



CONFLICT, COMPLAINTS & SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES

OVERVIEW

John Main's vision was for a community of love. He recognised, though, that we all carry our handicaps and wounds with us. Conflict is a natural part of all human relationships. At one end of the conflict continuum are situations involving misunderstanding and personality conflicts. If approached with love from within a community of love, these situations can be an opportunity for personal and communal growth.

At the other end of the continuum are abusive relationships which are dangerous and destructive. The World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM) has a zero-tolerance approach to harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation of any kind – physical, verbal, emotional or sexual. Our Christian vocation is to treat all others with dignity and respect.

Within the conflict continuum participants may complain about the behaviour of other participants, including leaders of various community activities. Conflicts or complaints within the New Zealand Community for Christian Meditation (NZCCM) could arise in relation to participation in or leadership of: weekly meditation groups, regional or national community meetings, retreats or education and the national Council. In the NZCCM leadership the regional coordinators are Council members.

Another potential source of conflict or complaint is the misuse of personal information, in particular photos, obtained via NZCCM activities. A final potential source of conflict or complaint is members teaching about meditation in non meditation community settings, such as schools or prisons.

These Guidelines are based on documents initially developed by WCCM. They are for use in all conflicts and complaints involving any participants in any NZCCM activities. Anyone who participates in any NZCCM activities is considered a member of NZCCM for the purpose of these guidelines.

The aims of these Guidelines are to:

- provide a clear, fair and discreet process for addressing any conflicts or complaints arising from any activities within NZCCM;
- maintain a safe and supportive environment for all those engaged in the activities of NZCCM;

- ensure the safety and well-being of all people, especially children, adults, at risk/vulnerable adults and communities, that members of NZCCM come into contact with.

In addressing any conflict or complaint within NZCCM our first step as members of a meditative community is to seek to listen to each other, to our inmost Self, to the divine Word to us. As St Benedict says, “listen and attend with the ear of the heart”. Meditating together with those involved in a conflict or complaint situation can be part of the process of addressing the issue. Sometimes simply coming together only to meditate can be an important part of the healing journey.

ADDRESSING CONFLICT AND COMPLAINTS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

1. Any conflict or complaint relating to *members of a meditation group* should in the first instance be resolved through discussion by members in the group. If not resolved it should be shared, with participants’ agreement, in writing with the regional coordinator, by the group leader and/or complainant.
2. The regional coordinator will, as necessary, advise and/or work with the group and leader to resolve the issue, through seeking all parties’ views and facilitating discussion. The regional coordinator will consult with fellow Council members as necessary to advise and assist.
3. All members are welcome to bring an advocate or support person to any meeting addressing a conflict or complaint.
4. If a complaint about *members of a meditation group* cannot be resolved through this process the complainant can complain in writing to the Council.
5. Any conflict or complaint in relation to a *leader or regional or national group*, needs to be made to a regional or the national coordinator as appropriate.
6. Any complaint about a *Council member or the national coordinator* that comes to the Council is to be made in writing or via email. The complaint will be promptly circulated to Council members and a process agreed via email to address the issue.
7. The national coordinator or designated Council member will acknowledge, in writing, receipt of the formal complaint and advise that these Guidelines will be followed. A copy of the process to be followed in this case will be attached to the letter to the complainant.
8. Three Council members, including the national coordinator (unless they are the subject of the complaint) will consider the complaint via an agreed process. Any Council member with a conflict of interest will excuse themselves from the group. This process will include, as necessary, discussion in person or via zoom at a meeting with the complainant and the person complained about (together or separately as appropriate). If necessary, there may be further meetings and an external facilitator engaged.
9. The process addressing a complaint to the Council, including any meetings, and resolution of the issue will be minuted. If the complaint is withdrawn this is documented in writing or by email.

SAFEGUARDING FOR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

1. When a NZCCM Council member is alerted to a situation of alleged inappropriate behaviour from a member of NZCCM (normally in the region where they are coordinator), potentially involving harm, abuse, neglect or exploitation, they contact the national coordinator.
2. The Council member or the national coordinator (or another delegated Council member if appropriate) promptly contacts the persons involved with the behaviour.
3. The Council member, in coordination with the national coordinator, takes any immediate remedial steps necessary to ensure the wellbeing of participants involved.
4. If there has been any breach of NZ law, the police must be alerted and those involved supported in an appropriate manner. For all other situations, the national coordinator and the relevant NZCCM Council member follow the process set out above.

In attempting to resolve any conflicts or complaints, the rules of natural justice must be adhered to including:

- Approach enquiries with an open mind and in a fair and reasonable way;
- Give adequate time for response to claims by person complained about;
- Consider the particular facts in each case;
- Give all matters due consideration;
- Ensure there is no predetermination of the outcome;
- Neither party should interfere with the complaints process by approaching, discussing, or harassing the other party in any way in relation to the complaint.

GUIDELINES ON PHOTOS AND PERSONAL INFORMATION

All members of NZCCM must:

- When taking photos and videos of persons attending community events, obtain their permission at the time;
- In the case of children, that permission must be obtained from the child's parent or person apparently in charge of the child;
- Obtain specific consent from anyone who would be identifiable in a photo or video which is intended to be published in any form or posted on social media;
- Obtain consent for any use of personal information about any individual, derived from any Christian Meditation related activity, to be shared in any form, verbally, in writing or electronically.

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING MEDITATION OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY

Members providing education about Christian Meditation in non meditation community settings, such as schools or prisons, are representatives of NZCCM.

Members of NZCCM teaching about meditation in non meditation community settings will collaborate with the institutions they wish to enter, including all their own requirements and procedures to ensure the safety of those the institution is responsible for, especially children, adults at risk/vulnerable adults and communities.

The member representing NZCCM to provide education in a non meditation community setting will be confirmed by the relevant regional coordinator, with the Council member responsible for such education being informed via the regular Council meeting.

If the NZCCM Council is notified of any complaint about a member teaching in a non meditation community setting, including inappropriate behaviour, the Council will use the procedures set out above.

Version 1

Adopted by the National Council of NZCCM on 10th December 2022

Review Dec 2025