

<b>TITLE: Complaints &amp; Whistleblowing Procedures</b>	<b>REFERENCE NO: CO-002</b>
<b>AUTHOR: Philip Mortell, Chairman Board of Management</b>	<b>REVISION NO: 00</b>
<b>APPROVED BY: Helen Culhane Project Leader</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE FROM: 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2016</b>
<b>REVIEW DATE: 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2018</b>	<b>Page 1 of 4</b>

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SIGNATURE: 

DATE: 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2016

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## COMPLAINTS

A complaint is defined as raising a concern about issues or breaches of codes of behavior. A complaint does not include allegations or suspicions of child abuse. Allegations of this nature must always be dealt with in accordance with reporting procedures as specified in the Children’s Grief Project *Safeguarding Handbook* [Appendix 1, pp. 30-34].

## WHISTLE BLOWING

Whistle blowing in general is the term used when someone who works for or in an organisation (in a paid or voluntary capacity) wishes to raise concerns about malpractice in that organisation.

Making the decision to do this can be difficult and stressful, but it is particularly important to report concerns where the welfare of children may be at stake. Fear of being wrong or not being believed can make any of us reluctant to come forward, so it is important to remember that you are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation or complaint. However, you will need to demonstrate that there are sufficient grounds for your concern.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness.

## UNTRUE/UNFOUNDED ALLEGATIONS

If you make an allegation/complaint in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

Don't think, 'What if I'm wrong?' – think, 'What if I'm right?'

## HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN

You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can – the earlier a concern is expressed, the easier and sooner action can be taken.

Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why. Depending on the nature of your concern, you may choose one of the following courses of action:

- **Use the dedicated email address for complaints:** [complaints@childrengriefproject.ie](mailto:complaints@childrengriefproject.ie)
- **Or write to:** Fr Seamus Enright CSsR at the Project address: Westbourne, Ashbourne Avenue, South Circular Road, Limerick.

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Concerns should be raised in writing and should include the following:

- the background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates);
- the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation.

#### **HOW THE PROJECT WILL RESPOND**

Fr Seamus Enright will respond to your concerns in accordance with the following provisions of this Procedure. (Do not forget that testing out your concerns is not the same as either accepting or rejecting them).

Where appropriate, the matter raised may:

- be dealt with by a sub-committee of the Board of Management, whose membership will be determined depending on the nature of the complaint or concern.
- be referred to the An Garda Siochana;
- form the subject of an independent inquiry.

In order to protect individuals and those accused of misdeeds or possible malpractice, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. The overriding principle which the Project will have in mind is the public interest. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example, child protection, vulnerable adults, and discrimination or harassment issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.

Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required this will be taken before any investigation is conducted. Within ten working days of a concern being raised, the Project will write to you:

- acknowledging that the concern has been received;
- indicating how the Project proposes to deal with the matter;
- giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response;
- telling you whether any initial enquiries have been made;
- supplying you with information on support available from the Project; and
- telling you whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not.

The amount of contact between the people considering the issues and you will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, the Project will seek further information from you. Where any meeting is arranged, off-site if you so wish, you can be accompanied by a work colleague.

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The Project will take steps to minimise any difficulties which you may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if you are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the Project will arrange for you to receive advice about the procedure.

The Project accepts that you need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, we will inform you of the outcome of any investigation, but you will understand that some information may need to be kept confidential.

#### **FURTHER ADVICE AND SUPPORT**

It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from the Project Leader or any member of the Board of Management.

***"Absolutely without fail, challenge poor practice or performance. If you ignore or collude with poor practice, it makes it harder to sound the alarm when things go wrong."***