



## Conflict resolution

The Synod Council shall follow the guidelines for conflict resolution contained in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Corinthians 6:1-8. Thus the principles of any conflict resolution process shall include the following:

- A forgiving spirit on the Council's part will be the foundation of any conflict resolution process,
- The process shall begin with direct negotiation and proceed to mediation and arbitration as required.
- The process shall be fair and transparent and shall seek to uphold the dignity of all persons.
- The process shall seek justice first and reconciliation second, recognizing that justice is necessary in order to achieve reconciliation.

This policy addresses the following potential conflicts:

### **1. Conflicts in which the Synod Council is directly involved such as:**

- Conflicts within the Synod Council;
- Conflicts between the Synod Council and persons or groups in direct relationship to the Synod Council (members/staff/volunteers);
- Conflicts between the Synod Council and persons or groups outside a direct relationship to Synod Council.

In cases where the Synod Council is one of the parties in the conflict, the Synod Council shall attempt to negotiate the conflict. Should those efforts fail, the Synod Council shall seek to resolve the conflict through mediation before submitting the conflict to arbitration.

### **2. Conflicts which the Synod Council is being asked to arbitrate such as:**

- Conflicts between persons or groups within the Synod Council;
- Conflicts between persons or groups within the Synod Council and persons or groups outside the Synod Council.
- Appeals by a congregation or a rostered minister of decisions made by a Synod Committee.
- Appeal of a decision by the Bishop's Office.

In cases where the Synod Council is not one of the parties in the conflict but is being asked to arbitrate the conflict, the Synod Council shall not become involved until all efforts at negotiation and mediation (whether described in policy or not) have been exhausted.

Where those efforts have failed Synod Council can agree to be the arbiter of the conflict, or appoint an arbitration committee to facilitate the arbitration.

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*The following components shall be part of the process:*

1. The person or group making the allegation(s) shall be identified.
2. The person or group to whom the allegation(s) is/are directed shall be identified.
3. The allegation(s) shall be made in writing to avoid assumptions or misperceptions, hearsay or irresponsible criticism.
4. The allegations shall be accompanied by information that supports the allegation(s).
5. Both the allegation(s) and the supporting information shall be shared with the person(s) or group to whom the allegation(s) are directed.
6. At the discretion of the Synod Council/Arbitration Committee the allegation(s) shall be presented to the Synod Council/Arbitration Committee in the presence of the person(s) or group to whom they refer.
7. The person(s) or group to whom the allegation(s) are directed shall have an opportunity to request additional information in writing and respond to the allegation(s) in the presence of the person(s) bringing it.
8. The Synod Council/Arbitration Committee shall have the opportunity to ask both parties for clarification or information.
9. The Synod Council/Arbitration Committee may meet in camera to consider the conflict. If new information presents itself at this point, the process will revert back to the fifth point above, and this information will be shared with the person(s) or group to whom the allegations are directed.
10. The Synod Council/Arbitration Committee shall report its decision to both parties in writing.
11. Under exceptional circumstances (e.g. sexual harassment, fraud) there may be delays in the conflict resolution process to allow for external investigation.