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## Versions:

Version	Date	Comments
0.1	07 November 2023	Initial Draft.
0.2	13 December 2023	Added document title in the header
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0.4	29 January 2024	Included the Conflict and Resolution Interview Form - Jon
1.0	3 March 2024	Review/amended – EB
1.1	TBC	Approved, Published – EB
1.2	3 March 2026	Re-formatted for website publication

## ENAC Escalation Management

### 1. Purpose

The Escalation Management policy and processes are designed to:

- a. Provide a structured approach for handling and resolving concerns and conflicts within the church organisation known as Every Nation Auckland City (ENAC). This includes leaders, members and staff in all locations.
- b. Ensure that any relationship concerns and conflicts are addressed in a biblical, timely and effective manner.
- c. Preserve the spiritual and relational health of ENAC so we can collectively, and effectively fulfil the vision and mission of our church.

### 2. Principles

The below key principles help build a foundation from which we address conflicts.

- a. **Conflict is inevitable:** We need to understand from the outset that humans naturally encounter conflict of various kinds. Jesus even promised this when he said, “It is impossible that no offenses should come...” (Luke 17:1).
- b. **Conflict is healthy:** Ignoring or avoiding conflict is not healthy for relationships. In fact, addressing conflict in a biblical manner has enormous opportunity for all parties to grow individually and in our relationships.
- c. **Division is the church’s greatest enemy:** Throughout church history Satan has used offense, slander and gossip to create disunity and division. His real agenda is to distract and disempower the expansion of the kingdom of God.
- d. **The Bible was written for all people groups:** The Bible wasn’t just written for Caucasians, Polynesians or Asians: The bible was written for all humans to navigate conflicts in ways that uphold biblical truth, wisdom and instruction. Refer to Appendix A for key scriptures.
- e. **Our response to conflict:** Two common responses to conflict is *fight or flight*. As much as it may be uncomfortable for some, we reject these responses and believe that the biblical response to conflict is to display a conciliatory response.
- f. **All conflict is resolvable:** ENAC’s presupposition is that all conflict, if handled well, is resolvable no matter how offensive or grievous it might be. The gospel resolved the greatest conflict of all time.

### 3. Unique Features

There are some unique features about our organisation that should be noted.

- a. **We are a church:** While we have legal, financial and organisational responsibilities, we are primarily a church under the headship of Jesus and set apart to go into the

world around us with the gospel and make disciples of Jesus. ENAC is therefore firstly a spiritual organisation and has an active spiritual enemy.

- b. **We are multi-cultural:** We are blessed to have many different ethnicities and cultures in our church. This brings enrichment in so many ways, but we also acknowledge that this brings additional complication. We accept that there is a greater chance of offense being taken and conflicts arising.
- d. **Two basic types of conflict:** The nature of some conflict is sin orientated with sinful motives and/or sinful behaviours. Another type of conflict is not sin orientated but some kind of insensitivity. The insensitivity could be due to cultural, personality, temperament or maturity differences.

## 4. How to Minimise Taking Offense

Just because the possibility of an offense presents itself, doesn't mean we need to take offense. Following are four attitudes (or mindsets) that can shield us from easily taking offense. These may help us avoid disappointment, hurt, relational strain – and hours of meetings.

- a. **Be ready:** The opportunity for offense will come (especially in a multi-cultural environment).
- b. **Be loving:** According to Matthew 5:44 and 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 love is the greatest gift we can give each other. Love avoids reading between the lines. Love believes the best and doesn't have to be right. Remember that ultimately God is our defender and the only perfect judge.
- c. **Be mature:** An offense might be a blessing in disguise as it may produce maturity (Christlikeness) in us. Proverbs 17:9 and 1 Peter 4:8, exhorts us to try and overlook an offense i.e. don't sweat the small stuff and be quick to forgive.

Note: A person who is being a constant source of conflict and/or is regularly and easily offended is immature and may have a deeper personal issue.
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- d. **Be responsible:** If an offense needs to be addressed, we should be careful, prayerful and tactful as we move forward and try to contain the matter through the following process.

## 5. How to Address and Resolve a Conflict

**Introduction:** We are going to follow the basic three step process as outlined in Matthew 18:15-17. Isn't it good that God has provided this for us! Even though the context of Matthew 18 is responding to a sin orientated matter, the Elders believe that this simple three step process is a helpful framework to enable us in resolving all offenses or conflicts.

Furthermore, the Elders have complimented this basic process with some practical wisdom we have labelled “*Elder’s Advice*”. The lack of specificity in the text leaves room for a local church to add relevant instructions that reflect its local context.

Before we embark on this Escalation Management process, we should pause and take time to make sure that we have a good attitude. Take time to calm your emotions by praying it through and check the condition of your heart. Asking, “What is God teaching me through this situation?” may help posture the heart.

*Elder’s Advice 01: At this point it may also be good to discretely consult with a leader who is more mature than you. The leader needs to be objective, spiritually strong and able to keep the matter in confidence i.e. discipler, connect group leader, connect care leader, elder or pastor or someone similar. **Do not gossip!***

### Summary: Mathew 18 (NLT)

v15	If another believer sins against you, <b>go privately and point out the offense</b> . If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back.	Go to the offender privately
v16	But if you are unsuccessful, <b>take one or two others with you and go back again</b> , so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses.	Return with trusted witnesses
v17	If the person still refuses to listen, <b>take your case to the church</b> . Then if he or she won’t accept the church’s decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector.	Escalate to church leadership

### STEP 1: Go to the offender privately (Matt 18:15)

In most cases, issues can be resolved at the local level by discussing it directly with the person concerned. It may well have been unintentional, or you may have misunderstood what was said or done. We strongly urge you to withhold judgement until you’ve heard their side of the story. Although this may feel uncomfortable, it is biblical!

*Elder’s Advice 02: In a multi-cultural environment, going to an offender privately may require an unreasonable amount of courage. In fact, it will be very difficult for some cultures to go to a pastor or senior leader directly, especially if English is a second language. So, to assist this process, we advise that a person who is offended, request the trusted leader to accompany them for support and even function as a mediator.*

*Helpful tips:*

- *Separate the person from the wrong deed or words*
- *Give them the benefit of the doubt*
- *Address only what the person can change*
- *Be specific about the wrong deed or words (avoid generalisation)*

- *Tell the offender how you feel about the offense*
- *Avoid sarcasm or frustration*
- *Avoid inflammatory words like 'always' and 'never'*

**Important Note:** If the conflict directly involves an elder or pastor and the nature of the offense is grievous, immoral or ungodly then this matter should be confidentially escalated directly to another pastor or elder for urgent attention. Additionally, if the conflict directly involves an elder or pastor and the nature of the offense brings the office of an elder into disrepute, then this matter should be confidentially escalated directly to another pastor or elder for urgent attention.

## STEP 2: Return with trusted witnesses (Matt 18:16)

If the issue remains unresolved, the offended person should return with one or two trusted people to witness the meeting remembering that the goal must be the restoration of relationship more than proving one's self right.

*Elder's Advice 03: We advise that the one or two people who go with the offended person to witness the meeting are spiritually mature.*

## STEP 3: Escalate to church leadership (Matt 18:17)

If the issue persists, the matter should be escalated to church leadership for mediation. This may be a discipler, connect group leader, ministry leader, connect care leader, department head, elder or pastor. The mediator needs to be a person who is respected by all parties and has a high level of objectivity, spiritual strength and is able to keep the matter in confidence. The church leadership will investigate the issue and work towards a resolution.

At this point, it is recommended to have a more formal process by way of using a Conflict and Resolution Form (Appendix C)

*Elders Advice 04: It may be helpful to **clarify** the situation then **execute** a simple plan to avoid a reoccurrence.*

### **Clarify:**

- *define the problem*
- *identify the cause of the problem*
- *list all possible solutions*
- *evaluate the pros and cons of each solution*

### **Execute:**

- *choose the best solution*
- *create an action plan and begin implementation*
- *evaluate progress*

## 6. Communication

Throughout the escalation process, regular communication with the concerned parties should be maintained to keep them informed about the progress and expected timelines for resolution.

In the meantime, all parties should....

- a. Not make provocative posts on social media or group chats
- b. Not gossip: Defined as “revealing personal or sensational facts about others to others that is by nature self-serving and injurious to someone else's reputation”

Proverbs 16:28 “A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends”

Depending on the severity and significance of the conflict, the elders may elect to issue a statement to the church leaders or members and/or call a meeting of church leaders or members. The objective is to provide excellent communication to bring clarity, confidence and security to the church.

## 7. Documentation

Every step of the escalation process should be documented, including the issue, actions taken, and resolutions proposed and implemented. Refer to Appendix C.

## 8. Feedback and Closure

Every step of the escalation process should be documented, including the issue, actions taken, and resolutions proposed and implemented. Refer to Appendix C.

## 9. Continuous Improvement

Periodic reviews of the Escalation Management Process should be conducted to identify opportunities for improvement and to ensure its effectiveness.

## 10. Staff of Every Nation Auckland City (ENAC)

For the purposes of this document 'staff' includes those who are either on the P.A.Y.E payroll or are a contractor to ENAC.

For the staff there are additional provisions and procedures in the ENAC Employment Agreement that are relevant to preserving a safe, harmonious and productive relationships among the staff. For this purpose, the following sections may be relevant.

- a. Staff culture
- b. Confidentiality
- c. Fairness in disciplinary matters
- d. Termination

## 11. Final Appeal (if applicable)

In cases where the issue remains unresolved after following the above steps, a final appeal process should be in place, which may involve external mediation or arbitration.

## 12. Appendix A (c/o Abigail Mendoza)

Key scriptures related to building healthy church relationship.

## 13. Appendix B

Conflict and Resolution forms:

- *Running an effective Interview meeting form*  
Appendices B Interview form.docx **[internal link disabled]**
- *Running an effective Mediation meeting form*  
Appendices B Mediation Meeting form.docx **[internal link disabled]**

## 14. Appendix C

'The Difference Between Forgiveness and Reconciliation'

**Source:**

The primary source of understanding came from the R. T. Kendall classic, called Total Forgiveness.  
<https://rtkendallministries.com/resources/store#ecwid:mode=product&product=3326033> [hyperlink disabled]

**Key Insights:**

Below are some helpful quotes from the book.

PAGE #	
11	<p><i>“Even if there is no reconciliation, there can still be total forgiveness. This may even apply to the forgiveness of those who are no longer alive. This forgiveness must happen in the heart, and when it does, peace emerges – with or without a complete restoration of relationship. What matters is that the Holy Spirit is able to dwell in us ungrieved, able to be utterly Himself. The degree to which the Holy Spirit is Himself in me will be the degree to which I am like Jesus and carry out His teachings.”</i></p>
26	<p><i>“Forgiveness and reconciliation are not always the same. Reconciliation requires the participation of two people. The person you forgive may not want to see or talk to you. Or they may have passed away since the time of the offence. Moreover, you may not want to maintain a close relationship with the person you forgive.</i></p> <p><i>Restoration implies a restoration of friendship after a quarrel. When a husband and wife totally forgive each other, it will usually mean a reconciliation – but not always. The bitterness and the desire to punish the other person may be gone, but the wish to restore things to the way they were may not necessarily be so strong.</i></p> <p><i>An injured person can forgive an offender without reconciliation. It is wonderful indeed if the relationship can be restored, but this must not be pressed in most cases. Some things can never be the same again. It takes two to reconcile, and there must be a total willingness on both parts.”</i></p>
95	<p><i>“God loves reconciliation. He has given the ministry of reconciliation to us, and He wants it to continue. When we are forgiven, He wants us to pass it on. When we interrupt that, He doesn’t like it all. He sent His Son to die on a cross, effectually calling us by His grace and giving us total forgiveness. But we interrupt that flow by not passing it on.”</i></p>