

COMPLAINTS AND WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

For all members of the Society of African Missions [SMA], their co-workers, employees and volunteers, and for all adults and young people with whom they work.

INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding children and young adults requires staff working with them to be committed to the highest possible standards of openness, integrity and transparency. Staff and volunteers must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and / or relevant agencies.

1 AIMS AND SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This policy aims to:

- encourage the raising of serious concerns
- provide avenues for the raising of these concerns
- ensure that there is adequate and appropriate feedback
- re-assure complainants that they will be protected from all possible reprisals when the disclosure is made in good faith.

2 WHISTLE BLOWING

Whistle blowing is the term used to describe a complaint made by anyone about any form of malpractice in an organisation, or a concern about health and safety.

Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns at once in order to prevent the problem worsening or widening, and to reduce the risk to others.

3 SAFEGUARDS

The SMA will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation of those raising concerns, and will take appropriate action to protect those raising genuine concerns.

All concerns will be treated in confidence, and every effort will be made not to reveal the identity of the whistleblower, if he or she so wishes. However, a whistleblower may be required to come forward, at a later date, as a witness. Concerns expressed anonymously will be considered and addressed. But extra caution will be exercised in dealing with such complaints at the discretion of the SMA, and initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate.

If an allegation is made in good faith, but is not later confirmed to be true, no action will be taken against the complainant. If, however, the complaint is found to be frivolous, malicious or for personal gain, legal action may be taken against the complainant, following consultation with our solicitors

4 HOW TO RAISE CONCERNS

The concern should be raised as soon as possible, and addressed to our immediate group leader, or the SMA Designated Person.

If the concern is related to either of the latter, you should approach the local SMA Community Leader or the SMA Provincial Leader. Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing: if verbally, a written note should be taken down with the details of the concern.

5 HOW THE SMA WILL RESPOND

Your concern will be reported to the SMA Designated Person within five working days, or sooner, if the concern raised indicates immediate risk to someone. The complaint will be thoroughly investigated internally. But it may be necessary to refer the matter to the PSNI / Garda Síochána, or to the external auditor (NSBCCCI), or it may form the subject of an independent inquiry.

Within ten working days of a concern being raised, the SMA will write to you acknowledging the fact that your concern has been received, and that the matter is being dealt with. Subsequent to legal constraints, you will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

The SMA may seek further information from you about the concern. Where any meeting is arranged, you can be accompanied by a union representative or a work colleague. If you are required to give evidence in a subsequent criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the SMA will arrange for you to receive professional advice.

Signed _____

Print your name here:

Date: _____