

**This information is for the workers, parents or adults with parental responsibility or members of the community. It is designed to deal with those issues which are not related to child protection.**

It is the aim of any church organisation to maintain happy and harmonious relationships with all who are associated with it and ensure that experiences provided are positive. It is extremely important that everyone feels their views and opinions are valued. It is also recognised that, on occasion, concerns may arise which require looking into and a response. It is expected that most of these will be dealt with quickly and effectively by the leader of an organisation. However, a complaint may arise that requires a more formal consideration and response. The following is an appropriate procedure for dealing with complaints fairly and in the best interests of everyone involved. It is designed to resolve any matter as quickly and simply as possible. Be assured that all complaints will be looked into in strictest confidence and that a response will be offered within the agreed time frames.

## **Making a complaint**

The leader in charge of the organisation is the first point of contact and you should first raise the concern orally. The leader will endeavour to answer the concern immediately. If you feel that you do not want to discuss the matter with the leader, if he/she cannot answer your concern or if your query is more serious, a formal written complaint should be submitted to the rector/priest in charge or any member of the parish panel whose contact details should be made available to you. Please be assured that all complaints will be looked into in the strictest confidence and that a response will be offered within the agreed time frames. If the nature of your complaint suggests that a child may be at risk of 'significant harm' in the context of parish activities, then a report will be made to the statutory authorities. It should be noted that the parish panel must follow the guidance of the statutory authority. Also, as the welfare of the child is paramount, the statutory authorities cannot give an undertaking that any information you provide will remain confidential. The official policy is that those receiving such information should 'only disclose it where the welfare of the child requires it and then only to those with a legitimate need to know'. The parish undertakes to acknowledge any formal complaints within three working days. It is our aim to resolve all complaints that lie within the competence of the panel, within four weeks but this may take longer depending on the nature of the complaint. In any event you will be kept informed of progress. Please understand that most leaders are volunteers and that it may take a while for them to reply in detail. Should you feel unhappy with the initial response there are procedures through which to appeal against a decision regarding a complaint.

## **Grievance procedure**

If you have any grievance which you consider to be genuine in respect of any aspect of your employment as a paid or volunteer worker, you have a right to a hearing by your immediate supervisor in the first instance. In the event that your grievance concerns your immediate supervisor, the grievance should be taken to that person's immediate supervisor. Failing satisfactory resolution of the grievance within a period of ten working days, you may then raise the matter with the panel who will arrange to hear the grievance as soon as possible and whose decision will be conveyed to you not later than ten working days from the date the grievance was heard. If you are unhappy with the outcome of the hearing, you may appeal to the bishop, whose decision will be final. You may be accompanied by a friend at this appeal hearing. In the event that the grievance concerns another employee, the panel may request that the grievance be made in writing in order that the person whom the grievance concerns may have an opportunity fully and fairly to answer any such grievance.

This policy shall be reviewed after three years.

**Policy ratified by the Select Vestry of Holy Trinity Parish, Killiney on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2012.**