

Whistleblower Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Whistleblower Policy is to encourage board members, volunteers, employees, contractors, and stakeholders of the Gentle Journey Foundation to report suspected illegal, unethical, or improper conduct without fear of retaliation. The Foundation is committed to operating with honesty, integrity, accountability, and transparency in all activities and financial matters.

This policy is intended to protect individuals who report concerns in good faith and to ensure that the Foundation addresses any issues appropriately and responsibly.

2. Reportable Activities

This policy applies to any suspected misconduct or improper activity including, but not limited to:

- Fraud or theft
- Misuse of Foundation funds or assets
- Financial mismanagement
- Conflicts of interest not disclosed
- Unauthorized use of Foundation property or equipment
- Violation of Foundation policies
- Violation of laws or regulations
- Harassment, discrimination, or unethical behavior
- Falsification of records or reports
- Improper related party transactions
- Any activity that could harm the Foundation's reputation or mission

Any individual who reasonably believes that misconduct has occurred is encouraged to report the concern.

3. Reporting Procedure

Concerns may be reported to:

- The Board Chair
- The Executive Director or President
- A Board Member
- The Treasurer (for financial concerns)

Reports may be made:

- In writing
- By email
- In person
- Anonymously if necessary

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The report should include as much detail as possible, including:

- Description of the concern
- Dates and locations (if applicable)
- Individuals involved
- Any supporting documentation or information

4. Investigation of Reports

All reports of suspected misconduct will be taken seriously and reviewed promptly. The Board of Directors or a designated committee will investigate the concern and determine appropriate action.

Investigations will be conducted confidentially to the extent possible and appropriate. If misconduct is confirmed, the Foundation may take appropriate corrective action, which may include disciplinary action, policy changes, financial corrections, or reporting to authorities if required.

5. Protection Against Retaliation

The Gentle Journey Foundation strictly prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports a concern in good faith.

Retaliation includes:

- Termination
- Harassment
- Threats
- Demotion
- Reduction in responsibilities
- Discrimination
- Intimidation

Any adverse treatment related to reporting a concern

Any individual who retaliates against a whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action, including removal from the Board or termination of involvement with the Foundation.

6. Confidentiality

Reports of suspected misconduct will be handled confidentially to the extent possible while still allowing for proper investigation and resolution.

Individuals reporting concerns should avoid discussing the matter with others unless instructed by the Board or investigators.

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7. False Reports

This policy is intended to protect individuals who report concerns in good faith. Knowingly making false accusations or intentionally misleading an investigation may result in disciplinary action.

8. Policy Review

This Whistleblower Policy will be reviewed periodically by the Board of Directors to ensure compliance with nonprofit governance standards and best practices.

9. Approval

This Whistleblower Policy was adopted by the Board of Directors of the Gentle Journey Foundation in 2024.