

Green Room Place (GRP) Whistleblowing Policy

Updated & Approved by Company Directors and Qualified Pastoral Staff on January 27th, 2025.

1. Purpose and Scope

Green Room Place, Ltd. (GRP) is committed to creating a safe and transparent environment for all staff, students, volunteers, and contractors. This Whistleblowing Policy outlines the procedures for reporting serious concerns regarding misconduct, illegal activity, unethical behaviour, or threats to the wellbeing and safety of individuals within GRP. This policy is intended to encourage individuals to come forward with their concerns without fear of retaliation.

2. What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing occurs when an individual reports a concern about wrongdoing or a breach of law, regulation, or ethical standards within the organisation. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Criminal activity (e.g., fraud, theft, or abuse)
- Safeguarding issues (e.g., neglect, physical, or emotional abuse)
- Bullying or harassment
- Breach of health and safety regulations
- Corruption, bribery, or conflicts of interest
- Discrimination or unfair treatment
- Environmental damage or breaches of environmental law
- Misuse of funds or resources

Whistleblowing is not about making a complaint about personal grievances (which should be handled through the Grievance Policy) but about reporting serious issues that could affect the wider community or the public interest.

3. Who Can Blow the Whistle?

This policy applies to:

- All staff (full-time, part-time, casual, and contractors)
- Volunteers and mentors
- Students (in specific cases, e.g., safeguarding concerns)
- Parents and guardians (in cases involving students)
- Visitors or any third parties involved with GRP

4. Reporting a Concern

If you have a concern that falls under the category of whistleblowing, you should report it as soon as possible to the appropriate individual:

- **Primary Contact:** Your direct manager.
- **Secondary Contact:** The **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** or **Nominated Child Protection Officer (NCPO)**.
- **Alternative Contact:** The **Company Director** or **Safeguarding Team**.

If you are unsure who to report to, please contact any senior staff member for guidance.

You can report your concern:

- Verbally (in person or via telephone)
- In writing (email, letter, or using the internal reporting form)

If you wish to remain anonymous, you may report your concerns without disclosing your identity. However, please note that this may limit the ability to investigate the concern fully.

5. How We Handle Whistleblowing Concerns

Once a concern is raised, the following steps will be taken:

- The concern will be acknowledged within **5 working days**.
- An investigation will be initiated to establish the facts. This may involve speaking with the person raising the concern, witnesses, and other relevant individuals.
- The individual raising the concern will be kept informed of the progress, unless the investigation could be jeopardised by sharing information.
- GRP will make every effort to resolve the concern and take appropriate action, which may include disciplinary measures or reporting the issue to external authorities, such as the police, safeguarding agencies, or regulatory bodies.

6. Protection for Whistleblowers

GRP is committed to protecting individuals who report concerns in good faith:

- **Confidentiality:** Your identity will be kept confidential where possible. However, there may be circumstances where confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, such as when disclosure is required by law.
- **Protection from Retaliation:** Whistleblowers will not face retaliation, discrimination, or victimisation for raising a concern. This includes protection against dismissal, harassment, or any form of unfair treatment.
- **Legal Protections:** Employees and volunteers who blow the whistle in good faith are protected by the **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA)**. This legislation ensures

that whistleblowers are protected from dismissal or detriment as a result of reporting their concerns.

7. Malicious or False Allegations

While GRP encourages individuals to speak up about legitimate concerns, we will not tolerate malicious or false allegations. Anyone who makes a malicious or knowingly false accusation may face disciplinary action. However, individuals will still be protected if they report concerns in good faith, even if the outcome of the investigation is not as they expected.

8. Support for Whistleblowers

We understand that blowing the whistle can be difficult, and we will provide support to individuals throughout the process. The following support options are available:

- Independent advice from external organisations such as **Public Concern at Work** (now known as Protect).
- Guidance on handling any concerns regarding confidentiality or fear of retaliation.

9. How to Contact External Authorities

If you feel that your concern has not been addressed properly by GRP, or if you are uncomfortable with reporting internally, you can raise your concern with external authorities:

- **Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)** or **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**
- **The Health and Safety Executive (HSE)**
- **The Police** (in case of criminal activities)
- **The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)** (for data protection concerns)

10. Review of Policy

This Whistleblowing Policy will be reviewed annually by the GRP Management Team to ensure its effectiveness. If any changes are made, staff and other stakeholders will be informed accordingly.