Archie Homes

Whistleblowing Policy

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Policy checklist	
Policy owner	Archie Homes
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Archie Homes will provide this policy, on request at no cost, in large print, in Braille, in audio or other non-written format, and in a variety of languages.

1.0 Introduction

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 came into force in July 1999. It is applicable in England, Scotland and Wales and gives statutory protection against victimisation and dismissal to employees and workers who voice their concerns about wrongdoings in the workplace.

This statutory protection relates to "qualifying disclosures" of information by a worker concerning specified types of wrongdoing or malpractice:

- A criminal offence
- A failure to comply with a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- A danger to the health and safety of an individual
- Any damage to the environment
- A bribe or act of corruption
- Any attempt to conceal information about any of the above.

A "qualifying disclosure" is a disclosure of information that the employee reasonably believes tends to show that one or more of the above is occurring, has occurred or is likely to occur.

This policy is designed to assure any employee of Archie Homes who has a genuine concern about a malpractice or wrongdoing at work that, providing they make their disclosure in good faith, they need not fear dismissal or any other form of victimisation, recrimination or disadvantage.

2.0 Procedure

This organisation is committed to the highest standards of conduct, honesty and accountability. Accordingly, malpractice and wrongdoing in the workplace will not be tolerated and any such bona fide claims will be treated seriously.

To enable us to maintain this commitment, any employee who has a genuine belief that there is evidence of malpractice, a danger to the health and safety of anyone associated with this undertaking, or wrongdoing in the organisation, is assured that they may raise genuine concerns without fear of dismissal or any other form of victimisation, recrimination or disadvantage.

This policy is applicable to all our employees.

Any concern raised will be treated in confidence and if you so wish we will endeavour to protect, so far as it is possible, your identity. You are encouraged to raise such a concern through our internal procedures rather than externally. This will ensure that the matter is dealt with speedily and at a level appropriate to the nature and seriousness of the allegation.

All allegations of malpractice and wrongdoing, together with the responses to them, will be properly recorded and the employee who raised the concern will be informed as to the outcome of any investigation.

Where your allegation has been discredited, no action will be taken against you providing the allegation was made in good faith. Any allegations you make maliciously or for personal gain may result in disciplinary action being taken against you.

This procedure for raising a "whistleblowing" concern internally is separate from our Grievance Procedure, which exists to allow an employee to raise an internal query, grievance, complaint or problem which specifically relates to them as an individual, or to them as a group of colleagues.

A disclosure may be made verbally or in writing and should include as much factual information relating to the concern as possible, e.g. background information, relevant dates and a statement of who is believed to be involved.

3.0 Internal procedure for making a disclosure

You should normally first raise your concern with your Director, stating clearly, verbally or in writing, that you are lodging an official disclosure under the Company's Whistleblowing Procedure.

That any such disclosure has been made must immediately be communicated to the Directors.

You will be written to, acknowledging receipt of your concern and giving the Directors' decision as to whether or not the matter will proceed any further.

Your concern will only be actioned if it is concluded that the grounds for raising your concerns are reasonable and your disclosure is made in good faith.

Assuming that it is concluded that the disclosure is made in good faith, and there are sufficient grounds or apprehensions for the matter to be taken further, a Director will immediately appoint an individual to be responsible for investigating the disclosure. The Director will then decide on the appropriate course of action to be followed.

Assuming that further investigations are undertaken, you will be given an indication of the date by which the Company expects to conclude its investigation.

You will then be advised of the findings, subject to any legal constraints. You will not be advised of the detail of any disciplinary steps that the Company sees fit to invoke against any employee as a result of its findings, as such matters are necessarily confidential.

Any employee lodging a disclosure under this procedure may be accompanied at any associated investigative meetings by a colleague of their choosing, subject to it being accepted by all parties that the components of any internal investigative meeting must be regarded and treated as being strictly confidential.

Exceptionally, you may wish to raise the matter externally. If you choose to make a disclosure to a "prescribed person", e.g. the Health & Safety Executive or the police, you should ensure that you:

- Make the disclosure in good faith;
- Reasonably believe that your concern falls within the description of the issues which the "prescribed person" is authorised to investigate; and
- Believe that the information disclosed, and any allegation contained within it, are substantially true.

4.0 External organisations

Archie Homes recognises that there may be matters which cannot be dealt with satisfactorily on an internal basis only and that external authorities may need to become involved.

5.0 Work-related social events

5.1 Introduction

As a token of its appreciation for the work that employees do for the Company, and to foster team spirit and good working relationships, the Company may offer employees the opportunity to attend social events from time to time. The Company may also run work-related social events to which clients, as well as staff, are invited.

5.2 General principles

Although such social events usually take place away from the workplace and outside of normal working hours, the Company's standard code of conduct applies to such events.

While the Directors do not wish to put a dampener on employees' enjoyment of social events, it is in everyone's interests to impose certain rules of conduct for the protection and comfort of all.

Specifically, employees who attend work-related social events must adhere to the following rules and principles:

- Employees should consume alcohol only in moderation at work-related social events, irrespective of whether the Company provides or pays for the drinks;
- It is strictly forbidden for any employee to use illegal drugs, including cannabis, at any work-related social event, whether on Company premises or not;

- The Company's policy on harassment/bullying applies to work-related social events;
- Employees should not say or do anything at a work-related social event that could offend, intimidate, embarrass or upset any other person, whether as a joke or not;
- Swearing and intemperate language are unacceptable at work-related social events; and
- Employees must not behave in any way at any work-related social event that could bring the Company's name into ill repute.

5.3 Breaches

Any breach of the above rules will render the employee liable to disciplinary action under the Company's disciplinary procedure, up to and including summary dismissal.

The above rules are in place for the benefit of all members of staff and to ensure that everyone can enjoy work-related social events in an atmosphere of conviviality without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable by another employee's conduct.