

ASHOK MASALA MART LIMITED

VIGIL MECHANISM/WHISTLE BLOWER POLICY

W.e.f. : 18th August, 2017

1. PREFACE

As per applicable provisions of section 177 of the Companies Act 2013 requires every listed company, Companies which accept deposits from the public and companies which have borrowed money from banks and public financial institutions in excess of fifty crore rupees to establish shall establish a whistle Blower policy/Vigil Mechanism for the directors and employees to report genuine concerns or grievances about unethical behavior, actual or suspected fraud or violation of the company's code of conduct for Directors and employees which lays down the principles and standards that one should govern the actions of the Company and its employees. Such a vigil mechanism shall provide for adequate safeguards against victimization of directors and employee who avail of such mechanism and also make provisions for the direct access to the chairperson of Audit Committee in exceptional cases.

Under these circumstances, Ashok Masala Mart Limited being a unlisted Company has established a Whistle Blower Policy/Vigil Mechanism and formulated a Policy in order to provide a framework for responsible and secure vigil mechanism/whistle blowing as under:

2. POLICY OBJECTIVES:

The Company is committed to adhere to the highest standard of ethical, moral and legal conduct of business operations. A Vigil (Whistle Blower) mechanism provides a channel to the employees and Director to report to the management concern about unethical behavior, actual or suspected fraud or violation of the codes of conduct or also provides for adequate safeguards against victimization of employees & Directors by giving them direct access to the Chairman of the Audit Committee in exceptional cases.

3. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

The policy covers malpractices and events which have taken place/suspected to have taken place misuse or abuse of authority, fraud or suspected fraud, violation of Company rules, manipulations, negligence causing danger to public health and safety, misappropriation of monies, and other matters or activity on account of which the interest of the Company is affected and formally reported by whistle blowers concerning its employees.

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4. DEFINITIONS

- a) “Alleged wrongful conduct” shall mean violation of law, Infringement of Company’s rules, misappropriation of monies, actual or suspected fraud, substantial and specific danger to public health safety or abuse of authority.
- b) “Audit Committee” means a committee constituted by the Board of Directors of Company.
- c) “Board” means the Board of directors of the Company.
- d) “Company” means Ashok Masala Mart Limited.
- e) “Code” means Code of Conduct for Directors and Senior Management Executives adopted by Ashok Masala Mart Limited.
- f) “Disciplinary action” means any action that can be taken on the completion of/during the investigation proceedings including but not limiting to a warning, imposition of fine, suspension from official duties or any such action as is deemed to be fit considering the gravity of the matter.
- g) “Employee” means all the present employees and Whole-time Directors of the Company.
- h) “Nodal Officer” means Company Secretary or Compliance officer of the Company to receive protected disclosures from whistle blowers, maintaining records thereof, placing the same before the Audit Committee for its disposal and informing the whistle blower the result thereof.
- i) “Protected Disclosure” means a concern raised by an employee or group of employees of the company, through a written communication and made in good faith which discloses or demonstrates information about an unethical or improper activity with respect to the Company. It should be factual and not speculative or in nature of interpretation / conclusion and should contain as much specific information as possible to allow for proper assessment of the nature and extent of the concern.
- j) “Subject” means a person group of persons against or in relation to whom a Protected Disclosure has been made or evidence gathered during the course of investigation.
- k) “Whistle Blower” means an Employee or group of employees who make a Protected Disclosure under this Policy and also referred in this policy as complainant.

5. ELIGIBILITY:

All Employees of the Company are eligible to make protected Disclosure under this policy and also relation to matter concerning the Company.

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6. COVERAGE OF POLICY:

The policy encourages all the Whistle Blowers to voice all their genuine concerns which shall include but not limited to the following:

- a. Abuse of authority;
- b. Breach of trust;
- c. Breach of confidentiality;
- d. Any unlawful act, whether criminal (e.g. theft) or a breach of the civil law (e.g. slander or libel);
- e. Manipulation of Company data/records;
- f. Breach of any Policy or Manual or Code adopted by the Company;
- g. Financial irregularities, including fraud, or suspected fraud;
- h. Deliberate violation of law/regulation;
- i. Misappropriation of Company assets/funds; and
- j. Any other unethical or improper conduct.

7. RECEIPT AND DISPOSAL OF PROTECTED DISCLOSURES:

1. All Protected disclosure should be reported to the Chairman of the Audit Committee in writing by complainant as soon as possible after the Whistle blower becomes aware of the same as to ensure a clear understanding of the issues raised and should either be typed or written in a legible handwriting in English, Hindi or in regional language.
2. The Protected Disclosure should be submitted in a closed and secured envelop and should be super scribed as “Protected Disclosure under the vigil Mechanism Policy”. If the complaint is not super scribed and close as mentioned above, it will not be possible for the Committee to protect the complainant and the protected disclosure will be dealt with as a normal disclosure. In order to protect the identity of the complainant, the nodal officer will not issue any acknowledgement to the complainant and they are advised neither to write their name/address on the envelope nor to enter into any further correspondence with the nodal officer / audit committee. The audit committee assures that in case any further clarification is required he will get touch with the complainant.
3. Anonymous / Pseudonymous disclosure shall not be entertained by the Nodal Officer.
4. The Protected Disclosure should be forwarded under a covering letter signed by the complainant. The Nodal Officer / Managing Director / Chairman of Audit Committee shall detach the covering letter bearing the identity of the whistle blower and process only the Protected Disclosure.
5. All Protected Disclosures should be addressed to the Company Secretary or Compliance Officer of the Company.

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6. Protected Disclosure against the Nodal Officer should be addressed to the Managing Director of the Company and the Protected Disclosure against the Managing Director of the Company should be addressed to the Chairman of the Audit Committee.

7. On receipt of the protected disclosure the Nodal Officer//Managing Director/ Chairman of the committee, as the case may be, shall make a record of protected disclosure and also ascertain from the complainant whether he was the person who made the protected disclosure or not before referring the matter to the Audit Committee for further appropriate investigation and needful action.

8. The Audit Committee if deems fit may call for further information or particulars from the complainant.

8. INVESTIGATION:

1. All Protected Disclosures under this policy will be recorded and thoroughly investigated. The Committee may investigate and may at its discretion consider involving any other officer of the Company and/or an outside agency for the purpose of investigation.

2. The decision to conduct an investigation taken by the Audit Committee by itself is not an accusation and is to be treated as a neutral fact finding process.

3. Subject(s) will normally be informed in writing of the allegation at the outset of the formal investigation and have opportunities for providing their inputs during investigation.

4. Subject(s) shall have a duty to co-operate with the committee or any of the officers appointed by it in this regard to the extent that such cooperation will not compromise self incrimination protections available under the applicable laws.

5. Subject(s) have a responsibility not to interfere with the investigation. Evidence shall not be withheld, destroyed or tampered with and witness shall not be influenced, coached, threatened or intimidated by the subject(s).

6. Unless there are compelling reasons not to do so, subject(s) will be given the opportunity to respond to material findings contained in the investigation report. No allegation of wrong doing against a subject(s) shall be considered as maintainable unless there is good evidence in support of allegation.

7. Subject(s) have a right to be informed of the outcome of the investigations.

8. The investigation shall be completed normally within 90days of the receipt of the protected disclosure and is extendable by such period as the Committee deems fit.

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9. DECISION AND REPORTING

a) Audit Committee along with its recommendations will report its findings to the Managing Director of the Company through the Nodal Officer within 15 days of receipt of report for further action as deemed fit. In case prima facie case exists against the subject, then the Managing Director of the Company shall forward the said report with its recommendation to the concerned disciplinary authority for further appropriate action in this regard or shall close the matter, for which he shall record the reasons. Copy of above decision shall be addressed to the Audit Committee, the Nodal Officer, the complainant and the subject.

b) In case the subject is a Nodal Officer of the Company, the protected disclosure shall be addressed to the Managing Director of the Company who, after examining the protected disclosure shall forward the matter to the audit committee. The audit committee after providing an opportunity to the subject to explain his position and after completion of investigation shall submit a report along with its recommendation to the Managing Director of the Company. After considering the report and recommendation as aforesaid, Managing Director shall forward the said report with its recommendation to the concerned disciplinary authority for further appropriate action in this regard or shall close the matter, for which he shall record the reasons. Copy of the above decision shall be addressed to the Audit Committee, the Nodal Officer, the complainant and the subject.

c) In case the Subject is the Managing Director of the Company, the Chairman of the Audit Committee after examining the Protected Disclosure shall forward the protected disclosure to other members of the Audit Committee if deemed fit. The Audit Committee shall appropriately and expeditiously investigate the Protected Disclosure.

d) If the report of investigation is not to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complainant has a right to report the event to the appropriate legal or investigating agency.

e) A complainant who makes false allegations of unethical & improper practices or about wrongful conduct of the of the subject to the Nodal Officer or the Committee shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the rules, procedures and policies of the Company.

10. PROTECTION:

a) No unfair treatment will be meted out to a Whistle Blower by virtue of his/her having reported a Protected Disclosure under this policy. The Company, as a policy, condemns any kind of discrimination, harassment, victimization or any other unfair employment practice like retaliation, threat or intimidation of 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 duties/functions including making further Protected disclosure under this policy. The Company will take steps to

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minimize the difficulties, which the Whistle Blower may experience as a result of making the Protected Disclosure.

b) A Whistle blower may report any violation of the above clause to the Chairman of the Audit Committee, who shall investigate into the same and recommend suitable action to the management.

c) The identity of the Whistle Blower shall be kept confidential.

d) Any other employee assisting in the said investigation or furnishing evidence shall also be protected to the same extent as the Whistle Blower.

11. SECRECY/CONFIDENTIALITY

The Complainant, Nodal Officer, Members of Audit Committee, the Subject and everybody involved in the process shall:

a. Maintain the confidentiality of all matters under this policy.

b. Discuss only to the extent or with those persons as required under this policy for completing the process of investigations.

c. Not keep the papers unattended anywhere at any time.

d. Keep the electronic mails/files under password.

12. ACCESS TO CHAIRMAN OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Whistle Blower shall have a right to access Chairman of the Audit Committee directly in exceptional cases and the Chairman of the Audit Committee is authorized to prescribe suitable directions in this regard.

13. COMMUNICATION

A Whistle Blower policy cannot be effective unless it is properly communicated to by employees. Employees shall be informed through publishing in notice board and the website of the Company.

14. RETENTION OF DOCUMENTS

All Protected disclosure in writing or documented along with the results of Investigation relating thereto, shall be retained by the Company for a period of 5 (five) years or such other period as specified by any other law in force ,whichever is more.

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15. ADMINISTRATION AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY

The Managing Director of the Company shall be responsible for the administration, interpretation, application and review of this policy. The Managing Director of the Company also shall be empowered to bring about necessary changes to this Policy, if required at any stage with the concurrence of the Audit Committee.

16. AMENDMENT

The Company may modify this Policy unilaterally at any time without notice. Modification may be necessary, among other reasons, to maintain compliance with local, state, central and federal regulations and/or accommodate organizational changes within the Company.

17. DISCLOSURE IN ANNUAL REPORT:

The details of establishment of Vigil Mechanism/Whistle Blower Policy shall be disclosed by the Company in its Annual Report in the Board's Report.

18. ANNUAL AFFIRMATION:

The Company shall annually affirm that it has not denied access by any Directors or employee to the Audit Committee and that it has provided protection to whistle blower from adverse personnel action.

The affirmation shall form part of Corporate Governance report as attached to the Annual Report of the Company.