



## Protected Disclosures Policy (Whistleblowing Policy)

Whistleblowing is a term used to describe the action of someone who reveals/discloses wrongdoing within an organisation to the public or to those in positions of authority. All church personnel within the Carmelite Order must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of their manager/prior/bishop. The purpose of this policy is to support those who have concerns for the welfare and safety of children or vulnerable adults to express their concerns without the fear that they will be victimised or harassed for doing so.

Church personnel can report their concerns to the parish priest, local prior, the Prior Provincial, bishop, manager or the DLP. Although this can be difficult to do, it is particularly important where the welfare of children or vulnerable adults may be at risk.

They may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express their concerns, due to loyalty to colleagues or fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or vulnerable adult continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember, it is often the most vulnerable children or vulnerable adults who are targeted. These individuals need an advocate to safeguard their welfare.

### Reasons for whistle-blowing:

- Each individual has a responsibility to raise concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour.
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening.
- To protect or reduce risks to others.
- To prevent themselves from becoming implicated.

### What stops people from whistle-blowing?

- Fear of starting a chain of events that spirals out of control.
- Disrupting the work or project.
- Fear of getting it wrong.
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers.
- Fear of not being believed.

## **Legal Basis**

In the Republic of Ireland, the relevant legislation is the Protected Disclosures Act 2014, a guide to which can be accessed electronically at

[www.raiseaconcern.com/legislation/raiseaconcern-easy-guide-to-pdpla#accept](http://www.raiseaconcern.com/legislation/raiseaconcern-easy-guide-to-pdpla#accept)

This legislation provides legal safeguards to employees of church bodies, as well as to agency workers in certain circumstances; to contractors and consultants contracted by the church body; and to trainees, temporary workers and those on work experience with the church body to report illegal practices or other specified wrongdoings such as abuse. **It does not apply to volunteers.** The safeguards apply where the disclosure is made in good faith and on reasonable grounds and related to any conduct or action which raises a significant danger to public health or safety.

The Carmelite Order is committed to ensuring that any person who raises a concern for the safety or welfare of a person will not be victimised, harassed or in any way disadvantaged, provided that the person has reasonable grounds for the concern. Any person who is concerned about poor or inappropriate practice or behaviour in a parish or community should discuss this with their manager, the local prior or the DLP.