

CGS North East Ltd



Company & Employee Handbook

Last updated August 2022

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DECLARATION OF INTENT

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

The policies and procedures contained within this handbook are provided to aid the management in handling any human resource and personnel issues. Additionally, they are made generally available to all employees who are required to make themselves fully conversant with them, especially as the contents form an integral part of the contract of employment. However, in adopting these policies, it is noted that the contents are not necessarily considered to be legally binding and may be superseded by updates in employment legislation which shall be communicated to employees as required. Please note however that the responsibility for implementation ultimately lies with the managers of the company.

The company hereby declares its intention to abide and administer its policies and procedures within current legislation and will apply best endeavours to ensure the handbook is maintained, reviewed, amended and updated periodically and as appropriate in the constantly changing business and legal environment.

HEALTH & SAFETY

It is the company's objective that employees and others be protected, so far as is reasonably practicable, from risks to health and safety arising from work activities and shall ensure any relevant policies are reviewed and revised as appropriate, to take account of changes in circumstances or in legal requirements. Note however that in doing so, the responsibility for achieving and adhering to acceptable safety standards rests not only with the employer but also with employees, sub-contractors and suppliers of materials to be used at work. It is the duty of all employees to read any company health & safety policies and to also take an active interest in achieving safety at work.

The successful implementation of effective health & safety in the workplace is dependent upon the wholehearted co-operation of all levels of employees and management. Wilful breaches of any policy will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

Name: _____

Position in Company: _____

Date: _____

HEALTH & SAFETY

All employees are required to familiarise themselves with the company's Health & Safety Policy, in accordance with their responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the company's own Health & Safety Rules and Procedures.

COMPANY RESPONSIBILITIES

The overall responsibility for ensuring the day-to-day implementation of this policy lies ultimately with the Managing Director.

The manager will have the following responsibilities:

- a) Implementation of this policy and bringing it to the attention of all employees.
- b) Compliance with safety precautions, including the regulating of contractors.
- c) Ensuring that all new entrants are properly inducted, which must include an awareness of all precautions and procedures applicable to the job, and the emergency procedures.
- d) Ensuring that no person is permitted to work at any kind of machinery or hazardous task unless he or she has been properly and fully instructed.
- e) Ensuring that all staff are aware of the location of all fire-fighting equipment and alarm call points and are conversant with its use.
- f) Ensuring that any legal requirements relating to the operation of the company are fully complied with, including (but not limited to):
 - Inspection of all fire-fighting equipment;
 - Safe use of electrical switches and circuits;
 - Maintenance of all appropriate registers;
 - Necessary safety training for staff;
 - Statutory inspections of plant and equipment;
 - Provision of first aid equipment;
 - Accident investigation;
 - Arrangements for cleaning;
- g) Ensuring that any responsibilities delegated to subordinate staff are clearly identified;
- h) Ensuring that access to the premises by the customers or other members of the general public is strictly limited to safe areas;
- i) Ensuring that suitable arrangements are in place to safeguard the premises against intruders.

EMPLOYEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

In the event of an emergency; employees should call the Police, Fire Brigade or Ambulance as appropriate.

Any accidents, dangerous occurrences, hazards and/or employees suffering from or in contact with an infectious disease should immediately notify their Manager as soon as practicable.

In addition;

- a) Each employee is responsible for his or her own acts or omissions and the effect that these may have upon the safety of themselves or any other person.
- b) Every employee must use safety equipment or clothing in a proper manner and for the purpose intended.
- c) Any employee who intentionally or recklessly misuses anything supplied in the interests of health and safety will be subject to disciplinary procedures.
- d) Every employee must work in accordance with any health and safety instruction or training that has been given.
- e) No employee may undertake any task for which they have not been authorised and for which they are not adequately trained.
- f) Every employee is required to bring to the attention of a responsible person any perceived shortcoming in our safety arrangements.
- g) All employees are under a duty to familiarise themselves with this policy.

RULES AND PROCEDURES

Every member of staff must acquaint themselves, and comply with the following rules:

Accidents at Work

- All accidents, occurring on company premises, regardless of severity, should be reported at once to the immediate line manager who will arrange for any medical attention required.
- Injuries sustained by employees away from their normal place of work should be reported on return.
- The company has a legal obligation to record all accidents in the "Accident Book" and report all accidents at work which result in incapacity for three or more days to the HSE.

First Aid

- First aid boxes are kept on the premises and the name of the First-aider or person responsible for taking charge of the situation regarding an injured or ill employee is displayed prominently on notice boards and elsewhere.

Electrical Equipment

- Never use electrical equipment if it is believed to be unsafe.
- Do not use any equipment, lead or cable which has failed an inspection or test until it has been made safe.
- Staff must not attempt to repair any faulty electrical equipment.
- Where appropriate switch off electrical equipment before leaving the office.

Emergencies

- There is a fire evacuation procedure. However, there will be other emergency procedures which are different. If there is a bomb or other emergency; staff will be told what to do.

Fire

- Employees should familiarise themselves with the fire evacuation procedure and respond promptly to evacuation alarms.
- Respect fire safety measures such as clear corridors, closed smoke doors and unobstructed exits.
- Anyone noticing unexplained smoke or any other sign of a fire should raise the alarm immediately. Employees should not attempt to fight a fire unless trained to do so. Close doors and evacuate by the safest route.
- After evacuating the building, employees should congregate at their appointed position and the manager will check that all staff have left the premises and are accounted for.

Hazards

- Any faulty or hazardous fixtures, fittings, furniture or equipment – especially electrical equipment – must be reported to the line manager. If there is a state of serious and imminent danger, the alarm should be raised and the danger area evacuated.

Hazardous Substances

- A hazardous substance is anything in a container labelled “toxic”, “corrosive”, “irritant” or “harmful” and any other substance with similar properties. All employees must be sure they understand the risks of work with hazardous substances and follow the required precautions and control measures.
- Staff must not introduce hazardous substances without authorisation.

Infectious Diseases

- Anyone who has been in contact with, or is suffering from an infectious disease should immediately notify their immediate line manager. This is particularly important in respect of German measles and any other diseases which could have an adverse effect on unborn babies.

Risks

- The company will advise staff about any risks connected with their work and the measures taken to reduce risks.

Smoking

- Smoking is prohibited in all areas except those designated as “smoking areas”.

General Housekeeping

- Keep all emergency exits, stairs and corridors free of obstructions.
- Ensure rest rooms, kitchens and washrooms are kept clean and tidy. Do not throw away matches in waste paper bins.
- Do not let cables trail to create trip or electrical hazards. If cables cannot be sited so that people do not trip over them or catch them, then they must be protected by devices such as ties and cable ramps.
- Think twice before putting things on the floor. Never leave things on the stairs.
- Do not store things where they will restrict corridors or access routes. Consider people with restricted mobility or impaired vision.
- Store things properly so that people can access them without getting hurt. Put heavy or awkward items at waist height.
- Store items in such a way that they are unlikely to fall onto people.
- Do not store things in front of emergency switches, fire or safety equipment, or safety notices.

Mental Health and Stress Policy

Introduction

The Company believes that its employees are its most valuable resource and that their wellbeing is vital to effective performance at work and the continued provision of high quality services. To this end, the Company is committed to providing maintaining and promoting a healthy and supportive working environment.

- Under the terms of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Company has a duty to ensure the health and safety of its employees as far as is reasonably practical.
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 place a duty on the Company to assess and control the degree of stress in the workplace.
- The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the Company not to discriminate against employees who suffer from a disability under the Act, which includes long term ill health caused by stress at work.

Although the Company has no control over external or personal factors, it is committed to managing stress and risks within its control, and to providing support to employees who are suffering from stress.

Aims of the Policy

- To ensure the physical and mental health of all employees;
- To promote a healthy, safe and friendly working environment and control and reduce risks to mental health;
- To help provide and maintain a supportive and non judgmental working environment;
- To provide effective support to all employees in managing stress and other mental health problems, and to encourage better recognition of mental health issues; and
- To recognise that the prevention of stress is easier than dealing with it once it has arisen.

Stress and its Recognition

Stress is a natural reaction to excessive pressure that is experienced by everybody. When stress is experienced consistently over a period of time, its effects can become detrimental and lead to further and more serious psychological and physical illnesses. Stress itself can be caused by an infinite number of variables which will vary enormously in different individuals. By way of example, personal factors like family problems can easily affect an individual's work, while work based factors like bullying, lack of training or poor working conditions can just as easily spill over into the home.

Recognising stress can be difficult as its effects will vary from person to person but the following signs can sometimes indicate that someone is experiencing difficulty:

- Changes in behaviour;
- Indecisiveness;
- Absenteeism; or
- Increase in the use of tobacco or alcohol.

Although the Company has no control over external factors which may be more difficult to identify the Health and Safety Executive has identified 6 main causes of stress at work which the Company can affect:

1. Demands made on employees;
2. The level of control employees have over their work;
3. The support employees receive from managers and colleagues;
4. The clarity of an employee's role within the organization;
5. The nature of relationships at work; and
6. The way that changes are managed.

The Company is aware that stress is easier to manage before it becomes a problem and with that in mind will endeavour to operate in a fashion that takes all of the above factors into account. The Company will also always be open to discuss how an alteration of one or more of these factors might produce a better working environment.

Principles

- The Company will conduct an annual assessment of the risks to employees' health, both mental and physical, based on data collected from staff at work including absence data, staff turnover, grievance cases, accidents and exit interviews.
- The Company will always listen to any concerns that employees may have. If employees believe that their work is putting their mental health or wellbeing at risk, they should speak to their line manager [and/or the HR team]. All such concerns will be treated with respect and dignity, and employees will be provided with the necessary information to make informed decisions.
- A referral to the occupational health team will be made after the initial discussion, if appropriate.
- The Company recognises that stress and other mental health issues may require periods of sick leave or absence in order to recover from stress.
- Where necessary the Company will facilitate the managed return to work of employees who have been absent due to stress.
- All cases will be dealt with in accordance with the Company's policy on equality and diversity details of which are available in the Company handbook.
- All discussions, requests for help and advice will be kept strictly confidential and the information gathered will be held in accordance with the Company's Data Protection Policy.
- Where necessary the Company will provide access to specialist psychological assistance.

COVID-19 (Pandemics)

This policy includes the measures we are actively taking to mitigate the spread of coronavirus. You are kindly requested to follow all these rules diligently, to sustain a healthy and safe workplace in this unique environment. It's important that we all respond responsibly and transparently to these health precautions, we assure you that we will always treat your private health and personal data with high confidentiality and sensitivity.

This COVID-19 company policy is susceptible to changes with the introduction of additional governmental guidelines. If so, we will update you as soon as possible by email.

This coronavirus policy applies to all of our employees who physically work in our office(s). We strongly recommend to our remote working personnel to read through this action plan as well, to ensure we collectively and uniformly respond to this challenge.

Here, we outline the required actions employees should take to protect themselves and their co-workers from a potential coronavirus infection.

Sick leave arrangements:

- If you have cold symptoms, such as cough/sneezing/fever, or feel poorly, request sick leave or work from home.
- If you have a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, you can return to the office *only after* you've fully recovered, with a doctor's note confirming your recovery.

Work from home requests:

- If you are feeling ill, but you are able to work, you can request to work from home.
- If you have recently returned from areas with a high number of COVID-19 cases, we may ask you to work from home for 14 calendar days, and return to the office only if you are fully asymptomatic. You will also be asked not to come into physical contact with any colleagues during this time.
- If you've been in close contact with someone infected by COVID-19, with high chances of being infected yourself, you shall be contacted by an NHS representative and may request work from home. You will also be asked not to come into physical contact with any colleagues during this time.
- If you're a parent and you have to stay at home with your children, request work from home. Follow up with your manager or departmental leader to make arrangements and set expectations.
- If you need to provide care to a family member infected by COVID-19, request work from home. You'll only be permitted to return to the office 14 calendar days after your family member has fully recovered, provided that you're asymptomatic or you have a doctor's note confirming you don't have the virus. You will also be asked not to come into physical contact with any colleagues during this time.

General hygiene rules:

- Wash your hands after using the toilet, before eating, and if you cough/sneeze into your hands (follow the 20-second hand-washing rule). You can also use sanitizers.
- Cough/sneeze into your sleeve, preferably into your elbow. If you use a tissue, discard it properly and clean/sanitize your hands immediately.
- Open the windows regularly to ensure open ventilation.
- Avoid touching your face, particularly eyes, nose, and mouth with your hands to prevent from getting infected.
- If you find yourself coughing/sneezing on a regular basis, avoid close physical contact with your coworkers and take extra precautionary measures (such as requesting sick leave).

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

SCOPE OF POLICY

The Company is committed to a policy of equal opportunities and its intention is to fully comply in all aspects of appropriate and current legislation. This policy will apply in respect of recruitment and selection procedures, career development, promotion, training, payment practices, and all other terms and conditions of employment. It is the responsibility of each employee at every level to promote Equal Opportunities and to pursue non-discriminatory policies and practices in employment and through behaviour language, attitude and actions so that no discriminatory practices occur.

It is our policy to promote Equal Opportunities throughout the company and to ensure that no employee or job applicant is less fairly treated or suffers any harassment because of discrimination whether directly, indirectly, through victimisation or harassment. Failure of any employee to observe the principles laid out in this policy will become subject to the company disciplinary procedure and may result in breaches of the law.

EQUALITY ACT

The Equality Act 2010 replaced and harmonised previous legislation and was introduced to ensure that workplace environments were fair and to comply with the law.

It covers the same groups that were protected by existing equality legislation – age, disability, race, sex, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. In addition following recent legislation in 2014, “obesity” may, depending upon the circumstances, also fall under the protection of the Equality Act. These are now called and referred to as ‘protected characteristics’. Additionally the company shall not discriminate against an employee or worker based on “associative” links for example; where the employee or worker has a son who is disabled.

CRIMINAL OFFENCES

The company shall abide by the guidelines contained within the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013), in that certain old and minor cautions and offences are no longer subject to disclosure.

All cautions and convictions for specified serious violent and sexual offences, and other specified offences of relevance for posts concerned with safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, will remain subject to disclosure.

In addition, employees or prospective candidates to the company are not required to disclose “spent” convictions when applying to work. As a consequence, the company will not dismiss an employee or exclude a person from a role, position, office, department or profession; or prejudice a person or employee in any way; where an employee or applicant fails to notify a “spent” conviction.

EQUAL PAY

The company will treat both its men and women employees equally, in respect of their terms and conditions of employment, if they are employed on 'like work', work rated as equivalent under a job evaluation study, or work found to be of equal value. This does not just cover remuneration alone, but includes most terms in an employment contract. Variance within rates of pay due to length of service, performance, bonuses or individually agreed terms of contract will not be influenced by the gender of the employee. Terms covering special treatment because of pregnancy or childbirth, or reflecting statutory restrictions on the employment of women are not covered.

SEX DISCRIMINATION

The company will not discriminate on grounds of gender or marriage; because someone intends to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment; or due to an individual's sexual orientation whether actual or perceived.

Same sex marriages are now permissible in law and the company shall not discriminate in any way in respect of couples in a same sex marriage. All records shall be amended to accommodate such changes in respect of next of kin information.

The company shall not tolerate sexual harassment, which is harassment of a 'sexual nature', nor shall it tolerate 'sex-related harassment' which is unwanted conduct related to an individual's sex or that of another person. This shall therefore include allowing a working environment where sexual banter is commonplace and which, although not directed at an individual or caused by their presence, may nevertheless create an offensive environment for that person.

RACE DISCRIMINATION

The company recognises and will not discriminate on grounds of race, colour, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origins. The Race Relations Act is concerned with people's actions and the effects of their actions, not their opinions or beliefs. Racial discrimination is not the same as racial prejudice.

AGE DISCRIMINATION

The company shall not discriminate against any employee on grounds of age, whether young or old, which includes by way of job advertising, recruitment, working practices and duties within particular roles.

In view of the fact that there is no longer a statutory retirement age under UK legislation, the company shall not automatically retire you, unless it has objective justification to take this action.

DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION

The company will not discriminate against current or prospective employees who have or have had a disability and will ensure adequate adjustments are made where appropriate, in support of this. Where relevant, the company shall also take reasonable steps to ensure the workplace is accessible to persons falling within the scope of the Equality Act that may involve the implementation of physical or structural changes.

The Equality Act defines a disabled person as “someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities which includes things like using a telephone, reading a book or using public transport”.

It will be considered discrimination to treat a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability (e.g. a tendency to make spelling mistakes arising from dyslexia).

Individuals diagnosed with progressive forms of cancer, HIV and multiple sclerosis also fall within the scope of disability and this protection is relevant from point of diagnosis rather than when the illness started to have an adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out their day-to-day activities. Employees are requested to inform the appropriate senior manager within the company if such diagnosis occurs and should note that any such disclosure shall be treated in the strictest confidence.

RELIGION OR BELIEF

The company will respect an individual’s religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief and will not allow discrimination or harassment of that individual due to those beliefs.

BULLYING & HARASSMENT

Even where not covered by the specific aspects stated within this Equal Opportunities policy, the Company shall not tolerate any form of harassment, victimisation or bullying within the workplace of its employees.

Bullying and/or harassment can take many forms and all staff should be aware of behaviour of one person to another that may be seen as over-bearing, intimidating, controlling or abusive. All staff should treat any other employee or work colleague with dignity and respect. Any complaint of bullying or harassment shall be investigated thoroughly and if found to have occurred shall be treated as Gross Misconduct.

Note that bullying and harassment are not determined by the intention of the person causing offence, but rather by the effect it has on the recipient i.e. if it is deemed by them that they find the behaviour unacceptable to them.

BREACH OF POLICY

If you feel that you have been treated inequitably in breach of the above policy, then you must initially raise the complaint through the company Grievance Procedure. The company shall then fully investigate any such complaint.

All employees are required to apply this policy in practice and failure to comply with, or deliberate breaches of, the above legislation will not be tolerated. Such instances will be investigated and dealt with under the company disciplinary procedure. If carried out deliberately or maliciously this will be regarded as Gross Misconduct and may dependent upon the severity of the breach result in summary dismissal.

DEFINITIONS

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (see perceptive discrimination) or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (see associative discrimination).

Associative Discrimination

This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Perceptive Discrimination

This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination can occur when you have a condition, rule, policy or even a practice in your company that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

Harassment

Harassment is defined as “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual”.

Third Party Harassment

The Equality Act makes employers potentially liable for harassment of employees by people (third parties) who are not employees of your company, such as customers or clients.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act, or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

SAFE DRIVING POLICY

It has been estimated that there are 6 million cars on the road for business reasons. The Department of Transport has suggested that half of those will be involved in an accident every year.

As a conscientious employer whose work involves considerable travelling, CSG North East Ltd ("the Company") is committed to reducing the risk of work-related road traffic crashes and collisions.

We understand that the following legislation applies to us:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Road Traffic Acts supported by the Highway Code
- UK Domestic Drivers' Hours Rules
- Tachograph Regulations
- The Road Transport (Working Times) Regulations 2005
- The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1996
- Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007

This Driving Policy applies to all staff members and Directors who drive in connection with Company employment whether it is in their own vehicle, a fleet vehicle or a vehicle hired by the Company.

This Policy will be given to all staff members who drive on Company business.

The purpose of this Policy is to set out how the Company will ensure that all those who drive on Company business are acting in line with the both Health and Safety Law and Road Traffic Legislation.

This Driving Policy will be reviewed / updated as needed annually, and any changes made known to all driving staff.

All staff who drive on Company business whether they use a company vehicle or their own, will be required to produce their Driving License every six months, or on request, to prove continued entitlement to drive the class of vehicles they are required to use. All drivers will be deemed to have consented to permit their employer to contact the DVLA to check for any endorsements every six months or if unsafe driving practices are suspected.

Failure to produce the driving license when requested may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Employees are required to inform their line manager of any Road Traffic Accidents (RTA) involving Company vehicles as soon as it is safe to do so, whether or not any damage is sustained to the Company vehicle. All staff are required to follow the procedures set out in sub-clause 9.6.

All employees must inform their line manager of any driving penalties either received or pending within 5 working days of notification.

Parking Tickets/Fines

If parking tickets are given to any Company vehicles whether or not they are being used for Company business, the driver/keeper of the vehicle is to ensure that the office is informed as soon as reasonably practicable. Failure to do so may result in the employee being held liable for extra costs over and above the original fine.

Drink and Drugs including Medicines

The Company operates a zero-tolerance drink and drug driving policy.

All drivers must report any pending prosecutions and/or cautions immediately, regardless of whose vehicle they were driving at the time. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.

Any driver prosecuted for such offences will be subject to the disciplinary procedure which may result in dismissal.

All employees are encouraged to report concerns about colleagues with regards to drink or drugs as soon as possible. This can be done anonymously if necessary.

Any driver who believes that they may be over the drink drive limit must inform their line manager. They must not drive. They may be given alternative duties if available or be required to take annual leave. Should this become a regular occurrence, disciplinary action may take place.

Any driver found to be affected by illegal drug use will face disciplinary procedures as well as prosecution by the Police.

Any driver taking prescription or over the counter medicines must ensure that they are still fit to drive. Many prescription/over the counter medicines can have a serious effect on the ability to concentrate and can contribute to accidents. Such medication may include cold remedies, some cough medicines, pain relief – especially those including opiates, and antidepressants which may cause muscle spasms.

Any driver whose abilities are found to be impaired through drugs, whether legal or illegal, may be prosecuted.

Any driver who may be unfit to drive must inform their line manager immediately. They must not drive.

Drivers' Responsibilities

All drivers are legally responsible for the roadworthiness of their vehicles. If the tyres are bald or the lights do not work etc. it is the driver who will receive penalty points and fines.

Drivers of Company vehicles are required to carry out basic maintenance on their vehicles, such as ensuring oil and coolant levels, tyre pressures etc. are all correct.

Any defects identified must be reported to the office immediately. The Managing Director will ensure the fault is recorded. The employee must complete a vehicle defect form as soon as the defect is found. The completed form must be handed to the Managing Director as soon as possible.

Verbal reporting of a defect without completing a defect form is not acceptable.

All reported defects will be dealt with promptly. The Company will not permit un-roadworthy vehicles to be used.

Grey Fleet

Any employees driving their own vehicle on behalf of the Company will be required to present their insurance certificate and MOT certificate (if applicable) on an annual basis. The employee must ensure that their vehicle is insured for business use.

Any employee driving their own vehicle must ensure that it is kept in a safe and roadworthy condition at all times. The management accept that employees may be without their vehicle when repairs are

necessary to keep the vehicle in a safe and roadworthy condition. However, employees must give as much notice as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Mobile Phones

The mobile phone is now seen as an essential means of work communication. However, it is illegal to use a handheld mobile phone while in control of a vehicle, whether it is mobile or stationary i.e. in traffic. If caught, you can get an automatic fixed penalty notice which will get 3 penalty points on your licence and a fine of £100.

Your case could also go to court and you could be disqualified from driving and get a maximum fine of £1,000.

All drivers/vehicles will be provided with hands-free kits; however, a mobile phone should only be used when it is absolutely necessary. You are permitted to use hands-free phones, sat navs and 2-way radios when you're driving, but if the police think you're distracted and not in control of your vehicle you could still get stopped and penalised. If you are involved in an accident and there is a possibility that you were not concentrating due to phone use, for example, you may also be charged with 'driving without due care and attention', or worse.

Whenever possible, mobile phones should be switched off while driving and a message facility used. Messages should only be picked up and responded to when it is safe to do so.

Drivers must not dial out or send or read texts while in motion. (This includes hands free kits.) They should find a safe place to stop before making any calls.

Where there is a passenger or 'drivers mate' in the vehicle they should be responsible for all communication however, all driver distractions must be kept to an absolute minimum.

Drivers must report faulty hands-free sets immediately.

These will then be repaired or replaced as soon as possible. Drivers will not be permitted or encouraged to use a handheld mobile phone while they have no hands-free kit.

Any driver failing to adhere to the mobile phone policy will be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Satellite Navigation Systems

Satellite Navigation Systems can be a useful tool for drivers; however, they can also be a dangerous distraction.

All destinations should be entered while the vehicle is stationary in a safe place. All drivers should stop if it is necessary to take their eyes off the road to check routes.

They should be positioned so as not to impair vision. They should not be positioned where they are likely to cause injuries in the event of a collision.

All vehicle distractions should be kept to a minimum and it is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that they are not likely to be distracted.

Journey Planning

The management will ensure that appointments are scheduled to a realistic timetable and are planned to take into account the essential need for adequate rest periods. Any employee who feels that their timetables/schedules are unrealistic, and they need to take risks or break speed limits to complete them must voice their concerns with their line manager as soon as possible.

The management will monitor weather conditions and will reschedule deliveries and/ or appointments etc. if conditions become too dangerous for the drivers.

Drivers must ensure that their personal lives do not cause them to come to work tired. Driver fatigue is a well-known cause of accidents.

Vehicle Maintenance

All drivers are required to carry out basic maintenance on the vehicle for which they are responsible. They should check oil, water, tyre pressures and windscreen washer fluid weekly.

In winter months, drivers are reminded that they must have a clear windscreen before setting off. Peering through a small section while the screen de-mists is not acceptable. Ensure that all your windows are clear/free of ice/snow etc. before moving off.

The management will ensure that all vehicles used on behalf of the Company are regularly inspected and strictly maintained using at least the manufacturer's recommended service schedules (and if applicable, in accordance with Operator licence requirements).

Emergency Procedures

Breakdown

- If possible, avoid stopping in dangerous places such as roundabouts and corners;
- Switch on your hazard lights;
- If it is safe to do so, drop your speed, continue driving and try to pull off the road completely, or onto a straight section of road;
- If you have to stop on a road, display your emergency triangle at least 45 metres behind your vehicle (don't do this on a motorway);
- Do not attempt to fix your vehicle yourself by the roadside. Call your employer's designated breakdown service;
- Switch off your engine and wait in a safe place, away from traffic.

Calling for Help

If possible, use the nearest emergency phone. On motorways, blue and white marker posts show the direction of the nearest phone. The phones connect directly to the police control centre and are numbered so that you can be easily located. If using your mobile phone, refer to the blue rectangular Driver Location Signs, which detail the road number (e.g. M1), direction of travel and precise location.

Motorway Breakdown Procedures

If your vehicle develops a problem on the motorway:

- Leave at the next exit if possible and stop at the next service area;
- If you must stop immediately, pull onto the hard shoulder and stop with wheels turned to the left, away from traffic;
- Park as close to the left as possible and try to stop near an emergency phone;
- Put on your hazard lights and turn on side lights in poor visibility;

- DO NOT use your warning triangle on the hard shoulder;
- NEVER attempt repairs yourself.

Waiting for Help

If you must stop on the hard shoulder:

- Get out of the vehicle;
- Make sure you and all passengers exit the vehicle on the left-hand side;
- Walk off the road – up the embankment if there is one, or climb over the crash barrier into a field if possible;
- NEVER try to cross lanes to the other side of a motorway.

Be prepared

- Carry a charged mobile phone (switched off and out of reach while driving);
- Carry an emergency kit, including warm and high visibility clothing, a torch, water and a reflective triangle;
- Call the office and the Company breakdown service and await instructions.

Accident

If a vehicle being used on Company business is involved in an accident (RTA) the following steps are to be taken:

- Stop your vehicle in a safe location;
- DO NOT admit liability;
- Call the emergency services if anyone is injured or if property is damaged;
- If the police attend the scene, note the reporting officer's name, identity number and station;
- Note information about the accident, exchange details with third parties and take the names and contact details of witnesses;
- Third parties are obliged to give you their name, the vehicle registration number and insurance details under section 170 of the Road Traffic Act 1988;
- If a camera is available, photograph the scene from different angles;
- Take pictures of the vehicles involved and of the damage to your own and third party vehicles/property;
- Contact your line manager as soon as you are able.

Employees must prioritise:

- Their own safety;
- The safety of anyone else involved;
- The safety of other road users.

SEVERE WEATHER

Winter can bring extremes of weather from dense fog to snowfall that closes major roads. The Company will monitor weather conditions and will attempt to ensure so far as reasonably or operationally practicable that no-one is sent on a journey that may take them into a severe weather front. The Company will ensure that all vehicles supplied by the Company have been properly maintained and prepared for bad weather. It is incumbent on the drivers of all vehicles to make sure they have adequate cold weather protection with them – warm coats, gloves and blankets etc. in case they are stranded.

All drivers are reminded that if they are stranded by snow etc., they should remain in their vehicle unless instructed to leave by the emergency services.

SICKNESS POLICY

SICKNESS PROCEDURE

You must explain any absence from work by telephone or other message as soon as practicable and preferably in person. Notification by text message is **not** an acceptable method. You are required to notify the company of any sickness and the company must record these absences whether paying Statutory or Company Sick Pay [SSP/CSP] or not.

If you are sick for less than 7 days i.e. Monday to Sunday, you may “Self-Certificate”. If you are sick for more than 7 days, you must produce a Doctor’s Certificate, known as a Statement of Fitness for Work. It is company policy to actively manage sickness absence by looking at ways to make reasonable adjustments to working conditions in order to facilitate a return to work. The company will consider recommendations made by your Doctor on the Statement of Fitness for Work form, however it may not always be possible to provide the level of support required and in these cases you will continue to be considered ‘not fit for work’ and will remain on sick leave.

If your main employment is not with the company, then you must notify your employer of any payments of CSP/SSP that you receive from your main employment in order that the calculations for any payments due can be accurately made.

COMPANY PAYMENTS

You are not entitled to receive payment during any period of unauthorised absence for any reason and the company has the right to exercise its discretion regarding the payment or non-payment of salary to you during any absence from work through sickness. The company therefore reserves the right to NOT to pay CSP when you are on a period of sickness and if the company exercises this right, you will instead be entitled to SSP.

STATUTORY SICK PAY (SSP)

The company is responsible for paying SSP to you for up to 28 weeks of each period of sickness. This will be paid at the same time as salary is normally paid. SSP is subject to Income Tax and National Insurance deductions in the same way as salary.

Before SSP is due you must be off work through sickness for a period of four or more days in a row. This is called a ‘period of incapacity for work’. If there are less than four days of sickness in a row SSP is not payable. Usually only complete days of sickness are counted for SSP purposes which is only paid for qualifying days. Unless alternatives are agreed, the qualifying days for SSP will be your normal working days as required by your contract of employment. SSP is not normally paid for the first three qualifying days in each period of incapacity for work. These three days are called waiting days.

STATE SICKNESS BENEFIT

Where you undergo a period of incapacity for work which is not eligible for SSP paid by the company, you need to obtain form SSP1 in order for you to be able to claim State Sickness Benefit.

HOLIDAY POLICY

The holiday year, your annual holiday entitlement and any compulsory holidays will be contained within your written 'Statement to comply with the Employment Rights Act 1996'.

ENTITLEMENT

Your annual holiday entitlement is calculated on a pro-rata basis, depending upon the quantity of hours you work each week and are based on full calendar months worked. It is important that you understand that you are not entitled to any holiday until you have accrued it. Despite this; the company wishes to be flexible and may subject to operational requirements and on a case-by-case basis, allow you to take holiday that you have not yet accrued. However, if you leave the company for whatever reason, then any holidays owed will be deducted from your final salary payment.

NOTIFICATION OF HOLIDAYS

The timing and duration of all holidays must be agreed in advance with your employer and you should aim to give the company as much notice as possible to avoid duplicate requests from your work colleagues. You should therefore aim to request holiday at least one month prior to the date requested, although holiday may be granted at shorter notice subject to operational requirements. The company has the right to refuse to grant a holiday request if it is deemed detrimental to the company's operations, but this will not be unreasonably applied. Holidays must also be taken within the holiday year period in which they are due; provided the company has not unreasonably refused to allow you holiday; as holiday not taken will be forfeited.

COMPULSORY HOLIDAYS

The company has the right for operational reasons to determine certain periods as compulsory holidays; such as plant shut-downs for maintenance; or due to known quiet or seasonal periods such as Christmas, although these shall be only applied if necessary.

BANK HOLIDAYS

Unless specified otherwise in your written 'Statement to comply with the Employment Rights Act 1996'; Bank Holidays and other proclaimed holidays are included as part of your annual holiday entitlement and the company makes no provision for additional time off or payment in respect of these days.

HOLIDAYS FOR PART-TIME STAFF

As per the Working Time Regulations, you are entitled to paid holiday calculated using similar criteria as though you were employed in a full-time role. Your entitlement will therefore be calculated on a pro-rata basis dependent upon your scheduled hours of work.

LEAVING THE COMPANY

Holiday will normally be refused to you if you are 'working' your notice period and payments in lieu of holiday not taken will only be made when you leave the company. However, no payment in lieu of holiday will be made if you leave without the required notice. If holiday already taken at the date of leaving exceeds your entitlement then a deduction of the relevant number of days' pay will be made from your final salary payment, or will be repayable by you upon leaving. If holiday already taken at the date you leave the company is less than your entitlement, then a payment in lieu of the relevant number of days' pay will be made with your final salary payment.

UNPAID HOLIDAY

There are a number of circumstances where you may be able to take "unpaid" holiday;

- you may qualify for "Parental Leave" following the birth of a child. Any additional leave granted under your paternity rights that are not paid for under the regulations must be taken as unpaid holiday
- consideration may be given by the company to allow you to take "unpaid" leave, provided it is not detrimental to the operational needs of the company. In order for unpaid holiday to be considered you must notify your line manager in writing clearly stating the reason you wish to take the time off as unpaid, at least one month prior to the date of the requested unpaid holiday.

Please note: in accordance with the Working Time Regulations; holiday entitlement will continue to accrue during unpaid leave. You are also reminded that the company has the right to refuse to grant any holiday request if it is deemed detrimental to the company's operations.

JURY SERVICE AND COURT WITNESSES

There will be no forfeiture of holiday entitlement on account of you being required to carry out jury service or your requirement to attend as a witness at Court.

Please note: It is important that you notify the company immediately upon receiving notice to attend Jury Service in order that cover can be obtained and that expenses and compensation can be claimed from the Courts.

OTHER TIME OFF

BEREAVEMENT

The company may grant to you short periods of compassionate leave upon the death of a close relative. Such leave may be paid or unpaid according to circumstances and closeness of the relation who has passed away and remains at the absolute discretion of the company.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS OR OPERATIONS

Routine pre-booked medical and dental check-ups are to be taken from your normal annual leave entitlement or as unpaid holiday.

If you have to attend an “emergency” medical or dental appointment at short-notice, this will normally be unpaid, although the company may at its discretion permit this to be taken as paid time off; however proof will always be required and should be given to your line manager upon your return. If you are ill, following such an appointment, you must follow the sickness reporting procedure.

If you require time off to undergo major or minor surgery, this should be booked as part of your normal holiday booking procedure. If you are ill or require a period of convalescence, following such an operation, a decision will be made by the company as to whether to grant paid leave or a period of sick leave. These cases will be considered on an individual basis and the Company reserves its right to exercise discretion regarding the payment or non-payment of salary during any absence from work through sickness.

EXTENDED LEAVE

In extreme cases you may require a considerable amount of time off to look after a seriously ill or dying relative. Any request for such extended leave should be submitted in writing to your line manager, prior to the date of the required leave. Subject to operational requirements, the company may grant the leave period, which may be paid or unpaid dependent upon the circumstances.

JURY SERVICE

If you are called to carry out duty as a juror or witnesses at Court, you must advise the company of the forthcoming commitment. In addition you will be entitled to claim for loss of earnings, a daily travel allowance and subsistence. The maximum loss of earnings should be claimed from the Court and in order to do so, please forward any claim forms received from the court to the company Accounts Department as soon as possible in order that the appropriate information can be provided.

PATERNITY & PARENTAL LEAVE

POLICY

In respect of all aspects of Paternity Leave; the company will comply with all current legislation and any amendments to these acts which become law through the implementation of the Works and Families Act 2006.

PATERNITY LEAVE

As a father you may be entitled to Paternity Leave to take time off to be with your child and/or to offer support to the mother. In order to qualify for Paternity Leave you must;

- Have responsibility for bringing up a child;
- Be the biological father, or be the mother's husband or partner (including same sex couples);
- Have worked for the company for a period of 26 weeks ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC);
- Be receiving earnings above the Lower Earnings Limit for National Insurance purposes.

If you qualify, you are entitled to two weeks paid ordinary paternity leave, but this must be taken as either one or two consecutive weeks and not as odd days off. If you take two weeks they must be taken together and be taken within 56 days after the birth.

ADDITIONAL PATERNITY LEAVE

Additional Paternity Leave (APL) will allow you to take up to 26 weeks' **paid leave** to care for the child on top of the two weeks of ordinary paternity leave. This can only be taken 20 or more weeks after the child's birth, or placement for adoption, and **only once** the mother has returned to work from statutory maternity, or adoption leave, or she has ended her entitlement.

Provided the above has been complied with and you wish to apply for Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP); then you must provide the company with a self-certification document (SC3) and give them at least 28 days' notice of the dates when you wish to take Additional Paternity Leave (APL).

PARENTAL LEAVE

If you have completed one year's service with the Company, and your child was born on or after 15 December 1994, you are entitled to a maximum of **thirteen weeks'** unpaid parental leave to care for your child.

The leave applies to both parents, but only one of them may take the time off in respect of each child and at least 21 days' notice must be given of the requested leave. The leave may be taken in blocks of one week upwards up to a maximum of four weeks in any one year at any time before your child's 5th birthday.

Please note: As per the Working Time Regulations; when on unpaid holiday you will continue to receive all your statutory contractual benefits as though you were still working.

ADOPTION LEAVE

If you adopt a child, or you are a member of a couple that adopts jointly; then you will be entitled to **thirty-nine weeks** of paid Ordinary Adoption Leave and following this; you will also be entitled to a **further 13 weeks** of unpaid Additional Adoption Leave. The other partner of a couple may also be entitled to Paternity Leave.

In order to qualify for Adoption Leave and Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP), you must;

- have been matched with a child for adoption
- have worked for the company for six months by the time you are notified of the match for adoption
- notify the company of your intention to take Adoption Leave within seven days of your notification and the date when you wish your leave to start
- be receiving earnings above the Lower Earnings Limit for National Insurance purposes
- provide a 'matching certificate' from the agency to prove your entitlement to SAP

You can start your ordinary Adoption Leave from the date the child is placed with you; or from a set date within 14 days **prior** to the date of placement.

EMERGENCIES

You will be entitled to take reasonable time off to deal with an "emergency" involving a dependent, or to attend an emergency medical or dental appointment with them.

Such time will normally be regarded as paid; however, such periods are expected to be short in duration and not for the purpose of looking after a sick child or dependent relative. In this event, where a more prolonged period of time off is required, then you should, subject to operational requirements, be considered for a period of unpaid compassionate leave or normal holiday.

You are not entitled to be paid for such time off, although at the absolute discretion of the company, short periods may be paid.

MATERNITY LEAVE

The company shall abide by all current legislation in respect of your rights to Maternity Leave and Maternity Pay.

Statutory maternity rights fall into four main categories:

- Time off for antenatal care.
- Protection against unfair dismissal on maternity-related grounds.
- Maternity leave and maternity absence.
- Maternity benefit.

Please note: Childbirth means the live birth of your child, or a stillbirth after your pregnancy provided it lasts at least twenty-four weeks.

MATERNITY RIGHTS

If you are pregnant, you are entitled to at least **twenty-six weeks** Statutory Ordinary Maternity Leave [OML] and **twenty-six weeks** Additional Maternity Leave [AML] regardless of your length of service. This means that you have the right to take up to **one full year** off work. During your ordinary maternity leave you have a statutory right to continue to benefit from the terms and conditions of your employment as though you were still at work and not on maternity leave; except in respect of the terms providing for your wages or salary.

STATUTORY MATERNITY PAY

If you are pregnant **AND** qualify within the terms of the current regulations, you are entitled to receive up to **thirty-nine weeks** SMP. In order to take advantage of the right to this, you must give the company proper notification of your intentions. Please note that you may continue working right up until the date your baby is born and still retain your full thirty-nine week entitlement to SMP which will be paid whether or not you intend to return to work.

Qualification for SMP

In order to qualify for SMP, you must have been employed by the company for a continuous period of at least twenty-six weeks up to and including the qualifying week.

- Qualifying Week: **15th week** before the Expected Week of Childbirth for SMP;
- Earnings: Average earnings must be above the Lower Earnings Limit for NIC liability
- National Insurance: If you are married and paying reduced rate National Insurance contributions you may be entitled to SMP if you satisfy the qualifying conditions
- Notification: The rules are as for maternity leave.

SMP is payable up to a maximum of thirty-nine weeks which is known as the Maternity Pay Period (MPP). Your MPP will not start **prior to the 11th week** before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC) and no later than the date of childbirth. SMP can start on any day of the week and SMP will be payable on a daily basis.

If you are absent with a pregnancy-related illness at any time **from the 6th week prior** to the EWC, your MPP will start from the 6th week or, if your absence commences later than this; then your MMP will start from the Sunday following the first day of that absence.

Amount of Statutory Maternity Pay

- Higher Rate: 90% of your average weekly earnings provided this is higher than the rate for SMP and if it is not then you will be paid the rate of SMP. This is payable for the first six weeks SMP is due.
- Lower Rate: standard rate of SMP.

Conditions

SMP is treated as pay and is subject to PAYE, Income Tax and National Insurance Contributions. Any lawful deductions that can be made from your pay (such as pension contributions) can also be made from your SMP. It is paid at the time when your wages would normally be paid for that period, i.e. follows normal payroll practice. Please note that SSP and SMP cannot be paid at the same time.

RETURNING TO WORK FOLLOWING MATERNITY LEAVE

The company does not have the right to contact you to ask if you will be returning to work at the end of your maternity leave and will therefore assume that you will take your full entitlement to maternity leave (i.e. OML and AML) before returning to work. The company will however write to you at least 28 days prior to the end of your MLP to notify you of the date on which your MLP ends.

However, if you wish to return before the end of your MLP, you must give at least **8 weeks'** notice of the date you intend to return. If you do not intend to return to work at the end of your MLP, then you must give the company at least the normal contracted notice period.

Except where a redundancy situation has arisen; then following your OML you are entitled to return to the same job as though you had not been away from work. This also applies when returning after your AML (unless this is not reasonably practicable) in which you will be offered suitable alternative work on no less favourable terms and conditions.

You do not have a statutory entitlement to a job share, part-time position or flexible hours upon your return from maternity leave, but the company will if given proper notification consider on an individual case by case basis, any requests for flexible working.

FAILURE TO RETURN TO WORK FOLLOWING MATERNITY LEAVE

Dismissal on pregnancy-related grounds will automatically be unfair. However, if you fail to return as expected following the end of your maternity leave, then normal termination of employment procedures will apply.

SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE

Parents of babies born (or adopted) on or after 5th April 2015 may be eligible to benefit from Shared Parental Leave. This permits maternity and paternity leave and pay provisions to be used in a different way to that previously. The structure of existing maternity and paternity provisions remains but if the shared parental leave option is utilised by the parents of children born or adopted after 5th April 2015, then the current maternity and paternity provisions cease as the new provisions now focus on who of the eligible parents will benefit from these.

Note that in order for the shared parental leave rights to commence, this can only be done after the mandatory maternity leave period of (usually) two weeks' after childbirth has expired. Additionally there must be at least eight weeks' of maternity leave remaining unused, and then the balance can be split between eligible parents as shared parental leave.

USING SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE

To take advantage of this right, a parent on maternity leave must return to work effectively bringing their maternity leave to an end before it would otherwise have expired. This also ends the right to maternity pay. The remaining maternity leave period (at least 8 weeks), and the remaining maternity pay now falls under the shared parental leave provisions which can be split between the two parents, subject to them satisfying the eligibility criteria.

NOTICE REQUESTING SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE

A parent (not the birth mother) who wants to take up shared parental leave first needs to give notice to their employer stating:

1. They are entitled to shared parental leave, and
2. That they wish to take shared parental leave.

This parent will need to set out their relationship with the mother, and give an indication of when they might take the leave. The notice should also consent to the use of their personal information, and make a declaration that both parents meet the eligibility requirements.

BINDING NOTICE

The parent **must** give their employer a Binding Notice of the Intended Commencement Date of their shared parental leave. This date must be at least eight weeks before the leave period is intended to commence, and must be arranged to take place within the first year of the baby's life. Shared parental leave can be utilised flexibly;

- It must be taken in blocks of 1 week, and not partial weeks.
- It may be alternated between parents
- Parents can apply for periods of discontinuous leave, for example, one week on and one week off (note if both parents are alternating shared parental leave, this will require both employers to be in agreement)
- Discontinuous Leave can only be taken to a maximum of 3 occasions and on each occasion the parent will have to submit separate binding notices and enter into a minimum of a 2 week consultation period with their employer for each separate occasion of discontinuous leave. (Note once the final period of discontinuous leave has been taken this will constitute the ending of the shared parental leave and both parents will be required to return to work).

The three Binding Notices cannot lawfully be refused, however, any change to a proposed block of leave requested by a parent will count as a fresh notice, and will count as one of that parent's three notices.

The employer may however refuse a binding notice provided the notification is for blocks of discontinuous leave and as an alternative offers the parent the right to take their shared parental leave in a single continuous block. It is therefore beneficial for the employee and employer to discuss and attempt to agree a way in which the different blocks of leave can be taken. If it is refused, each separate block would need a separate notice, and therefore would be limited to a maximum of three blocks. Note that once three binding notices have been submitted and refused (or accepted), there is no further right to request shared parental leave.

ELIGIBILITY

Both Parents

- have been employed continuously by the same employer for at least 26 weeks by the end of the 15th week before the due date (this is around the time you got pregnant)
- stay with the same employer while you take SPL
- be 'employees' (not 'workers')
- each earn on average at least £116 a week

If The Mother's Partner Wants To Take The SPL And Shpp

The mother must:

- have been working for at least 26 weeks (they do not need to be in a row) during the 66 weeks before the week the baby's due
- have earned at least £390 in total across any 13 of the 66 weeks

The mother's partner must:

- have been employed continuously by the same employer for at least 26 weeks by the end of the 15th week before the due date (this is around the time the mother got pregnant)
- stay with the same employer while they take SPL
- be an 'employee' (not a 'worker')
- earn on average at least £116 a week

If the mother's partner is a 'worker', they can get ShPP but not SPL. If the mother's partner earns less than £116 a week, they can get SPL but not ShPP.

If the mother wants to take the SPL and ShPP

The mother's partner must:

- have been working for at least 26 weeks (they do not need to be in a row) during the 66 weeks before the week the baby's due
- have earned at least £390 in total in 13 of the 66 weeks (add up the highest paying weeks, they do not need to be in a row)

The mother must:

- have been employed continuously by the same employer for at least 26 weeks by the end of the 15th week before the due date (this is around the time she got pregnant)
- stay with the same employer while they take SPL
- be an 'employee' (not a 'worker')
- earn on average at least £116 a week

PROTECTED RIGHTS

Eligible parents are protected from differential treatment for requesting shared parental leave, and also benefit from the same right to return to their roles after up to 26 weeks leave, as in a normal maternity leave situation.

KEEPING IN TOUCH DAYS

A mother on maternity leave has the right to take up to 10 Keeping In Touch (KIT) days to stay familiarised with the workplace for when they return to work. During shared parental leave, each parent will be able to take up to 10 KIT days each. These are now called Shared Parental Leave In Touch (SPLIT) days and so a maximum of 20 (twenty) days may be taken collectively. Payment for such SPLIT's must be negotiated in advance and are dependent on the type and amount of "work" carried out on such days. Note that where SPLIT's are utilised by either or both parent(s) and payment for work is made, receipt of such payment does not affect the entitlement to maternity pay.

FLEXIBLE WORKING

The company is committed to creating a positive working environment for its employees, within the constraints of operational procedures and demands. In this respect, the company shall abide by the provisions of the Employment Rights Act 1996, the Employment Act 2002, Flexible Working Regulations 2014 and the provisions of the Works and Families Act 2006, and shall seriously and carefully consider any requests from eligible employees in respect of flexible working. Any requests shall be considered independently from any other rights the employee may have under the Equality Act 2010.

Consideration shall be given to allowing eligible employees to request a change in the hours they work; the times they work; or to work from home. Making a request does not guarantee agreement as the company retains its right to consider the circumstances and ability to accommodate such requests. The objective however, is to create opportunity for discussion as to whether a change to the working pattern of parents can be mutually achieved.

ELIGIBILITY

In order to be eligible to submit a request for flexible working an individual must:

- be an employee of the company (whether this is on a part or full-time basis);
- have worked with their employer continuously for at least 26 weeks at the date of application;
- not be an agency worker;
- not be a member of the armed forces ;
- not have made another application to work flexibly during the past twelve months.

Employees with less than 26 weeks service do not have a statutory right to request flexible working, although the company may be prepared to consider such request on a case by case basis.

MAKING A REQUEST

To make a request for flexible working employees must:

- make their request in writing, state the date the request is made, the change to working conditions they are seeking, and the date they would like the change to take effect;
- state whether they have made a previous application for flexible work and the date of that application;
- what change to working conditions they are seeking and how they think this may affect the business e.g. cost saving to the business
- if they are making their request in relation to the Equality Act 2010, for example, as a reasonable adjustment for disabled employee;

COMPANY OBLIGATIONS

Once a request has been received the company shall arrange a meeting with the employee to discuss the request. During such meeting the reason for the request, what the employee is looking for and how the company may accommodate such a request should be discussed. Where the request is not approved, the company shall discuss potential compromises, before any final decision is made.

The company shall normally permit the employee to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative, even though it is not statutorily required to do so.

The company shall consider all requests in a reasonable manner and shall only refuse them if there is a business reason(s) for doing so based on the following list:

- the burden of additional costs
- an inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff
- an inability to recruit additional staff
- a detrimental impact on quality
- a detrimental impact on performance
- detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work
- a planned structural changes to the business

The company shall ensure that the process relating to any requests for flexible working shall be completed within 3 months of the initial request by the employee.

APPEAL PROCEDURE

Where the request has been refused, this will normally be the end of the matter and a further application cannot be made by the same employee for a further 12 months. However, in order to encourage the reaching of a mutually acceptable outcome, the employee retains the right to appeal against the decision;

The employee must write to the company within **14 days** of receipt of the decision not to allow the request outlining the reasons why they consider the decision unfair. Such reasons may include:

- that the company failed to follow the correct procedure
- the business grounds for refusal are unfounded
- that the refusal was based on incorrect facts
- that the reasons for refusing the flexible working amounts to a breach of other current legislation

The company shall hold another hearing at a mutually agreeable date to hear the employee's case and where possible, the person hearing the appeal should be another more senior manager. Following the appeal the company shall write to the employee within a reasonable time outlining the decision of the appeal, which shall be considered final.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Introduction

This Social Media Policy applies to all employees, contractors, and agents of the Company.

This Policy exists to address the use by Users of all types of social network and social media platforms including, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest, Tumblr, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat

The purpose of this Policy is to minimise the various risks to the Company presented by Social Media usage.

In addition to this Policy, Users must also comply with other Company Policies including the Company's Data Protection Policy, Equal Opportunities.

General Principles

There are certain general principles that all Users should keep in mind when using Social Media, whether for personal use or for authorised work-related purposes. All Users must:

- Use Social Media responsibly and professionally, and at all times in accordance with their duties;
- Be mindful of what constitutes confidential, restricted, or other proprietary information and ensure that such information is never disseminated over Social Media without express authority;
- Be mindful of what constitutes personal data and ensure that personal data relating to colleagues and customers is never disseminated over Social Media unless it is used in accordance with the Company's Data Protection Policy and with express authority;
- Ensure that their use of Social Media does not breach any other of the Company's policies including, but not limited to, its Data Protection Policy, Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy;
- Ensure that their use of Social Media does not breach any other laws, regulatory requirements, or other applicable rules set out by regulatory bodies and other organisations;
- Ensure that they do not breach any copyright or other intellectual property rights when using Social Media;
- Be mindful of the fact that any communication may be relied upon in court, to the advantage or detriment of the individual or the Company and conduct their use of Social Media accordingly.

The viewing, transmission, downloading, uploading, or accessing in any way, whether through Social Media or otherwise, of any of the following material using the Company's Internet and Communication Facilities will amount to gross misconduct with the possibility of summary dismissal:

- Material which is pornographic, sexist, racist, homophobic, or any other discriminatory or otherwise obscene or offensive material;
- Illegal or criminal material, including material which breaches copyright or any other intellectual property right;
- Any material which has the object or effect of causing harassment to the recipient;

- Material which the User knows, or reasonably ought to know, is confidential, restricted, or otherwise proprietary information and which they are not authorised to deal with;
- Any website (Social Media or otherwise) which the Company has blocked access to.

Personal Social Media Use

Users may use Social Media for personal purposes occasionally during work hours for example, during breaks provided that such usage complies with the provisions of this Policy and provided that it does not interfere with their work responsibilities or productivity.

Business Social Media Use

Certain Users may from time to time be required to use Social Media on behalf of the Company. Users should only do so with the authorisation of a Director, in accordance with instructions issued by a Director, and in accordance with this Policy.

Use of Social Media for business purposes must comply with the provisions of this Policy at all times. Users using Social Media on behalf of the Company may from time to time be required to interact with other internet users via Social Media, for example, in response to posts or enquiries regarding the Company. Unless the instructions issued to that User specifically authorise the User to respond without further approval, the User may not respond to any such communications without the prior approval of a Director. In any event, no User using Social Media on behalf of the Company should respond to such communications, with or without prior approval, without first consulting the relevant individual and/or department unless they are fully knowledgeable of the relevant topic and suitably qualified to respond.

Social Media contacts made during the course of business are to be treated as confidential information belonging to the Company.

Acceptable Use of Social Media

If a User makes any posting, contribution, or creation or publishes any other content which identifies or could identify the User as an employee, contractor, agent, or other member or associate of the Company, or in which the User discusses their work or experiences relating to the Company, the User must at all times ensure that their conduct is appropriate and consistent with their contract of employment and the corporate image of the Company, and should bear in mind that the User owes a duty of fidelity to the Company.

Unless specifically instructed to do so a Director, Users should make it clear that they are posting on Social Media as themselves, not as the Company, and that all opinions and ideas expressed on Social Media by that User are those of the User and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Company. Unless using Social Media on behalf of the Company, Users should not use any Social Media accounts belonging to (or otherwise associated with) the Company.

Company email addresses may not be used to sign up to any Social Media websites

Users should always be respectful to others when using Social Media and should always be mindful of the fact that their association with the Company may be known to anyone at any time. The conduct of all Users on Social Media may reflect on the Company, whether positive or negative. This applies whether a User is using Social Media for business purposes or for personal purposes, whether during working hours or otherwise.

If a User is unsure as to the appropriateness of a posting or other content they wish to publish, they should speak to a Director at the earliest opportunity to seek clarification.

Unacceptable and Prohibited Use of Social Media

Users must refrain from doing anything on Social Media or any other websites that defames, disparages, or otherwise brings into disrepute, the Company, a User's superiors, a User's colleagues, or other related third parties. This includes, but is not limited to, making false or misleading statements and impersonating colleagues or third parties.

Users must ensure that their use of Social Media does not damage the Company, its interests, or its reputation, whether directly or indirectly, in any way.

Unless specifically instructed to do so, Users must not represent themselves on Social Media as the Company or as posting on behalf of the Company.

Users may not share the following on Social Media unless specifically authorised to do so by a Director:

- Confidential information;
- Commercially sensitive or other proprietary business information belonging to or about the Company or any of its employees, contractors, agents, or other affiliated third parties and organisations;
- Personal data relating to colleagues or customers.

Users may not use any intellectual property belonging to the Company on Social Media (including, but not limited to, trademarks and logos) unless specifically authorised to do so by a Director.

Users may not add contacts made during the course of their duties to their personal Social Media accounts without the authorisation of a Director and without the express consent of the individuals involved.

Monitoring

To the extent permitted or required by law, the Company may monitor Users' use of the Company's Internet and Communications Facilities (including, but not limited to, Social Media use) for its legitimate business purposes which include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Ensuring that Company policies and guidelines are followed, and standards of service are maintained;
- Complying with any legal obligation;
- Investigating and preventing the unauthorised use of the Company's Internet and Communications Facilities and maintaining security;
- Investigating the suspected viewing or sending by Users of offensive or illegal material (or material that is otherwise in violation of this Policy);
- Investigating a User suspected of spending an excessive amount of time using the Company's Internet and Communications Facilities for personal purposes.

Users should be aware that all internet traffic data sent and received using the Company's Internet and Communications Facilities (including, but not limited to Social Media use) is logged, including websites visited, times of visits, and duration of visits. Any personal use of the internet will necessarily therefore be logged also. Users who wish to avoid the possibility of the Company becoming aware of any political or religious beliefs or affiliations should avoid visiting websites at work which might reveal such affiliations. By using the Company's Internet and Communications Facilities for personal use, Users are taken to consent to personal communications being logged and monitored by the Company. The Company shall ensure that any monitoring of Users' use of the Company's Internet and Communications Facilities complies with all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the GDPR (EU Regulation 2016/679 General Data Protection Regulation) and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Recruitment

The Company may use internet searches to carry out due diligence as part of its recruitment process. In these circumstances, the Company will act in accordance with its equal opportunities and data protection obligations.

Misuse and Compliance

Any User found to be misusing the Company's Internet and Communications Facilities (including, but not limited to, Social Media use) will be treated in line with the Company's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. Misuse of the internet can, in some cases, amount to a criminal offence.

Where any evidence of misuse of the Company's Internet and Communications Facilities (including, but not limited to Social Media use) is found, the Company may undertake an investigation into the misuse in accordance with the Company's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. If criminal activity is suspected or found, the Company may hand over relevant information to the police in connection with a criminal investigation.

PENSION

In accordance with current legislation regarding pensions auto-enrolment; where required to do so, the Company shall make available a pension scheme to the Employee provided all the necessary criteria are fulfilled. Under current regulations the Employee also has the right to opt-out of any scheme provided by the Company. Further details are available from your line manager.

A contracting-out certificate is not in force in respect of your employment.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

The company operates a Disciplinary Procedure and may initiate this for reasons of **POOR PERFORMANCE** and/or **MISCONDUCT**. These procedures will be used by the company as a means to help, support and encourage you to improve your performance and/or conduct, rather than primarily as a means of punishment.

This does not however preclude that the outcome may in fact result in sanctions being applied. Please also note that depending upon the circumstances; each stage of the process may be escalated to a higher level without going through each individual stage. In addition, escalation of the sanctions shall usually apply to the same or similar instances of misconduct or failure to achieve the improvement targets set as part of the performance process.

Where the employee has less than 2 years' service then the company reserves the right not to apply the disciplinary procedure but may choose to do so depending on the circumstances.

Poor Performance

Where your work performance falls below the standard required by the company, this issue will be addressed with you in order to encourage the improvement, achievement and/or maintenance of the required standard. Such cases may be addressed generally through the performance management process or as a specific instance of poor performance.

Misconduct

The primary objective of the disciplinary procedure for misconduct is not to seek your dismissal but to obtain a full explanation of the circumstances and following this, to ensure that such misconduct does not reoccur. However if the misconduct is serious this may result in the application of a sanction and in cases of Gross Misconduct, may result in summary dismissal.

Note that "Incapability" related to illness or injury shall be dealt with under a different process.

INVESTIGATION

A full impartial investigation will normally be undertaken to establish the facts, before and where appropriate, during the disciplinary process. As such an investigation may result in there being no grounds for formal action, it shall not always be necessary for the employee who may be subject of an allegation to be questioned in a formal investigation hearing prior to their attendance at a formal disciplinary hearing.

A formal investigation hearing shall normally only be carried out where there is insufficient clarity surrounding the issues to determine if a formal disciplinary hearing is necessary, bearing in mind that "Informal Resolution" may be more appropriate.

If a formal investigation hearing is carried out to determine clarity surrounding the issues, you will be invited in writing to the hearing will be entitled to have a work colleague or trade union representative present. During such a formal investigation hearing; at the point there becomes sufficient information to justify formal disciplinary proceedings, the hearing should be adjourned and a formal disciplinary hearing arranged.

ESCALATION OF PROCESS

The Company reserves the right depending on the severity of the poor performance or misconduct to escalate the disciplinary procedure to any stage without following each of the above steps, as deemed appropriate in the individual circumstances of the case

SANCTIONS

In the event of the disciplinary procedure being initiated, there are a number of potential outcomes open to the company as detailed below. In addition, the length of time the sanction remains active on the employee record for disciplinary purposes varies dependent upon the sanction (and may be increased or decreased by the company as appropriate) but is normally as stated below:

Method	Potential Sanction	Active on Employee Record
Informal Resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No Action• Advice & Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indefinitely (File Notes)• Indefinitely (File Notes)
Formal Process (Misconduct)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No Action• Advice & Guidance• 1st Formal Written Warning• Final Formal Written Warning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indefinitely (File Notes)• Indefinitely (File Notes)• 6 months• 12 months
Formal Process (Performance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No Action• Advice & Guidance• 1st Written Improvement Warning• Final Written Improvement Warning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indefinitely (File Notes)• Indefinitely (File Notes)• 6 months• 12 months

The company may escalate of the warnings sequentially through each stage following continued poor performance or misconduct issues; or depending upon the severity of each case, the company reserves the right to escalate to any level of disciplinary procedure as appropriate.

In the event of such process reaching a “dismissal” stage either through escalation of warnings or Gross Misconduct, then the following sanctions may be applied:

Method	Potential Sanction
Formal Process (Serious Misconduct or as result of Escalation of Warnings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dismissal – with notice
Formal Process (Gross Misconduct)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dismissal – without notice• Dismissal – with notice
Options available as an Alternative to Dismissal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demotion• Change of role or Relocation• Reduction in Salary

INFORMAL RESOLUTION

Where there is an initial issue of poor or unsatisfactory performance; or where there is any allegation of misconduct (especially where it is of a minor nature) the company shall fully consider resolving this matter through informal methods.

If utilising “Informal Resolution”; then the company will deal in the first instance through a process of confidential discussion to encourage an improvement in your performance or behaviour. This is an opportunity for you as the employee to address any such failings and in most cases, no further formal action will be necessary. You do not have the right to have someone accompany you to such informal meetings.

Note that if “Informal Resolution” is used to deal with misconduct or poor performance, then written warnings cannot be applied as a sanction. However, if “Informal Resolution” has been used for instances of misconduct and/or poor performance and there is no improvement, then formal action may be taken.

FORMAL PROCESS

Where informal discussion does not result in an improvement in your performance, or there are continued allegations of misconduct (or these appear to be of a more serious nature), then formal action will be instigated by the company.

Notification

- You will receive a formal written letter outlining the areas of unsatisfactory performance and/or allegations of misconduct.
- You will also receive any pertinent and/or relevant evidence a reasonable time prior to the date of the hearing.
- This notification letter will also invite you to a meeting within 5 working days (or at a mutually agreeable time and date), where the meeting will be held, who will be present and will also inform you of the right to be accompanied.
- You are required to attend this meeting and failure to do so without a reasonable excuse will result in the meeting being rearranged within a further 5 working days.
- Failure to attend this rearranged meeting without reasonable excuse will result in a decision being taken in your absence

Meeting

- During the meeting, which should be uninterrupted and held in private, a detailed discussion should take place outlining the areas of your poor performance and/or the allegations of misconduct.
- Full disclosure of the investigation undertaken by your employer will be made in order for you to be able to argue your case and offer an explanation of the alleged failings. This may include you providing evidence as part of the investigation process; or at the meeting itself; such as witnesses who were not interviewed as part of the original investigation, or other mitigating circumstances.
- Where there is evidence requiring further investigation, the meeting will be adjourned whilst this evidence is obtained. The meeting may also be adjourned for short periods to allow for comfort breaks, or to allow the manager conducting the meeting time to consider your comments and/or any evidence presented therein.

Decision

- Following the meeting, your employer will adjourn in order to fully review all the evidence prior to making any decision.
- Before making a decision, your employer will consider all the facts as well as your previous disciplinary record, previous performance, length of service and any action taken in any previous disciplinary cases. In addition careful consideration will be given to whether the intended action is reasonable and appropriate given the circumstances of the case.
- If the decision is to take no further action, you will be informed of this.
- The decision should be given to you orally upon reconvening of the hearing and will also be provided to you in writing as soon as practicable following the meeting.
- You have the right to appeal against the decision.

WRITTEN WARNING

Once consideration has been given to all the facts and evidence of the hearing, then the first formal sanction that may be taken by your employer is a written warning.

Misconduct

- The written warning should detail the nature of the misconduct, what is expected of you in order for you to change your behaviour for the future, appropriate review dates and your right to appeal against the decision.
- The letter will also be retained on your personnel record but will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after a specified period (i.e. 6 months).

Poor Performance

- The written warning should detail the nature of the poor or under performance; the steps you need to take to improve, a timescale for achieving this, appropriate review dates and your right to appeal against the decision.
- In addition the letter should outline any help and support to achieve the improvement that you could receive from the company.
- The letter will also be retained on your personnel record and act as a framework for assessing and reviewing your performance over a specified period (i.e. 6 months). This may be combined with a formal process of Performance Management or Employee Appraisal.

Please note: You will also be notified that this written warning represents the first stage in a process where if improvement in performance and/or conduct is not achieved, may lead to a final written warning; some other penalty; and/or ultimately dismissal.

FINAL WRITTEN WARNING

If poor performance and/or conduct are not improved; usually within the specified period, you may be issued with a final written warning.

- However, depending upon the individual circumstances of each case, you may be issued with more than one written warning before reaching this stage.
- Prior to any decision being taken, your employer will follow the formal process as outlined above and only determine the severity of disciplinary action to be taken following a full investigation and relevant meetings with you.
- Where the decision is taken to issue you with a final written warning; this will be sent to you as soon as practicable following the meeting with you and will outline the necessary changes in your performance or behaviour that are required; and a timescale for those improvements; and your right to appeal against the decision.
- In cases of poor performance, any support the Company may offer you to achieve and improvement will also be outlined along with a date for further review. The letter will be retained on your personnel record and act as a framework for assessing and reviewing your performance over a specified period (i.e. 12 months).
- In cases of misconduct, the letter will clearly outline what is expected of you in order for you to change your behaviour in the future as well as a review date. The letter will also be retained on your personnel record but will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after a specified period (i.e. 12 months).

Please note: You will also be notified that this written warning represents the final stage in a process where if improvement in performance and/or conduct is not achieved, may lead to a penalty which could include dismissal.

DISMISSAL

If there is a continued failure to improve poor performance and/or conduct after following the above process, then the final sanction available to your employer may be your dismissal. Alternative penalties may include demotion, transfer or loss of pay.

- Prior to any decision being taken, your employer will follow the formal process as outlined above and only determine the severity of disciplinary action to be taken following a full investigation and any relevant meetings with you.
- Where the decision is to dismiss; you will be informed of the reasons at the meeting and this will be supported in writing as soon as practicably thereafter.
- The letter outlining the reasons for dismissal will also state the date of termination of your contract, any notice period and your right to appeal against the decision.

APPEAL

- If you wish to appeal against a decision from any stage of the above process then you must notify the company, in writing, detailing the grounds for your appeal, within 7 days following the hearing date (unless stated otherwise to you).
- Following receipt of your appeal letter, your employer will write to you to arrange an appeal hearing as soon as possible and where practicable within 5 working days.
- You will receive a letter inviting you to the appeal which will outline the time and date of the meeting and the names of those who will be hearing the appeal. You have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or Trade Union representative at this meeting.
- The appeal will normally be heard by a more senior manager or Director; however, if due to the size of the company this is not possible, then another manager should hear your appeal.
- Please note however that your appeal hearing may, depending on the circumstances, be heard by the same person who dealt with the original hearing
- Once your appeal has been heard, you will be informed of the decision.
- A letter outlining the decision will also be sent to you within a reasonable time (not greater than 28 days) outlining the reasons for the decision. This will also state whether this appeal was the final step of the process or whether further representation is available to you.

GROSS MISCONDUCT

If the Company is satisfied that an act of gross misconduct has occurred, the result will normally be summary dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice.

Gross Misconduct is where there has been a serious breach of contractual terms. There is no exhaustive list which may constitute gross misconduct and whether a particular act or omission is gross misconduct, serious misconduct or general misconduct will depend on the circumstances. Some examples are listed below; where you:-

- a) commits a substantial breach of any of their obligations under the contract of employment, including refusal to carry out a reasonable and lawful instruction
- b) refusal to undergo a search of person or property when requested to do so by a suitably authorised person
- c) breaches any of the regulations in respect of their professional duties under current legislation, including but not exclusive to breaching any Code of Practice
- d) fails to produce documentation upon request relating to eligibility for employment within the United Kingdom, or becomes ineligible to work within the United Kingdom
- e) is guilty of any conduct which brings the Company into disrepute
- f) is convicted of any criminal offence (other than road traffic)
- g) becomes bankrupt
- h) commits theft, fraud or deliberate falsification of records
- i) assaults or fights with another person
- j) deliberately damages company property
- k) is seriously incapable whilst at work through alcohol, whether required to travel by vehicle to their place of work or otherwise
- l) is under the influence of illegal drugs whilst at work
- m) through serious negligence causes unacceptable loss, damage or injury
- n) carries out a serious act of insubordination
- o) deliberately or maliciously breaches the Company's Equal Opportunity Policy.
- p) deliberately or maliciously breaches the Company's IT Policy
- q) deliberately or maliciously breaches the Company's Social Media Policy
- r) conducts themselves in any way that is defamatory; offensive or obscene; untrue or malicious or in breach of copyright
- s) uses any methodology for purposes of intimidation or harassment

SUSPENSION FROM WORK

Following an allegation of gross misconduct, your employer may suspend you on full pay.

- Such decision will only be taken after careful consideration of the available facts.
- Suspension may occur for two reasons
 - To carry out an investigation in which case the suspension will not normally be for more than five working days (but may be extended if necessary) and should only last for the period whilst the allegation is investigated;
 - Pending a disciplinary hearing, where it is felt necessary by the company to do so in order to ensure that a fair and proper hearing is not prejudiced by the actions of any employee who may be involved;
- Suspension from work is not a disciplinary action and is not a prejudgement.
- The company reserves the right to place any employee on paid Garden Leave rather than suspension pending an investigation or disciplinary hearing.

GRIEVANCE AND DISPUTES PROCEDURE

GRIEVANCE/DISPUTES

If you have a grievance relating to your working environment or to a specific member of staff, you may initiate the Grievance Procedure to resolve the issue.

Informal Discussions

- If you have a grievance about your employment or about a member of staff, you should discuss it informally with your immediate line manager. It is hoped that most concerns will be resolved at this stage.

Step 1 – in writing to your Line Manager:

- If you feel that the matter has not been resolved through informal discussions, you must put your grievance in writing to your line manager. If the grievance relates to an issue with your line manager, then this should be put in writing to the next manager in seniority.

Step 2 – invitation to a meeting:

- You will receive a reply within 5 working days inviting you to a meeting where you will be able to raise your grievance. You have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or Trade Union representative at this meeting.
- You must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting.
- Once the grievance has been discussed, a decision will be sent to you in writing within a reasonable time.

Step 3 – appeal hearing by Senior Manager/Director:

- In the event of you feeling the grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved you should appeal and should put the reason for the appeal in writing. Your line manager will arrange an appeal hearing as soon as practicable, which will be heard by a more senior manager or Director. If due to the size of the company this is not possible, then another manager should normally hear your appeal.
- You will receive a letter within 5 working days inviting you to the appeal which should take place as soon as practicable. You have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or Trade Union representative at this meeting.
- Once your grievance has been heard at appeal, a letter outlining the decision will be sent to you within a reasonable time and will also state whether this was the final step of the process or whether further representation is available to you.

Please note: Written records will be maintained in respect of the nature of grievance, written correspondence, conversations, actions and decisions taken and the reasons for these. In the event of an appeal, records regarding this and any subsequent actions or developments will also be kept.

GDPR & Data protection Policy

Introduction

The Company needs to gather and use certain information about individuals.

These can include customers, suppliers, business contacts, employees and other people the organisation has a relationship with or may need to contact.

This policy describes how this personal data must be collected, handled and stored to meet the company's data protection standards — and to comply with the law.

Why this policy exists

This data protection policy ensures the Company:

- * Complies with data protection law and follow good practice
- * Protects the rights of staff, customers and partners
- * Is open about how it stores and processes individuals' data
- * Protects itself from the risks of a data breach

Data protection law

The Data Protection Act 2018 describes how organisations — including the Company— must collect, handle and store personal information.

These rules apply regardless of whether data is stored electronically, on paper or on other materials.

To comply with the law, personal information must be collected and used fairly, stored safely and not disclosed unlawfully.

The Data Protection Act is underpinned by eight important principles. These say that personal data must:

1. Be processed fairly and lawfully
2. Be obtained only for specific, lawful purposes
3. Be adequate, relevant and not excessive
4. Be accurate and kept up to date
5. Not be held for any longer than necessary
6. Processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects
7. Be protected in appropriate ways
8. Not be transferred outside the European Economic Area (EEA), unless that country or territory also ensures an adequate level of protection

People, risks and responsibilities

Policy scope

This policy applies to:

- * Head office

- * All branches and associated offices
- * All staff and volunteers
- * All contractors, suppliers and other people working on behalf of the Company

It applies to all data that the company holds relating to identifiable individuals, even if that information technically falls outside of the Data Protection Act 2018. This can include:

- * Names of individuals
- * Postal addresses
- * Email addresses
- * Telephone numbers
- * ...plus any other information relating to individuals

Data protection risks

This policy helps to protect the Company from some very real data security risks, including:

- * Breaches of confidentiality. For instance, information being given out inappropriately.
- * Failing to offer choice. For instance, all individuals should be free to choose how the company uses data relating to them.
- * Reputational damage. For instance, the company could suffer if hackers successfully gained access to sensitive data.

Responsibilities

Everyone who works for or with the Company has some responsibility for ensuring data is collected, stored and handled appropriately.

Each team that handles personal data must ensure that it is handled and processed in line with this policy and data protection principles.

However, these people have key areas of responsibility:

- * The board of directors is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the Company meets its legal obligations.
- * Where appointed, The Data Protection Officer, is responsible for:
 - o Keeping the board updated about data protection responsibilities, risks and issues.
 - o Reviewing all data protection procedures and related policies, in line with an agreed schedule.
 - o Arranging data protection training and advice for the people covered by this policy.
 - o Handling data protection questions from staff and anyone else covered by this policy.
 - o Dealing with requests from individuals to see the data the Company holds about them (also called 'subject access requests').
 - o Checking and approving any contracts or agreements with third parties that may handle the company's sensitive data.
- * The IT manager, is responsible for:

- o Ensuring all systems, services and equipment used for storing data meet acceptable security standards.
- o Performing regular checks and scans to ensure security hardware and software is functioning properly.
- o Evaluating any third-party services the company is considering using to store or process data. For instance, cloud computing services.
- * The Marketing Manager, is responsible for:
 - o Approving any data protection statements attached to communications such as emails and letters.
 - o Addressing any data protection queries from journalists or media outlets like newspapers.
 - o Where necessary, working with other staff to ensure marketing initiatives abide by data protection principles.

Opting out

Even where the organisation is not relying on consent, it may wish to give people the opportunity to opt out of their data being used in particular ways.

Withdrawing consent

The organisation may wish to acknowledge that, once given, consent can be withdrawn, but not retrospectively. There may be occasions where the organisation has no choice but to retain data for a certain length of time, even though consent for using it has been withdrawn

General staff guidelines

- * The only people able to access data covered by this policy should be those who need it for their work.
- * Data should not be shared informally. When access to confidential information is required, employees can request it from their line managers.
- * The Company will provide training to all employees to help them understand their responsibilities when handling data.
- * Employees should keep all data secure, by taking sensible precautions and following the guidelines below.
- * In particular, strong passwords must be used and they should never be shared.
- * Personal data should not be disclosed to unauthorised people, either within the company or externally.
- * Data should be regularly reviewed and updated if it is found to be out of date. If no longer required, it should be deleted and disposed of.
- * Employees should request help from their line manager or the data protection officer if they are unsure about any aspect of data protection.

Data storage

These rules describe how and where data should be safely stored. Questions about storing data safely can be directed to the IT manager or data controller.

When data is stored on paper, it should be kept in a secure place where unauthorised people cannot see it.

These guidelines also apply to data that is usually stored electronically but has been printed out for some reason:

- * When not required, the paper or files should be kept in a locked drawer or filing cabinet.
- * Employees should make sure paper and printouts are not left where unauthorised people could see them, like on a printer.
- * Data printouts should be shredded and disposed of securely when no longer required.

When data is stored electronically, it must be protected from unauthorised access, accidental deletion and malicious hacking attempts:

- * Data should be protected by strong passwords that are changed regularly and never shared between employees.
- * If data is stored on removable media (like a CD or DVD), these should be kept locked away securely when not being used.
- * Data should only be stored on designated drives and servers, and should only be uploaded to an approved cloud computing services.
- * Servers containing personal data should be sited in a secure location, away from general office space.
- * Data should be backed up frequently. Those backups should be tested regularly, in line with the company's standard backup procedures.
- * Data should never be saved directly to laptops or other mobile devices like tablets or smart phones.
- * All servers and computers containing data should be protected by approved security software and a firewall.

Data use

Personal data is of no value to the Company unless the business can make use of it. However, it is when personal data is accessed and used that it can be at the greatest risk of loss, corruption or theft:

- * When working with personal data, employees should ensure the screens of their computers are always locked when left unattended.
- * Personal data should not be shared informally. In particular, it should never be sent by email, as this form of communication is not secure.
- * Data must be encrypted before being transferred electronically. The IT manager can explain how to send data to authorised external contacts.

- * Personal data should never be transferred outside of the European Economic Area.
- * Employees should not save copies of personal data to their own computers. Always access and update the central copy of any data.

Data accuracy

The law requires the Company to take reasonable steps to ensure data is kept accurate and up to date.

The more important it is that the personal data is accurate, the greater the effort the Company should put into ensuring its accuracy.

It is the responsibility of all employees who work with data to take reasonable steps to ensure it is kept as accurate and up to date as possible.

- * Data will be held in as few places as necessary. Staff should not create any unnecessary additional data sets.
- * Staff should take every opportunity to ensure data is updated. For instance, by confirming a customer's details when they call.
- * The Company will make it easy for data subjects to update the information it holds about them. For instance, via the company website.
- * Data should be updated as inaccuracies are discovered. For instance, if a customer can no longer be reached on their stored telephone number, it should be removed from the database.
- * It is the marketing manager's responsibility to ensure marketing databases are checked against industry suppression files every six months.

Subject access requests

All individuals who are the subject of personal data held by the Company are entitled to:

- * Ask what information the company holds about them and why.
- * Ask how to gain access to it.
- * Be informed how to keep it up to date.
- * Be informed how the company is meeting its data protection obligations.

If an individual contacts the company requesting this information, this is called a subject access request.

Subject access requests from individuals should be made by email, addressed to the data controller and this email address can be provided by your line manager. The data controller can supply a standard request form, although individuals do not have to use this.

Individuals will not be charged for the subject access request. The data controller will aim to provide the relevant data within 14 days.

The data controller will always verify the identity of anyone making a subject access request before handing over any information.

Disclosing data for other reasons

In certain circumstances, the Data Protection Act allows personal data to be disclosed to law enforcement agencies without the consent of the data subject.

Under these circumstances, the Company will disclose requested data. However, the data controller will ensure the request is legitimate, seeking assistance from the board and from the company's legal advisers where necessary.

Providing information

The Company aims to ensure that individuals are aware that their data is being processed, and that they understand:

- * How the data is being used
- * How to exercise their rights

To these ends, the company has a privacy statement, setting out how data relating to individuals is used by the company.

[This is available on request. A version of this statement is also available on the company's website.]

WHISTLE BLOWING

POLICY

As per the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 the company will protect most employees from being subjected to a detriment by their employer for whistle blowing, the detriment may be denial of promotion, facilities or training opportunities.

A qualifying disclosure will be a protected disclosure if the worker makes the disclosure in good faith, reasonably believes that the information/allegation is substantially true and the act is not for personal gain. In addition, one or more of the following conditions must be met: (a) the worker reasonably believed that he would be *subjected to a detriment* by his employer if disclosure were to be made to the employer or to a prescribed person; (b) in the absence of an appropriate prescribed person, the worker reasonably believed that disclosure to the employer would result in the *destruction or concealment of information* about the wrongdoing and (c) the worker had *previously disclosed* substantially the same information to his employer or to a prescribed person.

A qualifying disclosure occurs when:

- a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed, or is likely to be committed
- a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which he is subject
- a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur
- the health or safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered
- the environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged
- information tending to show any matter falling within any one of the preceding paragraphs has been, is being or is likely to be deliberately concealed

You will be required to sign a disclosure relating to whistle blowing.

PROCEDURE

Employees can make a qualifying disclosure to the employer or via internal procedures, to a prescribed person, a legal advisor and a Minister.

1. Inform line manager or senior manager

It is suggested that in the first instance employees contact their line manager unless the disclosure is in relation to that person; in which case the next most senior manager should be informed.

2. An investigating officer will be appointed

To investigate any disclosure thoroughly, promptly and efficiently.

3. Result of investigation

If the investigations reveal malpractice has occurred as stated above, then the appropriate authorities **must** be informed without delay. In the event that the allegations are founded and amount to breach of internal discipline only; then disciplinary action shall be considered. In the event the claim by one employee against another is found to be vexatious, then disciplinary action may be taken against that individual also.

In the event of whistle blowing occurring the company will ensure that the employee will not be victimised, bullying, harassed or unfairly dismissed as per the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. The discloser has the right to anonymity and may retain this until such time as the investigating officer determines that their anonymity is interfering with the investigation of the case. If so, then the discloser will be requested to reveal their identity and cannot unreasonably withhold this if it is necessary for the full and proper investigation of the complaint.

SMOKING

Introduction

The Company is a responsible employer that takes our obligations to our employees very seriously. We recognise the importance of the health, safety and welfare of our employees and so have developed this dedicated smoking policy in order to help us comply with our legal duties. Smoking causes serious damage to the health of smokers and research has also shown that second hand smoke causes cancers, heart and respiratory diseases in non-smokers as well.

Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- Provide a safe and healthy working environment for all staff, customers OR clients and visitors;
- Comply with all of the requirements imposed by law;
- Raise awareness of the dangers associated with tobacco smoke;
- Guarantee the right of non smokers to breathe air free of smoke; and
- Support staff who wish to give up smoking.

Restrictions on Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in any of the Company's premises, entrances, or grounds at any time by any person irrespective of their status in, or business with, the Company.

All visitors, customers, contractors and deliverers are required to abide by the Company's smoking policy. Staff must inform all of the above of the policy although it must be stressed that staff should not put themselves at any risk in furtherance of this policy.

No smoking signs must be displayed by the Company in all of its premises.

Smoking on Company premises or in Company vehicles constitutes an offence under the Health Act. If a member of staff does not comply with the Company's Smoking Policy, disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the Company's disciplinary policy.

Electronic Cigarettes

The Company acknowledges that some employees may wish to make use of electronic cigarettes ("e-cigarettes") in the workplace, particularly as an aid to giving up smoking. E-cigarettes (sometimes also referred to as personal vaporizers (PV) or electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS)) are battery-powered products that release a visible vapour that contains liquid nicotine that is inhaled by the user.

Although it is not a legal offence to smoke e-cigarettes in a public place, the Company prohibits the use of e-cigarettes in the workplace. This is because, even though they do not produce smoke, e-cigarettes release a vapour that could provide an annoyance or health risk to other employees. In addition, some e-cigarette models look like real cigarettes, which makes the Company's smoking ban difficult to police.

Employees wishing to smoke e-cigarettes must do so off-site at break times.

Support for Smokers

The company recognises the difficulty that employees wishing to give up smoking may face. Reasonable requests from staff for time to attend smoking cessation groups will be treated sympathetically.

Rob Heerin (Company HR Advisor) is responsible for maintaining the policy and will provide staff who wish to give up smoking with details of where to seek help.

All requests for help will be treated in the strictest confidence. Information will be stored and processed in accordance with the Company's Data Protection Policy.

Non-compliance

Non-compliance with this smoking policy by an employee may result in appropriate disciplinary action, in accordance with the organisation's disciplinary procedure. Employees are also reminded that it is a criminal offence for employees to smoke in smoke-free areas, with a fixed penalty of £50 or prosecution and a fine of up to £200.

Customers [OR clients] who smoke in smoke-free areas should be reminded of the no-smoking signs and asked to stop. If a customer [OR client] continues to smoke, employees should explain that the customer [OR client] is committing a criminal offence. If the customer [OR client] still refuses to stop smoking, staff should ask him/her to leave the Company's premises.

DRUGS & ALCOHOL POLICY

GENERAL

The Company Policy on Drugs and Alcohol is a fundamental part of the Company's strategy to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of its employees and others who may be affected by its activities. Drug and Alcohol consumption/dependency affects individual health and work performance in terms of safety, efficiency, productivity and attendance. In addition, it can have a detrimental effect on colleagues and dependents.

Other persons working for or on behalf of the Company are to be made aware of and comply with these requirements, however disciplinary and support provisions only apply to employees of the Company.

COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

- Employees must not present themselves for work under the influence of alcohol or drugs such that their performance or ability to carry out their duties safely and competently is impaired in any way.
- When representing the Company within or outside normal working hours, employees are expected to take a responsible attitude to alcohol.
- Consumption, possession or sale of banned substances is prohibited. Possession and sale is also a criminal offence under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.
- Employees taking over the counter or prescribed medication shall inform their supervisor or manager.

GENERAL RULES RELATING TO ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

Lunch Breaks

Employees must not consume alcohol during working hours including lunch breaks. The normal working hours during which the restrictions on alcohol consumption apply include all periods of work such as overtime and extra duty and any period whilst waiting for work. Periods of travelling to or from a site will also be treated as falling within the scope of the Policy.

Hospitality and Entertainment

Where employees are involved in corporate hospitality or entertainment of customers, suppliers or other visitors, they are expected to take a responsible attitude to alcohol. Such functions should normally be arranged at times so that employees do not have to return to work having recently consumed alcohol. Employees remain subject to normal legal drink/drive limits.

Conferences and Training Courses

The regulations for consumption of alcohol apply during the normal working period of any conference or training course. They do not apply after hours except where work continues into the evening, for example, or some other extended period. Employees should remember that when they return to the workplace, they will be subject to limits for the presence of alcohol set out in the Policy.

Birthdays, Retirement Celebrations and Other Special Occasions

If alcohol is involved, such events should take place away from business premises and outside normal working hours.

CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE TESTING MAY BE IMPLEMENTED

The company reserves the right to require any employee to undergo a Drugs & Alcohol test administered by a specialist-testing agency where it has concern for the behaviour or wellbeing of an employee. In the absence of an acceptable explanation from the individual concerned the need for positive intervention will have been demonstrated and a '**For Cause**' test shall be initiated by the Manager.

Where an employee's attendance and/or work performance has been confirmed to be affected by an alcohol or drug-related problem, he or she shall be dealt with under the relevant procedure for managing attendance or performance.

SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS

Employees are reminded that they have a general duty to inform a Manager when they suspect a problem with another employee or where there is reason to suspect that an employee's behaviour is due to the influence of drugs or alcohol. It is imperative that these instances are reported immediately.

Employee Assistance Policy

The Company is committed to providing appropriate professional help and support to employees who suspect or know that they have an alcohol or drug-related problem and who voluntarily seek help.

Self-Referral by a worker who thinks they may have a problem

All such requests for assistance will be dealt with on a strictly confidential basis. Following a self-referral, feedback will only be given to management with the individual's consent.

Management Referral

An employee can be advised to seek assistance following an interview with their Manager where it is disclosed by the worker that they have a problem with alcohol or drugs. Following a management referral, feedback will be given to management.

Time off during normal working hours may be granted at the discretion of the Company where treatment, rehabilitation or counselling is required. It should be noted that help and support as outline above will not be available for any worker who has been involved in any accident or other situation where testing in accordance with this procedure has been undertaken or where the worker makes the disclosure during disciplinary proceedings.

RIGHT TO SEARCH

The Company has the contractual right to carry out searches of Employees and their property (including vehicles) whilst they are on the Company's premises or business. These searches are random and do not imply suspicion in relation to any individual concerned. Where practicable, the Employee will be accompanied by a third party who is on the premises at the time the search is being undertaken. The Employee has the right of refusal, but any such refusal may constitute a breach of contract which may lead to dismissal. The Employer has the right to contact the Police at any stage

MISCONDUCT

Misconduct related to consumption of alcohol or drugs is normally dealt with under the disciplinary procedure and acts of Gross Misconduct and may result in summary dismissal.

Dress and Appearance Policy

Introduction

Employees are expected to maintain an appropriate standard of dress, appearance and hygiene to ensure that the Company's professional image and reputation are maintained. This policy is designed to guide employees on the required standards of dress and appearance.

This policy is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of dress and appearance and the Company expects employees to use their common sense in dressing for work. The management team will be the sole judge of what is and is not appropriate for the purposes of this policy.

Employees are required to be neat, clean, well-groomed and presentable whilst at work, whether working on the Company's premises or elsewhere on Company business.

If employees do not comply with these rules, they will be subject to disciplinary action. In addition, and depending on the circumstances, employees may be required to go home and change their clothing. If this happens, employees will have no right to be paid for the duration of any absence from work.

The Company will review this dress and appearance policy periodically to ensure that it reflects appropriate standards and continues to meet our needs.

Religious and Cultural Dress

The Company recognises the diversity of cultures and religions of its employees and accepts that members of certain ethnic or religious groups are subject to strict religious or cultural requirements in terms of their clothing and appearance. Employees may wear appropriate religious and cultural dress (including clerical collars, head scarves, skullcaps and turbans) unless it creates a health and safety risk to the employee or any other person or otherwise breaches this policy.

Subject to necessary health, safety, security and hygiene requirements, the Company will take a sensitive approach and not insist on dress rules which run counter to religious or cultural norms. However, priority will be given to health and safety, security and other similar considerations. Employees who are uncertain as to whether an item of clothing is acceptable or who require further information and guidance on cultural and religious dress in the workplace should speak to a Director.

Company Dress Code

Employees must ensure that they wear their uniforms at all times during working hours, unless advised otherwise by their manager. Uniforms must always be clean and worn in a presentable fashion. The uniforms issued must not be altered in any way without the Company's permission.

Uniforms remain the property of the Company and damage or loss must be reported to a Director as soon as possible. Employees must take responsibility to ensure that good care is taken of uniforms and may be required to pay for clothing damaged or lost through negligence. In instances where a missing item would place an employee's health or safety at risk, the item(s) will be replaced immediately.

When employees are issued with items of protective clothing e.g. hard hats, masks or gloves, employees are required to wear protective clothing appropriately while carrying out their duties whenever required by law or by the Company's rules.

Employees must take reasonable care to ensure that protective clothing is not damaged, lost or stolen. Any damage or loss must be reported to a Director as soon as possible. In instances where a missing

item would place an employee's health or safety at risk, the protective clothing will be replaced immediately.

Any employee whose job involves working with machinery or working with food must keep his/her hair either short or tied back and must not wear any jewellery other than a wedding ring. These rules are in place for reasons of safety and hygiene.

EXPENSES

POLICY

The company will reimburse your expenses incurred necessarily in the course of your duties for the company and only if authorised and documented. Such reimbursement where applicable, e.g. allowances and mileage; will be restricted by the guidelines, rules and rates in compliance with Inland Revenue guidelines as updated from time to time.

Expenses that are classified as benefits and likely to give rise to additional tax liability on the company, e.g. lunch, personal entertainment and telephone calls (even if within accommodation costs), will not be reimbursed.

REIMBURSEMENT METHOD

You are expected to pay for expenses using your own resources, e.g. credit card, and reclaim reimbursement from the company in arrears, unless notified differently. Reimbursement to you will be normally via the monthly payroll. Exceptionally, e.g. if the magnitude of your claim is large and likely to expose you to financial embarrassment, reimbursement may be accelerated by cheque.

To reclaim expenses, you will submit a claim form, stating clearly the reasons for the expense, and ensure that the form is signed by your authorising manager.

BASE

For expense calculation purposes, the place where you work normally is your base. You may have only one base at one time. Daily travel expenses for routine commuting between your home and base for your contracted working period are at your cost and are not reimbursed.

Under exceptional circumstances, non-routine travel expenses outside of your contracted working period between home and base may be reimbursed if compliant with Inland Revenue guidelines, and if properly authorised in advance.

SUBSISTENCE

The Inland Revenue has established advisory benchmark subsistence allowances for meals and other incidental expenses that may be claimed without the submission of receipts. These are only applicable during day time hours. Night allowances will be paid as direct reimbursement of expenditure or must be agreed via an exemption document with HMRC.

Note that for payment of allowances, there is an expectation that expenditure shall have actually been incurred and subsistence allowances should not be claimed without doing so. It is recommended that where a subsistence allowance is to be claimed, the employee should retain any receipts as a matter of course, even though these will not be submitted with the claim.

Overnight Reimbursement

You will be reimbursed for the cost of reasonable overnight accommodation away from your home incurred necessarily in the course of your duties for the company if authorised and documented. You

will not be reimbursed for lunch, personal entertainment and telephone calls (even if within accommodation costs).

Day Reimbursement

You will not be reimbursed for lunch, personal entertainment and telephone calls.

Allowances

At your manager's discretion, when you are more than 5 miles away from your base on company business, the following Inland Revenue approved allowances may be paid through normal expenses without receipts.

£ 5.00 Breakfast Rate (irregular early starters only) - Where the employee leaves their home earlier than usual before 6.00am and incurs a cost on breakfast

£ 5.00 One Meal Rate (5 hour rule) - Where the employee has been away from his home/normal place of work for a period of at least five hours and has incurred a cost on a meal

£10.00 Two Meal Rate (10 hour rule) - Where the employee has been away from his home/normal place of work for a period of at least ten hours and has incurred a cost on a meal or meals

£15.00 Late Evening Meal Rate (irregular late finishers only) - Where the employee has to work later than usual, finishes work after 8.00 pm having worked his normal day and has to buy a meal which he would usually have at home

Note: If the employee is paid an allowance under the five or ten hour rule, the late meal allowance could still be paid if he finishes work after 8.00 pm and buys a meal that he would usually have at home. However, if the employee regularly finishes work late because, for example, he normally works the afternoon or evening shift, he would not be entitled to use the late evening meal rate.

TRAVEL

Mileage

Mileage may be payable by the company when using a private car, motorcycle or pedal cycle on company business, or when using a company vehicle for business use. In all cases, you are required to keep a record of the cumulative mileage claimed within the tax year. Mileage will be only be reimbursed on business travel with the distance calculated normally from your base. Please note that for journeys originating and/or terminating at your home, the Inland Revenue guidelines require that the trip distances be restricted to the shorter from/to your home or base, and expenses for travel to/from work are not payable.

If authorised to use your private car on company business, then the maximum rate payable is detailed below; however, the company may exercise its right to pay you a greater or lesser amount per mile travelled. However, that where you receive a higher pence per mile then this will be taxable, and conversely, where you are paid a lower amount, you may be entitled to tax relief on the difference. Contact the accounts department for more information.

Private car mileage allowances from tax year 2020/2021 are:

Private Cars (irrespective of engine capacity)	
<i>Up to 10,000 miles within tax year</i>	45p
<i>Over 10,000 miles within tax year</i>	25p
<i>Private Motorcycle</i>	24p
<i>Private Bicycle</i>	20p

Where you use a company vehicle, the mileage allowances from 01 December 2019 are:

<i>Company Cars</i>	Up to 1400 cc	1401-2000 cc	Over 2000 cc
<i>Petrol</i>	12p	14p	21p
<i>Gas</i>	8p	9p	14p
<i>Company Cars</i>	Up to 1600 cc	1601-2000 cc	Over 2000 cc
<i>Diesel</i>	9p	11p	14p
<i>Electric</i>	4p	4p	4p

Shared Travel

In respect of private vehicles, and in order to encourage car-sharing as well as reducing the environmental impact; an additional **5p** per mile is paid for each fellow employee passenger carried on the same business trip, full details must be recorded.

Parking

When away from your base in the course of your duties for the company, reasonable fees paid for parking will be reimbursed. Note that no one has the automatic right to claim for car parking expenses at their base. Fees paid by you for parking at base will be reimbursed only if sanctioned in advance.

Rail

Nominated senior managers may be permitted to travel first class by rail, and anyone accompanying or conducting an important visitor. In the latter case, approval in advance must be obtained. In all other cases, you must travel by standard class.

Air

Unless specifically authorised, all air travel will be by economy class.

Taxis

Taxis incurred necessarily in the course of your duties for the company will be reimbursed only if unavoidable and cost effective.

PHONES

The company will not reimburse the cost of your individual business calls on mobile or landline phones. This also applies to any reimbursement of rental charges or hardware costs. However, in exceptional circumstances you may be granted a phone allowance.

INTERNET & E-MAIL USAGE

The company will not reimburse the cost of your mobile or landline usage for access to the Internet or company e-mail. If you require access to either of these in the course of your business for the company, then approval in advance must be obtained.

FEES FOR PROFESSIONAL BODIES

The company will only reimburse your costs towards any subscriptions to Professional Institutes if membership is fundamental to your employment and have been agreed by the company with the Inland Revenue.

Employee Search Policy

Introduction

The Company aims to build and maintain with its employees a relationship characterised by mutual trust and respect. Whilst the vast majority of employees are trustworthy, there may occasionally be employees who do not maintain the same high standard of [something]. It is important that these employees are correctly identified in order to preserve the relationship that the Company enjoys with trustworthy employees.

Provision

The Company reserves the right to carry out personal searches of employees in the workplace. These searches may form part of a random search, or may be targeted to specific individuals or departments based on specific information received by the Company.

Employees are referred to their Terms and Conditions of Employment, which give the Company authority to carry out personal searches.

Personal searches will be carried out in support of Company policies, such as the Drug and Alcohol Policies, general Company rules and to generally protect Company assets and interests.

All searches will be carried out with regard to the Company's policies on Equal Opportunities and Bullying and Harassment.

Searches

All searches must be authorised by a Director in advance. Searches will be carried out in private by a suitable person of the same sex as the employee being searched.

All searches will be witnessed by a senior member of staff and, where requested, the employee shall be accompanied by a colleague of his or her choosing.

Searches will be limited to asking the employee to empty his or her pockets, bag [locker], [drawers or cabinets], and to remove their coat, jacket or outer clothing.

A written record will be made of each search, including:

- The time and date of the search;
- The reason for the search;
- Names of those present;
- The outcome of the search;
- and will be signed by all parties present.

Failure to consent to a search without reasonable justification may be treated as a disciplinary matter, and will be dealt with in accordance with the Company's disciplinary procedure.

Political Activity in the Workplace Policy

Introduction

The Company recognises the right of individuals to hold political opinions and to take part in political activity in their own time. It is, therefore, the Company's policy that employees may not take part in any type of political activity whilst at work.

Aims of the Policy

To provide a working environment in which all staff feel comfortable and in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity.

Provision

Whilst at work and during the course of employment, employees are prohibited from:

- political campaigning;
- handing out (or sending out via the Company's email system) written material, e.g. political leaflets;
- using the Company's resources (printers, faxes or photocopiers) to assist with political activity e.g. to print, copy or transmit political leaflets/messages;
- attempting to coerce others into holding a particular political opinion or trying to persuade them to engage in political activity;
- wearing political symbols, such as badges or t-shirts with political slogans;
- putting notices about political parties or statements of political views on the Company intranet or any of the Company's noticeboards;
- behaving with colleagues in a way that could amount to harassment or bullying, for example by mocking a colleague's political opinions, or exposing a colleague to extreme political views.

Outside work, employees must not behave in a way that could be detrimental to the Company, its relationships with clients/customers or its reputation.

The company does not wish to interfere with employees' political activities outside work but such activity must:

- be carried out only outside working hours and away from Company premises;
- not interfere with the work of any of the Company's employees;
- not say or write (including in emails and on social networking sites) anything which may bring the Company's name into disrepute.

Breaches of Policy

All employees are required to adhere to this policy. Any breaches of the policy may lead to disciplinary action. Serious breaches of this policy e.g. harassment and/or intimidation of colleagues may lead to dismissal.

CCTV SURVEILLANCE

At the company's discretion, Close Circuit Television [CCTV] may be deployed within every office under its jurisdiction. As far as practicable, the scheme will be conducted under the Code of Practice issued by the Data Protection Commission.

Where the company adopts such a policy, notices will be displayed in every office stating that CCTV may be deployed and the name of the person responsible for managing the scheme.

It is not the company's intention to constantly monitor its employees. Its intention by deploying such a scheme is to monitor specific areas from time to time to prevent and detect any or all of the following;

- damage to personal and/or company property
- theft of personal and/or company property
- harassment, intimidation, bullying or assault on any of its employees
- unauthorised access to areas within each office by employees or other intruders
- breaches of Health & Safety policies
- other criminal acts or breaches of the company rules

All CCTV recordings and images will be securely stored and will not be viewed by anyone unless they have been specifically authorised to do so. Such images will not be distributed to or viewed by any persons except those necessary to fully investigate any offences or breaches as stated above. Images collected under the above scheme will be **destroyed after 28 days** unless required as evidence for criminal or internal proceedings.

Any individual who has been caught on CCTV has the right to view those images. All requests to do so should be submitted in writing to the person stated as responsible for managing the scheme, who will arrange for such viewing to take place as soon as practicable following the request.

In addition, any complaints regarding the implementation or management of the above should be made in writing to the person responsible for managing the scheme.

STAFF RULES

You are required to observe and abide by the company's "Staff Rules" which are listed below. Breaches of these will be investigated and dealt with under the company disciplinary procedure, as and when the circumstances require.

TIME KEEPING & ABSENCE FROM WORK

- Unless previously authorised, you must be punctual for work at the required time as stated in your contract of employment or as arranged by your line manager.
- You must observe any stated lunch or tea breaks.
- Unless previously authorised, you should not leave work before the finishing time stated in your contract of employment or as arranged by your line manager.
- Any absence, late arrival or early departure from work must be documented and authorised, whether this is paid or unpaid holiday, sickness, maternity or paternity leave, or other time off; otherwise it will be regarded as unauthorised absence.
- Unauthorised absences from work may, depending on the circumstances, be construed as a breach of contract resulting in dismissal from the company.

CONDUCT

- Do not intimidate, harass, threaten or coerce fellow employees by using physical violence, improper language or other disorderly conduct.
- Do not place unauthorised documents on the company notice boards or remove or deface those documents placed with the authority of the management.
- Do not gamble on company premises.
- You are required to maintain a tidy working environment.
- You are required to dress appropriately to your role within the company and/or for your working environment. Examples of this would be the wearing of Protective Equipment or other clothing in order to comply with any Health & Safety policy. In addition, customer-facing roles may require the wearing of appropriate attire in order to ensure you portray the correct image for the company. If you are in any doubt, you should speak with your line manager for clarification.
- You should maintain an appropriate level of personal cleanliness.
- You must follow all reasonable instructions of supervisors or managers.

COMPANY PROPERTY

- Do not abuse, deface or wilfully damage company property.
- Company vehicles may only be used by authorised employees.
- All company property should be used only for company activities and should not be used for personal reasons unless previously authorised by a senior manager.
- Do not interfere with anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare.
- Use your work time only for company responsibilities and not for personal projects or activities, unless previously authorised.
- Pets and other animals (excluding guide dogs) are not permitted on company premises other than in exceptional circumstances and with the prior approval of a senior manager.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

- You must follow any written procedures concerning holidays, expenses, benefits etc. which are circulated or notified from time to time.
- You are required to be truthful when completing any documentation relevant to company use, which includes the completion of all personnel forms, medical records, other company forms and sickness certificates.
- It is contrary to company rules under all circumstances to falsify the time or attendance records of yourself or a fellow employee or encourage a fellow employee to take such action on your behalf.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- You are required to abide by and observe the company Health & Safety Policy at all times, as well as any general or specific guidance as specified under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.
- You must take reasonable care to promote the health and safety at work of yourself and your fellow employees.
- You are required to follow safe, normal work procedures and use only the equipment which you are authorised to use.
- In the event of fire or other alarms follow standing instructions and the orders given by your supervisor or manager, immediately and in an orderly manner.
- Do not carry any form of weapon, explosive or inflammable substance on to the company premises.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Do not convey to any person not in the company's employment any document relating to the business of the company except those published for distribution to the general public.
- Do not fill in or discuss any trading, marketing or financial surveys of any nature unless authorised in writing by a director of the company.
- Do not discuss or disclose any matters concerning financial operations or trading practices to any unauthorised person within the company or to persons outside the company.

TELEPHONE CALLS

- Company phones are to be used for company business only.
- Under no circumstances are telephone calls permitted to any Premium Rate lines or to numbers abroad, except those necessary for the carrying out of the company business.
- Personal calls are not permitted except in case of emergency or where authorised in advance by your line manager.