Complaints and Grievance Procedure for Croydon Buddhist Centre

Principles

1. This procedure provides a framework within which complaints or grievances can be addressed in a way which can help people to become more effective in their communications and relationships. The procedure is intended to be caring, equitable and consistently applied.

2. The principles of metta and fairness underpin the procedure, which will be implemented in accordance with the Precepts. The emphasis throughout the procedure is on finding ways to improve the situation in a sustainable way.

Complaints and grievance process

Stage 1: Informal

It is desirable for any complaints or grievances to be resolved at an informal level. This is part of the vision and expectation of a sangha (spiritual community) working together in harmony and it is a reasonable expectation that issues of grievance or complaint are usually resolved at this level. In order to be able to build and sustain harmony, people are encouraged to give voice, in a constructive manner, to issues impeding harmony, and to seek to find ways of resolving them. This is a core part of Buddhist practice.

Stage 2: Formal

Occasionally it may be the case that issues cannot be resolved at the informal level. When members of the sangha wish to proceed with a formal complaint or grievance the following process should be followed.

1. Formal complaints and grievances should be made in writing to the chair of the trustees of the charity.

2. The chair will put in place a kula (group) of appropriate people to investigate the complaint or grievance.

   Who will be on the kula? This will be at the chair's discretion. Normally this is likely to involve one or two trustees or other order members. If the person putting forward a complaint or grievance has asked to be ordained, someone from their ordination kula would be part of the kula considering their complaint or grievance.

   What if the complaint or grievance is against the chair? In this case the complainant should write to the president of the charity, who will identify who will be on the investigating kula.

3. The investigation process will depend on the nature of the complaint or grievance. It will involve consideration of the relevant documentation and any meetings necessary to further understand the nature of the complaint or grievance. Kula members will: - Invite relevant individuals to meetings and inform them in advance of the nature of the issues to be discussed and, where appropriate, provide any relevant documentation. Individuals invited to meetings may be accompanied by a companion, as an observer. - During the meeting, explore the issues with the invitee, who will be given a reasonable opportunity to ask questions, present information and express their point of view. - Ensure that any documentation relating to the meeting is stored confidentially.

4. The kula will draft a response to the complaint or grievance for the chair's consideration (or the president's consideration if the complaint is against the chair).
5. The chair (or president) will then determine his/her response to the complaint or grievance and send a formal reply to the complainant. The chair (or president) will seek to do this within six weeks of receiving a formal complaint or grievance.

6. There is no appeals process to the outcome of a formal complaint or grievance.

The above process will be confidential to the kula, the chair (or president) and any individuals invited to meetings.

The chair will inform trustees of the outcome of any formal complaints or grievances on a confidential basis. A written record of any complaint or grievances cases the Council deals with will be kept confidentially.

July 2026