

# **Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland**

## **Grievance Procedure**

### **1. Who is covered by the procedure?**

- 1.1 This procedure applies to all ministers regardless of length of service, it also applies to all ministry students and licentiates.
- 1.2 If the allegation is considered potential misconduct, then Chapter 8 of the Constitution and Code of Discipline must be followed for Ministers, students or licentiates.
- 1.3 This procedure does not form part of any ministers' Call. It may be amended at any time, and the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland may depart from it depending on the circumstances of any case, acting on legal advice.

### **2. Using this procedure**

2.1 Most grievances can be resolved quickly and informally through discussion with the Church Secretary. It is advisable to first seek an informal resolution to any issues of concern. If this does not resolve the problem, you should initiate the formal procedure below reasonably promptly.

2.2 Differences of opinions should not be dealt with under this procedure but should rather be resolved through existing church processes and by appropriate church democratic structures, such as Church Committee and/or the Church Session.

### **3 Step I: written grievance**

- 3.1 You should put your grievance in writing and submit it to the Clerk(s) of the Presbytery in which the minister serves; or if this is inappropriate for any reason, to the Clerk of the General Synod.
- 3.2 The written grievance should set out the nature of the complaint, including any relevant facts, dates, and names of individuals involved so that the relevant body may investigate it.

### **4 Step 2: meeting**

4.1 The Clerk(s) and Moderator(s) of Presbytery (or Clerk of General Synod, or Moderator of General Synod) will appoint a Grievance Investigation Panel of three persons normally within two weeks of receiving your written grievance. A Minister shall be appointed as the Chair of the Panel with two further members not connected with the congregation in which a grievance has been raised.

4.2 Ministers, can be accompanied by a ministerial colleague or an accredited representative. We will consider an alternative companion if it is required as a reasonable adjustment. All companions must respect the confidentiality of the investigation.

4.3 You and your companion should make every effort to attend and be prepared to state your reason for submission of the Official Grievance, providing appropriate supportive evidence.

4.4 If you or your companion cannot attend at the time specified you should let the Chair know as soon as possible and the Chair will try, within reason, to agree an alternative time.

4.5 The Chair may adjourn the meeting if s/he considers that further investigation is necessary, after which the meeting will usually be reconvened.

4.6 The Clerk (s) of your Presbytery will write to you, usually within one week of the final Panel meeting (upon receipt of the Panel Report from the Chair of the Panel) to report the decision of the Panel and notify of you of any further action that s/he intends to take to resolve the grievance. The Clerk(s) will also advise you of your right of appeal.

### 5 Step 3: appeals

5.1 If the grievance has not been resolved to your satisfaction you may appeal in writing to Clerk(s) of the Presbytery or Clerk to the General Synod (as may be appropriate) stating in writing your full grounds of appeal, within one week of the date on which the decision was sent or given to you.

5.2 The Clerk of the Presbytery or Clerk to the General Synod (as may be appropriate) in consultation with the appropriate Moderator of General Synod will appoint a Grievance Appeals Panel, normally within two weeks of receiving the appeal. This will be dealt with impartially by three persons nominated by the same who have not previously been involved in the case. A Minister shall be appointed as the Chair the Grievance Appeals Panel. Ministers, have the right of accompaniment this companion may also be a ministerial colleague or an accredited representative. We will consider an alternative companion if it is required as a reasonable adjustment. All companions must respect the confidentiality of the investigation.

5.3 The Clerk(s) of Presbytery will confirm the Church's final decision in writing, usually within one week of the appeal hearing (upon receipt Panel's Report). There is no further right of appeal.

This policy should be reviewed Bi-Annually by the General Purposes Committee.

### ***Footnote taken from the coversheet when the Policies and procedures were in one document:***

The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland Policies & Procedures for Ministers within the NSPCI As adopted by the General Synod originally in 2013, amended in 2016 and reviewed, expanded, adopted by Pro Renata General Synod in January 2026.

Preface to supplementary policies and procedures for Ministers

The law of the church is the Code of Discipline of the General Synod.

It is intended that the Code of Discipline shall provide the principles and procedures which shall guide and govern the administration of the church and relations between ministers, people and the courts of the church.

Nevertheless, it is understood that for greater clarification and for further guidance in proceeding regard shall be had to the following policies and procedures, which are supplementary to the Code of Discipline, though not integral to it.

It should be noted that the ministry of this denomination is understood to be a vocation. That is, those entering into it should demonstrate a sense of calling; and all parties involved, whether ministers, congregations, or courts of the church, shall give full regard to the values of Christian Service, Christian Fellowship, and Christian Endeavour, as indicated in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

With regard to the profession of the Christian ministry, it is noted that while the nature of this work may not be physically demanding, it is however, highly demanding in intellectual and emotional terms. The hours can be lengthy and unpredictable. There are many challenges in supporting, comforting, and assisting a broad range of people; and the minister will carry the burdens of those people on his/her shoulders. While the ministry does bring deep spiritual satisfaction, it presents a challenge of life and work which is continuous.

Therefore, the minister must at all times seek the blessing and strength of the Holy Spirit, as should all who feel obliged to apply the following policies and procedures.