

Grievance Policy

Document Summary

Policy Responsibility:	The Incumbent and Wardens
Document Manager:	The PCC Secretary
Policy Applies to:	Employees of the Incumbent, Wardens, or Parochial Church Council of St James-the-Less' Iron Acton.
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Amendment History

Version	Amendment Date	Author	Amendment Summary
0.1	26/06/2025	Ben Thompson	First Draft
1.0	27/08/2025	Ben Thompson	Approved by PCC

Version control guide:

- 0.1 (1st draft version)
- 0.2 (2nd draft and so on..... 0.3. 0.4 etc)
- 1.0 (Once document has been approved)
- 1.2 (during review/approval of a lifecycle document i.e. policies)
- 2.0 (2nd approved document) and so on.

1. Introduction

The Parish Church of St James-the-Less, Iron Acton (SJIA) is committed to promoting effective working relationships and creating an environment in which employees feel able to raise work related issues with their managers (Ministers, churchwardens, or other's as appropriate) .

SJIA is committed to ensuring that any difficulties or disagreements arising in the employment of staff or in their terms and conditions of employment are solved speedily and amicably.

This policy has been developed in accordance with all legal requirements and with regard to the statutory ACAS Code of Practice for Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures (March 2015). This policy is subject to updates and amendments in line with legislation.

2. Purpose and Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all staff employed by SJIA.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and transparent framework to deal with concerns, problems or complaints raised by employees in the course of their employment.

3. Right to Representation

Employees have the right to be accompanied by an accredited Trade Union representative or colleague at any formal grievance meeting. Consideration will also be given to allowing an employee as an alternative to be accompanied by a friend, not acting in a legal capacity. This consideration will be subject to the nature and sensitivities of the grievance.

It is an employees' responsibility to arrange representation, and it should not cause unreasonable delay to the process.

4. Procedure

A summary of the grievance process is detailed in appendix A.

4.1 Informal Resolution

SJIA encourages employees to resolve any concerns, which arise in the workplace at the earliest opportunity and are encouraged to discuss their concern(s) with their line manager in the first instance. Managers will attempt to address the employee's concerns appropriately and promptly.

Where a concern has been resolved as a result of such discussions the manager should confirm their understanding in writing to the employee to ensure that there is a common understanding of the outcome.

The expectation is that where possible the informal route is exhausted before referral to a formal grievance (section 4.2). When raising a formal grievance the employee should outline the steps that they have taken to resolve the grievance informally to demonstrate that all informal options have been explored prior to raising a formal grievance.

Employees do not have the right to be accompanied at informal meetings.

4.2 Formal Process

Where the grievance raised is not capable of informal resolution the employee should raise the matter formally by writing to their Line Manager within three months of the act(s) complained of taking place or, when an informal approach has been attempted, within 28 days of the date of the last informal meeting. See appendix B for guidance on writing a formal grievance

If the grievance involves the employee's line manager, the employee may write to the next level of management as appropriate.

The employee should set out the nature of the grievance, the evidence on which it is based and the remedy sought.

On receipt of a letter setting out a grievance the Manager may determine that it is necessary to make further enquiries and/or may appoint an investigating officer to conduct an investigation into the background facts or into any allegations made by the employee prior to a formal grievance meeting taking place (section 4.2.1).

Where an investigation is not necessary, or when an investigation has been completed, the employee will be asked to attend a formal meeting (section 4.2.2) to discuss the grievance. This meeting will normally take place within 10 working days of the written acknowledgement of the grievance, or completion of an investigation.

4.2.1 Investigation

If an investigation is deemed to be necessary, the Manager will appoint an appropriate person to investigate the grievance and provide a report to the Manager.

Where the grievance relates to other employees, the individuals involved will be informed in writing of the nature of the grievance and will be given an opportunity to submit a written response.

The report will also be made available to (a) the employee raising the grievance, and (b) the other parties to the grievance.

4.2.2 Grievance Meeting

The format for a grievance meeting is set out in Appendix C

The meeting will normally be attended by the appropriate manager (who will chair) and the employee who has raised the grievance, with his/her representative/accompanying person (section 3). A note taker may also be present. The purpose of the note taker is to provide the Chair with a sufficiently clear record of the hearing to support them in making a decision. The notes will not be a verbatim record of the meeting.

Any witnesses or other individuals who the manager chairing the meeting considers have information important to the case may also be present for part of the meeting. The employee raising the grievance may request the attendance of other members of staff to support her/his case; the employee will then be responsible for inviting anybody who they wish to have in attendance, once this is agreed.

The approach at the meeting will be supportive and sympathetic with the aim of identifying the reasons for the grievance and reaching a resolution to the grievance to the satisfaction of all parties.

At this meeting the employee will have the opportunity to explain the nature of their grievance and how they think it should be resolved. The manager chairing the meeting may adjourn the meeting to obtain further information, commission a investigation, clarify particular points or allow the employee to confer with any representative (section 3).

4.2.3 Grievance Outcome

The Manager will determine the outcome of the grievance. S/he may reject the grievance, or may uphold the whole or parts of the grievance and indicate what steps have been or should be taken to resolve it.

The Manager will explain the outcome of the grievance (wherever possible this will take place at the end of the grievance meeting). This outcome will then be confirmed, in writing, within 10 working days of the meeting. If this is not possible, the employee will be kept informed in writing about the reason for the delay and when a response can be expected. The written outcome of the grievance will advise the employee of the right of appeal and how to make such an appeal.

5. Right of Appeal

If the grievance remains unresolved and the employee who brought the grievance wishes to take further action, the employee may write to the Archdeacon at the following address:

Diocese of Bristol
1500 Parkway North
Stoke Gifford
BS34 8YU

The letter of appeal should be submitted within 10 working days from receipt of the outcome letter. The employee must identify the part(s) of the grievance that remain unresolved and the remedy sought.

Appeals will be considered by a Minister or Archdeacon's designated representative, who has had no prior involvement in the case. Any appeal will be dealt with in line with SJIA's Appeals Policy and Procedure. The appeal will be the final stage of the formal grievance procedure and this decision is final.

Appendix A- Grievance Process

Informal Resolution

Employee raises concern(s)/complaint(s) with line manager
or

If the grievance involves the employee's line manager, the employee may write to the next senior level of management as appropriate.

Issue resolved

Concern(s)/complaint(s)
remain unresolved

Formal Process

Employee writes grievance letter setting out details of complaint and remedy sought

Investigation takes place if further details are needed

Grievance meeting held

Employee advised of outcome of their grievance

Issue(s) resolved

Right of appeal against outcome

Appeal decision is final

Appendix B: Guidance on Writing Formal Grievances

- Keep your comments focussed on the specific issues you wish to raise. You need to give enough detail for SJIA to be able to investigate your complaint properly - if you raise too many issues, you may hide the crucial ones.
- Keep to the facts.
- If there is one key issue, identify it as such. Try to include all issues relevant to the case at one time rather than adding on at a later date.
- Be clear and factual - it makes for a much more effective investigation if the issues are outlined in a clear and straightforward manner.
- Include your name address and contact number
- Describe what happened and provide specific details of dates, names and circumstances.
- If your complaint is about a series of incidents, try to set them out in the order in which they took place.
- If you cannot remember an exact date, but know that but happened before a certain event, just say that. For example you could say ' a few days before I went on leave on 14th February....' or 'Just before the Christmas party....'
- Set out any evidence you have to support your complaint. If you have any information to support your complaint, include it in your letter or say that you have it and can provide it if needed. For example, you may have documents showing how much you should be paid, or a statement from someone who was in the same situation as you but was treated differently.
- Explain any steps, if any, you have taken to address the issues informally.
- Outline what outcome you would like to see - but remember to be reasonable and realistic in your expectations.
- Remember to sign and date your letter.

Appendix C – Format for a formal Grievance meeting

1. Chair of panel makes introductions and sets out meeting
2. If the employee is not accompanied explain that they were offered the right to be accompanied
3. Employee explains his/her complaint/concern and what remedy/resolution they are seeking
4. The panel to seek to gain a full understanding of the case, raising any questions with the employee (and management representative/respondent) as necessary, to clarify any points in relation to the information or evidence submitted or gained via investigation if applicable.
5. If applicable and where previously agreed with the Chair, witnesses may be called.
6. If applicable, a management representative/respondent will be given an opportunity to respond to each of the points raised by the employee and make representation to the Panel.
7. Employee (and any respondent) to be provided with the opportunity to sum up their case.
8. After the case(s) have been explained and the main questioning completed, the Chair may consider whether to briefly adjourn the meeting to give all the opportunity to review what has been said and consider whether there is anything they wish to clarify or to add in closing remarks + enable the panel to review what they have heard and seek clarification on any issues before bringing the meeting to a close.
9. If the panel is unable to make a decision as further information/time is required, inform the employee as to when they can expect written notification of the decision (or if further action was deemed necessary what this would entail)
10. When closing the meeting, ensure that everyone understands what is going to happen
11. Adjournment while a decision is reached
12. Depending upon whether the panel has been able to make a decision during any adjournment, explain that the staff member will receive confirmation/notification of its decision in writing usually within 10 working days of the meeting.