Birchmere.

PUBLISHED POLICY

Whistleblower Policy

Speaking up, and being protected for it

Version 1.0 · Effective 1 September 2026 · Review every 12 months



Why this policy exists

People who work here, and people we care for, sometimes see things that are wrong. The only reason they stay quiet is fear of what happens to them for speaking. This policy removes that reason.

It is a standing obligation for registered aged care providers and it is good practice for everyone else. Birchmere adopts it now.

1. Who is protected

1.1 Anyone: an employee, a former employee, a client, a family member, a supplier, a contractor, or a relative of any of them.

1.2 You are protected whether or not you are right, as long as you had reasonable grounds to suspect what you reported.

1.3 You are protected if you report anonymously.

2. What you can report

2.1 Anything you reasonably suspect involves: harm, abuse or neglect of a client; dishonesty, fraud or theft; a serious breach of the law or of our own policies; unsafe practice; falsified records; or conduct that puts someone at risk.

2.2 You do not need proof. You need a reasonable suspicion.

2.3 A personal work grievance — your roster, your pay, a disagreement with a supervisor — is not a whistleblower matter. Raise those under the Complaints and Feedback Policy. They are taken just as seriously.

3. Who to tell

Inside Birchmere	Your care coordinator, or any director. Email disclosures@birchmere.com.au.

Anonymously	Through the Portal, or by post to the address above marked to the disclosure officer. You do not have to give your name.
Outside Birchmere	Police. The Fair Work Ombudsman. The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner. A work health and safety regulator. Your own lawyer. The Older Persons Advocacy Network on 1800 700 600.

3.1 You may go outside Birchmere first. You never have to come to us before going to police or a regulator.

4. What we do

4.1 Acknowledge within 2 business days, where we have a way to contact you.

4.2 Protect your identity. We will not disclose who you are, or information likely to identify you, except to a person handling the matter, to a lawyer, or where the law requires it. Everyone handling a disclosure is bound by that.

4.3 Assess it, and investigate where it warrants investigating. If we decide not to investigate, we will tell you why.

4.4 Keep you informed of progress and of the outcome, so far as we properly can.

4.5 Keep disclosures in a separate secure record, not on your personnel file.

5. Protection from detriment

5.1 No one will be dismissed, disciplined, demoted, have their hours or bookings reduced, be excluded from work, harassed or treated differently because they have made or may make a disclosure.

5.2 This applies equally to a person suspected of making one, and to anyone who helps.

5.3 Where the person disclosing is a carer, we will not reduce their bookings while a matter is on foot. If a change to their work is genuinely necessary, we will explain why in writing.

5.4 Causing detriment to someone for making a disclosure is serious misconduct and grounds for immediate dismissal.

5.5 If you believe you have suffered detriment, tell any director immediately. You may also go to the Fair Work Ombudsman or a court.

6. A person a disclosure is about

6.1 Is told what is alleged, at a point that does not compromise the investigation.

6.2 Has a fair opportunity to respond, and may bring a support person.

6.3 Is not assumed to have done it. A disclosure is a starting point, not a finding.

7. False reports

7.1 A report made in good faith that turns out to be wrong carries no consequence. This is the ordinary case and we would rather have it than silence.

7.2 A report a person knows to be false is a disciplinary matter. We will not use this clause to discourage genuine reporting, and the bar is deliberately high.

8. Governance

8.1 A director is the disclosure officer and maintains the disclosures record.

8.2 The number of disclosures, their categories and their outcomes are reported to the directors every 6 months, without identifying anyone.

8.3 This policy is given to every carer at induction, published on our website, and reviewed every 12 months.

Birchmere.

Care that feels like family.

CALL 02 5115 1162

EMAIL hello@birchmere.com.au

ONLINE birchmere.com.au

Birchmere acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live and work, and pays respect to Elders past and present.

Private-pay home care. We don't provide NDIS-funded supports.

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