WHISTLE BLOWER POLICY

1. PURPOSE & APPLICATION

1.1. Enviro Trees are committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity and we expect all staff to maintain high standards.

1.2. Any suspected wrongdoing should be reported as soon as possible.

1.3. Under certain circumstances, employees have legal protection if they make disclosures about organisations for whom they work. These employees are commonly referred to as 'whistle blowers' and their activities have often received wide publicity in the media.

1.4. An employee who believed, for example, that organisations were disposing of toxic waste illegally may have 'blown the whistle' directly to the press or television, perhaps because of concern for the environment, a belief that the organisation would attempt a 'cover up' if asked to stop, or for financial gain.

1.5. Employees, who blew the whistle on organisations, were often treated detrimentally by them or their engagements were terminated. This discouraged employees from whistle blowing even where such action would be for the good of the public.

1.6. The legislation is designed to protect employees from suffering any detriment or termination of engagement for whistle blowing.

1.7. An important aspect of accountability and transparency is a mechanism to enable staff and other members of the Company to voice concerns in a responsible and effective manner.

1.8. It is a fundamental term of every contract of employment that an employee will faithfully serve his or her employer and not disclose confidential information about the employer's affairs.

1.9. Nevertheless, where an individual discovers information which they believe shows serious malpractice or wrongdoing within the organisation then this information should be disclosed internally without fear of reprisal, and there should be arrangements to enable this to be done independently of Management (although in relatively minor instances the Manager would be the appropriate person to be told).

1.10. The Public Interest Disclosure Act, which came into effect in 1999, gives legal protection to employees against being dismissed or penalised by their employers as a result of publicly disclosing certain serious concerns.

1.11. The Company has endorsed the provisions set out below so as to ensure that no members of staff should feel at a disadvantage in raising legitimate concerns.

1.12. It should be emphasised that this policy is intended to assist individuals who believe they have discovered malpractice or impropriety. It is not designed to question financial, or business decisions taken by the Company, nor should it be used to reconsider any matters which have already been addressed under harassment, complaint, disciplinary or other procedures. Once the "whistleblowing" procedures are in place, it is reasonable to expect staff to use them rather than air their complaints outside the Company.

2. QUALIFYING DISCLOSURES

2.1. Certain disclosures are prescribed by law as 'qualifying disclosures'. Disclosures are qualifying disclosures where it can be shown that the company commits a 'relevant failure' by: -

2.1.1. committing a criminal offence.

2.1.2. failing to comply with a legal obligation.

2.1.3. a miscarriage of justice.

2.1.4. endangering the health and safety of an individual.

2.1.5. environmental damage.

2.1.6. concealing any information relating to the above.

2.2. These acts can be in the past, present, or future, so that, for example, a disclosure qualifies if it relates to environmental damage that has happened, is happening, or is likely to happen.

2.3. This policy is designed to enable employees of the Company to raise concerns internally and at a high level and to disclose information which the individual believes shows malpractice or impropriety.

2.4. This policy is intended to cover concerns, which are in the public interest and may at least initially be investigated separately but might then lead to the invocation of other procedures e.g., disciplinary.

3. HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN

3.1. We hope that in many cases you will be able to report any concerns with your Manager.

3.2. However, where you prefer not to raise it with your Manager for any reason, you should contact:

3.2.1. Peter Dubiez, CEO

3.3. Alternatively, if you do not wish to report your concerns to any of the above parties, you may take them direct to the appropriate organisation or body

4. SAFEGUARDS

4.1. This policy is designed to offer protection to those employees of the Company who disclose such concerns provided the disclosure is made:

4.1.1. in good faith

4.1.2. in the reasonable belief of the individual making the disclosure that it tends to show malpractice or impropriety and if they make the disclosure to an appropriate person (see below).

4.2. It is important to note that no protection from internal disciplinary procedures is offered to those who choose not to use the procedure. In an extreme case malicious or wild allegations could give rise to legal action on the part of the persons complained about.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY

5.1. The Company will treat all such disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner.

5.2. The identity of the individual making the allegation may be kept confidential so long as it does not hinder or frustrate any investigation.

5.3. However, the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and the individual making the disclosure may need to provide a statement as part of the evidence required.

6. ANONYMOUS ALLEGATIONS

6.1. This policy encourages individuals to put their name to any disclosures they make.

6.2. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less credible, but they may be considered at the discretion of the Company.

6.3. In exercising this discretion, the factors to be considered will include:

6.3.1. The seriousness of the issues raised.

6.3.2. The credibility of the concern

6.3.3. The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources

7. UNTRUE ALLEGATIONS

7.1. If an individual makes an allegation in good faith, which is not confirmed by subsequent investigation, no action will be taken against that individual.

7.2. In making a disclosure, the individual should exercise due care to ensure the accuracy of the information.

7.3. If, however, an individual makes malicious or vexatious allegations, and particularly if he or she persists with making them, disciplinary action may be taken against that individual.

8. PROCEDURE IN MAKING A DISCLOSURE

8.1. On receipt of a complaint of malpractice, the member of staff who receives and takes note of the complaint, must pass this information as soon as is possible, to the appropriate designated investigating officer as follows:

8.1.1. Complaints of malpractice will be investigated by the appropriate Director unless the complaint is against the Director or is in any way related to the actions of the Director. In such cases, the complaint should be passed to a member of the Board for referral.

8.1.2. In the case of a complaint, which is any way connected with but not against the Director, a member of the Board will nominate a Senior Manager to function as the alternative investigating officer.

8.1.3. Complaints against a member of the Board should be passed to the Chairman who will nominate an appropriate investigating officer.

8.1.4. The complainant has the right to bypass the Line Management structure and take their complaint direct to the Chairman. The Chairman has the right to refer the complaint back to management if he/she feels that the management without any conflict of interest can more appropriately investigate the complaint.

8.2. If there is evidence of criminal activity, then the investigating officer should inform the police. The Company will ensure that any internal investigation does not hinder a formal police investigation.

9. TIMESCALES

9.1. Due to the varied nature of these sorts of complaints, which may involve internal investigators and/or the police, it is not possible to lay down precise timescales for such investigations.

9.2. The investigating officer should ensure that the investigations are undertaken as quickly as possible without affecting the quality and depth of those investigations.

9.3. The investigating officer, should as soon as possible, send a written acknowledgement of the concern to the complainant and thereafter report back to them in writing the outcome of the investigation and on the action that is proposed.

9.4. If the investigation is a prolonged one, the investigating officer should keep the complainant informed, in writing, as to the progress of the investigation and as to when it is likely to be concluded.

9.5. All responses to the complainant should be in writing and sent to their home address.

10. INVESTIGATING PROCEDURE

10.1. The investigating officer should follow these steps:

10.1.1. Full details and clarifications of the complaint should be obtained.

10.1.2. The investigating officer should inform the member of staff against whom the complaint is made as soon as is possible.

10.1.3. The member of staff will be informed of their right to be accompanied by a trade union or other representative at any future interview or hearing held under the provision of these procedures.

10.1.4. The investigating officer should consider the involvement of the Company auditors and the Police at this stage and should consult with the Chairman or a member of the Board.

10.1.5. The allegations should be fully investigated by the investigating officer with the assistance, where appropriate, of other individuals / bodies.

10.1.6. A judgement concerning the complaint and validity of the complaint will be made by the investigating officer. This judgement will be detailed in a written report containing the findings of the investigations and reasons for the judgement. The report will be passed to a member of the Board or Chairman as appropriate.

10.1.7. The member of the Board / Chairman will decide what action to take.

10.1.8. If the complaint is shown to be justified, then they will invoke the disciplinary or other appropriate Company procedures.

10.1.9. The complainant should be kept informed of the progress of the investigations and, if appropriate, of the final outcome.

10.1.10. If appropriate, a copy of the outcomes will be passed to the Company Auditors to enable a review of the procedures.

10.2. If the complainant is not satisfied that their concern is being properly dealt with by the investigating officer, they have the right to raise it in confidence with a member of the Board / Chairman, or one of the designated persons described above.

10.3. If the investigation finds the allegations unsubstantiated and all internal procedures have been exhausted, but the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, the Company recognises the lawful rights of employees and ex-employees to make disclosures to prescribed persons (such as the Health and Safety Executive, the Audit Commission, or the utility regulators), or, where justified, elsewhere.

11. GENERAL NOTES

11.1. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 prevents you from suffering detriment or having your contract terminated for 'whistle blowing' and we take very seriously any concerns which you may raise under this legislation.

11.2. We encourage you to use the procedure if you are concerned about any wrongdoing at work.

11.3. However, if the procedure has not been invoked in good faith (e.g., for malicious reasons or in pursuit of a personal grudge), then it will make you liable to immediate termination of engagement or such lesser disciplinary sanction as may be appropriate in the circumstances.

Peter Dubiez - CEO

22nd April 2025