



Whistleblower Guidelines: Safeguarding Children

All Clergy, Employees, Volunteers, contractors and Religious Appointees in the Archdiocese must bring safeguarding matters of concern to the attention of their Parish Priest or Agency Head. You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong, but you may not feel comfortable in expressing your concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues or you may fear being victimised or harassed due to the subject of your concerns. However, your hesitation must never result in a Child continuing to be unnecessarily at risk of harm. **Be assured, your concerns will be dealt with in confidence and you will not be harassed or victimised for bringing this information to our attention.** Under the *Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)*, workers are protected against retribution on account of assisting the Office of the Children's Guardian and for making a report in good faith.

Do not think "what if I am wrong?" - Think "what if I am right!"

Reasons for whistle-blowing

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour
- To protect or reduce the risks to others
- To prevent the problem from worsening
- To prevent yourself from being implicated and to meet any personal legislative requirements

What stops people from whistle-blowing

- Fear of getting it wrong or not being believed
- Fear of repercussions and disruption to work
- Fear of starting a chain of events that could get out of control

How to raise a concern

- Approach your Parish Priest or Agency Head
- If you are not comfortable talking to your Parish Priest or Agency Head, contact the Vicar General or the Director of the Safeguarding Office
- Refer to **Protocol: Managing Safeguarding Complaints** for a comprehensive outline of the complaints process

What happens next?

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries resulting from your concern
- The Archdiocese has a responsibility to protect you from any harassment or victimisation
- No action will be taken against you if your concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith
- Malicious allegations may be considered a disciplinary offence