

# Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Congregational Policies

## C.IV Complaint and Grievance Policy

### CG1 PREAMBLE

Anyone may respectfully approach the board, the staff, and the Ministers about issues they have. At the same time, we as congregants recognize that the individuals in these positions need to be safe if they are to serve well in their positions. This policy is designed to balance the right to safety while not constraining the right of congregants to lodge a complaint or grievance on issues of importance to the health of our community. A complaint or a grievance can arise when a person or group feels that policy or expectation has been violated or that a person has been wronged in some way. The Healthy Congregation Committee (HCC) will strive to respond to complaints and grievances in a way that balances fairness and transparency with the need for effective action and the needs for privacy and emotional safety of those involved.

### CG2 FILING A COMPLAINT OR GRIEVANCE

- A. Individuals with presumed complaints/grievances are first encouraged to talk to that board member, staff person, or Minister directly. If this is cause for discomfort, individuals are encouraged to bring a friend, a neutral party, or a member of the HCC along for support. If after this attempt is made and the results are deemed inadequate, a formal grievance/complaint can be made by submitting it in writing to the Healthy Congregation Committee.
- B. Complaints/grievances need to be submitted on a first-person basis; anonymous grievances cannot effectively be acted upon. At the same time, the need for privacy and discretion is recognized for the safety of all parties. The HCC will assess the situation and respond with a proposed course of action. Each situation is unique, and will be assessed as such, but most complaints/grievances will take the following form:
  1. Member of the HCC speaks with the complainant/grievant and other affected parties to assess the situation.
  2. A member of the HCC may offer mediation between the affected individuals.
  3. A plan of action may be written by the parties involved and facilitated by the HCC. The plan of action will include specifics regarding how to deal with the issue, and specifics for how to assess that the plan has been properly followed. This mutually agreed plan could include any of the following:
    - a. Specific policy change

- b. Regular mediation by a Minister or member of the HCC
  - c. Mediation by parties outside our congregation
  - d. Formal review of Staff member or Minister
  - e. No action (agree to disagree)
  - f. Collaborative agreement to address the issue
- C. Some grievances or complaints fall under different areas of purview in our community. An issue with a staff member may most properly be resolved with their supervisor. Personnel grievances will be handled in accordance with a separate personnel policy. Policy issues are dealt with by the board. Sermon issues might be appropriately addressed by the Worship Committee. Each complaint/grievance is unique, and the HCC will facilitate a process that best addresses the needs of those concerned.
- D. In the interest of transparency and healthy communications, all written complaints and grievances will be summarized in a report to the board, providing an abstract of events while following privacy considerations.

*Change history:*

*Complaint and Grievance Policy was approved by the Board of Trustees on 1/19/2010*