

Whistle-blowing Policy



To fulfil their commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults, all organisations that provide services for, or work with, children/adults or are required to have appropriate whistle-blowing procedures, and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children/adults to be addressed. Whistle-blowing may also apply to situations of unacceptable practice, performance or behaviour in situations unrelated to children or adults who may be vulnerable, and these same principles can be applied.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 gives workers legal protection against being dismissed or penalised as a result of publicly disclosing certain serious concerns. Whilst the Act does not provide the same protection for volunteers, The Parish of Wanstead adopts the same approach in their protection. Members of the parish should be encouraged to acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of unacceptable practice, performance or behaviour to the attention of the Rector, PCC Lay Chair, Churchwardens, Parish Safeguarding Officer or Archdeacon.

It is often the case that a co-worker or co-voluntary worker may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express concerns, feeling that this would be disloyal; he or she may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however, natural, must never result in a child or adult who may be vulnerable continuing to be unnecessarily at risk.

Reasons for whistle-blowing:

- To prevent the problem worsening or widening
- To protect or reduce risks to others
- To prevent becoming implicated oneself.

What stops people from whistle-blowing:

- Starting a chain of events which spirals out of control
- Disrupting the work or project
- Fear of getting it wrong
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers or reputations
- Fear of not being believed.

How to raise a concern:

- Concerns, suspicions or uneasiness about practice or behaviour of an individual should be voiced as soon as possible
- Be specific about what practice is concerning, what has been heard or what has been observed
- Inform the Rector, PCC Lay Chair, Churchwardens, Parish Safeguarding Officer

- If the concern is about a member of the clergy, contact the Archdeacon or the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.
- Ideally put concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, and providing dates and times
- Provide as many facts as possible; do not rely on rumour or opinion Procedure: Allegations and concerns
- You are encouraged to put your name to any disclosure; however, any concern raised anonymously should be considered at the discretion of the Parish, taking into account the seriousness of the issue raised, the credibility of the concern and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

What happens next:

- If the concern about practice, performance or behaviour relates to safeguarding children or adults who may be vulnerable, it should be investigated according to the safeguarding policy
- If the concern does not relate to safeguarding children or adults who may be vulnerable, it should be investigated according to complaints and grievance procedures
- The whistle-blower is not expected to prove the truth of a concern or investigate it
- Within the bounds of confidentiality, the whistle-blower should be given as much information as possible on the nature and progress of any enquiries
- The Rector, Lay Chair, or Churchwarden should ensure that the whistle-blower is not harassed or victimised
- In the event of the concern being about the Rector, the archdeacon should ensure that the whistle-blower is not harassed or victimised
- No action will be taken against a whistle-blower if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith
- Malicious allegations from a whistle-blower will be considered very seriously and may result in disciplinary action in the case of a paid employee or office holder.

Date approved by PCC: 16th September 2026

Date of next review: September 2027