

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Welcome

As a new employee of *****, you will receive a written Contract of Employment. This document outlines the general Terms and Conditions of Employment and is a confidential document between you and ***** (hereinafter called “the company”). Please read it carefully and sign it. This signifies your acceptance of the Terms and Conditions under which you are employed. You will be kept informed and notified in writing of any subsequent changes to your terms of employment.

1.2 Purpose of this Handbook

This Employee Handbook is designed to provide you with information about working conditions, benefits, and policies affecting your employment.

The information contained in this Handbook applies to all our employees. Following the policies described in this Handbook is considered a condition of continued employment. However, nothing in this Handbook alters an employee’s status. The contents of this Handbook shall not constitute nor be construed as a promise of employment or as a contract between the Company and any of its employees. The Handbook is a summary of our policies, which are presented here only as a matter of information.

You are responsible for reading, understanding, and complying with the provisions of this Handbook. Our objective is to provide you with a positive and safe work environment that is free from Discrimination and Harassment.

1.3 Company Background and Mission Statement.

Management is committed to the long term development of the company by meeting customer needs with quality products. We value all our employees and will endeavour to create a safe and positive working environment where all workers are treated with dignity and respect.

Our management style is based on the need for flexibility of operations dictated by rapidly changing technology and markets. It is also based on our beliefs that our people are honest and trustworthy and should be treated with respect and confidence.

1.4 Employment Records:

Your Employment Record is very important. It contains all relevant information pertaining to your employment including address, telephone number, emergency contact details, educational attainments etc. It is most important that these records are kept up to date. Please notify the company of any changes that might affect your employment record.

1.5 Data Protection:

The company will hold and collect data in relation to you in your employment. This is for the purpose of administration and management and also in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. All data will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

COMPANY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

2.1 Disciplinary Procedures

This disciplinary procedure is intended to be used in situations where an employee's work or conduct at work is unsatisfactory. In many instances, disciplinary matters can be dealt with on an informal basis by the supervisor discussing the situation with the employee concerned and agreeing any necessary corrective action.

Inevitably, there will be times when disciplinary matters need to be formalised.

When such situations arise, it is of the utmost importance that the formal disciplinary procedure is followed.

2.1.1 Purpose of the Procedure

In order to provide for the wellbeing of staff, the company requires a number of systems and procedures. A disciplinary procedure is essential to assist the company to operate effectively and create a fair, efficient and caring working environment.

The first aim of this procedure is to ensure consistency in the manner and circumstances in which disciplinary action will be taken. The second aim is to make clear the rights and responsibilities of employer and employees when such action is being taken. The procedure will apply to all employees whether full-time or part-time, permanent or temporary, with the principle of ensuring fair treatment for all.

2.2.2 Operation of the Procedure

The work rules and standards of conduct at ***** are important, and the Company regards them seriously. All employees are urged to become familiar with these rules and standards. In addition, employees are expected to follow the rules and standards

faithfully in doing their own jobs and conducting the Company's business. **Please note that any employee who deviates from these rules and standards will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.**

While not intended to list all the forms of behaviour that are considered unacceptable in the workplace, the following are examples of rule infractions or misconduct that may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

- Stealing from the organisation or a client;
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace.
- In the course of employment, inflicting bodily injury on another person;
- Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace;
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of company-owned or customer-owned property;
- Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct;
- Violation of Health & Safety regulations;
- Smoking in the workplace;
- Words, gestures or actions contravening the principles set out in the Equal Opportunities Policy and Bullying and Harassment Policy.
- Excessive absenteeism without leave or reasonable excuse.
- Failure to meet conditions governing hours of duty.
- Using company equipment for purposes other than business.
- Lack of cleanliness which fellow employees might reasonably consider to be offensive;
- Breach of confidence not amounting to gross misconduct;
- Failing to perform duties to an acceptable standard where the duties are normally performed by that person or are known to be in the capacity of that person; and
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct.

Informal Procedure:

When a disciplinary matter arises, the supervisor/manager will seek to establish the facts promptly before recollections fade, taking into account the statements of any available witnesses. After establishing the facts, the supervisor/manager may consider that there is no need to resort to the formal procedure and that it is sufficient to talk the matter over informally with the employee.

Formal Procedure:

As soon as a complaint or allegation of misconduct has been made against an employee, the supervisor/manager will initiate an investigation into this complaint to form an initial judgement on the facts of the case. The employee will be informed in writing of the nature of the complaint or allegation (with his/her representative) and any witnesses will be interviewed to gather any information pertaining to this.

Following a full investigation, the manager/supervisor will make a decision as to whether disciplinary action is appropriate.

In the event of a breach of the disciplinary rules constituting gross misconduct, the supervisor/manager may take the decision to suspend, with or without pay, during the initial period of the investigation. The completion of the investigation shall be followed by the reinstatement of the employee, if it is decided that no disciplinary action is required, or by arrangement of a disciplinary interview to consider the case.

Following an initial investigation, it may transpire that due to certain circumstances, disciplinary action against an employee would be inappropriate. In such cases the supervisor/manager may need to provide support and guidance to enable them to improve without the need to invoke formal procedures.

Disciplinary Interview:

If it becomes clear that formal disciplinary action is appropriate, a disciplinary interview will be arranged in line with the following procedure.

1. The employee will receive a formal letter requesting attendance at the disciplinary interview, clearly stating the nature of the complaint against him/her. The employee will be given 5 working days notice of the interview and be offered the opportunity to have representation.
2. The person conducting the interview shall explain to the employee (and their representative, if appropriate) the procedure for the interview, and that a decision on disciplinary action will be taken once all the facts have been presented.
3. The nature of the complaint and any supporting evidence will then be outlined to the employee. Any witnesses or other members of staff will be interviewed independently to corroborate this information as appropriate.
4. The employee concerned will then be allowed to state their case and call in any other members of staff to the interview to substantiate this. The manager/supervisor may ask further questions of the employee or any other participant at the interview in order to arrive at the full facts.
5. If, during these discussions, new facts emerge, the manager/supervisor may decide that further investigation is required and, if so, adjourn the interview and reconvene when such investigations have been completed.
6. It is the responsibility of the person hearing the interview to decide the appropriate penalty. In deciding the appropriate action to be taken, the following will be taken into account.
 - The gravity of the offence.
 - The penalty applied in similar cases in the past.
 - The individual's disciplinary record.
 - Any mitigating circumstances
 - Whether the proposed penalty is reasonable in all circumstances.
7. The disciplinary interview will then be reconvened to:
 - Inform the employee of the decision and disciplinary penalty if any
 - Explain the employees right of appeal

- In the case of a warning, explain what improvement is expected, how long it will last and what the consequences of failure to improve may be.
8. This decision will be confirmed in writing. If an improved level of performance or conduct is expected over a particular timescale, the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing this will be made clear to the employee.

Following a disciplinary interview and consideration of all the relevant facts, the following courses of action will be considered. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, action can be taken at **any** of these stages at an initial disciplinary hearing:

No disciplinary action

The manager/supervisor considers the complaints against the employee are false or unproven or of such a minor nature that no disciplinary action should be taken. All reference to the investigation will be removed from the employees' file. The employee will receive a letter confirming that no action will be taken.

Verbal warning

The manager/supervisor considers that, on account of the facts presented during the course of the investigation and disciplinary interview, the complaints against the employee are upheld but the nature of this misconduct is of a sufficiently minor nature that a verbal warning is most appropriate.

The employee will receive a plan for improving their work performance and/or conduct. All reference to the warning will be removed from the employee's file after 6 months, provided the employee's conduct and performance have improved.

Written Warning

A written warning will be given if the employee's performance or conduct remains unsatisfactory during the period set out in the verbal warning, or the misconduct or poor performance of which the employee is guilty is of a more serious nature.

Such a warning will be confirmed in writing to the employee and will detail the complaints against the employee, the improvements required and the expected time scale. It will also indicate that further disciplinary action will be taken if the employee fails to improve his/her behaviour. The employee will be informed of his/her right of appeal.

Final Written Warning

A final written warning may be given to an employee who persists with conduct or performance for which they have previously been given a written warning or for conduct of a more serious nature regardless of whether previous warnings have been issued.

A final written warning will be confirmed in writing to the employee and will detail the complaint and the improvements in conduct/performance required and if

such improvement is not forthcoming, further disciplinary action, including dismissal, may take place.

Dismissal

If all previous warnings produce no improvement in an employee's conduct/performance, the decision to dismiss the employee may be taken.

Following a disciplinary interview at which a decision to dismiss an employee has been taken, a letter confirming the reasons for dismissal and the effective date of the dismissal will be sent. Employees may receive either notice in accordance with their contract of employment or, if more appropriate, payment in lieu of notice.

Where a disciplinary hearing finds that an employee has committed an act of gross misconduct he/she may be dismissed without notice.

2.2 Grievance/Disputes Procedure:

Grievances will occur in the normal course of interaction in any organisation or workplace. It is accepted that failure to provide a procedure to deal adequately with these grievances, as they arise, will inevitably lead to disputes affecting not only the aggrieved party but all those employed in the organisation/workplace.

It is the company's intention to settle amicably, at all times, any disagreements between it and individual employees or groups of employees, or between employees themselves.

All grievances will be dealt without undue delay and at the earliest possible stage of this procedure. A senior member of management will ensure that all grievances will be dealt with consistently and fairly having regard to:

- Company Policy
- Custom and Practice within the company
- Labour Court and Third Party precedents

Stage 1.

You should first raise the matter with your Supervisor/Manager who will make every effort to solve the problem as quickly as possible. The matter will be discussed informally by the employee or employees concerned, with their immediate supervisor and agree any corrective actions.

Stage 2.

If you feel the problem has not been solved within a reasonable time or if you feel the solution is unsatisfactory, the matter will be referred to senior management. A meeting will take place within seven working days.

Stage 3.

Should the matter remain unresolved, it will be referred to the Labour Relations Commission or for a hearing by a rights commissioner. If still unresolved,

it will be referred to the Labour court for investigation, or, to, the Employment Appeals Tribunal, under the relevant acts.

During the period in which the above procedure is being followed, no form of industrial action designed to bring pressure to bear on either party will take place, until all avenues as prescribed have been followed by both parties and at least 14 days have elapsed following the issuing of a Labour Court Recommendation or a determination of the Employment appeals tribunal.

In the event of any issues arising which cannot immediately be disposed of and which are being processed in accordance with the above disputes procedure, normal working-under protest if necessary will continue, pending a settlement

2.3 Bullying & Harassment Policy and Procedure

Purpose:

The company is committed to providing all of its employees with a work environment free from bullying/harassment and sexual harassment. The aim of this policy is outline what constitutes bullying and harassment and what action the company will take in dealing with an offence of this nature.

Scope:

This policy is applicable to all employees (temporary and permanent) both in the workplace and at associated events such as meetings, conferences, and Company functions whether on or off site.

It also applies to contractors, customers and other business contacts with which employees might reasonably expect to come into contact within the course of their employment.

Policy:

The company acknowledges the right of all employees to be treated with fairness, dignity and respect and to a work environment free from bullying and harassment. Every employee has an obligation to be aware of the effects their behaviour has on others.

Any instances of bullying/harassment will be dealt with in an effective and efficient manner. Cases where the behaviour is proved to be repeated and consistent causing unnecessary stress and anxiety will be considered as gross misconduct and will be subject to disciplinary procedures up to and including dismissal.

It is imperative that all employees respect the dignity of every colleague and be conscious of behaviour which may cause offence.

Definition:

Bullying/Harassment are defined as any form of repeated, unwelcome and unacceptable conduct that can be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidation.

An individual can be harassed on grounds of race, religious belief, national ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability or membership of the traveller community.

The Harassment can include conduct offensive to a reasonable person e.g. oral or written slurs, physical contact, gestures, jokes, displaying pictures, flags/emblems, graffiti or other material which state or imply prejudicial attitudes which are offensive to fellow employees.

Other examples of bullying behaviour include:

- Personal insults and name calling.
- Persistent unjustified criticism and sarcasm.
- Public or private humiliation
- Shouting at employees in public and/or private sneering.
- Instantaneous rage, often over trivial issues.
- Unfair delegation of duties and responsibilities.
- Setting impossible deadlines.
- Unnecessary work interference.
- Making it difficult for employees to have access to necessary information.
- Aggression
- Not giving credit for work contribution
- Continuously refusing reasonable requests without good reason.
- Intimidation and threats in general.

Sexual Harassment can be defined as conduct towards another person that is sexual in nature or has a sexual dimension and is unwelcome to the recipient.

Examples of this type of Harassment include:

- Sexual Gestures
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, calendars or sending suggestive or pornographic correspondence(including e-mail)
- Unwelcome sexual comments or jokes
- Unwelcome physical contact such as pinching, unnecessary touching etc.

The above examples are not exhaustive and only serve as a guideline to employees. Each case will be taken in isolation and dealt with in the appropriate manner.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This policy adopts a two tiered approach (the informal and formal procedures) to dealing with issues of Bullying and Harassment in the workplace.

Informal Procedure:

It is often preferable for all concerned that complaints of bullying/harassment are dealt with informally whenever possible. This approach is likely to produce solutions, which are speedy, effective and minimise embarrassment and the risk of breaching confidentiality.

Thus, in the first instance a person who believes he/she is the subject of harassment/bullying should ask the person responsible to stop the offensive behaviour.

The person responsible should also be informed of the Company's bullying/harassment policy and advised that a further occurrence of this nature will result in a formal complaint.

In instance where a person is unsure whether the behaviour constitutes a form of bullying/harassment, he/she should discuss this with a supervisor or manager.

It is recognised that it may not always be practical to use the informal procedure particularly where the bullying/harassment is of a serious nature or where the person(s) concerned are at different levels in the company. In such instances, the employee should use the formal procedure.

Formal Procedure:

Where a formal complaint is being made, the employee should contact his/her supervisor/manager as soon as possible. An employee making a complaint will be required to put his/her allegation in writing.

In the interests of natural justice, the alleged harasser will be made aware of the nature of the complaint, his or her right to representation and will be given every opportunity to rebut the allegations made.

While it is desirable to maintain utmost confidentiality, once an investigation begins it may be necessary to interview other employees. If so, the importance of confidentiality will be stressed to them and any statements taken will be circulated to both the complainant and the alleged harasser for their comments before any conclusion is reached in the investigation.

When the investigation has been completed both parties will be informed as to whether or not the complaint has been upheld.

All complaints will be treated seriously, confidentially and dealt with as soon as is practicable. Strict confidentiality and proper discretion will be maintained as far as is possible to safeguard both parties from innuendo and harmful gossip.

A record of all relevant discussions which take place during the course of the investigation will be retained on file.

ACTION POST-INVESTIGATION

Where a complaint is upheld, a disciplinary hearing will take place in line with the company's disciplinary policy.

Should a case of bullying/harassment be proven then the company will take appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Records of any warnings for bullying/harassment will remain on an employee's file and will be used if any further allegations of a similar nature occur in the future.

Regular checks will be made by the person responsible for investigating the complaint to ensure that the bullying/harassment have stopped and that there is no victimisation.

Retaliation of any kind against an employee for complaining ago taking part in an investigation concerning bullying/harassment is a serious disciplinary offence.

In cases where it is established that a person made a false allegation against an employee, then he/she will face serious misconduct charges resulting in an immediate disciplinary hearing.

2.4 Health & Safety Policy

(Insert Health & Safety Policy here)

2.5 Equality Policy.

1. Introduction:

***** is an Equal Opportunities Employer. As such it is committed to Equality of Opportunity for existing and potential employees. The purpose of this Equal Opportunity / Diversity Policy is to create a workplace which provides for Equal Opportunities for all staff and potential staff and where their dignity is protected and respected at all times.

All persons regardless of Gender, Marital status, Family status, Race, Religious beliefs, Sexual Orientation, Disability, Age or Member of the Travelling Community will be provided with equality of access to employment and also encouraged and assisted to achieve their full potential. We will continue to foster a genuine culture of Equality.

2. Objectives:

The aim of the policy in terms of employment is to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This applies to Recruitment and Selection, Training, Promotion, Pay and Employee Benefits, Employee Grievances and Discipline Procedures and all Terms and Conditions of Employment.

3. Responsibilities:

The responsibility for ensuring the provision of Equality of Opportunity rests primarily with ***** as an employer. Managers and Supervisors have particular responsibility to engender respect for difference and to accommodate Diversity where appropriate.

All staff have an important role to play in ensuring Equality of Opportunity throughout the organisation. It is also recognised that individual employees on behalf of ***** have responsibilities in law and are:

- a) Required to co-operate with any measures introduced by the company to promote Equal Opportunities.
- b) Must not themselves, either directly or indirectly, discriminate against fellow employees or harass or intimidate them in any way.

4. Structures:

The Company is committed to resourcing an Equality Officer who is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for effective implementation, monitoring and review of the policy.

This policy will be communicated at every level within the organisation in a range of formats through various media.

We will undertake an Equality review and prepare an action plan on foot of this and maintain a monitoring system.

5. Recruitment and Selection:

***** will select those suitable for employment solely on the basis of merit. Job advertisements, application forms and publicity material will encourage applications from all suitable candidates and will not discriminate intentionally or unintentionally against any group or individual on any unjustifiable grounds.

The objective is to target the widest possible pool of potential applicants and to ensure that all candidates have Equality of access to all job vacancies.

We will seek to ensure a creative approach to our advertising that affirms Diversity and attracts the widest pool of candidates.

Where possible and practicable efforts will be made to ensure that interview panels come from diverse backgrounds. We will ensure that interviewers are trained to conduct interviews in a non-discriminatory way and that questions will relate to the requirements of the job.

Relevant questions will be asked of all candidates and evaluated in the same way and interviewers will be careful not to ask questions which might be taken as discriminatory.

Selection will be on merit and those who are successful shall demonstrate their suitability for employment according to pre-determined job-related selection criteria which will be consistently applied throughout the recruitment process.

Equality of Opportunity will also include accommodating where possible the special needs of individuals to facilitate their participation in the Recruitment & Selection process.

6. Career Development and Training:

Opportunities for Career Development and Training will be open to all and will not discriminate directly or indirectly on any of the grounds outlined in the 1998 Act. All employees will be provided with every opportunity to acquire the range of Training, Skills and experience necessary for their career development.

Opportunities for training will be based on the requirements of the job and career development will be based on people's abilities and merit. The Company is committed to a relevant training and career development policy for all staff irrespective of background.

7. Promotion:

All categories of staff will be encouraged to prepare, plan and consider themselves for promotion. All eligible employees will be made aware of promotional opportunities and encouraged to compete. Conditions governing access to promotion competitions will not discriminate, directly or indirectly, on any of the nine grounds. Unnecessary barriers to promotion will be removed and employees facilitated to compete by all means possible. Promotion and Re-grading will be decided on objective criteria to the requirements of the job and will not be influenced by any of the nine grounds.

8. Complaints and Redress:

All complaints from employees in relation to Employment Equality or alleged discrimination will be handled in accordance with grievance procedures.

Any person who wishes to raise issues concerning alleged discrimination or unfairness should do so in the first instance by contacting the Equality Officer.

We are committed to ensuring that all issues concerning alleged breaches of this policy will be dealt with seriously, promptly and with appropriate regard for confidentiality.

9. Harassment and Bullying:

***** is committed to providing a safe and secure working environment that is free of harassment (including sexual harassment) and bullying and within which all members of staff will be treated with dignity and respect. All employees have an obligation to prevent and eliminate Bullying & Harassment. A specific Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure are in place.

10. Positive Action:

***** will take practical measures to facilitate the integration of the following categories into employment:

1. Gender.
2. Persons over the Age of 50.
3. Persons with a Disability.
4. Membership of the Travelling Community.

11. Review and Monitoring:

Progress in the areas of Equal Opportunities and Diversity will be gauged through the continuous monitoring of the implementation of the Equal Opportunities/Diversity strategy. All aspects of this Equality Policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Equality Officer.

2.6 Tobacco Policy

Since 29th March, 2004 the Irish government has implemented a ban on smoking in the workplace. This ban was introduced as part of the public health (tobacco) Act, 2002 (Section 47) Regulations 2003. The purpose of this ban is to offer protection to employees and the public who are exposed to the harmful and toxic effects of tobacco smoke in the workplace.

***** is obliged to protect the health of staff, customers and visitors to their premises. Any person found guilty of breaching the ban may be subject to a fine of €3,000. Breaches of the smoking regulations will be dealt with under the company disciplinary procedure.

Employees are only entitled to time off for breaks as set down in section 12 of the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997. The company does not provide additional time for smoking breaks for employees.

2.7 Overtime Policy

This Policy is designed to assist the company to meet deadlines and clear any backlog of Work. It will also ensure that employees are adequately compensated for working overtime.

Overtime is defined as work performed outside the normal work schedule that has been approved in advance by your manager. You are selected for overtime work at the sole discretion of your manager.

If you are working 1 hour overtime, and your shift ends at 5.00p.m., then you continue working until 6.00 p.m.

If you are working 2.5 hours of overtime, you are entitled to a 15 minute paid break at the end of your normal shift.

If you work overtime at the weekend, break periods follow the same pattern as during normal work days.

In line with the organisation of working time Act (1997), employees must have a minimum of 11 hours rest between shifts. It is your responsibility to ensure that you comply with this legislation.

At no time is overtime neither guaranteed nor should overtime be construed as an integral part of earnings, working conditions or terms of employment.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

3.1 Hours of Work

The Company will use appropriate means to record attendance. Employees should be at their place of work, ready to start work at normal starting time. The Company attaches great importance to punctuality. Disciplinary action will be taken against late comers.

3.2 Lunch Periods and Breaks

(Insert Details Here)

3.3 Absence

Employees absent from work without prior permission must notify the company within 2 hours of their scheduled starting time. All absences other than certified illness, compassionate, annual or written leave-of-absence approved by management, will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the procedures outlined.

An employee absent through illness or injury for more than three consecutive working days must provide a doctor's certificate not later than the third day of absence. This certificate must cover the period of illness and contain a declaration as to when the employee will be fit to resume normal duties.

In the case of prolonged illness or injury, or a series of intermittent illnesses, the company reserves the right to have the employee examined by a doctor of its choice.

3.4 Hygiene

The highest standards of hygiene must be maintained at all times. All employees must comply with company requirements with regard to hygiene standards.

3.5 Alcohol & Drugs

The Company is committed to providing a safe and productive workplace for its employees. In keeping with this commitment, the following rules regarding alcohol and drugs of abuse have been established for all staff members, regardless of rank or position. The rules apply during working hours to all employees of the Company while they are on Company premises or elsewhere on Company business.

- The manufacture, distribution, possession, sale, or purchase of controlled substances of abuse on Company property is prohibited.

- Being under the influence of illegal drugs, alcohol, or substances of abuse on Company property is prohibited.
- Working while under the influence of prescription drugs that impair performance is prohibited.

In implementing this policy, the Company reserves the right to random drug tests.

3.6 E-Mail and Internet Use

Electronic mail enables the company to communicate promptly and efficiently with customers and suppliers. While e-mail brings many benefits to the company in terms of its communications, it also brings risks to the company. For this reason, it is necessary for the company to set down specific rules for the use of e-mail and internet within the company.

Every employee has a responsibility to maintain the company's image, to use electronic resources in a productive manner and to avoid placing the company at risk of legal liability based on their use.

E-mail is not to be used for private purposes and should not be used for any purpose other than company business.

The Company has access to the internet which enables staff to obtain information specific to their role within the company. Employees requiring access to the internet will need the approval of management. Internet connections are intended to support company business or the professional development of employees. General internet access will only be provided with the permission of management.

3.7 Confidentiality

Employees will be required not to divulge secrets or any information, which is regarded as confidential by the company or any associated companies or their business during or after your employment, except in the proper course of your employment or as required by law.

You may not remove any documents or things belonging to the company or which contain any confidential information from the Company's premises at any time without proper advance authorisation.

You must return to the Company upon request and, in any event, upon the termination of your employment, all documents and things belonging to the Company or which contain or refer to any confidential information and which are in your possession or under your control.

3.8 Resignation and Termination

An employee may terminate his/her employment by giving notice as per the terms and conditions outlined in the contract of employment. The company reserves

the right to pay the appropriate payment in lieu of notice and may require the employee not to work the notice period.

The minimum period of notice to be given to an employee depends on the length of the employee's computable service.

Notice to an employee will be in accordance with the minimum notice and terms of employment acts 1973 to 2001 as follows.

Length of Service	Notice
13 Weeks To Less Than 2 Years	1 Week
2 Years To Less Than 5 Years	2 Weeks
5 Years To Less Than 10 Years	4 Weeks
10 Years To Less than 15 Years	6 Weeks
More Than 15 Years	8 Weeks

3.9 Lay-Off/Short-Time

While it is the Company's intention to provide continuity of employment, there may be circumstances outside the company's control which necessitates short-time working or lay-off. Should the need arise to put staff on short time or lay them off, the company will give as much notice as is reasonable in the circumstances. Employees will only be paid for actual hours worked during such periods.

3.10 Redundancy

It is recognised that circumstances may arise which leave the Company with no alternative but to declare redundancies.

Where employees are made redundant, the prime consideration will be to protect the employment of as many people as possible, consistent with maintaining a fully efficient operation. Therefore, selection will be on retaining key employees required to maintain an efficient operation. All else being equal, a policy of last-in, first-out will apply.

Should the need for redundancy arise, appropriate consultation with employees will take place.

LEAVE AND BENEFITS

4.1 Annual Leave:

Annual leave will be as per the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997. The Company has the discretion to nominate up to 5 working days in each calendar year, upon which employees will be required to take a day's holiday. Generally these nominated days fall during the Christmas shut down period. The company also has the discretion to nominate operational shut down periods during which you may be

required to take annual leave. Employees will be given reasonable notice of any shut down periods. The nominated days are normally set by the company at the beginning of the calendar year.

Holidays must be taken in the calendar year in which they are due. At management's discretion, an employee may be allowed to carry over days into the following calendar year.

Employees are also entitled to nine public holidays per year. These days are as follows:

1. New Years Day
2. St Patrick's Day
3. Easter Monday
4. May Bank Holiday
5. June Bank Holiday
6. August Bank Holiday
7. October Bank Holiday
8. Christmas Day
9. St. Stephens Day

Scheduled holidays are agreed between management and employee, subject to the business needs of the company.

4.1.1 Compassionate Leave

Compassionate leave days are at the discretion of the company. In all cases of personal tragedy, please inform management who will help arrange your absence from work. You are allowed up to three days to attend to personal affairs following the death of an immediate family member. An immediate family member is defined as Mother, Father, Brother, Sister, Spouse Child.

4.1.2 Maternity Leave

Arrangements for maternity leave will be in accordance with the provisions of the Maternity Protection Acts 1994 & 2004.

As a pregnant employee you are entitled to 26 weeks maternity leave around the time of birth of the child and an additional unpaid leave period up to a maximum of 16 weeks, following consultation with you and management. It is important that, of the 26 weeks, at least 2 weeks should be taken before the end of the week in which the baby is due, and 4 weeks after that date. The remaining 20 weeks may be taken before or after the birth.

You must give the company at least 4 weeks notice in writing of your intention to take maternity leave combined with a medical certificate confirming the expected week of the birth of the baby. If you wish to take additional maternity leave, this must be confirmed in writing 4 weeks before the end of the maternity leave period. When returning to work you should give 4 weeks notice of your intended return to work date.

You are entitled to paid time off for medical or related ante-natal and post-natal care. Please give management 2 weeks notice of such appointments. Medical evidence of these appointments may be requested.

During maternity leave, your rights such as annual leave are preserved and continue to accrue as if you were not absent from work. While on maternity leave an Employee will normally be entitled to Maternity pay from the department of Social and Family Affairs for the 26 weeks maternity leave, depending on meeting certain PRSI eligibility criteria. Social welfare benefits are not payable during the optional additional 16 weeks maternity leave. You should apply at least 10 weeks prior to the expected birth of the child.

An employee, who is pregnant, has recently given birth or who is breastfeeding, will not be placed in any job that is a risk to her Health & Safety or that of her child. If such a risk exists the company will remove the risk, re-assign the employee or place her on Health & Safety leave.

There are two Breastfeeding Arrangements in place. Option 1 allows an Employee who is breastfeeding to reduce her hours by 1 hour per day for the purposes of breastfeeding other than in the workplace. Option 2 allows an Employee who is breastfeeding, to work breaks equivalent to 1 hour per day for the purposes of breastfeeding in the workplace.

The Company reserves the right to refuse payment for time-off to Employees where there is an abuse of this procedure, and any such abuses will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

4.1.3 Paternity Leave

Fathers of newborn children are entitled to 3 days paid leave to be taken within 30 days of the birth.

4.1.4 Parental Leave

Parental Leave provides for unpaid leave from work for parents to look after their young children to a maximum age of 8 years. All employees who have completed one year's continuous service on the date the parental leave is due to commence are entitled to 14 weeks unpaid Parental Leave.

An employee must give written notice to the Company of their intention to take Parental Leave, not later than 6 weeks before the commencement of the leave. Employees may be required to provide evidence of his or her entitlement to parental leave. Once notification of the intention to take Parental Leave has been made, a confirmation document must be prepared which must include:

- The date on which the leave will commence
- The duration of the leave
- The manner in which the leave will be taken
- The signatures of employer and employee.

Management may decide to postpone the parental leave, for up to 6 months, if satisfied that granting the leave would have a substantial adverse effect on the operation of the business.

Parental Leave may be terminated if there are reasonable grounds to believe that it is being used for a purpose other than taking care of the child concerned.

4.1.5 Force Majeure Leave

Employees may avail of Force Majeure Leave with pay for unplanned, extreme and urgent family reasons, where an immediate family member suffers an illness or injury and the employee's immediate presence with the injured party is absolutely indispensable.

Force Majeure Leave is to a maximum of 3 days in a consecutive 12-month period and a maximum of 5 days in a 36 month period. Absence for part of a day is counted as one day of Force Majeure Leave. Family members are defined as:

1. Child/Adoptive Child
2. Spouse or Partner (only where partner is living with employee)
3. Brother/Sister
4. Parent/Grandparent.

Force Majeure Leave will only apply in cases where the employee's personal presence is indispensable. If an alternative person (other family member, friend, babysitter) can be found to deal with the situation then this will not apply.

4.1.6 Carer's Leave

Carer's leave will be granted in accordance with the terms and provisions of the Carer's Leave Act 2001.

Relevant Person:

A care recipient will be considered a "Relevant person" if they need continual supervision and frequent assistance throughout the day in connection with normal bodily functions or need continual supervision in order to avoid danger to themselves or others.

Employees will be considered eligible to apply for Carer's leave if:

- 1) They have completed 12 months continuous employment with the company.
- 2) The person they wish to look after is considered a "Relevant Person"
- 3) The Employee will be providing full time care to the relevant person.
- 4) The Employee has provided the company with a decision from a deciding officer from the department of Social, Community and Family Affairs.

The department of Social, Community and Family Affairs will be responsible for ascertaining the validity of applications to avail of Carer's Leave.

Leave will be taken in either one continuous period of 104 weeks, or one or more periods, the total of which amounts to more than 104 weeks.

An Employee who proposes to avail of Carer's Leave must give written notice that they will be taking leave not later than six weeks before the date they are due to leave.

This notice must include:

- The proposal to take Carer's leave.
- The date when Leave will commence.
- The manner in which it is intended to take the leave.

- Confirmation that an application has been made to the department of Social, Community and Family Affairs that the person to be cared for is a “Relevant Person”.

An Employee while on Carer’s Leave will be regarded as still being in Employment and none of their rights relating to employment will be affected.

4.1.7 Adoptive Leave:

The Company is committed to providing employees with the necessary support and leave to adoptive employees. Unpaid Adoptive Leave of 24 weeks is available to adoptive mothers and sole male adopters. The Social Welfare provides the payment of an adoptive leave allowance for employees taking statutory adoptive leave.

In addition to the minimum period of adoptive leave, an employee may elect to take up to 16 weeks additional adoptive leave. During this period there is no entitlement to social welfare adoptive leave benefit.

An adopting mother or sole male adopter must notify the company in writing of their intention to take Adoptive leave no later than 4 weeks of the expected date of placement, if you feel you can offer the date sooner, please do so. If you wish to take the additional adoptive leave of 16 weeks, you must inform the company no later than 4 weeks before your expected return to work date.

During Adoptive Leave, your rights such as annual leave are preserved and continue to accrue as if you were not absent from work.

4.1.8 Jury Duty:

In circumstances where an employee serves on a jury, the company will grant leave in accordance with the Jury’s Act 1976. Employees are required to attend work before and after each court session and submit written evidence to the company of involvement in Jury duty.

4.2 Pension Policy and Plans

The Company operates a Pension Scheme for all employees. It is a condition of employment that all employees over the age of 21, with more than 12 months service become members of this scheme.

4.3 Training and Professional Development

Training and Development is a management responsibility and is an ongoing process aimed at fulfilling organisational needs and individual growth. The company intends to ensure that all employees appointed to a job are correctly selected, inducted and trained. Employees are obliged to co-operate fully with company training programmes.

Company Policy endeavours to provide career opportunities for employees whenever possible and to encourage employees who wish to progress. Promotion will be at the discretion of management and will be based on suitability for the position to be filled.

Where possible the company will make every effort to facilitate any employee who wishes to participate in further education and training opportunities to enhance their skills, career development and occupational mobility.

This is a Specimen Document