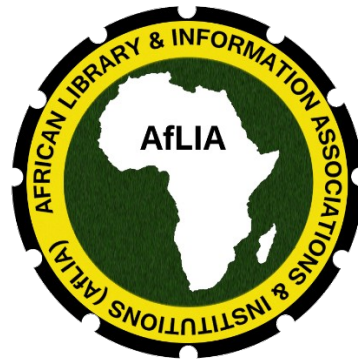


# **African Library and Information Associations and Institutions (AfLIA)**



## **Whistleblower Policy**

**MAY, 2020**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

**1.1** African Library and Information Associations and Institutions – AfLIA is the continental body of library and information associations and institutions that actively pursues the interests of library and information associations, library and information services as well as librarians and information workers and provide a platform to discuss issues and further the cause of the library and information sector in Africa. AfLIA is an association characterized by institutional membership with a Governing Council which has the power to act on its behalf in accordance with the AfLIA Constitution. The day to day affairs of the Association is steered by a Secretariat, headed by an Executive Director.

## **2.0 Purpose of the policy**

**2.1** The Governing Council of the African Library and Information Associations and Institutions (AfLIA) is committed to the promotion and maintenance of good corporate governance. The policy is designed to ensure the smooth operation of the organization in an open and transparent manner by protecting individuals who raise concerns about malpractices and or wrongdoing within the organization without fear of victimization in whatever form. Appropriate steps will be taken by the organization to investigate and deal with malpractices and or wrongdoing disclosed in good faith which might otherwise not be addressed.

**2.2** The Governing Council views whistleblowing as a very positive act that can inure to the benefit of the organization's effectiveness, efficiency and success in the long-term. Speaking up in good faith is not disloyalty to the organization or colleagues. The organization is committed to achieving the highest standard of service, ethical standard and practice in all its endeavours. The organization therefore encourages freedom of speech in good faith to achieve these high standards.

## **3.0 Definition of the policy**

**3.1** For the purposes of this policy, whistleblowing is defined as the reporting by employees of suspected misconduct and or wrongdoing within the organization that it has the ability to control. A whistleblower is any member of the Governing Council, Section Executives, Association members, Staff member, Vendor, Consultant, Mentee or other third party that makes such a report.

## **4.0 Scope of the policy**

**4.1** This policy is intended to enable those who become aware of any misconduct and or wrongdoing in the organization which affects some other person(s) or service,

to report their concerns at the earliest opportunity so that they can be properly investigated and remedial actions taken.

- 4.2** The policy applies to any person(s) associated with the organization, regardless of their position, or type of association. Any person who observes any misconduct and or wrongdoing has the duty to report same through the relevant channels of communication.
- 4.3** Notwithstanding their position or type of employment, AfLIA employees are encouraged to report concerns and or grievances with respect to the conduct by any member of the Governing Council, Section Executives, Association members, Staff member, Vendor, Consultant, Mentee which they believe:
- Breaches the organization’s governing rules, policies and procedures;
  - An action undertaken by Association and staff member will result in wastage of AfLIA resources;
  - Will result in denting the image or reputation of the organization;
  - Are likely to cause physical harm to a person or property;
  - Results in a conflict of interest situation;
  - Are an abuse of power.
- 4.4** Also, AfLIA encourages its Vendors, Consultants, Mentees and other third parties to report concerns or grievances they believe attain any of the examples outlined in section 4.3.
- 4.5** Where the matters being reported relate to: (a) employee grievances over decisions regarding the employee salary and benefits, employment status or other human resource issues affecting them; (b) discrimination, harassment and other offensive or disruptive behavior in the workplace; and (c) inter-personal difficulties between staff and their supervisors, or between staff members; these will be reviewed in accordance with the specific procedures established in the Human Resource Manual.
- 4.6** Matters that are reported relating to sexual harassment shall be reviewed and investigated in accordance with the procedures established in the Sexual Harassment Policy and AfLIA Constitution.
- 4.7** Matters that are reported relating to fraud shall be reviewed and investigated in accordance with the Anti-Fraud Policy and AfLIA Constitution.
- 4.8** Matters that are reported relating to grievances, discrimination, harassment and any other offensive or disruptive behavior among Governing Council Members and representatives of member institutions will be reviewed and action taken in accordance with the AfLIA Constitution, as long as the reported actions triggering whistleblowing are found to be taken in the name of or in relation to AfLIA.

## **5.0 Channels of communicating the policy**

**5.1** The following channels of communication are available to Governing Council members, association members, representatives of member institutions and staff members, to report their concerns:

- a. The Whistleblower email box ([whistleblower@aflia.net](mailto:whistleblower@aflia.net))
- b. Whistleblower hotline (+233 544 252 212)
- c. Immediate supervisor (where applicable)
- d. The Executive Director
- e. The President

**5.2** Governing Council members, representatives of member institutions and staff members are encouraged to raise their concerns early either by telephone, in person or in writing. The report should be as explicit as possible and include background of the concern or grievance with dates, the nature of the concern and why you think it is true.

**5.3** Vendors, Consultants, Mentees and other third parties are to submit their concerns or grievances to the Whistleblower email address.

## **6.0 Feedback to the whistleblower**

**6.1** The Governing Council of AfLIA and or the Executive Director will respond to your concerns as quickly as possible. The concerns will be properly addressed and the complainant provided with as much feedback as possible of the progress and outcome of any investigation, unless there are legal constraints why this cannot be done.

## **7.0 Protection for the whistleblower**

**7.1** Any person who makes his/her report in good faith is not disloyal to the organization or colleagues, but rather protecting and serving the organization with integrity. The identity of the person(s) who make such reports will be protected and kept confidential so that there is no retribution against them. Breaches in this regard will be treated as serious violation and will be subject to disciplinary and indemnity provisions as stipulated in the Ethics and Code of Conduct section of the Human Resource Manual.

**7.2** In case there is a situation where the concern cannot be resolved without revealing the identity of the whistleblower(s), the issue will be discussed with him/her/them before proceeding with taking any further action.

**7.3** The Governing Council, in consultation with the Executive Director, shall set aside a lump sum as an incentive to any Association member or staff who makes a valid report or complaint.

## **8.0 Actions not protected by the policy**

- 8.1** Where a whistleblower raises a concern in good faith, reasonably believing same to be true, there will be no action taken against him/her should the report turn out not to be accurate. The organization will regard the making of any deliberately false or malicious allegations as misconduct and or wrong doing, which may result in disciplinary action as stipulated in the Ethics and Code of Conduct section of the Human Resource Manual.
- 8.2** If a whistleblower has any personal interest in the matter, he/she must make this clear at the time the alleged misconduct and or wrong doing is reported. The act of whistleblowing will not shield whistleblowers from the reasonable consequences flowing from any involvement in misconduct. An individual's liability for his/her own conduct is not affected by his/her report of that conduct. However, in some circumstances, an admission may be a mitigating factor when considering disciplinary or other action.

## **9.0 Implementation of the policy**

- 9.1** The President will put in place the necessary mechanisms for the policy to be adequately communicated through appropriate procedures for proper implementation.
- 9.2** The Executive Director will communicate other appropriate procedures aimed at ensuring proper implementation of this policy.