St James' Church Hemingford Grey

Whistleblowing Policy

Introduction

St James' Church is committed to the highest possible standards of integrity and recognises that clergy, lay staff and volunteers are often the first to become aware of or identify serious concerns. When such concerns arise, barriers to coming forward could be in relation to misplaced loyalty to colleagues or the Church, or fear of harassment or victimisation. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (the 'Act') protects workers who raise concerns from victimisation or harassment. In accordance with the Act, St James' Church welcomes clergy and staff members who have serious concerns about any aspect of the church's work to come forward and voice those concerns, in confidence, within the church. The church relies heavily upon the contribution of volunteers and recognise that they are in an important position to recognise and report concerns. While voluntary roles are not included within the Act, the church encourages volunteers to use this process with the relevant principles of protection applied to them. This policy is in place to ensure that an internal process is available to encourage and enable workers and volunteers to raise serious concerns which would not meet the criteria for a complaint without fear of reprisals, to ensure that St James' Church continues to provide the highest standards of integrity and accountability.

Principles

This policy is based on the following fundamental principles:

- All Office Holders, lay staff and volunteers have the right to raise concerns about perceived unacceptable practice or behaviour.
- All Office Holders and lay staff are responsible for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour, safeguarding concerns and any health and safety risks. We also invite volunteers to raise these matters.
- St James' Church does not tolerate victimisation or harassment and will take action to protect clergy, lay staff and volunteers when they raise a concern in good faith.

Support

Clergy, lay staff and volunteers who raise concerns will be offered appropriate advice and support and will be kept informed in relation to the progress and outcome of any inquiries. Dependent on the circumstances and the wishes and needs of the person raising the concerns the support offered could include arranging a named supporter with independence from the situation, pastoral support, spiritual support, signposting to independent sources of support and advice or counselling support. Any person receiving a whistleblowing disclosure should discuss support needs with the person raising the concern.

How to raise a concern:

St James' Church recognises the difficulties in raising a concern about the behaviour of a colleague. However, raising the concern at an early stage may protect others, prevent the problem getting worse, and prevent individuals themselves becoming implicated.

Office Holders, lay staff and volunteers are encouraged to raise concerns in cases where:

- the law may have been broken
- House of Bishop's or the church's policies and procedures may have been breached
- there are concerns of a safeguarding nature

Who to tell:

Office Holders, lay staff and volunteers should raise concerns initially with their:

- Incumbent
- line-manager
- volunteer co-ordinator
- Parish Safeguarding Officer
- Archdeacon or Bishop if your concern relates to the incumbent.

This will be dependent upon the nature of the concerns and who might be involved.

Special Note:

Safeguarding Concerns – St James' Church is committed to safeguarding the welfare and protection of children and adults at risk of harm. Concerns about the welfare of children and adults at risk of harm should be reported without delay to prevent any ongoing risk of harm. Concerns should be reported to the Parish Safeguarding Officer by emailing safeguarding@churchbytheriver.org.uk. If the child or adult is in immediate danger they should report the matter directly to their relevant Local Authority or Constabulary.

How to report a concern:

Clergy, staff and volunteers can call, write to, or arrange to meet with any of the above. In the case of a meeting, the individual raising the concern may wish to invite a supporter.

Written concerns should

- identify that it is a whistleblowing disclosure;
- detail the background and history of the concerns;
- give, dates and places (where possible); and
- note the reasons why the individual is particularly concerned about the situation.

What could happen?

This will be dependent upon the nature of the concern. The matter may be:

- investigated internally
- referred to the Police and / or other statutory agencies
- independently investigated
- referred for consideration under the Clergy Discipline Measure; or
- a combination of the above

Malicious or Vexatious Allegations

Any malicious or vexatious allegations made by clergy or lay staff may lead to a disciplinary process for the individual concerned.

	Signed	Date
Incumbent	T. Mayo	24. 9. 26
Churchwarden		