

St John the Evangelist Church

Whistleblowing Policy



Introduction:

We are committed to honesty and integrity in our church life and we expect all involved to maintain high standards. Any suspected wrongdoing, including “covering up”, should be reported as soon as possible.

This policy covers all ministers, officers, PCC and sub-committee members, volunteers, employees and casual workers who are appointed by the Parochial Church Council. It does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

What is Whistleblowing:

Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to our activities. This includes bribery, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment and any breach of legal or professional obligations. It also includes the following matters specific to this workplace.

How to Raise a Concern:

If a child or vulnerable adult is **at immediate risk** you should contact Diocesan safeguarding team on 01245 294444 or the Police on 999 in accordance with the PCC's Safeguarding Policy. If you have received a direct allegation of abuse, but the child/adult **is not in immediate danger** you should contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer or Parish Priest without delay, and in all circumstances within 24 hours

We hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with the person to whom you are responsible. However, where you prefer not to raise it with that person for any reason, you should contact the Parish Priest or a Churchwarden. Contact details are at the end of this policy.

A meeting will be arranged with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a friend, colleague or union representative to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

Confidentiality:

We hope that whistleblowing concerns can be voiced openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. If you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern.

External Disclosures:

The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing associated with Church or Church Hall activities. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally. However, the law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Public Concern at Work operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

Protection and Support for Whistleblowers:

- We aim to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken
- If you have raised a safeguarding concern with the PCC Safeguarding Officer s/he will usually liaise with the Parish Priest about your support

- Confidential support from the Diocese is available to all clergy and licenced lay-workers in the diocese, as well as their spouses/partners.
- Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform a Churchwarden **OR** Parish Priest immediately.
- You must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct, as an employee you may be subject to disciplinary action. In some cases the whistleblower could have a right to sue you personally for compensation in an employment tribunal.
- However, if we conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower may be subject to formal action.
- Public Concern at Work operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

Contacts:

Parish Priest	Email: Vicar@stjohnsmoulsham.org.uk
Churchwardens	Will May and Nanette Wright Email: churchwardens@stjohnsmoulsham.org.uk
Protect (an independent whistleblowing charity)	Advice line for whistleblowers: (020) 3117 2520 Website: https://protect-advice.org.uk/contact-protect-advice-line/