Complaints Handling Policy

2026-27

1. General policy

1.1 Staff and Trustees of Lindisfarne College of Theology (LCT) take complaints seriously and commit to handling all complaints in a confidential, timely and appropriate manner.

1.2 Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints policy which is clear and easy to use;
- To make sure that trustees and staff are aware of this policy and know how to handle complaints;
- To ensure in all cases that complaints are handled using Gospel principles and that wherever possible, disputes and disagreements are amicably resolved and that relationships are restored;
- To learn from mistakes and misunderstandings and gather information which helps us improve what we do in the future.

1.3 All complaints and any associated information provided will be handled sensitively, and in accordance with relevant data protection requirements. However, the trustees reserve the right to involve external parties (including the police and other authorities) and to take legal advice where this is considered necessary.

1.4 The overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation rests with the Board of Trustees of LCT.

1.5 In constructing this policy, the trustees have paid due consideration to the Good Governance Code with the aim that the charity demonstrates internal and external complaints are handled constructively, impartially and effectively and it learns from mistakes.

1.6 This policy does not apply to complaints that relate to any aspect of the Common Awards approved academic provision. Complaints relating to the Common Awards approved academic provision will be dealt with under the LCT Academic Complaints Policy.

2. Receiving complaints

2.1 Complaints may be addressed to any trustee or member of the leadership team, either orally or in writing.

2.2 Where complaints are received by other contacts in LCT, complainants will be directed towards a member of the leadership team in the first instance.

2.3 At the time of receiving the complaint or within any initial response, complainants will be informed of the existence of this policy and provided with a copy if requested.

2.4 LCT operates a *Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults who are Vulnerable Policy*. Where complaints refer to people or activities covered by that policy, such complaints will be handled in accordance with both policies. In instances where the policies conflict, those contained in the safeguarding policy will carry precedence.

2.5 In certain cases and for the avoidance of doubt, the trustees or leadership team may request oral complaints to be repeated in writing and reserve the right to share complaints with other trustees or members of the leadership team as they see appropriate.

2.6 Complainants must be informed that certain aspects of oral complaints will be recorded (either at the time or later) including but not limited to:

- The name and contact details of the complainant;
- The date and time that the complaint was received;
- The substance of the complaint;
- Any formal relationship that the complainant has with LCT.

2.7 Complainants must be informed that although complaints will be handled confidentially, the trustees may share these with other trustees or members of the leadership team in accordance with this policy.

2.8 All complaints, together with any actions undertaken, will be recorded in a complaints log which will be reviewed by the trustees on a regular basis. Any conclusions and further action required as a result of this review will be formally recorded in the minutes of a trustees meeting.

2.9 Where the complaint relates to a specific person, the trustees may choose to inform that person of the nature of the complaint and to receive a formal response from them. The complainant's name and any other sensitive information provided by the complainant will not be shared with the subject of the complaint.

3. Resolving complaints

3.1 Complaints will be acknowledged by the trustees or member of the leadership team within 30 days of being received and will include details of who is dealing with the complaint and when the complainant can expect to have a response. Any first response should include a copy of this policy if not already provided.

3.2 The trustees will use best endeavours to provide a definitive response within 60 days of receiving the complaint. If, because of ongoing investigations or for other reasons this is not possible, a progress update will be provided to the complainant within 60 days of receiving the complaint.

3.3 A definitive response will include:

- Actions taken to investigate the complaint;
- Conclusions drawn from the investigation;
- Actions taken as a result of the investigation.

4. Appeals and escalation

4.1 Where the complainant is not satisfied with the response, they should inform the trustees of this dissatisfaction in writing within 30 days of receiving the response.

4.2 Due to the size of LCT, it is likely that the same group of trustees that dealt with the original complaint will be responsible for reviewing the appeal. Wherever possible a different trustee will take the lead in investigating the appeal.

4.3 As long as this notice of dissatisfaction is received within the timeframe set out in 4.1, the trustees will acknowledge this correspondence within 14 days and will use best endeavours to provide a definitive response within 30 days. Notices of dissatisfaction that are received outside of that timeframe will be considered at the discretion of the trustees.

4.4 This appeal decision will be considered final. At any time, the complainant can complain directly to the Charity Commission or any other appropriate regulating authority. The information about the types of complaints that the Commission can become involved with are set out on their website.

5. Contact details

Leadership Team:

Principal

The Revd Dr Richard Briggs

richard.briggs@lindisfarnect.org

Vice Principal

The Revd Dr Tiffany Conlin

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Director of Studies

Melody Briggs

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Operations Manager

Jenny Burton

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Co-chairs of the LCT Board of Trustees

The Revd Canon Dr Alan Bartlett

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