

VIGIL MECHANISM / WHISTLE BLOWER POLICY

BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosures Requirements) Regulations, 2015 (“LODR”) and as per applicable provisions of section 177 of the Companies Act, 2013, and SEBI (Prohibition of Insider Trading) Regulations, 2015, every listed company shall establish a Whistle Blower policy / Vigil Mechanism for the directors and employees to report genuine concerns or grievances about unethical behaviour, actual or suspected fraud or violation of the company’s Code of Conduct or Ethics Policy. The Company has adopted a Code of Conduct for Directors and Senior Management Executives (“the Code”), which lays down the principles and standards that should govern the actions of the Company and its employees. Any actual or potential violation of the Code, howsoever insignificant or perceived as such, would be a matter of serious concern for the Company. Such a vigil mechanism shall provide for adequate safeguards against victimization of directors and employees who avail of such mechanism and also make provisions for direct access to the Chairperson of Audit Committee in exceptional cases.

Under these circumstances, ADVANCE TECHNOFORGE LIMITED, being a Listed Company proposes to establish a Whistle Blower Policy/ Vigil Mechanism and to formulate a policy for the same.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

Company is committed to adhere to the highest standards of ethical, moral and legal conduct of business operations. To maintain these standards, the Company encourages its employees who have concerns about suspected misconduct to come forward and express these concerns without fear of punishment or unfair treatment. A Vigil (Whistle Blower) mechanism provides a channel to the employees and Directors to report to the management concerns about unethical behaviour, actual or suspected fraud or violation of the Codes of conduct or legal or regulatory requirements incorrect or misrepresentation of any financial statements and reports, etc.

This policy encourages all employees to bring to the Company’s attention any concern or complaint having an impact on the company. The Whistle-Blowing Policy lists down the process to report violations of laws, rules, regulations or unethical conduct by its employees.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This Policy intends to cover serious concerns that could have grave impact on the operations and performance of the business of the Company and 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.

The policy neither releases employees from their duty of confidentiality in the course of their work, nor is it a route for taking up a grievance about a personal situation.

DEFINITIONS

- Audit Committee** : means the Audit Committee constituted by the Board of Directors of the Company in accordance with Section 177 of the Companies Act 2013 and read with LODR.
- Employee** : means every employee of the Company, including the Directors in the employment of the Company.
- Protected Disclosure** : a written communication made in good faith that discloses or demonstrates factual information that may evidence unethical or improper activity.
- Code** : means Conduct for the members of the Board of Directors and Senior Management adopted by ADVANCE TECHNOFORGE LIMITED
- Subject** : means a person against or in relation to whom a Protected Disclosure has been made or evidence gathered during the course of an investigation.
- Whistle Blower** : means an Employee making a Protected Disclosure under this Policy.
- Ethics Officer** : means an officer of the company nominated by Competent Authority to conduct detailed investigation under this policy and to receive protected disclosure from Whistle blowers, maintain record thereof, placing the same before the Audit Committee for its disposal and informing the Whistle blower the results thereof.
- Company** : ADVANCE TECHNOFORGE LIMITED

ELIGIBILITY

All Employees and Directors of the Company are eligible to make Protected Disclosures under the Policy in relation to matters concerning the Company.

RECEIPT AND DISPOSAL OF PROTECTED DISCLOSURES

All Protected Disclosures should be reported in writing by the complainant as soon as possible after he becomes aware of the same so as to ensure a clear understanding of the issues raised and should either be typed or written in a legible handwriting in English.

The Protected Disclosure should be submitted in a closed and secured envelope and should be super scribed as “Protected disclosure under the Whistle Blower policy”. Alternatively, the same can also be sent through email with the subject “Protected disclosure under the Whistle Blower policy”. In order to protect identity of the complainant, the Ethics Officer will not issue any acknowledgement to the complainants, and they are advised neither to write their name/address on the envelope nor enter into

any further correspondence with the Ethics Officer. The Ethics Officer shall assure that in case any further clarification is required he will get in touch with the complainant.

The Company shall not entertain anonymous/ pseudonymous disclosures.

The Protected Disclosure should be forwarded under a covering letter signed by the complainant to the Ethics Officer who shall detach the covering letter bearing the identity of the Whistle Blower and process only the Protected Disclosure. All Protected Disclosures should be addressed to the Ethics Officer of the Company or to the Chairman of the Audit Committee/ Chairman in exceptional cases.

Protected Disclosure against the Ethics Officer should be addressed to the Chairman of the Company and the Protected Disclosure against the Chairman of the Company should be addressed to the Chairman of the Audit Committee.

On receipt of the protected disclosure the Ethics Officer / Chairman/ Chairman of the Audit Committee, as the case may be, shall make a record of the Protected Disclosure and also ascertain from the complainant whether he was the person who made the protected disclosure or not.

The record will include:

- Brief facts;
- Whether the same Protected Disclosure was raised previously by anyone, and if so, the
- outcome thereof;
- Whether the same Protected Disclosure was raised previously on the same subject;
- Details of actions taken by Ethics Officer for processing the complaint
- Findings of the Audit Committee
- The recommendations of the Audit Committee/ other action(s).

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

INVESTIGATION

All Protected Disclosures reported under this Policy will be thoroughly investigated by the Ethics Officer of the Company who will investigate / oversee the investigations under the authorization of the Audit committee.

The Chairman of Audit Committee /Ethics officer may at its discretion consider involving any investigators for the purpose of Investigation.

The decision to conduct an investigation taken into a Protected Disclosure by itself is not an acceptance of the accusation by the Authority and is to be treated as a neutral fact-finding process because the outcome of the investigation may or may not support accusation.

The identity of a Subject will be kept confidential to the extent possible given the legitimate needs of the investigation.

Unless there are compelling reasons not to do so, subjects will be given reasonable opportunity for hearing their side during the investigation. No allegation of wrongdoing against a Subject shall be considered as maintainable unless there is good evidence in support of the allegation. Subjects shall have a duty to co-operate with the Ethics Officer(s) /Audit Committee during investigation to the extent that such co-operation sought does not merely require them to admit guilt.

Subjects shall have right to access any document/information for their legitimate need to clarify/defend themselves in the investigation proceedings.

Subject shall have a right to consult with a person or persons of their choice, other than the Ethics Officer/Chairman or Members of Audit Committee and the Whistle Blower. Subject shall be free at any time to engage counsel at their own cost to represent them in the investigation proceedings.

Subjects shall have a responsibility not to interfere with the investigation. Evidence shall not be withheld, destroyed or tampered with, and witnesses shall not be influenced, coached, threatened or intimidated by the Subjects.

Subjects have a right to be informed of the outcome of the investigation. If allegations are not sustained, the Subjects shall be consulted as to whether public disclosure of the investigation results would be in the best interest of the Subject and the Company.

Ethics Officer shall normally complete the investigation within 90 days of the receipt of protected disclosure.

In case of allegations against subject are substantiated by the Ethics Officer in his report, the Audit Committee shall give an opportunity to Subject to explain his side.

PROTECTION

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 being adopted against Whistle Blowers. Complete protection will, therefore, be given to Whistle Blowers against any unfair 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. The Company will take steps to minimize difficulties, which the Whistle Blower may experience as a result of making the Protected Disclosure. Thus, if the Whistle Blower is required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the Company will arrange for the Whistle Blower to receive advice about the procedure, etc.

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. The identity of the Whistle Blower shall be kept confidential to the extent possible and permitted under law.

Any other Employee assisting in the said investigation shall also be protected to the same extent as the Whistle Blower.

SECRECY / CONFIDENTIALITY

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

- Maintain confidentiality of all matters under this Policy
- Discuss only to the extent or with those persons as required under this policy for completing the process of investigations.
- Not keep the papers unattended anywhere at any time
- Keep the electronic mails / files under password.

DECISION

If an investigation leads the Ethics Officer / Chairman of the Audit Committee to conclude that an improper or unethical act has been committed, the Ethics Officer / Chairman of the Audit Committee shall recommend to the management of the Company to take such disciplinary or corrective action as he may deem fit. It is clarified that any disciplinary or corrective action initiated against the Subject as a result of the findings of an investigation pursuant to this Policy shall adhere to the applicable personnel or staff conduct and disciplinary procedures.

If the report of investigation is not to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complainant has the right to report the event to the appropriate legal or investigating agency. A complainant who makes false allegations of unethical & improper practices or about alleged wrongful conduct of the subject to the Ethics Officer or the Audit Committee shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the rules, procedures and policies of the Company.

REPORTING

The Ethics officer shall submit a report to the Chairman of the Audit Committee on a regular basis about all Protected Disclosures referred to him/her since the last report together with the results of investigations, if any.

RETENTION OF DOCUMENTS

All Protected disclosures in writing or documented along with the results of Investigation relating thereto, shall be retained by the Company for a period of 7 (seven) years or such other period as specified by any other law in force, whichever is more.

AMENDMENT

The Company reserves its right to amend or modify this Policy in whole or in part, at any time without assigning any reason whatsoever. However, no such amendment or modification will be binding on the Employees and Directors unless the same is notified to them in writing.

Any change in the Policy shall be approved by the Board of the Company. The Board shall have the right to withdraw and/ or amend any part of this Policy or the entire Policy, at any

time, as it deems fit, or from time to time, and the decision of the Board in this respect shall be final and binding.

In case any provisions of the Policy are contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013, rules framed thereunder and Listing Regulations (“Statutory Provisions”), the provisions of Statutory Provisions shall prevail.

DISSEMINATION

The policy shall be hosted on the website of the Company
i.e. <https://www.advancetechforge.com/>

Effective Date: November 11, 2024

Date of Approval by Board of Directors: November 11, 2024