# St. Mark's Complaints and Suggestions Policy

## 1 Our Aim

**St Mark's Church Broomhall and Broomhill  Living -Thinking- Loving- Faith** is committed to the wellbeing of those in our congregation and wider community. There may be times when we do not meet our own high standards and we really need to know about this, to investigate the issues and ensure it does not happen again. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the feedback of parishioners and the public, in particular by responding positively to complaints and suggestions, and by putting mistakes right.

Therefore we aim to ensure that:

- we welcome all feedback
- making a complaint or suggestion is as easy as possible
- we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response
- we deal with all feedback promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially
- we respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc.
- we learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review these procedures annually at the September PCC meeting.  The Annual Parochial Church Meeting is another opportunity to examine the procedures of the PCC.

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally and dealt with quickly.

Our aims are to:

- resolve informal concerns efficiently and appropriately
- respond consistently without escalating the situation
- take appropriate action as necessary

This policy ensures that we welcome suggestions and provide guidelines for dealing with complaints from members of the public and congregation about our services, facilities, and the actions of staff and volunteers.

## 2. Definitions

A **suggestion** is an expression of feedback which may require some action by the church.

A **complaint** is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction, however, it is expressed. This would include complaints expressed face to face, via a phone call, in writing, via email or any other method. All staff should have sufficient knowledge to be able to identify an "expression of dissatisfaction" even when the word "complain" or "complaint" is not used.

## 3. Complaints Procedure

This formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction. Written records will be kept by the Churchwardens at every stage of the process.

### 3.1. Responsibilities

St Mark's Church Broomhill and Broomhall's responsibility will be to:

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing within 7 days;
- respond to the issue raised within a stated period of time which will be confirmed as soon as it can be established, depending on the nature complaint;
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint; and
- take action where appropriate.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- bring their complaint, in writing, to the attention of St. Mark's PCC using the form below or otherwise to one of the Churchwardens or the office. Ideally this should be within 8 weeks of the issue arising;
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- allow St Mark's a reasonable time to deal with the matter, and
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond St Mark's control.

### 3.2. Confidentiality:

Except where it is our obligation to pass information on to safeguarding or statutory authorities, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and St. Mark's maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own facts). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

### 3.3. Procedure:

**Stage 1**
Wherever possible complaints will be handled informally. If concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then move to stage 2.

**Stage 2**
The complainant should be advised that a formal complaint may be made and the following procedure should be explained to them. Any member of the Standing Committee may follow this through with the complainant.

a) A formal complaint can be made either verbally or in writing. If in writing the attached form should be used. If verbally, a statement should be taken by the member of the Standing Committee.
b) In all cases, the complaint must be passed on to the Standing Committee. In the event of a complaint about a member of the Standing Committee, the complaint

should be referred to another member of the clergy and if the complaint is about the clergy this must be passed on to Area Dean or the Archdeacon.

c) The person delegated to respond to the complaint, depending on the nature of the complaint, must acknowledge the complaint in writing within one week of receiving it, detailing the process being followed and, wherever possible outlining the timescale for responses.
d) Members of the Standing Committee will investigate the complaint. Any conclusions reached should be discussed with the person involved.
e) The person making the complaint will receive a response based on the investigation within four weeks of the complaint being received. If this is not possible then a letter must be sent explaining why.

**Stage 3**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the above decision, then it should be discussed at PCC. The PCC will examine the complaint and may wish to carry out further interviews, examine files / notes. They will respond within four weeks in writing. Their decision will be final.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may wish to consider contacting the Archdeacon and/or the Charity Commission, since St Mark's Church is a charity regulated by the Charity Commission. The Charity Commission can be contacted either via their website https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity or by writing to them at Charity Commission First Contact, PO Box 1227, Liverpool L69 3UG.

**ALL SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS** must be reported to the parish safeguarding officer and/or the diocesan safeguarding team (details on our website).

If someone is at risk of harm the Police must be informed.

This policy is to be reviewed annually at the September PCC meeting.

Signed on behalf of the PCC by:

Beth Keith Vicar

Stuart Bennett
Churchwarden

Frances Gray Churchwarden

Date: 15th September 2026

Review Date: September 2027

# St. Mark's Broomhill and Broomhall Complaints Form

You may use this form to make a complaint about St Mark's Church Broomhill and Broomhall. Your complaint will be acknowledged within 7 days and discussed by the Standing Committee.

We would like you to return this form as soon as possible to office@stmarkssheffield.co.uk or in a sealed envelope marked for the attention of the Standing Committee.

**Your Name** ……..

**Address** ……...

……..

**Telephone** ……..

---

**Date of incident**

**Approximate time of incident (where relevant)**

---

**Complaint (please continue overleaf if necessary)**

---

**What action would you like to be taken?**

---

**What times are convenient for you to have an appointment to discuss this?**

We will reply within 7 days of receipt to advise regarding next steps. Thank you.