THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Complaints Policy

The Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person who has made the complaint, as far as is practical or reasonable to do so.

1. Our complaints policy

1.1. The purpose of this policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone at the diocese knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and promptly
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired and reconciled
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do
- To respond within two weeks of a complaint being acknowledged.

1.2. This policy covers complaints about members, officers or employees of the DBF, its Boards or Committees, other than those complaints excluded below.

1.3. **This policy is not intended to cover safeguarding concerns. If you are concerned that you or someone you know may be the subject of abuse, or you have a concern regarding any other safeguarding issue, you must contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser:**

Karen Galloway, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser karen.galloway@cofesuffolk.org Tel: 01473 298545 Mobile: 07785 621319

1.4. If the complaint is not of a safeguarding nature but relates to a complaint against the safeguarding team this policy should be followed.

1.5. This policy does not cover:

- Complaints relating to diocesan church schools, where the individual school's complaints process should be used.
- Complaints relating to local parochial matters, should be referred to the member of clergy or the churchwarden.
- Complaints from DBF staff, who should use the DBF's grievance procedure.
- Complaints from members of clergy where it is a grievance relating to the exercise of the office held - the Archbishop's Council has set out a Code of Practice and supportive advice for dealing with grievances.
- Complaints relating to members of the clergy should be referred to the relevant Archdeacon.

2. Confidentiality

2.1. All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

3. Making a complaint

3.1. Informal Approach

3.2. In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about, therefore you are encouraged, in the first instance, to address your concerns directly with the individual concerned.

3.3. Formal Approach – written complaints

3.4. If, following the informal process, and your complaint is not related to one of the issues specified as not being covered by this policy, you remain dissatisfied with the proposed resolution or with the way your complaint has been handled, or do not believe the informal route is appropriate for your concern, then the formal procedure should be followed.

3.5. Your complaint should be sent in writing to the Diocesan Secretary at the Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich at The Diocesan Office, St Nicholas Centre, 4 Cutler Street, Ipswich, IP1 1UQ. This should be done within three months of the incident you are complaining about. You also need to tell us:

- If you are raising the complaint on your own behalf or on someone else's behalf
- What you think went wrong
- How you think we should put it right
- The impact on you or the person you are complaining on behalf of

3.6. The Diocesan Secretary or (if the Diocesan Secretary has already been involved or is the subject of your complaint) the Chair of the DBF, should acknowledge your complaint in writing within 14 working days of receipt, enclosing a copy of this procedure.

3.7. A suitably senior person will be appointed to investigate the facts of the case and propose a resolution and/or make a decision. If the investigator believes that meeting with you would be appropriate to discuss the matter in further detail, this will be arranged, usually within 14 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.

3.8. If you do not want to attend a meeting or it is not possible, necessary or appropriate in the circumstances, the Diocese will aim to conclude this process and provide you with a definitive reply usually within 30 calendar days of sending you the acknowledgement letter. If this is not possible we will let you know.

3.9. The reply will usually describe the action taken to investigate your complaint, the conclusions from the investigation and any action taken or solutions proposed because of your complaint. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you should contact us again, within 30 days of receiving our conclusions, explaining your reasons as to why you are dissatisfied with the outcome and we will appoint another person to review the decision.

3.10. The Diocesan Secretary or (if the Diocesan Secretary has already been involved or is the subject of your complaint) the Chair of the DBF, should acknowledge your complaint in writing within 14 working days of receipt, enclosing a copy of this procedure.

3.11. A suitably senior person will be appointed to investigate the facts of the case and propose a resolution and/or make a decision. If the investigator believes that meeting with you would be appropriate to discuss the matter in further detail, this will be arranged, usually within 14 days of sending you the acknowledgement letter.

3.12. If you do not want to attend a meeting or it is not possible, necessary or appropriate in the circumstances, the Diocese will aim to conclude this process and provide you with a definitive reply usually within 30 calendar days of sending you the acknowledgement letter. If this is not possible we will let you know.

3.13. The reply will usually describe the action taken to investigate your complaint, the conclusions from the investigation and any action taken or solutions proposed because of your complaint. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you should contact us again, within 30 days of receiving our conclusions, explaining your reasons as to why you are dissatisfied with the outcome and we will appoint another person to review the decision.

3.14. We will aim to write to you within 30 calendar days of receiving your request for a review, confirming our final position on your complaint and explaining our reasons.

3.15. If the person making the complaint feels that the matter has not been resolved, or remains dissatisfied with the procedure followed, it is possible to raise the matter with an appropriate external body at any stage.

Date Approved:	April 2025
Approving Committee:	Governance / Bishop's Council
Version:	v1.2
Review Committee:	Governance
Review Date:	April 2028 (by GC)