

GROVE Neurodivergent Mentoring & Education LTD

Whistleblowing: Guidelines for Raising Serious Concerns

Whistleblowing:

'Whistleblowing' is a term used to refer to the internal or external disclosure of malpractice as well as illegal acts, or omissions, at work.

This Policy:

- Is designed to provide a means of you raising serious concerns.
- Applies to everyone who works for and volunteers with GROVE: employees, volunteers, agency workers, interns, and contractors irrespective of the fact that contractors or volunteers are not afforded the same legal protection that is afforded to employees.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 amended the Employment Rights Act 1996 and it provides protection for individuals who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters, outlined below.

These are called qualifying disclosures defined as one made in good faith by an individual who has a reasonable belief that:

- a criminal offence (including fraudulent and corrupt behaviour, eg theft, fraud or malpractice);
- a miscarriage of justice;
- an act creating risk to health and safety;
- an act causing damage to the environment;
- a breach of any other legal obligation, or;
- concealment of any of the above.

You do not need proof – instead a reasonable belief of such an action having been, being or likely to be carried out.

If you make such a protected disclosure, you have the right not to be dismissed, subjected to any other detriment, or victimised even if you are genuinely mistaken.

Raising a Concern

This policy is only to be used in **exceptional circumstances** whereby the other GROVE policies (such as Child Protection & Safeguarding, Concerns & Complaints amongst others) are not sufficient. Please raise a concern as soon as you can. This can be done orally but it is preferable in writing. Please explain:

- Context / background that is relevant.
- Why you feel the situation is of concern.
- That you are following the Whistleblowing policy.
- Where or not you wish your identity to be kept confidential (depending on the circumstances this may not be possible).

Who should I raise it with?

Your concern should be raised with Jess Garner GROVE's CEO.

What happens after I raise a concern?

- You will receive acknowledgement within 3 working days.
- There will be an investigation by the CEO (unless the concern is related to the CEO in which case an appropriate other will be designated this role). Our HR support organisation will provide support and you will be given further information about next steps at that stage. Please be assured that this will include feedback.

Disclosing to the Press or on Social Media

This will not be considered reasonable and may constitute misconduct.

Further Support & Raising a Concern Externally

Where staff feel unable to raise a genuine and serious CP&S issue with GROVE or feel that their genuine concerns are not being addressed the following options are available:

- NSPCC whistleblowing advice line: Staff can call 0800028 0285 – 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: help@nspcc.org.uk or staff can write to: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH.
- Designated Officer in the Local Authority
- HM Revenue & Customs
- ICO
- The Police

Additional advice and guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>

Malicious Disclosures

Action will be taken against any contractor, worker or employee who makes allegations in bad faith and/or publicly discloses information when it is unreasonable for them to do so.