



PeaceWise

building peacemakers for life

Complaints Policy

This is a Board policy

Author(s):	Bruce Burgess and Li Ai Gamble	Board Approved Date:	29 November 2019
Responsible Person:	Training and Conciliation Manager (Li Ai Gamble)	Review Due:	November 2022
Version history:	This version is 2.0. First approved 30 June 2017.		

Complaints Policy

1. Policy Statement

PeaceWise commits to being an organisation whose working environment is safe, enjoyable and productive, where our resources are stewarded appropriately, and where there is a formal process for issues to be raised and addressed in a manner that reflects our values.

2. Scope and Purpose

This Policy deals with how we approach and work through complaints or negative feedback about us, as an organisation, or concerning staff, volunteers or mediators arranged by PeaceWise. It is open for use by members of the public, volunteers or staff and involves five key elements:

- (a) *Culture*. Our aim is to serve our stakeholders to the best of our ability. We accept that we are not perfect. We value complaints and feedback as a means of identifying and understanding how we can do things better.
- (b) *Principles*. Our complaints and feedback system is modelled on biblical principles, including humility, fairness, accessibility, responsiveness, peacemaking, efficiency and integration.
- (c) *People*. Our complaints handling staff will be skilled and professional.
- (d) *Process*. Our complaints handling process involves seven stages - acknowledgment, assessment, planning, investigation, response, review, and consideration of systemic issues.
- (e) *Analysis*. We review information about complaints as part of a continuous process of review and improvement.

We discuss these elements in more detail below.

3. Connection to our values

The key PeaceWise core values relevant to this policy are:

Accountability

As the Church has been granted the ministry of reconciliation, we promote mutual accountability within the body of believers.

Application: All people associated with PeaceWise are accountable for their actions.

Wisdom

As the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, we ground all that we do in prayer as we seek God leading and direction

Application: We will prayerfully seek God's help in responding wisely to any complaint made.

Integrity

We are open, honest and honour our commitments.

Application: We will maintain the highest ethical standards and do what we say.

Example

We strive to live out what we teach about peacemaking, and especially in the conflicts we face in our own lives and in our ministry.

Application: If we receive any complaint in relation to our conduct or services, we will model and apply the biblical peacemaking principles in our approach to resolving the issue.

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4. Element 1—Culture

We are committed to achieving our Mission. We are equally committed to doing so in the best way possible, and with care and without hurting any of the people we deal with. We know that despite our best efforts, we are not perfect and that we can always do better.

Accordingly, we value complaints and feedback and recognise that effective complaint handling will benefit our stakeholders, our ministry, our reputation and our administration. We affirm that complaints can highlight weaknesses in our programs, policies and service delivery, and are opportunities to improve our operations, ministry and service.

We also affirm that good complaint handling will reassure stakeholders that we are committed to resolving problems, improving and building relationships, and to improving our accountability and transparency.

5. Element 2—Principles

Our complaint and feedback handling process is based on biblical principles, modelled on principles of fairness, peacemaking, transparency, accessibility, responsiveness and efficiency.

In addition, as one of our [Core Values](#) is “Example – We strive to live out what we teach about peacemaking”, we see complaint handling as an opportunity to ‘practise what we preach’. All complaints will be investigated with complete impartiality by a staff member or Board member who is not personally involved in the issues, or, if required, by an external consultant or adviser.

Each complaint will be assessed on its own merits. As far as possible confidentiality and privacy will be maintained and we will be transparent in reporting back results to you as quickly as reasonably possible. It is our aim to resolve all complaints as quickly and efficiently as possible. For example, if they can be resolved over the phone at the time they are made, we will do so.

We will not victimise or treat any person adversely because they have made a complaint. There is no financial charge for making a complaint. If you have special needs (eg non English speaking background or a physical impairment), please let us know and we will do our best to assist you.

You may initiate a complaint or feedback by email, letter or telephone call - see the contact details below. If you wish to make your complaint or provide feedback anonymously, it will still receive our genuine attention, although of course we will be unable to report back or seek further information which may be able to assist us in dealing with any issue. We are happy to deal directly with you, or through a parent, guardian, friend or adviser.

6. Element 3—People

We deeply value our stakeholders, staff and volunteers and we take complaints and feedback seriously. All complaints will be handled by our Training and Conciliation Manager, unless it is inappropriate for him or her to do so, eg due to absence or a lack of independence, in which case another senior member of staff or a Board member will handle it. In matters of great significance, we may outsource the handling of a complaint to an external adviser or consultant, to whom we will give complete co-operation.

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7. Element 4—Process

Our standard complaint handling procedures are as follows (although we reserve the right to approach a complaint more flexibly if we think it will achieve a more just and efficient outcome):

1. We will acknowledge each complaint promptly and give you the contact details of the person handling the complaint, ideally within 2 business days. If we have not finalised your complaint within 7 days after that, we will contact you to report our progress.
2. We will open a confidential complaint file, assess the complaint and assign it priority.
3. If some form of further enquiry or investigation is required, we will plan how the enquiry or the investigation is to be carried out.
4. We will investigate all relevant factual issues and then review the complaint in light of those facts. We will then consider options for complaint resolution and any reconciliation of relationship required.
5. We will contact you to discuss the complaint. In doing so we will inform you of the relevant facts we have identified and ask you to comment and/or give us any other relevant information you may have. We will then discuss with you how we propose to resolve the complaint. If we were wrong or have acted inappropriately, we will apologise and ask for your forgiveness. We will follow the PeaceWise 4Gs process and/or PAUSE principal as appropriate.
6. If you are not satisfied with the proposed resolution, our Chair will review the position, and we will contact you appropriately. If there has not been a satisfactory outcome to your complaint, we may suggest that together we follow a Christian mediation process. Alternatively, you may pursue any other action which you believe is appropriate.
7. We will act as soon as reasonably possible on any systemic issues that are identified as a result of the complaint or feedback.

Note—if we reasonably believe that a complaint is vexatious, trivial or not genuine we will inform you accordingly as soon as we form that view. If you wish to take matters further, you may pursue any other action which you believe is appropriate.

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8. Element 5—Analysis

We appreciate that complaints and feedback can provide an insight into our programs and services, and may show that they are not working as well as they might by.

- highlighting service failings that need to be remedied; and
- revealing problems and trends that can be acted on by management. We will:
 - use information brought to light by any complaints and feedback to improve our service to our stakeholders by; and
 - address at Board level any significant issues which are revealed by our complaints handling and feedback procedures.

9. Contact details:

Position: Training and Conciliation Manager

Telephone: 1300 IPEACE (1300 173 223)

Email: liaig@peacewise.org.au

Postal: PO Box 2442 North Parramatta, NWS 2151

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