

**ADITYA BIRLA FINANCE LIMITED**

<b>POLICY TITLE</b>	<b>Aditya Birla Finance Limited - Whistle Blower Policy</b>
Policy Owner	Head - HR
Issued to	All Employees

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## 1. Preamble

The Aditya Birla Group Values of Integrity, Commitment, Passion, Seamlessness, and Speed are the foundation for all our actions and for the decisions we take. They set standards for the organization and for employee conduct. Being a part of Aditya Birla Group as well as Aditya Birla Capital Group, Aditya Birla Finance Limited is fully committed towards implementing the above-mentioned values.

This policy lists down broadly the identifiable and non-negotiable set of actions/behaviour applicable to all employees across Aditya Birla Finance Limited (ABFL). It provides direction and explains how to report violations/ potential violations of the values and/or the ABCL Code of Conduct and the process of grievance redressal.

All employees of ABFL must practice honesty and integrity in their respective functions and comply with all applicable policies, procedures, laws and regulations in letter and spirit.

### **Purpose of this Policy**

- a. To encourage the employees, directors, or any party to report unethical behaviours, malpractices, wrongful conduct, fraud, violation of the company's policies & values, violation of law by any employee of ABFL without any fear of retaliation. Any employee or party who in good faith reports such behaviours, malpractices will be called as Whistle Blower.
- b. To build and strengthen a culture of transparency and trust within the organization.
- c. The policy provides an environment that promotes responsible behaviour and protects whistle blowing. It reminds Employees and Directors about their duty to report any suspected violation of any law that applies to the ABFL and any suspected violation of the Group Values or the ABCL Code of Conduct.

- d. Above all, it is a dynamic source of information about what may be going wrong at various levels within ABFL, which will help ABFL in realigning various processes and to take corrective actions as part of good governance practice.

## **2. Objective**

This policy seeks the support of employees, directors and any party affiliated with ABFL to be whistle blowers by reporting significant deviations from key management policies and report any non-compliance and wrong practices, e.g., unethical behaviour, fraud, violation of law, etc.

## **3. Applicability**

This policy applies to all employees of ABFL (including outsourced, temporary and on contract personnel) as well as any party who is / was affiliated with the company\*, (hereinafter referred to as 'Whistle Blower').

This policy supersedes any other local & company level whistle blower policy that exists. This policy shall be applicable to all offices of ABFL, all sub-units if any, and places where business is conducted/transacted/discussed, which includes but is not limited to offices, branches, hotels, guest houses and conference halls.

## **4. Who is a whistle blower?**

Any Employee, Director or any party who is affiliated to ABFL business who discloses or demonstrates evidence of an unethical activity or any conduct that may constitute breach of the Group's/Group Company's Code of Conduct or the Group Values. This whistleblower has come to the decision to make a disclosure or express a genuine concern/grievance/allegation, after a lot of thought.

## **5. Protection**

The process is designed to offer protection to the whistleblower (employees and directors) provided that the disclosure made/concern raised/allegations made("complaint") by a whistleblower is in good faith and the alleged action or non-action, constitutes a genuine and serious breach of what is laid down in the Group Values and/ or the ABCL Code of Conduct.

ABFL affirms that it will not allow any whistleblower to be victimized for making any complaint. Any kind of victimization of the whistleblower brought to the notice of the relevant Value Standards Committee will be treated as an act warranting disciplinary action and will be treated so.

At ABFL, we condemn any kind of discrimination, harassment, victimization, or any other unfair employment practice adopted against whistle-blowers. Complete protection will be given to whistleblowers against any unfair practices like retaliation, threat or intimidation, termination/suspension of service, disciplinary action, transfer, demotion, refusal of promotion, or the like, including any direct or indirect use of authority to obstruct the whistle-blower's right to continue to perform his/her duties/functions in a free and fair manner.

## **6. Reporting in good faith**

Every Whistle Blower is expected to read and understand this policy and abide by it. It is recommended that any individual who wishes to report, do so after gathering adequate facts/data to substantiate the complaint and not complain merely based on hearsay or rumour. This also means that no action should be taken against the whistleblower, if the complaint was made in good faith, but no misconduct was confirmed on subsequent investigation.

If an investigation reveals a complaint was made with ill intent or ulterior motive, the Value Standards Committee may suggest initiating appropriate action against the whistleblower.

## **7. Scope of Reporting**

This policy encourages all Whistle Blowers to report any kind of misuse of company's properties, or mismanagement or wrongful conduct prevailing/executed in the company, which the whistleblower in good faith, believes, evidence any of the following:

1. Violation of any law or regulations, or policies including but not limited to corruption, bribery, theft, fraud, coercion, and wilful omission.
2. Procurement frauds.

3. Misappropriation of company funds/assets.
4. Manipulation of company data/records.
5. Misappropriating cash/company assets; leaking confidential or proprietary information.
6. Unofficial use of company's property/human assets.
7. Activities violating company policies. (Including ABCL code of conduct)
8. A substantial and specific danger to public health and safety.
9. An abuse of authority or fraud
10. An act of discrimination or sexual harassment \*.
11. Any such act, which the whistleblower believes and has evidence of, that is in violation to ABCL Code of Conduct / ABG Values.
12. Any actual or suspected leak of **Unpublished Price Sensitive Information** [UPSI] of the Company by any Promoter, Director, Key Managerial Person, Insider, employee, other Designated Person, support staff or any other known or un-know person.

The above list is illustrative and should not be considered as exhaustive.

#### **8. List of exclusions**

1. Matters which are Trivial or frivolous in nature.
2. Matters pertaining to Sexual Harassment as they are covered under the specific law and policy constituted for the said purpose.
3. Matters which are pending before a Court of Law, State or National Human Rights Commission or any other Commission, Tribunal or any other judiciary or sub judiciary body.
4. Any matter, after the expiry of one year from the date on which the act constituting violation of human rights is alleged to have been committed.
5. Allegation, which is not against the interests of ABFL/employees as stated above.
6. Issue raised relates to civil dispute, such property rights, contractual obligations, etc.

6. Issue raised, relating to service matters, i.e., matters relating to employment such as salary, promotion, etc.

\*In case of sexual harassment, the Policy for Prevention of Sexual Harassment [POSH] of ABFL shall be applicable and the complaint shall be closed as per the process described therein.

## 9. Dealing with anonymity

A whistleblower may choose to keep his/her identity anonymous. In such cases, the complaint should be accompanied with strong evidence and data. In such absence of appropriate strong evidence/ data, Value Standard Committee (VSC) will have the option to take appropriate decision whether to take action or not take any action and accordingly will communicate to the concerned Anonymous Whistleblower to provide details to take it forward. Whatever decision the WB committee takes needs to be properly documented which are not subject to be shared with anyone outside the WB committee and the Board.

## 10. Confidentiality

The WB Committee will treat all complaints in a confidential and sensitive manner. In specific cases where the criticality and necessity of disclosing the identity of the whistleblower is important, it may be disclosed, on a 'need-to-know-basis', during the investigation process and only with the prior approval of the whistleblower.

## 11. Procedure for raising a complaint

A whistleblower can make a complaint in multiple ways:

1. Can login to Ethics Hotline website i.e., [www.integritymatters.in](http://www.integritymatters.in) to lodge a complaint OR can write an email Ethics Hotline i.e., [abgethicshelpline@integritymatters.in](mailto:abgethicshelpline@integritymatters.in), OR Call Ethics Hotline phone number 1800-102-6969 or write to C/o Integrity Matters, Unit 1211, CENTRUM, C-3, S.G. Barve Road, Wagle Estate, Thane West, Maharashtra-400604.
2. Can login to our Company website and lodge a complaint under Whistleblower Policy section.
3. Can write to the VSC email id which are indicated in the table below. The email contact and address details are available as mentioned below
4. Can write to the Head HR, Business Head or Company Secretary of the Company.

5. Any anonymous complaint by a whistleblower pertaining to any nature received at any employee in the organization, would be first required to be forwarded to HR head of respective Unit, and then the same may be placed in VSC to arrive at final nature of complaint to be taken forward accordingly.

In ABFL there are 3 tier committees which have been created to facilitate registration of the Whistle Blower complaint, which are –

If Breach of Code of Conduct or Values is at:	Report Complaint via E-mail to:	Report Complaint in writing to:
<b>ABCL Chief Executive or above level</b>	<a href="mailto:GroupValueStandards@adityabirla.com">GroupValueStandards@adityabirla.com</a>	Aditya Birla Group Aditya Birla Management Corporation Pvt. Ltd  Aditya Birla Centre, 'C' Wing, 3rd Floor, S.K. Ahire Marg, Worli, Mumbai 400 030 India.
<b>Unit CEO level or SMT member level</b>	<b>*Business level Whistle Blower /Grievance Redressal Committee (BGRC)</b>  <a href="mailto:finserv.BVSC@adityabirlacapital.com">finserv.BVSC@adityabirlacapital.com</a>	Aditya Birla Capital Limited Group One World Centre, Tower-1, 18th floor,  Jupiter Mills Compound,  841, S.B. Marg, Prabhadevi, Mumbai 400 013.
<b>Any level below the Unit CEO level</b>	<b>**Unit level Whistle Blower/Grievance Redressal Committee (UGRC).</b> <a href="mailto:ABFL.UVSC@adityabirlacapital.com">ABFL.UVSC@adityabirlacapital.com</a>	Unit level Whistle Blower Committee (UWBC). Aditya Birla Finance Limited  One World Centre, Tower-1, 18th floor, Jupiter Mills Compound, 841, S.B. Marg, Prabhadevi, Mumbai 400 01

\*In cases where complaint is against any member of the Business Level Whistle Blower/Grievance Redressal Committee same should be reported to the Group Value Committee (GVC). Up on receiving a complaint against any of the members of VSC or if the member falls in the purview of conflict of interest



in any such complaint received, then the said member would be recused from the investigation Committee till the concerned investigation gets over.

\*\*In case where complaint is against any member of the Unit Committee the same should be reported to the Business level Value Standard Committee. Up on receiving a complaint against any of the members of WB Committee or if the member falls in the purview of conflict of interest in any such complaint received, then the said member would be recused from the investigation Committee till the concerned investigation gets over

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If the complainant so desires, he/she may alternatively report the incident to his / her functional head or manager who will then report it (in writing or via E-mail-Refer Annexure 1 for Format) to the relevant Committee.

Because the employee has several means of reporting, the employee does not need to report to someone he / she believes may be involved in the suspected violation or from whom the employee would fear retaliation.

## **12. Procedure for handling a complaint:**

1. A whistle blower identifies non-adherence of the ABCL Code of Conduct or Aditya Birla Group's Code of Conduct by any employee or a segment of the organization, will compile information that supports the case.
2. The whistle blower sends the complaint to the independent reporting mechanism - Ethics Hotline or to the Value Standard Committee, depending on:
  - The level at which the violation is perceived to be happening, or
  - The seniority of the individual/s involved

If the breach or misdemeanour is at:

- The Unit Head level (Chief Executive Officer, Unit Head etc) and above, the employee will write to the Group level Value Standards Committee (GVSC)
- Unit Function Head level, the same will be reported to the ABCL Value Standards Committee (BWBC)

- Any other level, the same will be reported to the ABFL Value Standards Committee (UWBC)
3. A whistle blower can also send the complaint to the Business Head, Unit Head, Head HR & Admin, CHRO or Company Secretary.
  4. All complaints which are sent directly to the various reporting authorities will necessarily be also reported to the Ethics Hotline. The Ethics hotline will capture all relevant information and send it to Values Standard Committee within 2-3 working days.
  5. Upon receipt of information, the secretary of the Values Standard Committee will first do a preliminary investigation to check whether the complaint seems to be genuine and falls under the purview of the whistle blower policy. If the complaint is sent with malicious intent, then the committee will take appropriate disciplinary action against the whistle blower.
  6. If the complaint does not fall under the purview of whistle blower policy, then the same would be redirected to the right forum. For e.g. – If complaint is related to sexual harassment, same will be forwarded to the Internal Committee and would be dealt as per the process prescribed under the Policy and statute to Prevent Sexual Harassment at the Workplace. If a complaint is related to a personal grievance, e.g., appraisal rating, promotion etc., it will be forwarded to the Head HR of the Unit.
  7. Once established that the case needs investigation, the secretary of the Value Standards Committee, in consultation with the committee, shall appoint a team to investigate the case, with utmost confidentiality. The investigative team can be a pool of internal people or can be an external agency specialized in investigating such cases.
  8. Under no circumstances, will the secretary, investigation team and the committee reveal / disclose the identity of the “accused” to anyone else (including the immediate manager) – other than all those who are required to know about the case.
  9. The investigation team should work towards ensuring that the investigation is completed by following the laws of the land and principles of natural justice within 3 weeks of the complaint being reported. The mentioned timelines are indicative and will depend upon the facts and circumstance in each case such as, the number of witnesses to be examined by the parties, cooperation extended by the parties and their witnesses and other relevant factors. However, best efforts would be made to close the enquiry within indicative timelines.

### **13. Actions by Committee**

If charges are substantiated, or the complaint is found correct on investigation, suitable action will be suggested to the Management. The following punitive actions but not limited to legal action could be taken against employees, where the committee finds him/ her guilty:

- a) Counselling & a Warning letter
- b) Withholding of promotion / increments
- c) Bar from participating in bonus review cycle
- d) Termination
- e) Legal suit

The above are only suggestive and the Committee may decide on the actions to be taken on a case-to-case basis depending on the gravity of the offence.

**Note:**

If wrongful conduct remains largely unsubstantiated; the committee has the right to close the complaint.

If the case is found to be false and ill intent and the whistle blower / complainant has indulged in this knowingly, he/she would be held guilty of misconduct and appropriate action shall be taken. However, the Committee shall distinguish between mistaken reporting and ill intent of the complainant.

The decision of Whistle Blower Committee will be binding on the parties involved / parties found guilty of the reported misconduct.

**14. Reporting process**

Considering the confidentiality of Whistleblower complaint, any details of Annual and Quarterly reporting will be prepared by the Value Standards Committee and the brief summary of cases will be placed before the Board of the relevant Group Company and also shared with the Organization Effectiveness portfolio at Group Human Resources.

**Annexure 1:  
Template for Reporting Violation**

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**To: Redressal Committee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Violation details:**

- a. Which aspects of the whistle blower policy have been violated?
  
- b. Who is /are the individual/ people/ functions involved?

**Critical Incidents and Factual Data:**

- a. Please describe what constitutes the violation i.e., incident details.
  
- b. List supporting information/ data that you would have, that the Committee can seek from you while investigating.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the Person reporting (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information (including email optional): \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:**

Reporting done by individuals disclosing their names will be attended to first. Anonymous complaints are discouraged and would be considered only in extreme cases.

### Annexure 2: Contact Details

Company Name	Email ID
ABG Group	<a href="mailto:group.vsc@adityabirla.com">group.vsc@adityabirla.com</a>
Aditya Birla Capital Ltd (Group)	<a href="mailto:finserv.BVSC@adityabirlacapital.com">finserv.BVSC@adityabirlacapital.com</a>
Aditya Birla Finance Limited	<a href="mailto:ABFL.UVSC@adityabirlacapital.com">ABFL.UVSC@adityabirlacapital.com</a>

### Annexure 3: Postal Addresses for Reporting Complaint in Writing

Business Unit	Report complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the relevant committee and post it to the appropriate address mentioned below
Aditya Birla Capital Ltd	One World Centre, Tower-1, 18 <sup>th</sup> floor, Jupiter Mills Compound, 841, S.B. Marg, Elphinstone Road, Mumbai 400 013
Aditya Birla Finance Limited	OneWorld Centre, Tower-1, 18 <sup>th</sup> floor, Jupiter Mills Compound, 841, S.B. Marg, Elphinstone Road, Mumbai 400 013

### Annexure 4: FAQ

#### Questions that one may have on this Policy

##### a. Is it my duty to Report?

Everyone is required to report to the Company any suspected violation of any law that applies to the Company and any suspected violation of the Company's Code of Conduct and Values. It is important that you report all suspected violations.

It is the policy of the Company that you must, when you reasonably suspect that a violation of an applicable law or the Company's Code of Conduct and Values has occurred or is occurring, report that potential violation.

Reporting is crucial for early detection, proper investigation and remediation, and deterrence of violations of Company policies or applicable laws. You should not fear any negative consequences for reporting reasonably suspected violations because retaliation for reporting suspected violations is strictly prohibited by Company policy. Failure to report

any reasonable belief that a violation has occurred or is occurring is itself a violation of this Policy and such failure will be addressed with appropriate disciplinary action, including possible termination of employment.

**b. Will my identity be kept confidential if I report?**

For the purpose of providing protection to the whistle blower/complainant, he/she should try and disclose his/her identity to committee. The committee will ensure that it keeps your identity confidential to the extent possible.

The best way to keep your identity confidential is to follow the approach listed in this policy. All reports under this Policy will be promptly and appropriately investigated, and all information disclosed during the course of the investigation will remain confidential, except as necessary to conduct the investigation and take any remedial action, in accordance with applicable law.

**c. Can I report without revealing my identity?**

Revealing your identity while filing your report is encouraged since it enables the committee to reach out to the whistleblower and gather more information should the need arise. It also enables the committee to seek additional support from the whistleblower if need be. This helps in investigating a violation thoroughly, accurately and enables the committee to take action immediately.

However, you have the option to report anonymously. In such cases, please ensure that you submit enough data, details and evidence which clearly substantiate the violation that has occurred. Any instance / rumor of violation of code of conduct or policy, etc. that is not accompanied by concrete evidence will not be considered.

**d. Will I be victimized if I report?**

To protect the whistleblower/complainant, ABFL has a strict policy against retaliation or victimization. No one may take any adverse action against any employee for complaining about, reporting, or participating or assisting in the investigation of, a reasonably suspected violation of any law, this Policy, or the Company's Code of Conduct

and Ethics.

The Company takes reports of such retaliation/victimization seriously. Incidents of retaliation/

victimization against any employee reporting a violation or participating in the investigation of a reasonably suspected violation will result in **appropriate disciplinary action against anyone responsible, including possible termination of employment.**

Those working for or with the Company who engage in retaliation/victimization against whistle blowers /Complainants may also be **subject to civil, criminal, and administrative penalties.**

**e. What all should I cover in my report?**

Your report should include as much information about the suspected violation as you can provide. Where possible, it should describe the nature of the suspected violation; the identities of persons involved in the suspected violation; a description of documents that relate to the suspected violation; and the time frame during which the suspected violation occurred.

**f. Will I be contacted by the committee after I complain?**

Where you have not reported anonymously, you may be contacted by the committee members for further information.