

Guidance on Complaints Procedure for Safeguarding Concerns that are Not Allegations of Abuse



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A complaint is defined as a grievance and/or the raising of a concern about [Breaches of Codes of Behaviour](#). [\(LinkTBC\)](#)

Allegations or suspicions of child abuse or adult abuse do not fall into this category of general complaints and should always be dealt with in accordance with Diocesan child safeguarding and adult safeguarding policies and procedures. [\(See Guidance on Reporting\)](#). [\(LinkTBC\)](#)

This complaints procedure is not for use by Church personnel who should use the [Whistle-Blowing Procedure](#) [\(LinkTBC\)](#) to raise their complaint.

Having a culture of openness, transparency and fairness means that a parish or organisation has nothing to hide in terms of practice, and that it is open to hearing feedback from children, young people, vulnerable adults, carers, other clergy, volunteers and parishioners about the services the parish offers and how it can improve upon them.

Parishioners, carers and children and young people should be made aware of the complaints procedure and should be provided with an information leaflet.

All recorded information relating to complaints should be kept confidential and stored in a secure place in the parish office. Records regarding complaints should be kept for a period of time as indicated in the [Data Protection Guidelines](#). [\(LinkTBC\)](#)

A framework for a simple complaints procedure

If there is a complaint which is not a child protection issue, the parent or child, as far as possible, should do the following:

Step One

- Discuss the complaint with the leader of the group/activity.
- If the matter is not resolved, then the complainant should discuss it with the Parish Priest in charge, who would facilitate a meeting between the parties.
- The Parish Priest's decision or resolution of the issue should be accepted by both parties.

A similar framework could be used to create a grievance procedure where a leader has a concern.

Step Two

If resolution has not been achieved the following steps should be taken:

- The Bishop or his delegate should be contacted by completing a [Complaints Form](#). [\(LinkTBC\)](#)
- A letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint should be sent within seven calendar days, enclosing a copy of the complaints procedure.
- All complaints must be thoroughly investigated.
- The Bishop or his delegate, may organise a meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve the complaint. This communication may also take place by telephone if a meeting is not possible. They will do this within fourteen calendar days of sending the acknowledgement letter to the complainant.

- Within seven days of the meeting or discussion, the Bishop or his delegate will write to the complainant to confirm what took place and to set out any solutions that were agreed upon.
- If the meeting is not agreeable or possible, the Bishop or his delegate will issue a detailed written reply to the complainant, setting out their suggestions for resolving the matter within twenty-one calendar days of sending the acknowledgement letter to them.

Relevant Forms

SO23

USEFUL RESOURCES

- Breaches of Codes of Behaviour
- Whistleblowing Guidance
- Diocesan Reporting Procedures
- Data Protection Guidelines