Christ Church Virginia Water
Whistleblowing Policy

Christ Church is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, honest and open environment. Everyone involved in the life of this church- including clergy, employees, volunteers, members of the congregation and visitors –should feel able to raise concerns about safeguarding, unsafe practice or other serious issues, and to know that these will be taken seriously.

1. Purpose of this statement

This statement explains how concerns can be raised about behaviour, practice or situations that may put children, young people, adults at risk or others in danger, or that may be dishonest or unsafe. It supports the Church of England's national safeguarding policies and forms part of our safer recruitment and people management practice.

2. What is whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is raising concerns about suspected wrongdoing or risks connected with our work. This can include bribery, fraud or other criminal behaviour, failures of justice, risks to health and safety, environmental harm, or breaches of legal or professional duties. It also covers the following issues that are specific to this workplace.

3. What kinds of concerns can be raised?

- Safeguarding concerns about children, young people or adults at risk.
- Behaviour by clergy, staff, volunteers or others that appears unsafe, abusive or inconsistent with the Church's codes of conduct.
- Serious health and safety risks.
- Financial misconduct or misuse of church funds.
- Other serious wrongdoing or attempts to cover up any of the above.

4. Who can raise a concern?

Anyone can raise a concern, including clergy, employees, volunteers, PCC members, members of the congregation, visitors and members of the local community.

5. How to raise a concern locally

If you are concerned about a child or vulnerable adult, contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer between 9am and 5pm on 01483 790379 or safeguarding@cofeguildford.co.uk. If a child or vulnerable adult is at immediate risk call emergency services on 999 and then the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer as soon as practicable. However, where you prefer not to raise it with that person for any reason, concerns should be raised promptly with one of the following people in the parish:

Role	Name	Contact details (phone / email)
Vicar	Simon Vibert	simon.vibert@cc-vw.org
Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)	Pam Unwin	safeguarding@cc-vw.org
Churchwardens	Roger Blain Bev Gilbert	roger.andrew.blain@gmail.com bev@georgegilbert.co.uk

You can raise a concern in person, by phone or in writing (including email). Please say if you would like your concern to be treated as confidential.

6. If you do not feel able to raise a concern locally

If you feel unable to raise a concern with anyone in the parish, or if you have raised a concern and do not feel it has been taken seriously, you can contact the diocesan safeguarding team directly.

7. Confidentiality and support

Christ Church will treat concerns sensitively and confidentially wherever possible, sharing information only with those who need to know in order to respond to the concern. We recognise that raising a concern can be difficult and will seek to provide appropriate support to those who speak up.

8. Protection from unfair treatment

No-one should be treated unfairly or suffer negative consequences because they have raised a concern in good faith. Christ Church Virginia Water is committed to fostering a culture in which concerns can be raised openly and safely. Where concerns relate to safeguarding or serious wrongdoing, the parish and diocese will follow national guidance and relevant employment or volunteer processes.

9. How we respond to concerns

- Acknowledge receipt of the concern where contact details are provided.
- Take advice from the Parish Safeguarding Officer and/or diocesan safeguarding team where appropriate.
- Assess any immediate risk and take steps to ensure safety.
- Decide what action to take, which may include making a formal safeguarding report or involving other agencies.
- Keep appropriate records of the concern and action taken.

10. Review

This statement should be reviewed regularly alongside the parish safeguarding policy and updated when local contacts or diocesan details change.

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Approved by: Parochial Church Council (PCC), Christ Church Virginia Water

Date Approved: _____

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Review Frequency: Annually, or sooner if required by changes in legislation, Church of England guidance, diocesan guidance, or parish practice.

Next Review Date: _____