



## **COLLEAGUE HANDBOOK**

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# **SECTION 1**



**TIGERS**  
Childcare

## Our Core Values

**T** EAMWORK

We are one team and we work together by sharing our skills, knowledge and experience.

**I** NTEGRITY

We are honest, open, ethical & fair. We speak up when our core values are not being respected.

**G** ROWTH

Knowledge is understanding and we recognise that by continuing to learn and by expanding on our expertise and skills we grow as educators and as a company.

**E** XCELLENCE  
THROUGH QUALITY

We deliver the best possible outcomes for the children in our care and take pride in our work which is founded on quality.

**R** ELATIONSHIPS

We build relationships with the children in our care, their families and with each other. We do this by being open and honest in our communication and interactions.

**S** UPPORT

We support our colleagues and families. We understand the challenges everyone faces in their daily lives and we offer supports to help. Simply put, we work together, we win together, we move forward together.

**L** EADERSHIP

We lead by example and set the agenda for improvement: in ourselves, in our services and in our industry.

**E** MPATHY  
AND RESPECT

Everyone is treated equally within our company. We foster an environment where everyone (children, their families and colleagues) is listened to and valued.

**A** CCOUNTABILITY

We take ownership for our decisions and make smart, cost-effective and sustainable choices.

**D** IVERSITY

Our colleagues are our greatest strength. We know it takes people with different ideas, strengths, interests, and cultural backgrounds to make our company succeed.

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# COLLEAGUE EXPECTATIONS

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The success of any Organisation and that of its colleagues depends very largely on the colleagues themselves, and so we look to you to play your part as we shall continue to play ours.

We provide equal opportunities and are committed to the principle of equality regardless of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the traveller community. We will apply employment policies which are fair, equitable and consistent with the skills and abilities of our colleagues and the needs of the business. We look to your support in implementing these policies to ensure that all colleagues are accorded equal opportunity for recruitment, training and promotion and, in all jobs of like work, on equal terms and conditions of employment.

We will not condone any discriminatory act or attitude in the conduct of our business with the public or our colleagues and acts of unlawful harassment or discrimination are disciplinary offences.

We welcome you and express our sincere hope that you will be happy here in our team. We ask that you study carefully the contents of this Colleague Handbook as, in addition to setting out our rules and regulations, it also contains a great deal of helpful information.

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Tigers Childcare expects the following points be observed from all colleagues:

- Child safety must be observed at all times.
- Respect for each child.
- Observe confidentiality.
- Adhere to Company policies and procedures specific to the facility in which you work.
- Listen to each child and respect their contribution.
- Arrive on time and where possible be flexible when there is a shortage of staff.
- Appropriate dress.
- Observe health and safety.
- No foul language.
- No attending work under the influence of substances.
- Smoking is not allowed on the premises.
- Mobile phones must not be used in rooms during working hours.
- Treat children, Co-workers, Parents and all users with respect.

Remember that you have a responsibility to protect and promote children's rights by:

- Treating them with dignity, sensitivity, and respect.
- Encouraging children to have an input into how things are run.
- Helping children to be safe, happy and having as much fun as possible.
- Never favouring one child or children over others.
- Enabling children to regard their bodies as their own property.
- Encouraging them to express feelings, fears and experiences openly.
- Giving written information about the organisation to children and their parents/carers.
- Knowing about principles and practices of child protection including the legal duties.
- Never engaging in sexually provocative games or make suggestive comments even in fun.
- Respecting children's privacy in bathrooms or in changing rooms.
- Sensitivity ensuring that children know about the child protection policy.
- Always respond to complaints or allegations.

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- Helping children realise the difference between confidentiality and secrecy.
  - Being sensitive to the fact that some children are more vulnerable and have special needs.
  - Never using physical punishment with children.

You must be aware of the following when working with children in the Crèche;

- You should be sensitive to the risks involved in participating in contact sports or other activities.
- While physical contact is a valid way of comforting, reassuring and showing concern for children, it should only take place when it is acceptable to all persons concerned.
- You should never physically punish or be in any way verbally abusive to a child, nor should you tell jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of children.
- You should be sensitive to the possibility of developing favouritism, or becoming involved or spending more time with any one child.
- Children should be encouraged to report cases of bullying to you, or a worker of their choice. Complaints must be brought to the attention of your Manager.
- Everyone involved in the Organisation should respect the personal space, safety and privacy of individuals.

# CODE OF ETHICS

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## **A) TO CHILDREN**

It is the responsibility of each member of staff and Management to:

- Promote the welfare of each child.
- Respect diversity.
- Provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum.
- Maintain confidentiality.

## **B) TO FAMILIES**

It is the responsibility of each member of staff and Management to:

- Co-operate with families in meeting the needs of each child.
- Respect diversity.
- Communicate with families.
- Share information with families.
- Maintain a professional relationship with families.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Act as a support to families.

## **C) TO THE COMMUNITY**

It is the responsibility of each member of staff and Management to:

- Serve as advocates for the needs of all children.
- Liaise with other professionals to work with children and their families.

## **D) TO THE CHILDCARE PROFESSION**

It is the responsibility to staff and Management to:

- Maintain professional approach.
- Continue to learn, train in the childcare profession.
- Promote, develop and support early childhood care and education.
- Staff should listen to children.
- Staff should value and respect children and treat them with dignity.
- Staff should promote positive attitudes, and self-esteem in all children.
- Staff should practice conflict resolution.
- Children's voices should be heard and children must be involved in decision making.
- Staff should be aware of appropriate ways of comforting children, depending on age.
- Staff must be sensitive to risks involved in participating in physical games. Children should be educated on what is unacceptable. Verbal, physical, emotional or sexual punishment is extremely forbidden. Staff should treat all children equally. Children should feel comfortable to report cases of bullying. Two staff members must be present at all times.

# JOINING OUR ORGANISATION

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## **A) PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Our decision to offer you employment took into account the personal information you provided to us on the basis that it was correct and complete. In the event of such information proving to be untrue or misleading, we reserve the right to terminate any employment contract offered.

## **B) JOB DESCRIPTION**

You have been provided with a job description of the position to which you have been appointed but amendments may be made to your job description from time to time in relation to our changing needs and your own ability. It may be necessary for you to perform alternative duties within the business.

## **C) DISCLOSURE AND BARRING CERTIFICATE(S)**

Your initial employment is conditional upon the provision of a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Certificate of a level appropriate to your post. You may be required to undertake subsequent criminal record checks from time to time during your employment as deemed appropriate by the Company. In the event that such certificate(s) are not supplied your employment with us will be terminated.

Data collected about criminal convictions will be processed in line with the Data Protection Act. You may read more about the data we hold on you, why we hold it and the lawful basis that applies in the colleague privacy notice.

## **D) CONVICTIONS AND OFFENCES**

During your employment, you are required to immediately report to the Company any convictions or offences with which you are charged, including traffic offences. Data collected about criminal convictions will be processed in line with the Data Protection Act. You may read more about the data we hold on you, why we hold it and the lawful basis that applies in the colleague privacy notice.

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**E) PROFILE OF A PLAY WORKER**

An effective play worker.....

- Listens to others.
- Knows about play and play leadership.
- Cares about the children under his or her care.
- Is accepted by the playgroup.
- Shows initiative when appropriate.
- Is sensitive to the needs of others.
- Thinks before acting BUT can act effectively and quickly when required.
- Takes a back seat when appropriate.
- Makes use of the talents of group members.
- Shares responsibilities and abilities.
- Uses democratic methods when appropriate to do so.
- Is directive when required to be.
- Makes decisions and accepts responsibilities for them.
- Is genuine and accepting with group members.
- Is considerate and helpful to group members.
- Is usually successful in helping the group achieve its goals.
- Is willing to admit mistakes.
- Is aware of strengths and weaknesses he or she may have.
- Can and should be able to have fun.
- Reassures each child.

**F) INDUCTION**

At the start of your employment with the Company you are required to complete an induction session. During which all our policies and procedures (including Health and Safety) will be outlined to you. Information relating to these will be given to you at the induction.

**G) QUALIFICATIONS**

Due to legislative requirements it is a condition of your employment that you have the necessary qualifications in order to perform your duties. In order to satisfy our legislative obligations the Company will require you to provide evidence that these qualifications have been attained within two weeks of commencing employment. A failure to comply with this request may lead the Company to consider taking disciplinary action up to and including dismissal

**H) PERFORMANCE AND REVIEW**

Our policy is to monitor your work performance on a continuous basis so that we can maximise your strengths, and help you to overcome any possible weaknesses.

**I) JOB FLEXIBILITY**

It is an express condition of employment that you are prepared, whenever necessary, to transfer to alternative departments or duties within our business. This flexibility is essential as the type and volume of work is always subject to change, and it allows us to operate efficiently and gain maximum potential from our work force.

**J) MOBILITY**

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Although you are usually employed at one particular site, it is a condition of your employment that you are prepared, whenever applicable, to transfer to any other of our sites and/or the premises/residences of our clients/customers either on a temporary or permanent basis. This mobility is essential to the smooth running of our business.

**K) STAFF MEETINGS**

It is compulsory of your employment with Tiger Time Limited to attend all staff meetings. This will include monthly manager meetings, if applicable, and weekly team meetings. Details of all meetings will be issued in advance.

# SALARIES AND WAGES, ETC

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## **A) ADMINISTRATION**

### 1. Payment

- a. The pay week ends on Friday midnight and wages are available the following Friday.
- b. You will receive a payslip showing how the total amount of your pay has been calculated. It will also show the deductions that have been made and the reasons for them, e.g. Income Tax, National Insurance, etc.
- c. You are required to complete and submit timesheets as directed in order to ensure that you receive the correct payment. Incorrectly completed, or late submission of, timesheets may result in incorrect or delayed payment of wages. Deliberate falsification of timesheets will be regarded as a disciplinary offence and may lead to your summary dismissal.
- d. Any pay queries which you may have should be raised with your Manager.

### 2. Overpayments

If you are overpaid for any reason, the total amount of the overpayment will normally be deducted from your next payment but if this would cause hardship, arrangements may be made for the overpayment to be recovered over a longer period.

### 3. Income Tax and Social Insurance

At the end of each tax year you will be given a form P60 showing the total pay you have received from us during that year and the amount of deductions for Income Tax and PRSI. You should keep this document in a safe place as you may need to produce it if making enquiries with the Revenue, etc.

If there is a change in your circumstances you should speak with the local revenue office.

## **B) LATENESS/ABSENTEEISM**

1. You must attend for work punctually at the specified time(s) and you are required to comply strictly with any time recording procedures relating to your area of work.
2. All absences must be notified in accordance with the sickness reporting procedures laid down in this Colleague Handbook.
3. If you arrive for work more than one hour late without having previously notified us, other arrangements may have been made to cover your duties and you may be sent off the premises for the remainder of the shift/day without pay.
4. Lateness or absence may result in disciplinary action and/or loss of appropriate payment.

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**C) TEMPORARY SHORTAGE OF WORK**

If there is a temporary shortage of work for any reason, we will try to maintain your continuity of employment even if this necessitates placing you on short time working, or alternatively, lay off. If you are placed on short time working, your pay will be reduced according to time actually worked. If you are placed on lay off, you will receive no pay other than statutory guarantee pay.

**D) FURLOUGH**

In the event of a national or international economic or other catastrophe, or as directed by the UK Government, which severely impacts the operations of our business, we reserve the contractual right to place you on furlough. Such impact may be that we are required to close the business for a temporary period, or other such impact which severely decreases the normal demand for our services/product. Being placed on furlough means that you will not be provided with any work by the Company for a temporary period. Its general purpose is to assist in avoiding unpaid lay off or redundancy. When placing you on furlough we will advise fully at the time on any payments which will be made during the furlough period which may be based on any Government, or other, financial assistance Scheme in place at the time. Whilst on furlough you continue to be an colleague of the Company and your normal terms and conditions will continue to apply save for any about which you are notified at the time, which may be subject to the terms of any aforementioned financial assistance. Full details of the furlough arrangements and any associated rules will be advised at the time of placing you on furlough.

# AUTHORISED LEAVE/TIME OFF FROM WORK

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## **A) MATERNITY/PATERNITY/ADOPTIVE LEAVE**

You may be entitled to maternity/paternity/adoption leave and pay in accordance with the current statutory provisions. If you (or your partner) become pregnant or are notified of a match date for adoption purposes you should notify your Manager at an early stage so that your entitlements and obligations can be explained to you.

## **B) PARENTAL/SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE**

If you are entitled to take parental leave or shared parental leave in respect of the current statutory provisions, you should discuss your needs with your Manager, who will identify your entitlements and look at the proposed leave periods dependent upon your child's/children's particular circumstances and the operational aspects of the business.

## **C) URGENT FAMILY LEAVE/FORCE MAJEURE LEAVE**

If you need to take time off work for urgent, emergency or unforeseen family reasons, you may be entitled to a limited amount of paid leave in accordance with the current statutory provisions. The statutory entitlement to 'force majeure' leave may arise where your immediate presence with a near relative (your child, spouse or partner, sibling, parent or grandparent) is required as a result of his/her injury or illness in unforeseen circumstances. It is your responsibility to apply for this leave as soon as possible following your return to work. Further details are available from your Manager.

## **D) CARER'S LEAVE**

You may be entitled to carer's leave, depending on whether you meet certain Social Welfare criteria and your length of service with us. If you wish to take carer's leave, you should notify your Manager so that any entitlement can be explained to you.

## **E) JURY SERVICE**

If you are summoned to Jury Duty you must inform your Manager as soon as possible and produce the jury summons. If you are summoned for Jury Duty on a scheduled working day you should provide evidence of attendance at Court to your Manager. Where you are called for Jury Duty you will be entitled to time off with pay for the required length of time. If you do not have to attend court, you are expected to report to work each day.

## **F) WITNESS DUTY**

Where you are required to attend as a witness, no payment shall be made by the Company.

## **G) BEREAVEMENT LEAVE**

Individuals' reactions to bereavement vary greatly and the setting of fixed rules for time off for the death of a close relative, for example spouse, child, parent, brother, sister, in-law, is therefore inappropriate. In such cases you should discuss your circumstances with your Manager and agree appropriate time off.

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**H) TIME OFF**

Circumstances may arise where you need time off for medical/dental appointments, or for other reasons. Where possible, such appointments should be made outside normal working hours. If this is not possible, time off required for these purposes may be granted at the discretion of your Manager and will normally be without pay.

# HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENT AND CONDITIONS

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## **A) ANNUAL HOLIDAYS**

1. Your holiday year begins on 1<sup>st</sup> September and ends on 31<sup>st</sup> August each year.
2. Your annual holiday entitlement is shown in your individual Statement of Main Terms of Employment (Form SMT).
3. You are required to take all of your holiday entitlement in the current holiday year. We do not give payment in lieu of holidays.
4. Should your working hours be reduced due to a downturn of work, in accordance with our Temporary Shortage of Work Policy, any annual leave or sick leave entitlements accrued during this period will be on a pro rata basis.

## **B) CONDITIONS APPLYING TO YOUR ANNUAL HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENT**

1. You should submit all holiday requests via hronline and await approval before making any firm holiday arrangements.
2. Holiday requests will only be considered if you present them on hronline and we will allocate agreed holiday dates on a "first come - first served" basis to ensure that operational efficiency and minimum staffing levels are maintained throughout the year.
3. Due to the nature of the business the Company has set closedown periods when you are required to take some or all of your annual holiday entitlement. The exact dates of these will be made known to you at the beginning of the holiday year and will normally be in line with school holidays.
4. You should give at least four weeks' notice of your intention to take holidays and one weeks' notice is required for odd single days.
5. You may not normally take more than two working weeks consecutively.
6. Annual leave cannot be granted in September or in the last two weeks in June.
7. Your holidays will be paid at your normal basic pay unless otherwise specified.
8. In the event of the termination of your employment any holidays accrued but not taken in the current holiday year will be paid for. However, in the event of your having taken holidays which have not been accrued pro-rata in the holiday year, then the appropriate payments will be deducted from your final wages/salary. This is an express written term of your contract of employment.
9. Annual leave cannot be granted in place of sick leave.
10. The Company reserves the right to refuse annual leave requests where the Company is unable to facilitate such a request. This extends to cases where you have requested at least two unbroken weeks of leave having worked more than eight months of the leave year.

## **C) PUBLIC HOLIDAYS**

Your entitlement to public holidays and to any additional payment which may be made for working on a public holiday is shown in your individual Statement of Main Terms of Employment (Form SMT).

# SICKNESS/INJURY PAYMENTS AND CONDITIONS

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## **A) NOTIFICATION OF INCAPACITY FOR WORK**

You must notify us by telephone on the first day of incapacity and at the earliest possible opportunity no later than one hour before your start time. You should try to give some indication of your expected return date and notify us as soon as possible if this date changes. If you are unsure of your return to work date, you must notify us by telephone every day with an update until the expected return to work date has been determined. Notification should be made personally (or if due to incapacity you are unable to do so, then by a relative, neighbour or friend), to your Manager. Notification by text message or voicemail will not be acceptable.

## **B) EVIDENCE OF INCAPACITY**

1. If your absence has been (or you know that it will be) for two or more working days you should see your doctor and make sure he/she gives you a medical certificate and forward this to us without delay. Subsequently you must supply us with consecutive doctor's medical certificates to cover the whole of your absence on an agreed basis. Failure to provide a medical certificate may lead to disciplinary action.
2. If your incapacity extends to more than seven days you are required to notify us of your continued incapacity once a week thereafter.

## **C) PAYMENTS**

1. You are entitled to statutory sick pay (SSP) if you are absent for four or more consecutive days because of sickness or injury provided you meet the statutory qualifying conditions. SSP is treated like wages and is subject to normal deductions.
2. Qualifying days are the only days for which you are entitled to SSP. These days are normally your working days unless otherwise notified to you. The first three qualifying days of absence are waiting days for which SSP is not payable. Where a second or subsequent period of incapacity (of four days or more) occurs within 56 days of a previous period of incapacity, waiting days are not served again.
3. Where the circumstances of your incapacity are such that you receive or are awarded any sum by way of compensation or damages in respect of the incapacity from a third party, then any payments which we may have made to you because of the absence (including SSP) shall be repaid by you to us up to an amount not exceeding the amount of the compensation or damages paid by the third party and up to, but not exceeding, any amount paid by us.

## **D) RETURN TO WORK**

1. You should notify your Manager as soon as you know on which day you will be returning to work, if this differs from a date of return previously notified.
2. If you have been suffering from an infectious or contagious disease or illness such as rubella or hepatitis/viral gastroenteritis (winter vomiting bug) you must not report for work without clearance from your own doctor.
3. On your return to work after any period of sickness/injury absence (including absence covered by a medical certificate), you are also required to complete a self-certification absence form and hand this to your Manager.

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4. For any period of absence where you are required to provide a doctor's medical certificate to cover your absence, you are also required to supply a certificate from your doctor stating that you are fully fit to resume your normal duties.

**G) GENERAL**

1. Submission of a medical certificate or sickness self-certification absence form, although giving us the reason for your absence may not always be regarded by us as sufficient justification for accepting your absence. Sickness is just one of a number of reasons for absence and although it is understandable that if you are sick you may need time off, continual or repeated absence through sickness may not be acceptable to us.
2. In deciding whether your absence is acceptable or not we will take into account the reasons and extent of all your absences, including any absence caused by sickness/injury. We cannot operate with an excessive level of absence as all absence, for whatever reason, reduces our efficiency.
3. We will take a serious view if you take sickness/injury leave which is not genuine, and it will result in disciplinary action being taken.
4. If we consider it necessary, we may ask your permission to contact your doctor and/or for you to be independently medically examined.

# GENERAL TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT, INFORMATION AND PROCEDURES

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## **A) CHANGES IN PERSONAL DETAILS**

You must notify us of any change of name, address, telephone number, etc., so that we can maintain accurate information on our records and make contact with you in an emergency, if necessary, outside normal working hours. Form CPD is available from your Manager for this purpose.

## **B) TRAVEL EXPENSES**

We will reimburse you against receipts for costs involved whilst travelling on our business, details of which will be issued separately.

## **C) COLLEAGUES' PROPERTY**

We do not accept liability for any loss of, or damage to, property which you bring onto the premises. You are requested not to bring personal items of value onto the premises and, in particular, not to leave any items overnight.

## **D) LOST PROPERTY**

Articles of lost property should be handed to your Manager who will retain them whilst attempts are made to discover the owner.

## **E) PARKING**

To avoid congestion, all vehicles must be parked only in the designated parking areas. No liability is accepted for damage to private vehicles, however it may be caused.

## **F) BUYING OR SELLING OF GOODS**

You are not allowed to buy or sell goods on your own behalf on our premises.

## **G) COLLECTIONS FROM COLLEAGUES**

Unless specific authorisation is given by your Manager, no collections of any kind are allowed on our premises.

## **H) FRIENDS AND RELATIVES CONTACT**

You should discourage your friends and relatives from either calling on you in person or by telephone except in an emergency.

## **I) CAR INSURANCE**

If you are using your own car for business purposes, you must ensure that your car insurance provides adequate cover and a copy of your current certificate is made available to your Manager.

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**J) DRIVING LICENCE**

If driving is a necessary part of your role it is imperative that you maintain a valid driving licence suitable for the vehicle you operate at all times during your employment. You are required upon request to produce your driving licence to the management. We may also require you to provide us with the ability to access your driving licence details online. If at any time your licence is endorsed, or you are disqualified from driving, we must be informed immediately. Should your licence be removed or become invalid for any reason, your employment may be terminated.

**K) THIRD PARTY INVOLVEMENT**

We reserve the right to allow third parties to chair any meeting, for example disciplinary, capability, grievance, this is not an exhaustive list. We will seek your consent at the relevant time to share relevant 'special categories of data' where it is necessary for the purposes of that hearing.

**L) RECORDING OF FORMAL MEETINGS**

We reserve the right to record any formal meetings whether conducted by us or a third party, a copy of the recording can be made available on request. **All personal data collected for this purpose will be processed in line with the current Data Protection Act.**

# TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

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## **A) RESIGNATIONS**

All resignations must be supplied in writing, stating the reason for resigning your post.

## **B) TERMINATING EMPLOYMENT WITHOUT GIVING NOTICE**

If you terminate your employment without giving or working the required period of notice, as indicated in your individual Statement of Main Terms of Employment, you will have an amount equal to any additional cost of covering your duties during the notice period not worked deducted from any termination pay due to you. This is an express written term of your contract of employment. You will also forfeit any contractual accrued holiday pay due to you over and above your statutory holiday pay, if you fail to give or work the required period of notice.

## **C) RETURN OF VEHICLES**

On the termination of your employment you must return your Company vehicle to our premises. Failure to return the vehicle will result in the cost of its recovery being deducted from any monies outstanding to you. This is an express written term of your contract of employment.

## **D) RETURN OF OUR PROPERTY**

On the termination of your employment you must return all our property which is in your possession or for which you have responsibility. Failure to return such items will result in the cost of the items being deducted from any monies outstanding to you. This is an express written term of your contract of employment.

## **E) REPAYMENT OF OUTSTANDING MONIES**

On the termination of your employment we have the right to deduct from any termination pay due to you, any monies collected by you on our behalf and any advances of wages or any loans which we may have made to you. This is an express written term of your contract of employment.

## **F) EXIT INTERVIEW**

When you resign from the Company you will be asked to complete an exit interview form with your Manager. This information helps us to identify areas where we can improve colleague relations and/or the arrangement of work and will be treated confidentially.

## **G) GARDEN LEAVE**

In the event of circumstances prevailing, a period of 'garden leave' may be granted to ensure fairness to both employer and colleague once either side has given notice of termination.

You may not be required to carry out your normal duties during the remaining period of your employment; however you may still be available for answering queries.

You must not, without the prior written permission of a Director, contact or attempt to contact any client, customer, supplier, agent, professional adviser, broker, or banker of the Company or any associated companies or any colleague of the Company or any associated companies.

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# **SECTION 2**

# SAFEGUARDS

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## **A) RIGHTS OF SEARCH**

1. We have the contractual right to carry out searches of colleagues and their property (including vehicles) whilst they are on our premises or business. You may be asked to remove the contents of your pockets, bags, vehicles, lockers, etc. These searches are carried out at random or on the basis of suspicion.
2. The Company will ensure an appropriate person carries out any such search, and an colleague's personal dignity will be maintained at all times.
3. Where a search is required, if practicable you will be accompanied by a fellow colleague who is on the premises at the time a search is taking place, or at the time that any further questioning takes place.
4. Any lack of co-operation with such a request may result in disciplinary action.
5. We reserve the right to call in the police at any stage.

## **B) CONFIDENTIALITY**

1. All information that:
  - a. is or has been acquired by you during, or in the course of your employment, or has otherwise been acquired by you in confidence,
  - b. relates particularly to our business, clients or that of other persons or bodies with whom we have dealings of any sort, and
  - c. has not been made public by, or with our authority,shall be confidential, and (save in the course of our business or as required by law) you shall not at any time, whether before or after the termination of your employment, disclose such information to any person without our written consent.
2. You are to exercise reasonable care to keep safe all documentary or other material containing confidential information, and shall at the time of termination of your employment with us, or at any other time upon demand, return to us any such material in your possession.
3. You must make yourself aware of our policies on data protection in relation to personal data and ensure compliance with them at all times.

## **C) COMPANIES & PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES**

At the start of your employment you will be required to attend an induction session(s) at which you will be made aware of the standard procedures and code of practice applicable to your individual role and responsibilities. From time to time we may amend the content of this induction and will require you to undergo further training as necessary.

## **D) CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

During this agreement/contract of employment the colleague shall not (except as a representative of the Company) be directly or indirectly engaged, concerned or interested in, any other business which:

- 
- Is wholly or partly in competition with the business carried out by the Company.
  - With regards to any goods or services is a supplier to, or customer/client of, the Company.

**E) COPYRIGHT**

All written material, whether held on paper, electronically or magnetically which was made or acquired by you during the course of your employment with us, is our property and our copyright. At the time of termination of your employment with us, or at any other time upon demand, you shall return to us any such material in your possession.

**F) OTHER EMPLOYMENT**

If you propose taking up employment with an employer or pursuing separate business interests or any similar venture, you must discuss the proposal with your immediate Manager in order to establish the likely impact of these activities on both yourself and the Company. You will be asked to give full details of the proposal and consideration will be given to:

- Working hours
- Competition, reputation and credibility
- Health, safety and welfare

You will be notified in writing of the Company's decision. The Company may refuse to consent to your request. If you work without consent this could result in the termination of your employment. \*

If you are unhappy with the decision you may appeal using the Grievance Procedure.

**\*NB: This does not apply to those on a zero hour contract who should refer to the following:**

**If you already have any other employment or are considering any additional employment you must notify us so that we can discuss any implications arising from the current working time legislation.**

**G) GIFTS**

You are not permitted to accept any gift (including monetary gifts) from customers/suppliers or other third parties connected with the business or anyone or organisation soliciting for business

**H) DATA PROTECTION**

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the current Data Protection Act regulate our use of your personal data. As an employer it is our responsibility to ensure that the personal data we process in relation to you is done so in accordance with the required principles. Any data held shall be processed fairly and lawfully and in accordance with the rights of data subjects.

We will process data in line with our privacy notices in relation to both job applicants and colleagues.

You have several rights in relation to your data. More information about these rights is available in our "Policy on your rights in relation to your data". We commit to ensuring that your rights are upheld in accordance with the law and have appropriate mechanisms for dealing with such.

# WHISTLEBLOWING

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We may ask for your consent for processing certain types of personal data. In these circumstances, you will be fully informed as to the personal data we wish to process and the reason for the processing. You may choose to provide or withhold your consent. Once consent is provided, you are able to withdraw consent at any time.

You are required to comply with all Company policies and procedures in relation to processing data. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

**I) CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION**

Closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras are used on our premises for security purposes. Notwithstanding this express purpose we reserve the right to use any evidence obtained through CCTV in any disciplinary issue. We will ensure all personal data obtained in this way is processed in line with the current Data Protection Act. You may refer to the colleague privacy notice for more information on the data we hold, the reasons we hold it and the lawful basis which applies.

**J) KEYHOLDERS**

If you are an allocated key holder, you must ensure that all procedures and guidelines are followed when securing the building prior to leaving. The keys and any security measures such as alarm codes must be kept safe at all times. You must not give the keys or alarm code to any third party unless authorisation is obtained from a Manager. Any loss or damage caused as a result of your failure to follow procedures or your negligence in ensuring the safekeeping of the keys and alarm code will result in disciplinary action which could lead to your summary dismissal. We also reserve the right to deduct the cost of any loss, repair or replacement from any monies owing to you.

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## **A) INTRODUCTION**

Under certain circumstances, colleagues are protected from suffering any detriment or termination of employment if they make disclosures about organisations for whom they work.

## **B) QUALIFYING DISCLOSURES**

- 1) Certain disclosures are prescribed by law as “qualifying disclosures”. A “qualifying disclosure” means a disclosure of information that the colleague genuinely and reasonably believes is in the public interest and shows that the Company has committed a “relevant failure” by:
  - a) committing a criminal offence;
  - b) failing to comply with a legal obligation;
  - c) a miscarriage of justice;
  - d) endangering the health and safety of an individual;
  - e) environmental damage; or
  - f) concealing any information relating to the above.
- 2) These acts can be in the past, present or future, so that, for example, a disclosure qualifies if it relates to environmental damage that has happened, is happening, or is likely to happen. The Company will take any concerns that you may raise relating to the above matters very seriously.
- 3) The Employment Rights Act 1996 provides protection for workers who ‘blow the whistle’ where they reasonably believe that some form of illegality, injustice or breach of health and safety has occurred or is likely to occur. The disclosure has to be “in the public interest”. We encourage you to use the procedure to raise any such concerns.

## **C) THE PROCEDURE**

- 1) In the first instance you should report any concerns you may have to your Manager who will treat the matter with complete confidence. If you are not satisfied with the explanation or reason given to you, you should raise the matter with the appropriate official organisation or regulatory body.
- 2) If you do not report your concerns to your Manager, you should take them direct to the appropriate organisation or body.

## **D) TREATMENT BY OTHERS**

Bullying, harassment or any other detrimental treatment afforded to a colleague who has made a qualifying disclosure is unacceptable. Anyone found to have acted in such a manner will be subject to disciplinary action.

# COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

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## A) *E-MAIL AND INTERNET POLICY*

### 1. Introduction

The purpose of the Internet and E-mail policy is to provide a framework to ensure that there is continuity of procedures in the usage of Internet and E-mail within the Company. The Internet and E-mail system have established themselves as an important communications facility within the Company and have provided us with contact with professional and academic sources throughout the world. Therefore, to ensure that we are able to utilise the system to its optimum we have devised a policy that provides maximum use of the facility whilst ensuring compliance with the legislation throughout. Company E-mail and internet facilities are monitored on a regular basis. Excessive or inappropriate use of these facilities will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

### 2. Internet

Where appropriate duly authorised staff are encouraged to make use of the Internet as part of their official and professional activities. Attention must be paid to ensuring that published information has relevance to normal professional activities before material is released in the Company name. Where personal views are expressed a disclaimer stating that this is the case should be clearly added to all correspondence. The intellectual property right and copyright must not be compromised when publishing on the Internet. The availability and variety of information on the Internet has meant that it can be used to obtain material reasonably considered to be offensive. The use of the Internet to access and/or distribute any kind of offensive material, or non-related employment issues, leave an individual liable to disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal. These provisions apply to internet usage on Company mobile phones also.

### 3. E-Mail

The use of the E-Mail system is encouraged as its appropriate use facilitates efficiency. Used correctly it is a facility that is of assistance to colleagues. Inappropriate use however causes many problems including distractions, time wasting and legal claims. The procedure sets out the Company's position on the correct use of the E-Mail system.

### 4. Procedures - Authorised Use

- a) Unauthorised or inappropriate use of the E-Mail system may result in disciplinary action which could include summary dismissal.
- b) The E-Mail system is available for communication and matters directly concerned with the legitimate business of the Company. Colleagues using the E-Mail system should give particular attention to the following points:-
  - i) all E-mail messages comply with Company communication standards.
  - ii) E-Mail messages and copies should only be sent to those for whom they are particularly relevant.
  - iii) E-Mail should not be used as a substitute for face to face communication or telephone contact. Flame mails (i.e. E-Mails that are abusive) must not be sent. Hasty messages sent without proper consideration can cause upset, concern or misunderstanding.

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- iv) if E-Mail is confidential the user must ensure that the necessary steps are taken to protect confidentiality. The Company will be liable for infringing copyright or any defamatory information that is circulated either within the Company or to external users of the system.
  - v) offers or contracts transmitted by E-Mail are as legally binding on the Company as those sent on paper.
  - c) The Company will not tolerate excessive use of the E-Mail/Internet system for personal use, and should not be used for unofficial or inappropriate purposes, including:-
    - i) any messages that could constitute bullying, harassment or other detriment.
    - ii) personal use where this interferes with work (e.g. social invitations, personal messages, blogging, jokes, cartoons, downloading music/films/clips chain letters, buying or selling of goods, accessing social networking sites or other private matters).
    - iii) use of social networking sites during your working hours is strictly forbidden. Due to the lack of confidentiality of these sites contact with clients/customers or their colleagues outside your working hours must not make reference to Tigers Childcare or discuss business related to Tigers Childcare. Failure to abide by this policy may lead to disciplinary action which could result in your dismissal depending on the seriousness of the breach.
    - iv) on-line gambling.
    - v) accessing or transmitting pornography.
    - vi) transmitting copyright information and/or any software available to the user.
    - vii) posting confidential information about other colleagues, the Company or its customers or suppliers.

## **5. Monitoring**

We reserve the right to monitor all e-mail/internet activity by you for the purposes of ensuring compliance with our policies and procedures and of ensuring compliance with the relevant regulatory requirements. This includes monitoring of any additional accounts you may be requested to set up for the purposes of performing your work tasks, which are subject to the same rules as your work email account. Information acquired through such monitoring may be used as evidence in disciplinary proceedings. Monitoring your usage will mean processing your personal data. You may read more about the data we hold on you, why we hold it and the lawful basis that applies in the colleague privacy notice.

### **B) VIRUS PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

In order to prevent the introduction of virus contamination into the software system the following must be observed:-

- a) Unauthorised software including public domain software, magazine cover disks/CDs or Internet/World Wide Web downloads must not be used.

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- b) All software must be virus checked using standard testing procedures before being used.

**C) STATEMENTS TO THE MEDIA**

Any statements to reporters from newspapers, radio, television, etc. in relation to our business will be given only by a Director.

**D) USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES**

Any work related issue or material that could identify an individual who is a customer/client or work colleague, which could adversely affect the company a customer/client or our relationship with any customer/client must not be placed on a social networking site. This means that work related matters, must not be placed on any such site at any time either during or outside of working hours and includes access via any computer equipment, mobile phone or PDA.

**E) ABUSE OF ANY SOCIAL NETWORKING PROFILES**

The Company takes its responsibility towards its colleagues very seriously, and in light of this all colleagues should be aware that it will be considered an offence to abuse another colleague's social networking profile on Company time, by using Company equipment, or which implicates the Company in any way. Abuse of social networking profiles is considered to be the posting of offensive comments, pictures, links or otherwise on any colleague's social networking profile/page.

As an colleague you should not access social networking sites during working hours, however if accessing these pages on designated rest breaks or outside of working hours you should not put yourself in a position where your profile is susceptible to hacking by any colleague.

Any colleague who is found to have abused any colleague's account may be in breach of the Company's Harassment and/or Equality policies and may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

**F) USE OF COMPUTER EQUIPMENT**

In order to control the use of the Company's computer equipment and reduce the risk of contamination the following will apply:-

- a) The introduction of new software must first of all be checked and authorised by a nominated senior member of the Company before general use will be permitted.
- b) Only authorised staff should have access to the Company's computer equipment.
- c) Only authorised software may be used on any of the Company's computer equipment.
- d) Only software that is used for business applications may be used.
- e) No software may be brought onto or taken from the Company's premises without prior authorisation.
- f) Unauthorised access to the computer facility will result in disciplinary action.

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g) Unauthorised copying and/or removal of computer equipment/software will result in disciplinary action, such actions could lead to dismissal.

**G) COMPANY'S RIGHT OF ACCESS**

Please note that we reserve the right and will exercise the right, when appropriate, to review, audit, intercept, archive, access and disclose all messages created, received or sent over the computer system. If requested you are obliged to provide your Manager with all passwords for your computer system.

**H) COMMUNICATIONS**

We will try to keep you informed about items of interest by means of our notice board. You should use this, if you wish (with permission), to promote any particular item of interest to other colleagues.

**I) MAIL**

All mail received by us will be opened, including that addressed to colleagues. Private mail, therefore, should not be sent care of our address. No private mail may be posted at our expense except in those cases where a formal re-charge arrangement has been made.

**J) TELEPHONE CALLS/MOBILE PHONES**

Telephones are essential for our business. Personal telephone calls are allowed only in the case of emergency and with the prior permission of your Manager.

Personal mobile phones should be switched off during working hours and used only during authorised breaks.

**K) COMPANY MOBILE PHONES**

A Company mobile phone is provided for business use only and at all times will remain the property of the Company. A Company mobile phone is provided primarily to enable you to carry out your role, i.e. to keep the Company informed at the earliest opportunity of matters which it needs to know and to be similarly contacted by the Company, or to contact customers or clients when you are working away from your base. Therefore, it is your responsibility to ensure that the phone is kept charged and switched on while you are on duty. If you have been issued with a Company mobile phone, you are responsible for the safekeeping and condition of the phone at all times and you will be responsible for any cost of repair or replacement other than reasonable wear and tear. Internet usage on Company mobile phones is subject to the same provisions set out in our E-mail and Internet Policy. The Company reserves the right to monitor all communications made on Company mobile phones in order to ensure compliance with our policies and procedures.

In the event that the phone is lost or stolen, the Company must be notified immediately in order to cancel the number and arrange for a replacement.

Upon termination of your employment, if you do not return your Company mobile phone or should your phone be returned in an unsatisfactory condition, the cost of replacement or a proportionate amount of this, as decided by the Company, will be deducted from any final monies owing to you, or you will otherwise reimburse the Company.

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The Company recognises that you may have to make personal calls during working hours or outside normal working hours. Where it is deemed that an unreasonable amount of personal calls, texts or data downloads have been made using the mobile phone, the Company reserves the right to deduct those costs, either through deduction from pay or otherwise as agreed and excessive use may result in disciplinary action.

# STANDARDS

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## **A) WASTAGE**

1. We maintain a policy of "minimum waste" which is essential to the cost-effective and efficient running of all our operations.
2. You are able to promote this policy by taking extra care during your normal duties by avoiding unnecessary or extravagant use of services, time, energy, etc., and the following points are illustrations of this:-
  - a) Handle machines, equipment and stock with care.
  - b) Turn off any unnecessary lighting and heating. Keep doors closed whenever possible and do not allow taps to drip.
  - c) Ask for other work if your job has come to a standstill.
  - d) Start with the minimum of delay after arriving for work and after breaks.
3. The following provision is an express written term of your contract of employment:-
  - a) Any damage to vehicles, stock or property (including non-statutory safety equipment) that is the result of your carelessness, negligence or deliberate vandalism will render you liable to pay the full or part of the cost of repair or replacement.
  - b) Any loss to us that is the result of your failure to observe rules, procedures or instruction, or is as a result of your negligent behaviour or your unsatisfactory standards of work will render you liable to reimburse to us the full or part of the cost of the loss.
  - c) In the event of an at fault accident whilst driving one of our vehicles you may be required to pay the cost of the insurance excess.
4. In the event of failure to pay, we have the contractual right to deduct such costs from your pay.
5. The recovery of any monies owed by you does not preclude the Company from initiating disciplinary action relating to the offence.

## **B) STANDARDS OF DRESS**

### **1. Early Years Centre Managers**

Managers of Early Years Centres are not required to wear the staff uniform when they are not working in ratio. It is important that you present a professional image with regard to appearance and standards of dress. Smart casual business attire is permitted.

### **2. Childcare Professionals**

As you are liable to come into contact with parents and members of the public, it is important that you present a professional image with regard to appearance and standards of dress. Tigers will provide each colleague with one t-shirt, one polo shirt and one hoody. Colleagues can purchase additional uniform as required; we suggest that at a minimum each colleague purchase at least one additional t-shirt and one sweatshirt hoody.

You should wear jeans or dark coloured (navy, black or dark grey) tracksuit bottoms which

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will complement and blend in with the uniform. Leggings are not permitted.

Converse style runners are permitted. Uniforms must be worn at all times whilst at work, kept in good condition and laundered on a regular basis. The following is not permitted for all colleagues.

- Excessive make up, false tan, long nails - nails must be kept short at all times
- Excessive/facial piercings - facial piercings must be removed while at work
- Visible tattoos - please ensure they are covered up

**C) HOUSEKEEPING**

Both from the point of view of safety and of appearance, work areas must be kept clean and tidy at all times.

**D) COMPANY EQUIPMENT**

Use of such property for any purpose other than normally defined duties is not permitted. Property of any type is not to be taken away from the premises unless with prior approval. You must immediately notify the appropriate member of Management of any damage to property or premises.

**E) CUSTOMER SERVICE**

Parents are the key to the success of our business and good service is the key to gaining and retaining customers. Every parent should receive the following service from you:

- a) Be available and greet every parent, and use their name where appropriate
- b) Be friendly, smile and listen to their needs
- c) Be efficient in taking their details and any payments if required
- d) Thank them for choosing our service

**F) COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

From time to time customers/clients will make a complaint (whether verbal or written) to you about the business or its colleagues. It is your responsibility to inform your Manager immediately of the complaint you have just received. A record of the complaint should be kept by your Manager irrespective of how small the complaint is. On receipt of the complaint, the main priority is to deal with the complaint promptly and to the customer's/client's satisfaction as far as possible. You should not attempt to deal with the complaint yourself or without the assistance of your Manager.

Your Manager is responsible for maintaining an effective complaints procedure in line with the appropriate guidelines and for training all staff in their responsibilities on receipt of a complaint.

If you are the subject of an investigation by an External Body, such as the HSE, it will be necessary to remove you from your duties for the duration of this investigation in accordance with National Guidelines. This precautionary action is to protect the service user involved in the complaint and also to ensure the investigation is carried out in a timely manner.

Removal from duties may take the form of a transfer of department, move to alternative duties, or in some circumstances it may take the form of suspension with contractual pay.

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Such measures are not to be regarded as disciplinary action but merely a holding measure pending further investigations and for which it is inappropriate for an individual to remain in their regular capacity. The duration of the precautionary action will only be for as long as it takes to complete the investigation. While these external investigations may continue for a number of months, the business commit to meeting with the individual on a regular basis (fortnightly or monthly being most reasonable) to communicate any updates.

**G) BEHAVIOUR AT WORK**

1. You should behave with civility towards fellow colleagues, and no rudeness will be permitted towards customers or members of the public. Objectionable or insulting behaviour or bad language will render you liable to disciplinary action.
2. You should use your best endeavours to promote the interests of the business and shall, during normal working hours, devote the whole of your time, attention and abilities to the business and its affairs.
3. Any involvement in activities which could be construed as being in competition with us is not allowed.

All reasonable instructions are to be carried out.

**H) BEHAVIOUR OUTSIDE OF WORK**

Because the business demands colleagues of the highest integrity we have the right to expect you to maintain these standards outside of working hours. Activities that result in adverse publicity to ourselves, or which cause us to lose faith in your integrity, may give us grounds for your dismissal.

**J) WORK RELATED SOCIAL EVENTS**

Throughout the course of your employment, the Company may at its discretion organise official work events for staff for specific celebrations such as Christmas parties or in the event of a staff member leaving. Colleagues must remember that while attending such a work related event that they are representing the Company and that the Company's rules and procedures will still apply in relation to behaviour and conduct at such events. Accordingly, staff will be expected to;

- Conduct themselves at all times in an orderly manner;
- Refrain from loud and obnoxious behaviour;
- Be aware of other people, the venue and their staff and treat them with respect;
- Ensure that they take alcohol responsibly;
- Refrain from posting photographs on social networking sites which may paint the Company or its agents in an inappropriate light;
- Refrain from posting photographs containing images of your fellow colleagues/colleagues on social networking sites against the wishes or without permission of those fellow colleagues/colleagues.

From time to time there may be parties or outings which are organised by colleagues and these are not the responsibility of the Company. The Company will not be liable for any incidents which occur during an unofficial party.

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These parties will not be:

- Organised by Management;
- The responsibility of the Management or Company;
- Organised during work hours;
- Organised in the workplace or on the Company premises;
- Held on the Company premises;
- Booked in the name of Tigers Childcare, nor will the Company name be used during any unofficial outings/party.

Staff organising any unofficial outing, party etc. must inform all possible attendees that the outing is unofficial and not the responsibility of the Company or Management. Colleagues will know if a party/outing is official as:

- All documentation regarding the event will be on official memos or headed paper from Management
- The event will be organised via the workplace

If in doubt please ask Management. A breach of this policy may result in Disciplinary action.

# GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PRACTICE

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## **A) INTRODUCTION**

Our Company has a long tradition of serving the needs of children and is active in promoting the well-being of children, both physical and emotional. We are aware that children in our society can experience abuse during childhood and this can generate both distress and disturbance at the time and have long term deleterious effects on the person's health and safety.

There is an obligation on society as a whole to ensure the safety and protection of children.

## **B) SAFETY**

Children, young people and their families should have every confidence that they are treated with respect and understanding during the period of time they are in contact with the business.

Staff also need to be aware of the guidelines and standards to be used in dealing with children, so that they can feel they can they are working in a safe context, with clearly established codes of good practice. These guidelines are, therefore, intended also to provide support and protection for staff.

## **C) POLICY STATEMENT**

It is the policy of the Company to be fully committed to the safeguarding of every child's welfare whilst attending at the Company. In this regard, every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that the child's engagement with our services will be free from harm, neglect or abuse. It is the policy of our Company to consider the welfare of the child our paramount consideration, and where harm or neglect is believed to be occurring, it is our policy to work in cooperation with the statutory services so as to ensure protection of the child.

We will do all that is possible to ensure that we provide a place where everyone can feel safe and secure and no one suffers abuse of any kind. We are guided in this by Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Our Duty to Care: Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People.

## **D) CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

1. We will ensure that everyone is supported and listened to and that each person understands their responsibility to treat all as equal.
2. It is the policy of Tigers Childcare to promote the general welfare, health and full development of children and protect them from harm of all kinds, in line with articles 19 and 34 of the United Nations Convention on the right of the child.
3. In accordance with the National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, we undertake our duty in relation to Child Protection. This service operates a Child Protection Procedure, which staff are regularly updated on, and about which parents are informed. It is the responsibility of the service to report any suspicions about physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect to the Health Board. This will be done with the utmost regard to confidentiality. We will strive to support families experiencing difficulties to copy with their children and in this way prevent abuse.
4. All staff will receive training.
5. The Designated Officer is your Manager. Any concerns must be brought to a designated

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officer.

6. All staff have a duty and responsibility to report child abuse to the designated officer. The designated officer must take all steps to ensure that the safety of the child takes first priority. Confidentiality and respect must be adhered to. Records will be kept by the designated officer and information will be provided on a need to know basis. It is best practice to advise a parent/guardian. Help and guidance can be sought from the County Childcare Manager.

**E) SAFE RECRUITMENT POLICY**

The Company acknowledges that safe care for the children in our services starts with the appointment of suitably qualified, skilled and vetted professionals, and volunteers, who have the desired competences to deliver a quality service to our users, and particularly the children who come into contact with the Company.

- Our recruitment procedures are applied thoroughly to ALL applicants, irrespective of who the applicant happens to be.
- Our interview processes judge the applicant on a wide range of skills and competencies.
- All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that we eliminate applicants who are not suitable for working with children.
- That those engaged in the recruitment processes are suitably trained to undertake this task.
- That our recruitment processes are transparent, adhere to best practice, and comply with the rules of natural justice, record keeping and human resource management.
- All applicants will be required to sign a declaration stating that there is no known reason or event that would render them unsuitable for the post, and declaring any past or pending criminal prosecutions against them.
- The successful applicant will only be offered a position subject to a) suitable references, b) proof of qualifications c) relevant vetting/clearance procedures d) positive proof of identification.

Child abuse can take many forms and may involve deliberate acts of cruelty or a persistent failure to provide adequate standards of care, whether physical or emotional. In practice, this may involve:

- Hitting or hurting a child.
- Breaking down the self-confidence of a child.
- Leaving a child without supervision.
- Teasing a child unnecessarily.
- Verbally abusing a child.
- Exposing a child to pornographic acts or literature.
- Inappropriate touching of a child.
- Neglecting a child's medical needs
- Neglecting a child's emotional needs.
- Not taking proper care of a child, e.g., not cleaning, clothing, feeding or providing warmth, shelter and a safe environment for the child to grow in and develop.

**F) THE SIX R'S OF DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE**

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It should be noted that this is general advice, and is no substitute for proper training in dealing with child abuse. It must not be seen as constituting a comprehensive assessment or investigative review, as these are the responsibility of specialist staff in the Health Board or Gardaí.

**1. Receive**

Listen to what the child is saying. The child needs to see that the staff accepts what they are saying, and that it is being taken seriously.

**2. Reassure**

It is essential what you reassure only as far as it is reliable to do so. Do not make promises, no matter how well intentioned e.g. that it will be kept confidential. It is appropriate to reassure the child that the alleged abuse or neglect is not their fault.

**3. React**

Probe the child in a non-intrusive or investigative way to ascertain exactly what it is the child wishes to say, and thereafter whether there are grounds for referring the matter further. Such questioning of the child should not constitute an interrogation of the child, and should be conducted using “open questions” that facilitate the child to say what they need to say without having words put in their mouth by the adult.

It is important that staff do not criticise the alleged perpetrator, and that they explain what they need to do next and who you have to tell about this information.

**4. Record**

An essential part of the disclosure process is to ensure that staff take contemporaneous notes of what the child says, in the child’s own words, and that such records are dated and signed by the staff member. All records should be made in accordance with the services procedures on record keeping, specifically the requirement to record only observable or verifiable facts relating to the disclosure, or of the child’s demeanour. Where staff record an opinion in respect of the disclosure, they are required to identify it as such. Lastly, in complying with this procedure, staff who record a disclosure should record when and who they passed the information on to.

**5. Remember**

Remember to follow these guidelines, in conjunction with those contained in “Children First”, to ensure that the child protection processes of the service contribute to the promotion of children’s welfare.

**6. Refer**

Refer to your Manager/Supervisor at all times throughout the process for guidance, supervision and case Management.

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**G) REPORTING PROCEDURE**

**Designated Officer**

An integral part of the services commitment is the protection of children. If you suspect abuse of a child you should contact the Designated Officer who will give support and guidance in matters relating to child protection as well as taking the lead role in reporting (if necessary) of referrals to the Health Board/Gardaí.

It is important to remember though that it is not the responsibility of staff to engage in investigative interviews with the alleged perpetrator about the abuse - this is the role of the statutory services. Where the alleged perpetrator is a staff member (see later) the role of interviewing the staff member will be clarified with the HSE and, where applicable, the Gardaí.

When the Designated Officer receives a report from a member of staff of suspected or disclosed abuse/neglect, their first task is to ascertain whether the information furnished by the staff facilitates a conclusion that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the referred child has been, is being or is likely to be, abused, neglected or harmed.

This may require the Designated Officer to seek out further information, or seek to discuss the matter with a Duty Social Worker in the Health Board informally, as recommended in "Children First". The purpose of this deliberative process is to make the decision whether to formally report the matter to the HSE and/or Gardaí.

**H) REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**

Where reasonable grounds exist for the reporting of suspected or actual child abuse, a report should be made to the HSE in person, by telephone or in writing. Reports may be made to the Child Care Manager or directly to the social worker. Each HSE office has a social worker on duty for a certain number of hours each day. The duty social worker is available to meet with, or talk on the telephone, to persons wishing to report child protection concerns.

In the event of an emergency, or the non-availability of the HSE staff, the report should be made to An Garda Síochána. This may be done at any Garda Station.

Anyone who reports a suspicion of abuse, provided the report is made in good faith (not maliciously), is protected under the Protection of Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998.

**I) CHILDCARE**

The aim of the Company is to ensure that all children enjoy educational and stimulating experiences in a safe, comfortable and pleasant environment. You should therefore, be constantly aware of their individual fulfilment and care. Any particular problems should be discussed with your Manager.

The following conditions must be observed whilst on duty and handled gently at all times:

- a) Children must be spoken to/addressed appropriately to their age. Rough treatment/shouting at children will not be tolerated. If this situation arises it will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedures. Positive conversation should be practised.
- b) Children must not be left alone under any circumstances. At least two members of staff must be in attendance with a child.
- c) Any complaints from parents must be reported to the Proprietor immediately.

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- d) All incidents affecting children (e.g. head injuries, deterioration in a child's health or unusual behaviour or where it is known that a hospital visit is/may be required) must be reported to the Proprietor. An accident/medical report must be completed.
  - e) You should not make statements, other than normal daily routine information directly to a child's parents concerning the child's condition or their behaviour. Any request for such information should be referred to the Proprietor.
  - f) If you become aware of any form of abuse of a child you must report it immediately to the Proprietor. Any person found to be involved in such action will be liable to dismissal for gross misconduct.
  - g) Strict security procedures are in force which must be adhered to. In the event of a child going missing you must report it to the Proprietor
  - h) No drugs must be administered unless full training and authorisation has been received. All drug administration must be properly recorded.

**J) BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT**

At Tigers Childcare our ultimate goal of behaviour is to teach children self-discipline and an understanding of the consequences of their behaviour, ensuring that no practices are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful in respect of any child. Further information can be obtained in the Policy Booklet.

# SAFETY, WELFARE AND HYGIENE

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## **A) SAFETY**

1. You should make yourself familiar with our Health and Safety Policy and your own health and safety duties and responsibilities, as shown separately.
2. You must not take any action which could threaten the health or safety of yourself, other colleagues, customers or members of the public.
3. Protective clothing and other equipment which may be issued for your protection because of the nature of your job must be worn and used at all appropriate times. Failure to do so could be a contravention of your health and safety responsibilities. Once issued, this protective wear/equipment is your responsibility.
4. You should report all accidents at work, no matter how minor in the accident book, which can be found in the office.
5. The Crèche firmly believes in the importance of providing a healthy and safe environment for customers and staff. The Crèche wholly accepts the aims and provisions of health and safety legislation and recognises that foremost in its duties and responsibilities to its colleagues is the need to provide and maintain safe, healthy and hygienic working conditions and practices. The Crèche considers all levels of staff share their responsibility.
6. It is the duty of every individual colleague to take every reasonable care for the health and safety of himself/herself and of other persons who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions at work. It is the legally enforceable duty of all colleagues to co-operate with their Company in achieving compliance with health and safety legislation.
7. You must ensure that you are aware of our fire and evacuation procedures and the action you should take in the event of such an emergency.

## **B) REFRESHMENT MAKING FACILITIES**

We provide refreshment making facilities for your use, which must be kept clean and tidy at all times. The refreshment making facilities may only be used during authorised breaks.

## **C) BATHROOM/TOILET**

We provide a bathroom/toilet for your use, which must be kept clean and tidy at all times.

## **D) SMOKING POLICY**

There is a statutory ban on smoking in the workplace.

## **E) HYGIENE**

1. Any exposed cut or burn must be covered with a first-aid dressing.
2. If you are suffering from an infectious or contagious disease or illness such as rubella or hepatitis you must not report for work without clearance from your own doctor.
3. Contact with any person suffering from an infectious or contagious disease must be reported before commencing work.

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**F) CLIENTS/CUSTOMERS PREMISES**

Whilst visiting or working at any of our clients/customers premises, you must ensure that you are aware of and strictly comply with all of their rules and requirements e.g. security, health and safety, smoking, parking, etc.

**G) HYGIENE FOR FOOD HANDLERS/HACCP**

1. You must wash your hands immediately before commencing work and after using the toilet.
2. Any cut or burn on the hand or arm must be covered with an approved dressing.
3. Head or beard coverings and overalls/uniforms, where provided, must be worn at all times.
4. No jewellery should be worn, other than plain band wedding rings, without the permission of your Manager.
5. You should not wear excessive amounts of make-up or perfume and nail varnish should not be worn.
6. If you are suffering from an infectious or contagious disease or illness, or have a bowel disorder, boils, skin or mouth infection, you must not report for work without clearance from your own doctor.
7. Contact with any person suffering from an infectious or contagious disease must be reported and you must have clearance from your own doctor before commencing work.
8. As part of your role you are required to make yourself familiar with our HACCP system. Copies of which are available from the kitchen. Also, you are required to make yourself familiar with any updates or amendments that are made to it.
9. Where training in HACCP is made available you are obliged to attend any such training sessions. Failure to attend without good cause will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Process.

**G) DEALING WITH SPILLAGES AND HAZARDS**

1. Disposable gloves must be used when cleaning spills of body fluids.
2. Disposable towels must always be used when cleaning up body fluids.
3. A supply of clean clothing for both children and staff should be readily available for any accidents.
4. The area of the incident is treated with suitable disinfectant.
5. Any spills from water, paint, drinks etc. should be cleaned/ mopped up immediately to avoid any unnecessary accidents.
6. Any food substances, which may be on the floor, should be removed immediately in an appropriate manner.
7. Any hazards should be made safe; if this cannot be done the hazard should be removed. All staff is to be informed of any hazards

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## H) **HANDWASHING**

All persons working in direct contact with food products, food-contact surfaces, and food-packaging materials must conform to hygienic practices while on duty to the extent necessary to protect against contamination of food. The methods for maintaining cleanliness include, but are not limited to:

1. Washing hands thoroughly (and sanitize if necessary to eliminate undesirable microorganisms) in a designated hand-washing facility before starting work, after each absence from the work station for example, going for breaks or to toilet, and at any other time when the hands may have been soiled or contaminated.
2. Removing all jewellery and other objects that might fall into mix, equipment, and containers.
3. Wearing, where appropriate and in effective manner, hairnets and beard covers where applicable. Hair in food can be a source of both microbiological and physical contamination. Staff will be required to keep their hair clean and appropriate hair and/or beard restraints should be worn at all times where appropriate.
4. Eating food, chewing gum, drinking beverages, or smoking should not occur in any areas of operation including where equipment or utensils are washed. Healthy people frequently harbour pathogens in their mouth and respiratory tract. When activities such as eating, drinking, or smoking that involves hand to mouth contact occur, pathogens can be transferred to colleague's hands and then to products that they handle. These activities should not occur in food preparation areas, and hands should be washed when colleagues return to work areas after engaging in these activities.

### **Washing Your Hands**

The primary purpose of hand washing is to remove unwanted microbiological and other contaminants. Remember that everyone who handles food washes his or her hands before starting work, after a break, after going to the toilet, after emptying a bin and before starting a new task.



#### **Step 1**

**Remove any jewellery and wet your hands thoroughly under warm running water (43°C or 110°F) and squirt liquid soap onto the palm of one hand.**



#### **Step 2**

**Rub your hands together to make lather.**



#### **Step 3**

**Rub the palm of one hand along the back of the other and along the fingers. Then repeat with the other hand.**



**Step 4**  
Rub in between each of your fingers on both hands and round your thumbs.



**Step 5**  
Rinse off the soap with clean water.



**Step 6**  
Dry hands thoroughly on a disposable towel

**H) PREPARING FOOD**

1. Upon entering the kitchen/food preparation area, hands must be washed immediately, before commencing any work. Hands should be washed frequently throughout the day to avoid cross contamination (e.g. after handling garbage, between handling different products, etc.)
2. Handle food as little as possible (use scoops, tongs, spoons, cups, etc.)
3. Do not combine old food and new food items.
4. Use only clean and sanitized dishes.
5. Keep your work area clean. Wipe down with a sanitizing solution when finished a food prep item.
6. Refrigerated items are to be returned to the cooler as soon as you are done using them. All finished products must also be refrigerated as soon as production is complete.
7. Cover, date and refrigerate food items immediately and rotate. Rotation of stock is very important; our policy is to rotate stock when we receive it, from time to time stock does get moved around. As a production worker part of your responsibility is to ensure that you are using the oldest product first. Follow the principle of FIFO: First In - First Out
8. Do not place containers on the floor.
9. If you see or smell something that you are not sure of take that product or situation to your Manager immediately.

**H) ALCOHOL & DRUGS POLICY**

Under legislation we, as your employer, have a duty to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety and welfare at work of all our colleagues and similarly you have a responsibility to yourself and your colleagues. The use of alcohol and drugs may impair the safe and efficient running of the business and/or the health and safety of our colleagues.

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The effects of alcohol and drugs can be numerous:-  
(these are examples only and not an exhaustive list)

- a. absenteeism (e.g. unauthorised absence, lateness, excessive levels of sickness, etc.)
- b. higher accident levels (e.g. at work, elsewhere, driving to and from work)
- c. work performance (e.g. difficulty in concentrating, tasks taking more time, making mistakes, etc.).

Where the Company has a reasonable belief that you are under the influence of some form of intoxicants it may at its discretion send you home for the remainder of the day without pay. This is not considered a form of disciplinary action but is done solely in the interests of the Health and Safety of you, your work colleagues and any customers or third parties

If your performance or attendance at work is affected as a result of alcohol or drugs, or we believe you have been involved in any drug related action/offence, you may be subject to disciplinary action and, dependent on the circumstances, this may lead to your dismissal.

In the event that any medication is prescribed/supplied to an colleague, the colleague shall make their work duties known to the prescriber / supplier of such medication. The colleague shall ascertain whether the medication is expected to produce any side-effects that may adversely affect the performance of their work duties, and shall advise your Manager.

If a problem associated with the use of prescribed medication arises at work a claim by an colleague of ignorance about the possible effects of the medication shall not be regarded as acceptable.

***I) FITNESS FOR WORK***

If you arrive for work and, in our opinion, you are not fit to work, we reserve the right to exercise our duty of care if we believe that you may not be able to undertake your duties in a safe manner or may pose a safety risk to others, and send you away for the remainder of the day with or without pay and, dependant on the circumstances, you may be liable to disciplinary action.

# MANUAL HANDLING

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## A) *INTRODUCTION*

There are four main aspects of manual handling;

### 1. The Load

The risk of back injury increases if the load is:

- Too heavy
- Too large
- Difficult to grasp
- Unbalanced or unstable
- Difficult to reach
- Of a shape or size that obscures the worker's view

### 2. The Task

The risk of back injury increases if the task:

- Is too strenuous e.g. carried out too frequently/for a long duration
- Involves awkward postures or movements
- Involves repetitive handling

### 3. The Environment

There may be some characteristics that may affect the risk of back injury:

- Insufficient space to carry out manual handling properly
- Uneven, unstable or slippery floor
- Heat may make workers feel tired and sweat may make it difficult to have a proper grip of tools etc.
- Insufficient lighting

### 4. The Individual

There may be some individual factors that may affect the risk of back injury:

- Lack of experience
- Age
- Physical dimensions such as height, weight and strength
- Any history of back problems

## B) *CORRECT LIFTING TECHNIQUES*

Before lifting a load, you need to plan and prepare. Make sure that you know where you are going and there are no obstacles in the way. Also make sure your hands and any handles are not slippery. You should then use the following technique:

- Put your feet around the load, with your body over it (if this is not feasible, try to get your body as close as possible to the load)
- Use the muscles of your legs when lifting
- Straighten your back
- Pull the load as close as possible to your body
- Lift and carry the load with straight downward turned arms.



When pushing and pulling, it is important that:

- It is done using the body's own weight i.e. lean forward when pushing and backwards when pulling
- You have enough grip on the floor
- You avoid twisting and bending your back
- Handling devices have handles/grips you can use which should be between the shoulder and waist so you can pull in a good, neutral position
- Handling devices are well maintained so that the wheels have appropriate size and they run smoothly
- Floors are hard, even and clean.

**TWISTING AND BENDING OF THE BACK SHOULD BE AVOIDED**



# RULES FOR THE USE OF COMPANY VEHICLES

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## **A) DRIVING LICENCE AND AUTHORITY TO DRIVE COMPANY VEHICLES**

1. You must be in possession of a current driving licence and have a Director's authority to drive one of our vehicles.
2. Your driving licence must be produced for scrutiny by a Director prior to driving any of our vehicles. It is your responsibility to provide us with copies of renewed licences. Alternatively, we may require you to provide us with the ability to access your driving licence details online.
3. If at any time your licence is endorsed, or you are disqualified from driving, we must be informed immediately.
4. It is your responsibility to see that the vehicle is not used by anyone other than authorised colleagues. Special written permission must be obtained from a Director for the vehicle to be used by any other person.
5. **Data collected about driving licences will be processed in line with the Data Protection Act. You may read more about the data we hold on you, why we hold it and the lawful basis that applies in the colleague privacy notice.**

## **B) FIXTURES, FITTINGS AND MODIFICATIONS**

1. No fixtures such as aerials, roof racks, towing apparatus, stickers, may be attached to the vehicle without prior written permission. When handing the vehicle back to us such attachments must remain unless adequate rectification work is carried out professionally to restore the vehicle to its former condition.
2. No change or alterations may be made to the manufacturer's mechanical or structural specification for the vehicle.

## **C) DRIVING WHILST INTOXICATED**

You are not permitted under any circumstances to operate or drive a Company vehicle, either during working hours or on personal time, under the influence of any intoxicant. Whether inside or outside working time you must abide by the Company rules of use for this Vehicle. This is an express condition of your employment and if you are found to be in breach of the Company usage policy it will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

## **D) WARRANTY**

All warranty work must be reported to us prior to it being carried out.

## **E) CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE**

1. As the vehicle has been allocated to you, it is your responsibility to keep it clean both internally and externally, and to ensure that the vehicle is regularly serviced in accordance with the requirements laid down by the manufacturer, and as specified in the maintenance book of the particular model of vehicle.
2. Any other maintenance or repair work or replacement of parts, including tyres, must be approved in advance by us.

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**F) SMOKING POLICY**

There is a statutory ban on smoking in Company premises, including Company vehicles which must be observed at all times. Current legislation imposes a €3,000 fine on employers whose colleagues smoke in an enclosed work environment including Company vehicles. Breaches of the Company smoking policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

**G) FUEL ETC.**

1. In addition to keeping the vehicle regularly serviced, it is your responsibility to see that the oil and water levels, battery and brake fluid and tyre pressures are maintained and that the tread of all tyres conforms to the minimum legal requirements.
2. Unless contrary arrangements exist in writing between us, we will only reimburse you for fuel and oil used on our business. Fuel cards are supplied to Company vehicle users and fuel receipts must be submitted immediately to the office.

**H) FINES**

We cannot under any circumstances accept responsibility for parking or other fines incurred by you. Any fines imposed by relevant authorities including (but not limited to) speeding and parking will be payable by the colleague. The Company take no responsibility for the payment of fines incurred by the colleague during their employment. In the event that the Company receive the summons on the colleague's behalf or owing to a fine incurred by the colleague, we may pay the fine and deduct the cost from the colleague's salary.

**I) DAMAGE OR INJURY**

1. If you are involved in an accident which causes damage to property or another vehicle, or injury to any person or animal, you are required to give your name and address, the name and address of the vehicle owner, the registration number of the vehicle and the name of the insurance Company to any person having reasonable grounds for requiring such information. It is important that you give no further information. If for some reason it is not possible to give this information at the time of the accident, the matter must be reported to the office and where necessary the Gardaí as soon as possible, but within twenty-four hours of the occurrence.
2. In addition, in the case of an incident involving injury to another person or to notifiable animals, you are responsible for notifying the Gardaí of the occurrence and you must produce your insurance certificate to the Garda attending the accident, or to any other person having reasonable grounds for seeing it. The accident must be reported to a Garda station or to a Garda within twenty-four hours. If you are not then able to produce the certificate you must in any event produce it in person within five days after the accident to such Garda station as you may specify at the time of first reporting the accident.
3. For security reasons, insurance certificates are kept by us. However, a copy of the certificate of insurance is provided with each vehicle and this will be renewed annually. You should make sure that it is with the vehicle at all times. Replacement copies can be obtained from us if necessary.

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**J) LOSS**

1. In the case of theft of the vehicle, we and the Gardaí must be informed immediately. Full details of the contents of the vehicle must also be given. If any contents are stolen from the vehicle, we and the Gardaí should be notified immediately.
2. Please note that only our property is insured by us and you should make your own arrangements to cover personal effects.
3. The vehicle should be kept locked when not in use and the contents should be stored out of sight, preferably in the boot. If a vehicle is stolen we are required to prove to the insurance Company that there has been no negligence and, therefore, we must hold you responsible in the event of such negligence.

**K) ACCIDENT PROCEDURE**

1. It is a condition of the insurance policy that the insurers are notified of all accidents, even if apparently of no consequence. You must, therefore, as soon as possible after the accident obtain an accident report form from us which must be completed and returned to us within twenty-four hours. All the information required on the form must be completed. You should note that whenever possible the following particulars should appear in the form:
  - a. the name and address of the other driver and the name and address of his/her insurers
  - b. the names and addresses of all passengers in both our vehicle and the other vehicle
  - c. names and addresses of all witnesses. It will be of considerable assistance if statements can be obtained from all witnesses at the **time of the accident**
  - d. particulars of the Garda attending i.e. name, number and division.
2. A detailed sketch must be provided showing the relative position of the vehicle before and after the accident, together with details of the roads in the vicinity, e.g. whether they are major or minor roads and as many relevant measurements as possible.
3. If our vehicle is undriveable you are responsible for making adequate arrangements for the vehicle to be towed to a garage, and the name and address of the garage where the vehicle may be inspected must be stated on the claim form.
4. An estimate of the repairs required to be carried out, showing details and cost of both labour and materials, must be obtained and sent to us as soon as possible.
5. Under no circumstances may repairs be put in hand until the Insurance Company has given its agreement. We will notify you when this has been done.
6. You should not under any circumstances express any opinion one way or the other on the degree of responsibility for the accident. Only exchange particulars mentioned in I) above and nothing more.

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**L) TRAVEL OVERSEAS**

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Our vehicles may not be taken out of the country without written permission from a Director. Our insurance policy covers the use of the vehicle in Ireland only.

**M) PERMITTED USE**

1. Subject to the restrictions already stipulated, our vehicles may only be used for our business, excluding the carriage of passengers for hire or reward. Colleagues are not permitted to carry passengers, other than fellow colleagues of the Company, during working hours. Our vehicles may not be used for any type of motoring sport, including racing, rallying or pace making, whether on the public highway or on private land. Private mileage must be shown and declared.
2. Company vehicles are provided for your job, with limited personal use allowed outside of working hours. You are expected to behave with the highest integrity when using our vehicles, both during and outside of working hours. You must not engage in or cause our vehicles to be present at any activities that could result in negative publicity to ourselves, or which could adversely affect our public image.

The Company reserves the right to initiate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, if you have been found to be in breach of our Rules for the Use of Company Vehicles policy.

**N) PERSONAL LIABILITY FOR DAMAGE TO VEHICLES**

1. Where any damage to one of our vehicles is due to your negligence or lack of care, we reserve the right to insist on your rectifying the damage at your own expense or paying the excess part of any claim on the insurers.
2. Repeated instances may result in the use of the vehicle being withdrawn and disciplinary action being taken.

**O) USE OF MOBILE PHONE WHILST DRIVING**

It is illegal to use a mobile phone whilst driving (without a hands free set). It is our Company policy that you should not use any mobile phones whilst driving. You should pull over to the side of the road in an appropriate place before making or receiving any telephone calls. In the event of you being unable to pick up a call because you cannot find a safe place to stop, you must return the call as soon as conveniently possible.

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# **SECTION 3**

# DISCIPLINARY PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

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## **A) INTRODUCTION**

We recognise that during your employment with us your capability to carry out your duties may deteriorate. This can be for a number of reasons, the most common ones being that either the job changes over a period of time and you fail to keep pace with the changes, or you change (most commonly because of health reasons) and you can no longer cope with the work.

## **B) JOB CHANGES**

1. If the nature of your job changes or if we have general concerns about your ability to perform your job we will try to ensure that you understand the level of performance expected of you and that you receive adequate training and supervision. Concerns regarding your capability will normally first be discussed in an informal manner and you will be given time to improve.
2. If your standard of performance is still not adequate you will be warned in writing that a failure to improve and to maintain the performance required could lead to your dismissal. We will also consider the possibility of a transfer to more suitable work if possible.
3. If there is still no improvement after a reasonable time and we cannot transfer you to more suitable work, or if your level of performance has a serious or substantial effect on our organisation or reputation, you will be issued with a final warning that you will be dismissed unless the required standard of performance is achieved and maintained.
4. If such improvement is not forthcoming after a reasonable period of time, you will be dismissed with the appropriate notice.

## **C) PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

1. Personal circumstances may arise which do not prevent you from attending for work but which prevent you from carrying out your normal duties (e.g. a lack of dexterity or general ill health). If such a situation arises, we will normally need to have details of your medical diagnosis and prognosis so that we have the benefit of expert advice. Under normal circumstances this can be most easily obtained by asking your own doctor for a medical report. Your permission is needed before we can obtain such a report and we will expect you to co-operate in this matter should the need arise. When we have obtained as much information as possible regarding your condition and after consultation with you, a decision will be made about your future employment with us in your current role or, where circumstances permit, in a more suitable role.
2. There may also be personal circumstances which prevent you from attending work, either for a prolonged period(s) or for frequent short absences. Under these circumstances we will need to know when we can expect your attendance record to reach an acceptable level. This may again mean asking your own doctor for a medical report or by making whatever investigations are appropriate in the circumstances. When we have obtained as much information as possible regarding your condition, and after consultation with you, a decision will be made about your future employment with us in your current role or, where circumstances permit, in a more suitable role.

## **D) SHORT SERVICE STAFF**

We retain discretion in respect of the capability procedures to take account of your length of service and to vary the procedures accordingly. If you have a short amount of service, you may not be in receipt of any warnings before dismissal.

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**A) INTRODUCTION**

- 1) It is necessary to have a minimum number of rules in the interests of the whole organisation.
- 2) The rules set standards of performance and behaviour whilst the procedures are designed to help promote fairness and order in the treatment of individuals. It is our aim that the rules and procedures should emphasise and encourage improvement in the conduct of individuals, where they are failing to meet the required standards, and not be seen merely as a means of punishment. We reserve the right to amend these rules and procedures where appropriate.
- 3) Every effort will be made to ensure that any action taken under this procedure is fair, with you being given the opportunity to state your case and appeal against any decision that you consider to be unjust.
- 4) The following rules and procedures should ensure that:
  - a) the correct procedure is used when requiring you to attend a disciplinary hearing;
  - b) you are fully aware of the standards of performance, action and behaviour required of you;
  - c) disciplinary action, where necessary, is taken speedily and in a fair, uniform and consistent manner;
  - d) you will only be disciplined after careful investigation of the facts and the opportunity to present your side of the case. On some occasions temporary suspension on contractual pay may be necessary in order that an uninterrupted investigation can take place. This must not be regarded as disciplinary action or a penalty of any kind;
  - e) other than for an "off the record" informal reprimand, you have the right to be accompanied by a fellow colleague at all stages of the formal disciplinary process;
  - f) you will not normally be dismissed for a first breach of discipline, except in the case of gross misconduct; and
  - g) if you are disciplined, you will receive an explanation of the penalty imposed and you will have the right to appeal against the finding and the penalty.

**B) DISCIPLINARY RULES**

It is not practicable to specify all disciplinary rules or offences that may result in disciplinary action, as they may vary depending on the nature of the work. In addition to the specific examples of unsatisfactory conduct, misconduct and gross misconduct shown in this handbook, a breach of other specific conditions, procedures, rules etc. that are contained within this handbook or that have otherwise been made known to you, will also result in this procedure being used to deal with such matters.

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**C) RULES COVERING UNSATISFACTORY CONDUCT AND MISCONDUCT**  
(These are examples only and not an exhaustive list.)

You will be liable to disciplinary action if you are found to have acted in any of the following ways:

- a) failure to abide by the general health and safety rules and procedures;
- b) smoking in designated non-smoking areas;
- c) consumption of alcohol on the premises;
- d) persistent absenteeism and/or lateness;
- e) unsatisfactory standards or output of work;
- f) rudeness towards clients, members of the public or other colleagues, objectionable or insulting behaviour, harassment, bullying or bad language;
- g) failure to devote the whole of your time, attention and abilities to our business and its affairs during your normal working hours;
- h) unauthorised use of e-mail and internet;
- i) failure to carry out all reasonable instructions or follow our rules and procedures;
- j) unauthorised use or negligent damage or loss of our property;
- k) failure to report immediately any damage to property or premises caused by you;
- l) use of our vehicles without approval or the private use of our commercial vehicles without authorisation;
- m) failure to report any incident whilst driving our vehicles, whether or not personal injury or vehicle damage occurs;
- n) if your work involves driving, failure to report immediately any type of driving conviction, or any summons which may lead to your conviction;
- o) carrying unauthorised goods or passengers in our commercial vehicles or the use of our vehicles for personal gain; and
- p) loss of driving licence where driving on public roads forms an essential part of the duties of the post.

**D) SERIOUS MISCONDUCT**

Where one of the unsatisfactory conduct or misconduct rules has been broken and if, upon investigation, it is shown to be due to your extreme carelessness or has a serious or substantial effect upon our operation or reputation, you may be issued with a final written warning in the first instance.

You may receive a final written warning as the first course of action, if, in an alleged gross misconduct disciplinary matter, upon investigation, there is shown to be some level of mitigation resulting in it being treated as an offence just short of dismissal.

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**E) RULES COVERING GROSS MISCONDUCT**

Occurrences of gross misconduct are very rare because the penalty is dismissal without notice and without any previous warning being issued. It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of examples of gross misconduct. However, any behaviour or negligence resulting in a fundamental breach of contractual terms that irrevocably destroys the trust and confidence necessary to continue the employment relationship will constitute gross misconduct. Examples of offences that will normally be deemed as gross misconduct include serious instances of:

- a) theft or fraud;
- b) physical violence or bullying;
- c) deliberate damage to property;
- d) deliberate acts of unlawful discrimination or harassment;
- e) possession, or being under the influence, of drugs\* at work and/or testing positive for drug use in a random sample drug test in line with our policy; and

\*For this purpose, the term 'drugs' is used to describe both illegal drugs and other psychoactive (mind-altering) substances which may or may not be illegal.

- f) breach of health and safety rules that endangers the lives of, or may cause serious injury to, colleagues or any other person.

(The above examples are illustrative and do not form an exhaustive list.)

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**E) DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

1) Disciplinary action taken against you will be based on the following procedure:

<b>OFFENCE</b>	<b>FIRST OCCASION</b>	<b>SECOND OCCASION</b>	<b>THIRD OCCASION</b>	<b>FOURTH OCCASION</b>
Unsatisfactory Conduct	Formal verbal warning	Written Warning	Final written warning	Dismissal
Misconduct	Written Warning	Final written Warning	Dismissal	
Serious misconduct	Final written warning	Dismissal		
Gross misconduct	Dismissal			

- 2) We retain discretion in respect of the disciplinary procedures to take account of your length of service and to vary the procedures accordingly. If you have a short amount of service you may not be in receipt of any warnings before dismissal.
- 3) If a disciplinary penalty is imposed it will be in line with the procedure outlined above, which may encompass a formal verbal warning, written warning, final written warning, or dismissal, and full details will be given to you.
- 4) In all cases warnings will be issued for misconduct, irrespective of the precise matters concerned, and any further breach of the rules in relation to similar or entirely independent matters of misconduct will be treated as further disciplinary matters and allow the continuation of the disciplinary process through to dismissal if the warnings are not heeded.

**G) DISCIPLINARY AUTHORITY**

The operation of the disciplinary procedure contained in the previous section is based on the following authority at the various levels of disciplinary action. However, the list does not prevent a higher level of seniority or nominated person progressing any action at whatever stage of the disciplinary process.

Formal verbal warning	Manager/Director
Written warning	Manager/Director
Final written warning	Manager/Director
Dismissal	Manager/Director

**H) PERIOD OF WARNINGS**

1. Formal verbal warning

A formal verbal warning will normally be disregarded after a six month period.

2. Written warning

A written warning will normally be disregarded after a 12 month period.

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3. Final written warning

A final written warning will normally be disregarded after a 12 month period.

***I) GENERAL NOTES***

1. If you are in a supervisory or managerial position then demotion to a lower status may be considered as an alternative to dismissal except in cases of gross misconduct.
2. In exceptional circumstances, suspension from work without pay for up to five days as an alternative to dismissal (except dismissal for gross misconduct) may be considered by the person authorised to dismiss.
3. Gross misconduct offences will result in dismissal without notice.
4. You have the right to appeal against any disciplinary action.

# DISCIPLINARY/CAPABILITY APPEAL

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1. You have the right to lodge an appeal in respect of any capability/disciplinary action taken against you.
2. If you wish to exercise this right you should apply either verbally or in writing to the person indicated in your individual Statement of Main Terms of Employment.
3. An appeal against a formal warning or dismissal should give details of why the penalty imposed is too severe, inappropriate or unfair in the circumstances.
4. The appeal procedure will normally be conducted by a member of staff not previously connected with the process so that an independent decision into the severity and appropriateness of the action taken can be made.
5. If you are appealing on the grounds that you have not committed the offence then your appeal may take the form of a complete re-hearing and reappraisal of all matters so that the person who conducts the appeal can make an independent decision before deciding to grant or refuse the appeal.
6. You may be accompanied at any stage of the appeal hearing by a fellow colleague of your choice. The result of the appeal will be made known to you in writing, normally within five working days after the hearing.

# GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

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1. It is important that if you feel dissatisfied with any matter relating to your employment you should have an effective means by which such a grievance can be aired and, where appropriate, resolved.
2. Nothing in this procedure is intended to prevent you from informally raising any matter you may wish to mention. Informal discussion can frequently solve problems without the need for a written record. However, if you wish to raise a formal grievance you should normally do so in writing from the outset.
3. You have the right to be accompanied at any stage of the procedure by a fellow colleague who may act as a witness or speak on your behalf to explain the situation more clearly.
4. If you feel aggrieved at any matter relating to your work (except personal harassment, for which there is a separate procedure following this section), you should first raise the matter with the person specified in your Statement of Main Terms of Employment, explaining fully the nature and extent of your grievance. You will then be invited to a meeting at a reasonable time and location at which your grievance will be investigated fully. You must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting. You will be notified of the decision, in writing, normally within ten working days of the meeting, including your right of appeal.
5. If you wish to appeal you must inform [Senior Manager] within five working days. You will then be invited to a further meeting, which you must take all reasonable steps to attend. As far as reasonably practicable, the Company will be represented by a more Senior Manager than attended the first meeting (unless the most Senior Manager attended that meeting).
6. Following the appeal meeting you will be informed of the final decision, normally within ten working days, which will be confirmed in writing.

# EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

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## **A) STATEMENT OF POLICY**

1. We recognise that discrimination is unacceptable and although equality of opportunity has been a long standing feature of our employment practices and procedures, we have made the decision to adopt a formal equal opportunities policy. Breaches of the policy will lead to disciplinary proceedings and, if appropriate, disciplinary action.
2. The aim of the policy is to ensure no job applicant or colleague is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
3. We will ensure that the policy is circulated to any agencies responsible for our recruitment and a copy of the policy will be made available for all colleagues and made known to all applicants for employment.
4. The policy will be communicated to all private contractors reminding them of their responsibilities towards the equality of opportunity.
5. The policy will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account will be taken of all available guidance and in particular any relevant Codes of Practice.
6. We will maintain a neutral working environment in which no worker feels under threat or intimidated.

## **B) RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

1. The recruitment and selection process is crucially important to any equal opportunities policy. We will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that colleagues making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions.
2. Promotion and advancement will be made on merit and all decisions relating to this will be made within the overall framework and principles of this policy.
3. Job descriptions, where used, will be revised to ensure that they are in line with our equal opportunities policy. Job requirements will be reflected accurately in any personnel specifications.
4. We will adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of vacancies.
5. We will not confine our recruitment to areas or media sources which provide only, or mainly, applicants of a particular group.
6. All applicants who apply for jobs with us will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do the job.
7. All colleagues involved in the recruitment process will periodically review their selection criteria to ensure that they are related to the job requirements and do not unlawfully discriminate.
8. Short listing and interviewing will be carried out by more than one person where possible.

# PERSONAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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9. Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the job and will not be of a discriminatory nature.
10. We will not disqualify any applicant because he/she is unable to complete an application form unassisted unless personal completion of the form is a valid test of the standard of English required for the safe and effective performance of the job.
11. Selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of other staff.

## **C) TRAINING AND PROMOTION**

1. Senior staff will receive training in the application of this policy to ensure that they are aware of its contents and provisions.
2. All promotion will be in line with this policy.

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## A) INTRODUCTION

- 1) Harassment or victimisation on the grounds of the following protected characteristic: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation is unacceptable.
- 2) Personal harassment takes many forms but whatever form it takes, it is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 and will not be tolerated.
- 3) This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains up to date and in order to monitor its effectiveness.

## B) SCOPE

We deplore all forms of personal harassment and seek to ensure that the working environment is sympathetic to all those who work for us. This includes colleagues, workers, agency workers, volunteers and contractors in all areas of our Company, including any overseas sites.

## C) DEFINITIONS

### Harassment

This is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

Unwanted conduct can include:

- a) spoken words
- b) banter
- c) written words
- d) posts or contact on social media
- e) imagery
- f) graffiti
- g) physical gestures
- h) facial expressions
- i) mimicry
- j) jokes or pranks
- k) acts affecting a person's surroundings
- l) aggression, and
- m) physical behaviour towards a person or their property.

### Sexual harassment

This is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

- a) sexual comments or jokes
- b) displaying sexually graphic pictures, posters or photos
- c) suggestive looks, staring or leering
- d) propositions and sexual advances
- e) making promises in return for sexual favours
- f) sexual gestures
- g) intrusive questions about a person's private or sex life or a person discussing their own sex life
- h) sexual posts or contact on social media
- i) spreading sexual rumours about a person

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- j) sending sexually explicit emails or text messages, and
  - k) unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging or kissing.

### **Less favourable treatment for rejecting or submitting to unwanted conduct**

This occurs when:

- a) someone is subjected to unwanted conduct:
  - i) of a sexual nature
  - ii) related to sex, or
  - iii) related to gender reassignment
- b) the unwanted conduct has the purpose or effect of:
  - i) violating their dignity, or
  - ii) creating an intimidating, hostile degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them, and
- c) they are treated less favourably because they submitted to, or rejected the unwanted conduct.

### **D) CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH ARE COVERED**

- 1) This policy covers behaviour which occurs in the following situations:
  - a) a work situation
  - b) a situation occurring outside of the normal workplace or normal working hours which is related to work, for example, a working lunch or social event with colleagues;
  - c) outside of a work situation but against a colleague or other person connected to the Company, including on social media;
  - d) against anyone outside of a work situation where the incident is relevant to their suitability to carry out the role.

### **E) COMPLAINING ABOUT PERSONAL HARASSMENT**

#### **1) Informal complaint**

We recognise that complaints of personal harassment, and particularly of sexual harassment, can sometimes be of a sensitive or intimate nature and that it may not be appropriate for you to raise the issue through our normal grievance procedure. In these circumstances you are encouraged to raise such issues with a senior colleague of your choice (whether or not that person has a direct supervisory responsibility for you) as a confidential helper. This person cannot be your Manager who will be responsible for investigating the matter if it becomes a formal complaint.

If you are the victim of minor harassment you should make it clear to the harasser on an informal basis that their behaviour is unwelcome and ask the harasser to stop. If you feel unable to do this verbally then you should hand a written request to the harasser, and your confidential helper can assist you in this.

#### **2) Formal complaint**

Where the informal approach fails or if the harassment is more serious, you should bring the matter to the attention of your Manager as a formal written complaint and again your confidential helper can assist you in this. If possible, you should keep notes of the harassment so that the written complaint

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can include:

- a) the name of the alleged harasser;
- b) the nature of the alleged harassment;
- c) the dates and times when the alleged harassment occurred;
- d) the names of any witnesses; and
- e) any action already taken by you to stop the alleged harassment.

On receipt of a formal complaint we will take action to separate you from the alleged harasser to enable an uninterrupted investigation to take place. This may involve a temporary transfer of the alleged harasser to another work area or suspension with contractual pay until the matter has been resolved.

The person dealing with the complaint will invite you to attend a meeting, at a reasonable time and location, to discuss the matter and carry out a thorough investigation. You have the right to be accompanied at such a meeting by your confidential helper or another work colleague of your choice and you must take all reasonable steps to attend. Those involved in the investigation will be expected to act in confidence and any breach of confidence will be a disciplinary matter.

On conclusion of the investigation, which will normally be within ten working days of the meeting with you, the decision of the investigator, detailing the findings, will be sent in writing to you.

You have the right to appeal against the findings of the investigator in accordance with the appeal provisions of the grievance procedure.

#### **F) DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

- 1) If the decision is that the allegation is well founded, the harasser will be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with our disciplinary procedure. An colleague who receives a formal warning or who is dismissed for harassment may appeal by using our capability/disciplinary appeal procedure.
- 2) When deciding on the level of disciplinary sanction to be applied, we will take into consideration aggravating factors such as abuse of power over a more junior colleague.
- 3) If you bring a complaint of harassment you will not be victimised for having brought the complaint. However if it is concluded that the complaint is both untrue and has been brought with malicious intent, disciplinary action will be taken against you.

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## G) THIRD PARTY HARASSMENT

- 1) Third party harassment occurs when one of our workforce is subjected to harassment by someone who is not part of our workforce but who is encountered in connection with work. This includes our customers, suppliers, members of the public. Third party harassment of our workforce will not be tolerated.
- 2) Should you be subjected to third party harassment, you are encouraged to report this as soon as possible to your Manager.

Should a customer harass a member of our workforce, they will be warned that continued provision of our service to them will cease if they are to act in a similar way again. Should their behaviour recur, they will be informed that our service to them will cease. Any criminal acts will be reported to the police, and we will share information relating to the incident with our other branches to ensure that we maintain a consistent approach to the cessation of our services.

# BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

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## **A) PURPOSE**

As part of our commitment to the fairness, dignity and respect of each colleague, any form of bullying will not be tolerated by this Company. The aim of this Policy is to indicate what constitutes bullying and what action the Company will take if it becomes necessary to deal with an offence of this nature.

## **B) SCOPE**

This Policy is applicable to all colleagues (temporary and permanent) irrespective of length of service and includes clients and service personnel both inside and outside the work environment.

## **C) POLICY**

The Company acknowledges the right of all colleagues to a workplace and environment free from any form of bullying. Every member of staff has an obligation to be aware of the effects of their own behaviour on others.

Any instances of bullying will be dealt with in an effective and efficient manner. In cases where the behaviour is proved to be repeated and consistent, causing unnecessary stress and anxiety, this will be considered gross misconduct. The Company reserves the right to use the disciplinary procedure up to and including summary dismissal.

As part of this Company's code of conduct, it is imperative that all staff and suppliers respect the dignity of every colleague. Please consider the multi-cultural beliefs of all of your colleagues regarding your code of conduct, with particular reference to remarks, dress code, posters, e-mails and anything which may cause offence on the grounds of a person's gender, civil status, race, religion, family status, age, sexual orientation or disability or to a member of the traveller community.

## **D) DEFINITION**

The Task Force on the Prevention of Workplace Bullying defines bullying as:

"Repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work. An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition may be an affront to dignity at work but, as a one off is not considered to be bullying".

The following are examples of the types of behaviour considered as bullying and are prohibited by the Company:

## **E) VERBAL ABUSE**

- Shouting or using aggressive or obscene language, in public or in private, to humiliate or intimidate.
- Making offensive comments about the same person regularly.
- Unfair and excessive criticism.
- Ridiculing the colleague in front of other colleagues and individuals.

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- Spreading false or malicious information about the individual around the Organisation etc.
  - Personal insults, name calling
  - Threatening job loss for trivial errors.

The above list is not exhaustive and only serves as a guideline to colleagues. Each case will be taken in isolation and dealt with in the appropriate manner.

**F) NON VERBAL ABUSE**

- Setting up a person to fail by overloading them with work or setting impossible deadlines.
- Withholding information and blaming the person for being ignorant.
- Ignoring, excluding and isolating a person.
- Blocking promotion.
- Threatening body language.
- Damaging personal belongings.
- Excessive monitoring.
- Making offensive/inappropriate comments via text messaging, email or via social networking sites.

The above list is not exhaustive and only serves as a guideline to colleagues. Each case will be taken in isolation and dealt with in the appropriate manner.

**G) PHYSICAL ABUSE**

- Hitting.
- Bodily contact that is abusive in nature.

The above list is not exhaustive and only serves as a guideline to colleagues. Each case will be taken in isolation and dealt with in the appropriate manner.

**H) PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING**

**1. Informal Procedure**

An informal approach can often resolve difficult situations with the minimum of conflict and stress for the individuals involved. This in no way diminishes the issue of the effects on the individual.

If you feel you are being bullied you should attempt to explain to the alleged bully that their behaviour is unacceptable. If you find it difficult to approach the alleged bully alone then seek help and advice from the nominated contact person. He/she will listen, be supportive and explain the various options open to you.

You may ask the contact person to assist you with raising the issue with the alleged bully. The contact person will approach the alleged bully in a confidential, non-confrontational discussion to try to resolve the matter in a low-key manner.

If you decide to bypass the informal procedure, for whatever reason, and choose to go down the formal route then this will not reflect negatively on you in any way.

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## **2. Formal Procedure**

If the informal approach is not appropriate, or if after using the informal procedure, the bullying continues, then the formal procedure will be invoked.

A formal written complaint must be given to your Manager or a member of the Management team. The complaint should only contain precise details of actual incidents of bullying.

A letter will be sent to the alleged bully to inform him/her that a formal complaint has been made against them. A copy of the complaint will be given to him/her and he/she will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegations.

An initial examination will be carried out by a designated, impartial member of Management who will determine the appropriate course of action to be taken e.g. a mediated solution or attempt to resolve the situation informally or decide if it should be progressed to a formal investigation. If these courses of action prove to be inappropriate or inconclusive, then a formal investigation of the complaint will take place to determine the facts and credibility of the allegations.

## **3. Investigation**

The investigation will be carried out by a designated member of the Management team or, if necessary, in the case of any possible conflict of interest, an agreed external third party. In either case, the person nominated should be familiar with the procedures involved. The investigation will be thorough, objective and confidential. It will be conducted with sensitivity and respect for the rights of the complainant and the alleged bully.

The designated investigator will meet with the complainant, the alleged bully and any witnesses or other relevant persons individually. The purpose of these meetings is to establish the facts about the allegations, set a timeframe, all of which will be completely confidential.

The complainant and the alleged bully have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or colleague / trade union representative.

The person investigating the complaints will make every effort to carry out and complete the investigation as quickly as possible. When the investigation is complete, a written report will be submitted to Management which will contain the findings of the investigation.

Both the complainant and the alleged bully will be given the opportunity to comment on the findings of the investigation before any action is decided by Management.

Management will inform the complainant and the alleged bully, in writing, about the findings of the investigation.

## **4. Outcome**

If it is decided that the complaint is well founded then a formal interview will be conducted with the alleged bully to determine an appropriate course of action. This may include counselling, monitoring or progressing the issue through disciplinary and grievance procedures.

In the event of the findings of the investigation concluding that the complaint was untrue and was brought with a malicious or vexation intent then disciplinary action will be taken against you up to and including dismissal.