



Whistleblowing and complaint procedure

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FOR YOU

Event and communication agency



Together for respectful and fair conduct

WHO?

Internal Stakeholders:

Internal reports can be made through the direct line established with the Human Resources (HR) department or directly to the immediate supervisor. Alternatively, employees may also choose to use the official reporting address if they prefer this channel. Employees are encouraged to refer to The Friends' Code of Ethics and the associated reporting procedure for further guidance.

External Stakeholders:

External stakeholders can use the official reporting address of **The Friends** (signalement@thefriends.be) as the designated channel for submitting their complaints. This channel is designed to ensure prompt and confidential handling.

WHAT?

Grievances may be submitted for any conduct that is dishonest or fraudulent, relates to a crime or an offense, violates laws and regulations, breaches contractual obligations, contravenes any principle outlined in our Code of conduct or other company policies, or demonstrates behavior that is otherwise unethical as defined by The Friends. Additionally, grievances may include any actual or suspected wrongdoing, whether the person submitting the grievance has witnessed the misconduct directly or not.

HOW?

Once a grievance is submitted, the individual will receive an acknowledgment of the report within **7 days**. A formal response will be provided within a maximum of **3 months**. The identity of the person submitting the grievance will remain confidential and will only be known to the grievance manager handling the case.

If the grievance is not retained, the stakeholder will be informed of the specific reasons for this decision.

For validated grievances, the stakeholder will be kept informed throughout the handling process. This includes updates at key stages such as the analysis, investigation, dialogue with relevant parties, resolution process, and final conclusion.



WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

The Friends is committed to protecting the identity of whistleblowers who report violations of the code or disclose serious threats or harm to the public interest that they are personally aware of.

The Friends will take all possible measures to protect whistleblowers from retaliation*, in accordance with Belgian legislation. This legislation establishes a protection framework for whistleblowers by transposing the European Directive 2019/1937 of the European Parliament and Council of October 23, 2019.

To this end, complaints related to whistleblowing will be handled with sensitivity, confidentiality, and discretion, as far as circumstances and the law allow.

Whistleblowers who believe they have faced retaliation may file a written complaint. Any retaliation complaint will be investigated promptly, and appropriate corrective actions will be taken if the retaliation allegations are substantiated.

