

St Leonard's Church Employee Handbook

Feb 2026

Contents

This document outlines various policies and procedures relating to your employment by St Leonard's church.

1. Salary Policy
2. Annual Leave Policy
3. Pension Enrolment
4. Sickness and Absence Policy
5. Maternity and Paternity Policy
6. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Employment Policy
7. Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy
8. Grievance Policy
9. Disciplinary Policy
10. Additional Church Policies

Salary Policy

This policy explains an approach to determining salary levels for employees of St Leonard's church and the St Leonard's Church Community Centre. It attempts to create a transparent and fair framework that will recognise the different qualifications, experience and responsibilities people bring to their respective roles.

As a church we have committed to paying **at least** the "Real Living Wage". However, we recognise that in the past this has seen the erosion of year on year differentials across different jobs. A review of job descriptions was last carried out in consultation with role holders and line managers. These were approved by the PCC in Nov 2023 (P96/22). This has been undertaken to standardise the format in which these are presented. This enables a simpler comparison of roles to ensure consistency in pay awards. In creating these changes we have drawn heavily on a framework used in the Methodist church, the C of E guidelines and consulted the Diocese HR team to benchmark the figures against comparable roles in the charitable sector.

A couple of important points should be born in mind:

- It is the **post** (not the individual) for which the salary is being set.
- The person specification, described in the role profile, will detail the essential criteria required in order for the post holder to perform their duties satisfactorily
- Whatever qualifications or abilities a post holder or potential post holder may have as personal qualities, if they are not listed as an essential or desirable criteria in the person specification, then they do not count when setting a salary figure for a post.
- Should a role develop beyond the original job specification, this should be reviewed and by mutual agreement be updated and a new salary considered under the framework.

Determining salaries

To make the salary structure clear and transparent we have assigned each role points under three categories of: Qualifications, Experience & Responsibilities. The details of how these points are assigned is made explicit below and can form a basis for pay reviews with the role holder. Each category can result in 0-3 points with a total of 9 points across all categories. Using the number of points, the final salary will then be calculated as:

$$\text{Salary} = \text{RLW} + (3\% * \text{RLW} * \text{Number of Points})$$

Where RLW represents the Real Living Wage. The RLW is currently £12.60/hour (Aug 2025) So for example if a role holder were to have 1 point - Qualifications, 2 points -

Experience and 0 points - Responsibilities, their total points would be 3. As an example (using RLW as of Feb 2026 £13.45/hr and a job role of 3pts), the salary would then be worked out as:

$$\text{Salary} = 13.45 + (0.03 * 13.45 * 3) = 14.66 / \text{hour}$$

Importantly, by tying not only the base rate but also the increment for roles to the RLW, salaries and differentials will remain consistent in real terms. The RLW is updated by the 'Living wage foundation' annually and will be applied to salaries in January of each year.

The Points System

The following sections clarify areas in which increases to the basic salary are made. These criteria are stated in the role specification. A maximum of 3 points can be awarded in each of the following sections.

Section A: Qualifications (job related qualifications)

- A-level, Advanced GNVQ, level 3 NVQ, or equivalent = 1 point
- Appropriate undergraduate Diploma or Degree, level 4 NVQ or equivalent Professional qualifications = 2 points
- Appropriate postgraduate Diploma or Degree, level 5 NVQ, or equivalent Professional Qualifications = 3 points

Section B: Proven Ability (Previously referred to as Experience)

- Can demonstrate through proven ability how past experiences show understanding of the work to be undertaken = +1 point.
- Can demonstrate through proven ability how past experiences will contribute to the development of the post = +1 point.
- Can demonstrate through proven ability how past experiences will contribute to strategic thinking = +1 point.

Section C: Responsibilities

- Does the post hold Managerial and Supervision responsibilities? i.e. the postholder would be required to recruit, train and manage volunteers. If yes = +1 point.
- Does the post involve complexity i.e. the post holder would be involved in a range of tasks covering various functions some of which may be described as demanding or complex? If yes = +1 point.
- Will the post holder be responsible for making decisions? i.e. difficult or important decisions on a regular basis, where many factors must be weighed, and /or makes decisions leading to changes in procedures affecting others. If yes = +1 point.

A maximum of 9 points can be awarded.

Annual Leave Policy

This policy outlines the procedures for taking and managing annual leave for all employees of St Leonard's Church.

Annual Leave Entitlement

Your specific annual leave entitlement, including any public holidays, is detailed in your individual employment contract. It will be the equivalent of 25 days + 8 bank holidays. This corresponds to $12.69\% \times \text{your hours worked per year}$. Where annual leave entitlement results in a fraction of an hour or a partial shift, this will be rounded up to the nearest hour or half-day as detailed in your contract to facilitate easy scheduling. Leave cannot be rounded down. Entitlement is calculated based on all hours worked, including any additional hours or authorised overtime, ensuring your holiday pot grows in line with your actual work patterns.

The Leave Year

The leave year runs from 1st January to 31st December.

Requesting Leave

To request annual leave, please notify your line manager or the Church office by email with as much notice as possible. Leave is granted at the discretion of your line manager, taking into account the needs of the church and any other leave requests from colleagues.

Carrying Over Leave

Employees are encouraged to take all their annual leave within the leave year. In exceptional circumstances, with prior agreement from your line manager, you may be allowed to carry over unused leave into the next leave year. This must be taken by 31st March of the new leave year.

Public Holidays

If your usual working hours coincide with a bank holiday you will be required to take this as leave from your annual entitlement. If you are asked to work on a bank holiday your line manager will arrange time off in lieu.

Pension Enrolment

St Leonard's offers all employees the opportunity to join a company pension scheme.

Under UK law the details of enrolment in a pension depend on how much you earn. The current thresholds can be found here (<https://www.gov.uk/workplace-pensions>). However, currently (August 2025):

- if you are between 22 and the state pension age, and earn more than £10,000 pa we are obliged to automatically enrol you in the pension scheme. You may subsequently choose to opt out by contacting the pension scheme (see below). Every 3 years we are required to re-enrol you, though you can opt out again within 1 month to receive your contributions back.
- If you do not meet these criteria, you will still be offered the opportunity to join the pension scheme, but this is optional and there is no automatic enrolment.

St Leonard's pension scheme:

Scheme name: Pension Builder Classic (PB Classic)
Provider: Church Workers Pension Fund

St Leonard's makes employer contributions on behalf of all employees who join the pension scheme, irrespective of whether you were automatically enrolled and regardless of annual income according to the following rates.

Standard Contributions:

Employee Contribution: No contribution required
Employer Contribution: 9.5% + 0.5% life cover

Pension contributions will be calculated based on an employee's total gross pensionable earnings in each pay period. This includes all pay for hours worked, including any regular or ad-hoc overtime, as well as any premium rates or allowances for antisocial hours.

Important Actions for Employees:

1. **Read the Full Details:** You can find the scheme guide, including life cover details, here: <https://cepb.foleon.com/pensions/pb-classic/>
2. **Nominate Your Beneficiaries:** You **must** tell the pension scheme who you want to receive any benefits. This is done via **PensionsOnline**: <https://pensions.churchofengland.org/>

Voluntary Contributions:

You may also make voluntary contributions to the pension scheme. To make voluntary contributions, employees should communicate their wish in writing to the church finance administrator. These contributions can be cancelled in the same way.

Opting out:

Should you wish to opt out of the pension scheme within one month of your enrolment date, please contact the Church of England Pensions Board on 0207 898 1802 or visit pensions@churchofengland.org for an 'opt out notice'.

Retirement Age:

Your normal retirement age is the current state pension age.

Accessing your Pension:

To access your pension details, visit PensionsOnline at pensions.churchofengland.org

For any queries or further information regarding your pension, contact the Church of England Pensions Board, PO Box 2026, Pershore WR10 9BW

Tel: 0207 898 1802 pensions@churchofengland.org

Sickness Policy and Absence

Employees of St Leonard's are entitled to both statutory and contractual sick pay as set out below.

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

As an employee, you may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if you would usually earn more than the government's Lower Earnings Limit (£125/wk in 2025). This will be paid at the government-specified rate (currently £118.75 per week as of April 6, 2025) for up to 28 weeks. SSP is not payable for the first 3 days of sickness (known as waiting days). You can find more details at <https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay>.

If you do not meet the eligibility criteria for SSP, we will provide you with a completed SSP1 form within 7 days of your absence. This form will explain why you are not entitled to SSP and will provide information on how you can claim other benefits.

Reporting Sickness

You must inform either your line manager or the parish office if you are sick and unable to work as soon as reasonably practicable on the first day of your absence, and no later than 7 days from the start of your absence, or you may risk losing some statutory sick pay. For absences of 7 calendar days or less (including non-working days), you may 'self-certify' your illness, meaning you do not need a doctor's note for this period. For absences longer than 7 days (including non-working days), you must

provide us with a "fit-note" from a suitable health professional. If you are unable to obtain such evidence within 7 days, you must inform your line manager and explain the reasonable steps you are taking to obtain one.

St Leonard's Church offers a contractual sick pay scheme that provides an enhanced payment above the Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) rate. This contractual sick pay is paid for the first 3 weeks of any period of sickness, up to a maximum of 15 working days in any calendar year (based on Full-Time Equivalent). **For employees who work part-time hours or fewer than 52 weeks per year, this maximum annual entitlement is applied pro rata.**

This enhanced pay includes and supersedes any SSP entitlement for this period, including the three SSP waiting days. During this period, any entitlement to SSP will be paid as part of your contractual sick pay; you cannot be paid both. After this period, any continuing sickness absence will be paid at the statutory rate, provided you are eligible.

The calculation of your contractual sick pay is as follows:

- **For employees with regular contracted hours:** You will receive your full standard pay, calculated on your contracted hours (excluding overtime).
- **For employees with flexible hours:** Your sick pay will be based on your average weekly earnings over the previous 52 weeks.

Maternity and Paternity Policy

Employees of St Leonard's Church may be entitled to both statutory and contractual benefits related to maternity, paternity, and adoption leave and pay. This policy outlines these entitlements.

Statutory Entitlements

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP):

Eligible employees* are paid at 90% of their average weekly earnings for the first 6 weeks, then at £187.18 (as of April 2025) or 90% of average weekly earnings (whichever is lower) for the next 33 weeks (total of 39 weeks paid).

Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP):

Eligible employees* are paid at £187.18 (as of April 2025) or 90% of average weekly earnings (whichever is lower) for 1 or 2 weeks. Since April 2024, Statutory Paternity Leave (SPL) can be taken as two non-consecutive weeks at any point within 52 weeks of the child's birth or adoption placement.

Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP):

A couple may share up to 50 weeks of leave and up to 37 weeks of pay. ShPP is paid at a rate of £187.18 (as of April 2025) or 90% of average weekly earnings (whichever is lower). The mother must take the first two weeks of compulsory maternity leave after the birth before any shared leave can begin. The remaining leave and pay can then be shared with their partner.

For more details on these statutory benefits, please visit the government's official website: <https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave>, <https://www.gov.uk/paternity-pay-leave>, and <https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay>

Statutory Adoption Leave and Pay (SAP):

Eligible employees* can take up to 52 weeks of Statutory Adoption Leave. The first 39 weeks may be paid at a rate of 90% of your average weekly earnings for the first 6 weeks, then £187.18 (as of April 2025) or 90% of average weekly earnings (whichever is lower) for the next 33 weeks. Only one partner in a couple can claim SAP. The other partner may be entitled to Statutory Paternity Pay.

Important note: This policy also covers eligibility for parental leave for parents of adopted children. For more details on these statutory benefits, please visit the government's official website: <https://www.gov.uk/adoption-pay-leave>.

Contractual Benefits

St Leonard's Church offers enhanced contractual benefits to eligible employees, subject to the conditions outlined below.

Contractual Maternity Pay:

Eligible employees** will receive 12 weeks at full pay according to their standard contractual hours (this includes and is not in addition to their Statutory Maternity Pay). This is followed by **27 weeks** at the statutory SMP rate, providing a total of 39 weeks of paid leave.

Contractual Adoption Pay:

Eligible employees** taking the main adoption leave will receive 12 weeks at full pay according to their standard contractual hours (this includes and is not in addition to their Statutory Adoption Pay), followed by the remaining weeks at the statutory SAP rate.

Contractual Paternity Pay:

For the partner of a new mother or main adopter, eligible employees** will receive 2 weeks at full pay according to their standard contractual hours (this includes and is not in addition to their Statutory Paternity Pay).

Calculation of "Full Pay":

For employees with regular contracted hours (including those on term-time or 42-week contracts): Your 'full pay' will be based on your standard contractual weekly pay as defined in your contract, excluding overtime. **For the avoidance of doubt, the 10 non-working weeks for 42-week staff will not be used to deflate the average weekly pay calculation.**

* To qualify, you must have worked continuously for us for at least 26 weeks ending with the 15th week before the baby is due (or the week you were matched with a child for adoption), and earn above the Lower Earnings Limit for National Insurance.

**To be eligible for this enhanced contractual maternity / paternity / adoption pay, you must have completed 52 weeks of continuous service with St Leonard's Church by the 15th week before your baby is due (or the week you were matched with a child for adoption).

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Employment Policy

Our Commitment: At St Leonard's Church, we are deeply committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive working environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. We ensure fair and equal treatment for all employees, workers, volunteers, and job applicants, regardless of their background, experiences, or personal characteristics.

Who this policy covers: This policy outlines our responsibilities as an employer and applies to all employees, workers, and potential recruits. While the Equality Act 2010 primarily covers employees and workers, we extend the principles of this policy to all our valued volunteers, ensuring they too are treated with fairness and dignity. This policy covers all aspects of the employment relationship, including recruitment, training, pay, and other terms and conditions.

Protected Characteristics (Equality Act 2010):

The Equality Act 2010 prevents discrimination, harassment, and victimisation on the grounds of nine protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Maternity and Pregnancy
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or Belief
- Sex (Gender)

- Sexual Orientation

Genuine Occupational Requirement (GOR): For some specific roles within the Church, it may be considered an absolute requirement (Genuine Occupational Requirement) for the individual to be a worshipping and communicant Christian. We rigorously assess all jobs to ensure this is only applied where strictly necessary, and it will not be a requirement for roles where it is not essential.

Our Responsibilities:

- PCC: Ensures this policy remains current, reflects legislative changes, and that all staff are aware of it.
- Line Managers, Incumbent, & Church Wardens: Are responsible for implementing this policy, ensuring appropriate awareness and training, and promptly addressing any breaches.
- All Employees: Are responsible for their own conduct in line with this policy, treating everyone with respect and fairness, attending relevant training, and identifying/raising any concerns about non-application of this policy.

Disability Inclusion: We are committed to supporting individuals with disabilities. Consistent with the Equality Act 2010, if an employee has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, we will work collaboratively to put in place 'reasonable adjustments' to enable them to perform their role. Our aim is to ensure everyone can carry out their responsibilities effectively.

Raising Concerns / Complaints: If you feel you have experienced discrimination, harassment, or victimisation you should first speak to the person involved or your line manager. If this doesn't resolve the matter, please follow the formal PCC Grievance Procedure (section 7).

Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy

Our Commitment: We are committed to providing a safe, respectful, and dignified working environment for all employees, workers, and volunteers. This policy outlines our stance against all forms of harassment and bullying and complements our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy.

What is Harassment and Bullying?

- Harassment is defined by the Equality Act 2010 as any unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for them. Protected characteristics include age, disability, gender

reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, maternity and pregnancy, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

- Bullying is behaviour that is offensive, intimidating, malicious, or insulting, an abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates, denigrates, or injures the recipient. While not legally defined, if bullying relates to a protected characteristic, it may also be considered harassment.

Both harassment and bullying can be:

- A single incident or persistent behaviour.
- Direct (face-to-face) or indirect (e.g., through written communication, email, telephone, social media, or third parties).
- By an individual or a group.
- Obvious or subtle.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include: unwanted physical contact, unwelcome sexual advances, offensive comments or jokes, spreading malicious rumours, ignoring or shunning someone, shouting, ridiculing, excessive supervision, or abusing power.

Raising Concerns: If you experience or witness harassment or bullying, we encourage you to address it promptly.

1. Informal Steps (Recommended First Step):

- If you witness what you perceive to be harassment or bullying, approach the victim first to prioritise their well-being. Confirm your understanding with them and, **where appropriate**, seek their consent before taking further informal action. **Please note that in cases involving serious misconduct or safeguarding concerns, the Church may have a duty to investigate regardless of whether a formal complaint is made.**
- If you feel comfortable and safe, consider approaching the individual who you believe to be harassing or bullying either yourself or someone else directly (verbally or in writing) to explain how their behaviour is affecting you and ask them to stop.
- You can speak to your line manager or a trusted colleague for support in approaching the individual.

2. Formal Complaint:

- If the informal approach is unsuccessful, or the behaviour is too serious to address informally, you should make a formal complaint.

- Please refer to the PCC Grievance Policy (section 8). If your complaint is against the Incumbent, raise it with a Churchwarden; if there's a conflict of interest, contact the Area Dean.
- You must be prepared to raise the complaint yourself. While you can have a supporter, they cannot make the complaint on your behalf.

Resolution & Confidentiality: Our aim is to find a fair resolution. Depending on the seriousness, formal action (e.g., disciplinary action for employees, removal from role for volunteers) may be taken against the perpetrator. Other resolutions may include facilitated conversations, mediation, or managerial interventions.

We understand that raising concerns can be difficult. All complaints will be handled with the highest levels of confidentiality. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis for resolution, and you will be advised in advance. Please note that if a complaint is made confidentially without identifying yourself, action may not be possible.

Important Context:

- **Reasonable Management:** Legitimate instructions, performance discussions, and reasonable disciplinary actions are not considered harassment or bullying.
- **Critical Feedback:** Constructive and respectfully given critical feedback on performance or behaviour is a legitimate part of the working relationship. Such feedback should be specific, accurate, and aimed at improvement, not undermining.
- **False Accusations:** Deliberately unfounded or malicious complaints will be investigated and may result in formal action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Grievance Policy

Purpose and Scope: We are committed to providing a positive and constructive environment where all employees can thrive. We recognise that concerns may arise regarding your employment, treatment, or working conditions. This policy outlines a fair, timely, and objective process for employees and workers of the PCC to address such concerns. *This policy applies to **employees and workers of the PCC only**. Volunteers should refer to the Church Complaints Policy for raising concerns.*

What You Can Raise a Grievance About: You can raise a grievance about matters concerning:

- Your terms and conditions of employment.
- Environmental or organisational working conditions.
- Working relationships.

This procedure will also be used to investigate complaints related to our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy or the Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy.

Our Commitment to Fairness and Respect: We understand that raising a grievance can be a stressful experience. Throughout the process, everyone involved is expected to treat each other with dignity and respect. We will handle your concerns confidentially, only sharing information as necessary for resolution, and we will inform you in advance if this is required.

Informal Resolution (Recommended First Step): We encourage you to try resolving concerns informally in the first instance. Often, a direct conversation with your line manager can resolve issues quickly and constructively.

Formal Grievance Procedure: If an informal resolution is not possible, or if the matter is too serious, you can raise a formal grievance.

1. **Stage 1: Raising Your Grievance:** You should raise your grievance as soon as possible, and normally no later than 3 months after the incident (or the last in a series of incidents) occurred. You should submit your concerns in writing, ideally to your line manager, you may alternatively raise the issue with an “alternate”, the Incumbent, or a Churchwarden. We will aim to hold a grievance meeting with you within 10 working days of receiving your written grievance.
2. **Outcome:** Your line manager or “alternate” will meet with you to discuss the matter and may conduct an investigation before providing a written outcome. You will normally receive a written response within 10 working days of the meeting.

- 3. Appeal:** If you are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, you have the right to appeal the decision within 5 working days, providing your reasons in writing. An appeal meeting will be held by a different person, not connected to either your grievance or the judgement given in stage 1. This may be the incumbent a Churchwarden or if there's a conflict of interest the Area Dean. We will aim to hold the appeal meeting within 10 days or as soon as practicable thereafter. Their decision will be final.

Mediation For grievances involving interpersonal conflict, mediation can often lead to a successful resolution. If both parties agree, an independent, skilled mediator can facilitate a conversation to help find a mutually acceptable solution.

Your Right to Representation: You have a statutory right to be accompanied at formal grievance hearings and appeals by a workplace colleague or Trade Union Representative. Recognizing our small team, this right is extended to include other members of the church congregation who can support you, provided there is no conflict of interest.

Meeting Records: A formal record of all meetings under this procedure will be made. Digital recording is generally not permitted, except in exceptional circumstances (e.g., as a reasonable adjustment for a disability), with prior arrangement.

Disciplinary Policy

Purpose and Scope: We expect all employees to meet certain standards of conduct and performance. While we aim to address minor concerns informally, this formal Disciplinary Policy outlines the process we follow for more serious matters or when informal approaches are unsuccessful.

Status of Policy: This policy serves as a guide to our procedures and is not intended to form part of your formal contract of employment. This allows the PCC to update the policy as employment laws change, ensuring our processes always remain fair and up to date. However, St Leonard's Church is committed to following the principles of the ACAS Code of Practice in all disciplinary matters.

This policy applies to **employees** of St Leonard's Church only. It does not apply to contractors, consultants, self-employed individuals, volunteers, or members of the clergy.

Our Commitment to Fairness and Respect: Being involved in a disciplinary process can be stressful. We commit to ensuring that all proceedings are conducted fairly, respectfully, and confidentially, involving only those necessary. We will also make

reasonable adjustments for employees with disabilities to ensure their full and fair participation.

Grievances During a Disciplinary Process: If you have a grievance related to the disciplinary allegations, you may raise it at any time, and we will determine the most appropriate way to address both matters. If your grievance is unrelated, it will be investigated separately, and the disciplinary process may be temporarily suspended if deemed appropriate.

Suspension: In very serious cases, such as potential gross misconduct or where there's a risk of evidence tampering or witness interference, you may be temporarily suspended on full pay while an investigation takes place. Suspension is a neutral act and does not imply guilt. Any suspension will be for the shortest possible time and regularly reviewed.

Your Rights

- **Right to Representation:** You have a statutory right to be accompanied at disciplinary hearings and appeals by a workplace colleague or a Trade Union Representative. Recognizing our small organization, this right is extended to include another member of the church congregation who can offer support, provided there is no conflict of interest.
- **Meeting Records:** A formal record of all meetings held under this procedure will be made. Digital recording is generally not permitted unless a reasonable adjustment for a disability has been agreed upon.

The Disciplinary Process Overview

1. **Investigation:** If a concern about your conduct arises, we will typically conduct a thorough investigation to gather all relevant facts. The investigator will inform you of the allegations and may meet with you to gather information.
2. **Disciplinary Hearing:** If the investigation indicates that a disciplinary hearing is necessary, you will be invited to a formal hearing. You will receive notice of the allegations, relevant evidence, and the investigation report in advance. This hearing provides you with an opportunity to present your case and respond to the allegations.
3. **Decision:** Following the hearing, a decision will be made on whether the allegations are upheld and what, if any, disciplinary sanction will be applied. Possible sanctions include:
 - **First Written Warning:** For minor cases of misconduct, usually valid for 12 months.
 - **Final Written Warning:** For more serious misconduct, or if a previous warning is active. This sanction may also be used for Gross Misconduct cases where there are strong mitigating circumstances. This will remain active for 24 months.

- **Dismissal:** For very serious cases of Gross Misconduct (subject to the consideration of any mitigating circumstances) or where further misconduct occurs while a Final Written Warning is active.
4. **Appeal:** If you are not satisfied with a disciplinary decision, you have the right to appeal. Your appeal must be submitted in writing within 5 working days, stating your grounds for appeal. We will aim to hold the appeal meeting within 10 working days, or as soon as practicable thereafter. Your appeal will be heard by a Churchwarden, Incumbent or Area Dean unconnected with the original decision, and their decision will be final.

Misconduct refers to less serious breaches of our standards, such as persistent poor timekeeping, failing to follow reasonable instructions, or minor disruptive behaviour. These issues are typically handled through the staged warning process.

Gross Misconduct refers to conduct so serious that it fundamentally breaches the relationship of trust between the employee and the Church. This may lead to immediate dismissal without notice. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Theft or fraud.
- Physical violence or bullying.
- Serious harassment or discrimination.
- Deliberate damage to property.
- Serious breaches of safety rules or safeguarding policies.
- Any conduct that severely damages the Church's reputation.

Consideration of Mitigating Circumstances: Before reaching a decision of dismissal, the person or panel hearing the disciplinary case will consider any mitigating circumstances. This ensures that the Church acts as a fair and reasonable employer. These may include:

- The employee's previous disciplinary and service record.
- Evidence of provocation or extreme personal stress.
- Whether the action was a genuine, one-off error of judgement.
- Evidence of genuine remorse or immediate self-reporting.

Additional Church Policies

In addition to the policies detailed within this Employee Handbook, St Leonard's Church maintains a range of other important policies, procedures, and guidelines that govern specific aspects of our operations and your role. You should familiarise yourself with any policies relevant to your duties.

Additional policies include:

- Children and Adult's Safeguarding Policy
- Governance Policy
- Finance Policy
- Health and Safety Risk Assessments

The latest versions of these policies are available at
<https://stleonardswollaton.org.uk/notice-sheets/>.

The Children and Adult's safeguarding policy is to be found here:
<https://stleonardswollaton.org.uk/safeguarding/>