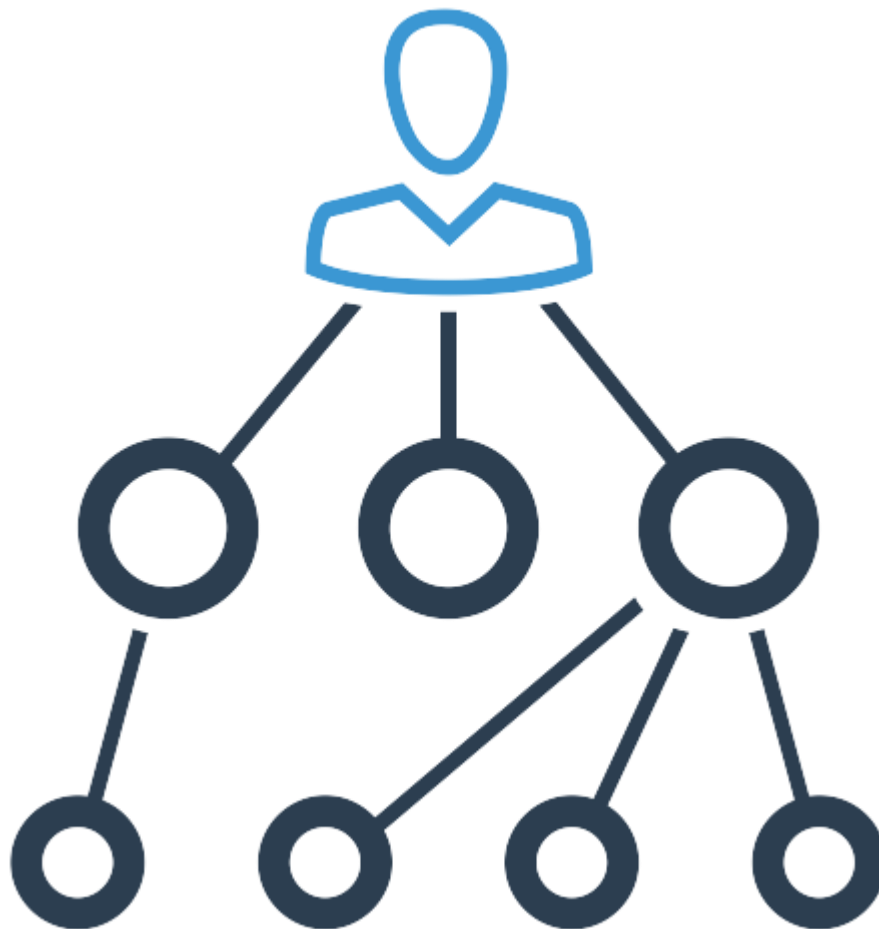




The Parish of
St Mary the Virgin
STANWELL
&
St Matthew
ASHFORD



Staff Policies



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S01- ALCOHOL AND DRUGS MISUSE POLICY

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS MISUSE

WHAT THIS POLICY COVERS

The purpose of the policy is to set out the Charity's position on drug or alcohol misuse in the workplace, to protect the health and safety of workers and to comply with relevant legislation.

Breaches of the policy are viewed as gross misconduct and will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal without notice.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

You must not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol when you report for work or during working time.

If you are taking medication or herbal remedies that may affect your work performance, or the safety, of yourself or others, you must inform your manager as soon as possible of which medication you are taking and the possible side effects.

SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES WITH ALCOHOL OR DRUG PROBLEMS

If you have or believe you may have an alcohol or drug problem, you should inform the Charity and seek medical advice before it affects your performance or conduct at work. If you come forward and seek help for an alcohol or drug problem, you will be treated sympathetically, and any discussions will remain confidential.

The Charity will treat any absence due to drug and alcohol abuse in the same way as sickness absence on condition that you have obtained professional help and/or are receiving treatment. The Charity will consider reasonable adjustments for employees with addiction issues, as addiction may be classified as a disability under the **Equality Act 2010**. This may include temporary adjustments to your role, working hours, or access to support services. However, you must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs at work throughout this time of support.

The use, possession, storage, transportation, promotion and/or sale of illegal drugs are forbidden in any situation connected to the Charity. The Charity reserves the right to involve the relevant authorities if it is deemed appropriate.

You are also expected to comply with any third-party site rules, policies, and procedures.

PROCEDURE

The Charity will take all reasonable steps to prevent employees, agency workers and contractors from carrying out work-related activities if they are considered to be unfit or unsafe to undertake the work as a result of drug or alcohol consumption.



If you are suspected to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs during working hours or on Charity premises, the Charity reserves the right to send you home.

This type of incident will be viewed as a gross misconduct offence and dealt with under the Charity's Disciplinary Procedure, which could result in dismissal without notice. If the Charity has reasonable grounds to believe that you were under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol at work, you will not be paid for this day.



S02- ANNUAL LEAVE POLICY

ANNUAL LEAVE

WHAT THIS POLICY COVERS

This policy sets out the rules and procedures concerning taking annual leave.

Your entitlements and responsibilities Details of the holiday year and your annual leave entitlement can be found in your Contract of Employment.

TIMING AND LENGTH OF HOLIDAYS

You are not permitted to take more than two weeks' holiday at any one time, except at the sole discretion of the Charity.

The Charity may require you to reserve a specified amount of annual leave entitlement (no more than 1 week) to be taken at a time set by the Charity, depending on the needs of the Charity. The Charity reserves the right not to provide you with advance notice of this requirement.

CARRYING OVER UNUSED HOLIDAYS

You are not permitted to carry over accrued annual leave from one holiday year to the next, except where required by law. For example, if you are unable to take holiday due to long-term sickness, maternity leave, or other statutory leave, you may carry over unused holiday entitlement in line with the Working Time Regulations 1998 and relevant case law.

HOLIDAYS DURING LONG-TERM ABSENCES

You will continue to accrue your full statutory holiday entitlement during sickness absence.

However, any contractual holiday entitlement over and above the minimum statutory holiday entitlement will not accrue during any period of sickness absence. You are permitted to take annual leave during periods of sickness and this must be requested via the normal procedure.

If you have been unable to take annual leave due to long-term sickness you may be permitted to carry over part of your unused annual leave from one holiday year to the next.



TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

The Charity may require you to take all or part of any outstanding holiday entitlement during a period of notice to terminate employment or garden leave.

The Charity reserves the right not to provide you with advance notice of this requirement.

Upon the termination of your employment, for whatever reason, you will be entitled to be paid for holidays accrued but not taken in the current holiday year, at the date of termination of employment.

If upon the termination of your employment, you have taken more annual leave than you have accrued in the current holiday year, an appropriate deduction will be made from your final payment.

If you are dismissed for gross misconduct or if you fail to give the required notice of resignation, you are not entitled to be recompensed for unused holidays over the minimum statutory entitlement.

UNAUTHORIZED HOLIDAYS

If you are absent from work on a date on which a holiday request has been refused, the Charity will investigate the reason for your absence. If the Charity considers that you do not have a reasonable explanation for your non-attendance, you will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal without notice.

SICKNESS AND HOLIDAYS

If you are taken ill or sustain an injury during a period of authorised holiday, you may, at your manager's discretion, be permitted to take the holiday at a later time. You must follow normal absence reporting and medical certification procedures.

If you are absent from work due to sickness immediately before a period of authorised holiday and your incapacity extends into the authorised holiday period, you may, at your manager's discretion, be permitted to delay the period of holiday until a later time. You must submit a written request to postpone the planned holiday, together with a medical certificate completed by a medical practitioner.



If you receive more than the statutory minimum annual leave entitlement and you are absent without authorisation on the day before or the day after a public holiday, the Charity reserves the right to withhold holiday pay in respect of that public holiday.

HOLIDAYS DURING MATERNITY, ADOPTION AND SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE

You will continue to accrue your full contractual holiday entitlement during maternity, adoption and shared parental leave.

If you are unable to take annual leave due to maternity, adoption or shared parental leave, you will be permitted to carry over your unused annual leave from one holiday year to the next.

You must discuss holiday arrangements around your leave with your manager.

PROCEDURE

PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING HOLIDAYS

All periods of annual leave must be authorised in advance by your manager. You must not make firm holiday arrangements before receiving confirmation from your manager that your request has been authorised.

You are required to submit completed holiday requests as early as possible, as detailed in your Contract of Employment.

Requests for annual leave will be granted on a 'first come, first served' basis. Owing to the needs of The Charity, the Charity reserves the right to limit the number of employees who are permitted to take holiday at the same time. The granting of all holiday requests will be subject to adequate cover being available and the overall needs of the Charity.



S03- COMPUTERS AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

COMPUTERS AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

WHAT THIS POLICY COVERS

This policy sets out the Charity's guidelines on access to and the use of the Charity's computers and electronic communications. It sets out the action which will be taken when breaches of the guidelines occur. You are only permitted to use the Charity's computer systems following the Charity's Data Protection, Bring Your Own Device to Work, and Monitoring Policies and the following guidelines.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Charity's computer systems and software and their contents belong to the Charity and they are intended for business purposes only. You are not permitted to use the Charity's systems for personal use unless authorised by your manager.

You are not permitted to download or install anything from external sources unless you have express authorisation from your manager.

No device or equipment must be attached to the Charity's systems without prior approval of your manager.

The Charity has the right to monitor and access all aspects of its systems, including data that is stored on the Charity's computer systems as notified to you in the Charity's Privacy Notice and in compliance with data protection laws.

SYSTEM SECURITY

You must only log on to the Charity's computer systems using your own password which must be kept secret. You must select a password that is not easily broken (e.g. not your surname).

You are not permitted to use another employee's password to log on to the computer system, whether or not you have that employee's permission. If you log on to the computer using another employee's password, you will be liable to disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal for gross misconduct. If you disclose your password to another employee, you will be liable to disciplinary action.

To safeguard the Charity's computer systems from viruses, you must take care when opening documents or communications from unknown origins. Attachments may be blocked if they are deemed to be potentially harmful to the Charity's systems.

All information, documents, and data created, saved or maintained on the Charity's computer system remains at all times the property of the Charity.



PROCESSING PERSONAL DATA

You may have access to the personal data of other individuals and of our members, their families, Trustees information and contractors that is being processed within the Charity's computer systems in the course of your employment. Where this is the case, the Charity relies on you to help meet its data protection obligations to employees and to residents, their families, Trustees information and contractors.

If you have access to personal data, you are required:

- to access only data that you have authority to access and only for authorised purposes;
- not to disclose data except to individuals (whether inside or outside the Charity) who have appropriate authorisation;
- to keep data secure by complying with rules on access to premises, access to computers including password protection, and secure file storage and destruction;
- not to remove personal data, or devices containing or that can be used to access personal data, from the Charity's premises without adopting appropriate security measures (such as encryption or password protection) to secure the data and the device; and
- not to store personal data on local drives or on personal devices that are used for business purposes.

Failure to observe these requirements will amount to a disciplinary offence which will be dealt with under the Charity's disciplinary procedure. Significant or deliberate breaches of this policy, such as accessing employees, residents, their families and contractors' data without authorisation or a legitimate reason to do so, will constitute gross misconduct and could lead to your dismissal without notice.



USE OF E-MAIL

Where the Charity's computer systems contain an e-mail facility, you must use that e-mail system for business purposes only.

E-mails must be written following the standards of any other form of written communication and the content and language used in the message must be consistent with best practice. Messages must be concise and directed to relevant individuals on a need-to-know basis.

You must take care when opening e-mails from unknown external sources. Attachments to e-mails may be blocked if they are deemed to be potentially harmful to the Charity's systems.

E-mails can be the subject of legal action (for example, claims of defamation, breach of confidentiality or breach of contract) against both the employee who sent them or the Charity. As e-mail messages may be disclosed to any person mentioned in them, you must always ensure that the content of the e-mail is appropriate.

Abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory e-mails must never be sent to anyone. If you do so, you will be liable to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal without notice.

INTERNET ACCESS

You are required to limit your use of the internet to sites and searches appropriate to your job. The Charity may monitor all internet use by employees.

You are expressly forbidden from accessing web pages or files downloaded from the internet that could in any way be regarded as illegal, offensive, in bad taste or immoral.

MONITORING

The Charity may monitor the use of its computer systems, including emails, internet usage, and other electronic communications, to ensure compliance with this policy and for legitimate business purposes. Monitoring will be conducted in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. Employees will be informed of the extent and purpose of monitoring through the Charity's Privacy Notice. Covert monitoring will only be used in exceptional circumstances, such as suspected criminal activity, and will be conducted in compliance with data protection laws.

PROCEDURE

MISUSE OF COMPUTER SYSTEMS

Examples of misuse include, but are not limited to, the following:

- use of on-line auction sites
- sending, receiving, downloading, displaying or disseminating material that discriminates against, degrades, insults, causes offence to or harasses others



- accessing pornographic or other inappropriate or unlawful materials
- engaging in on-line gambling
- forwarding electronic chain letters or similar material
- issuing false or defamatory statements about any person or organisation via the Charity's electronic systems
- unauthorised sharing of confidential information about the Charity or any person or organisation connected to the Charity,
- unauthorised disclosure of personal data; and
- loading or running unauthorised games or software

Any evidence of misuse will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal without notice. If necessary, information gathered in connection with the investigation will be handed to the police.

Complaints of bullying and harassment

If you feel that you have been harassed or bullied or are offended by material received from a colleague, you must inform your manager immediately.



S04- CONDUCT AND STANDARDS POLICY

CONDUCT AND STANDARDS

WHAT THIS POLICY COVERS

This policy details the main standards of behaviour that you need to adhere to and also details the behaviours that the Charity would regard as gross misconduct. The standards of behaviour and the details of gross misconduct listed in this policy should not be considered exhaustive.

YOUR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

You are under a duty to comply with the standards of behaviour required by the Charity and to behave in a reasonable manner at all times.

ATTENDANCE AND TIMEKEEPING

You must:

- comply with the rules relating to notification of absence set out in the Charity's Absence Procedure
- arrive at work promptly, ready to start work at your contracted starting time
- remain at work until your contracted finishing time
- obtain management authorisation if for any reason you wish to arrive later or leave earlier than your agreed normal start and finish times

The Charity reserves the right not to pay you in respect of working time lost because of poor timekeeping.

Persistent poor timekeeping will result in disciplinary action.

CONDUCT STANDARDS

YOU MUST:

- maintain satisfactory standards of performance at work
- comply with all reasonable management instructions
- co-operate fully with your colleagues and with management
- ensure the maintenance of acceptable standards of politeness
- take all necessary steps to safeguard the Charity's public image and preserve positive relationships with all persons and organisations connected to the Charity
- ensure that you behave in a way that does not constitute unlawful discrimination
- comply with the Charity's Operating Policies and Procedures

FLEXIBILITY

You may be required to work additional hours at short notice, in accordance with the needs of the business.



You may also be required to undertake duties outside your normal job remit and to work at locations other than your normal place of work.

CONFIDENTIALITY

You must keep confidential, except as required by law, both during your employment and at

any time after its termination, all information gained in the course of your employment about the Charity and that of all persons and organisations connected to the Charity.

CONDUCT WHILE REPRESENTING THE CHARITY

As a general rule, behaviour outside of normal working hours is a personal matter and does not directly concern the Charity. However, there are some exceptions to this rule.

The Charity will become involved when incidents occur:

- at office parties or other work-related social occasions or gatherings
- at social occasions or gatherings organised by a third party, where you have been invited in your capacity as an employee
- at work-related conferences
- while working away on business on behalf of the Charity

On these occasions you are expected to behave appropriately and responsibly, keeping in mind that you are representing the Charity. You are instructed specifically not to consume any alcohol at such events where you are driving.

Any employee whose conduct brings the Charity into disrepute will be subject to the Charity's disciplinary procedure. Such behaviour will be viewed as a gross misconduct offence and will render the employee liable to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal without notice.

OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES AND OTHER EMPLOYMENT

You are not permitted to engage in any activity outside your employment with the Charity that could reasonably be interpreted as competing with the Charity.

You are required to seek permission from management before taking on any other employment while employed by the Charity unless you are on a zero-hours contract.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

It is your duty and responsibility to familiarise yourself with and to comply with, the Charity or any third party's health and safety policies and procedures. Breach of these rules will result in disciplinary action, up to and including the termination of your employment without notice for gross misconduct.

You must report all accidents, however minor, as soon as possible, making a comprehensive entry in the Charity's Accident Book.



DRESS AND APPEARANCE

The personal appearance of employees makes an important contribution to the Charity's reputation and image. For this reason, it is important that your dress and appearance are professional and reflect the environment in which you work.

All employees will be expected to comply with any management instructions concerning dress and appearance.

PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

You are not permitted to make use of Charity or a third party's telephone, fax, postal or other services for personal purposes.

You must not remove property or equipment from Charity or a third party's premises unless for use on authorised business or with the permission of management.

Where you damage property belonging to the Charity either through misuse or carelessness, the Charity reserves the right to make a deduction from your pay in respect of the damaged property.

On termination of your employment, you must return all Charity property, such as keys, laptops, mobile telephones, Charity vehicles, documents or any other items belonging to the Charity.

CLEAR DESK POLICY

To improve security and confidentiality, you are required to ensure that when your workstation is unoccupied you take all necessary steps to clear your work station of any sensitive and confidential information.

This ensures that all sensitive and confidential information, whether it be on paper, a storage device, or a hardware device, is properly locked away or disposed of when a workstation is not in use. This policy will reduce the risk of unauthorized access, data protection breaches, loss of, and damage to information during and outside of normal business hours or when workstations are left unattended.

Whenever a desk is unoccupied for an extended period of time the following will apply:

- All sensitive and confidential paperwork must be removed from the desk and locked in a drawer or filing cabinet. This includes mass storage devices such as CDs, DVDs, and USB drives;
- All waste paper which contains sensitive or confidential information must be placed in the designated confidential waste bins. Under no circumstances must this information be placed in regular waste paper bins;



- Computer workstations must be locked when the desk is unoccupied and completely shut down at the end of the work day;
- Laptops, tablets, and other hardware devices must be removed from the desk and locked in a drawer or filing cabinet;
- Keys for accessing drawers or filing cabinets must not be left unattended at a desk.

Printers and fax machines must be treated with the same care.

PERSONAL SEARCHES

The Charity may reasonably request to search your clothing, personal baggage, personal storage areas or vehicles. An authorised person must conduct any such search in the presence of an independent witness. Should you refuse such a request, the Charity will require the appropriate authorities to conduct the search on behalf of the Charity. Failure to co-operate with the Charity in this respect will be treated as gross misconduct.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

You are solely responsible for the safety of your personal possessions on Charity premises and must ensure that your personal possessions are kept in a safe place at all times. If you find an item of lost property on the premises, you are required to inform management immediately.

ENVIRONMENT

In order to provide a cost-effective service, you are requested to use Charity equipment, materials and services efficiently. You should try to reduce wastage and the subsequent impact on the environment by ensuring that you close windows, avoid using unnecessary lighting or heating or leaving taps running, switch off equipment when it is not in use and handle all materials with care.

BREACH OF THIS POLICY

A breach of the Charity's standards of behaviour is likely to result in disciplinary action being taken.

GROSS MISCONDUCT

Set out below are details of behaviour that the Charity views as gross misconduct, which is likely to result in dismissal without notice. This list is not exhaustive. Such behaviour includes:

- theft, dishonesty or fraud
- deliberate recording of incorrect working hours
- unauthorised absence
- smoking on the Charity's or a third party's premises or in a vehicle belonging to the Charity



- sleeping during working hours
- assault, acts of violence or aggression
- bullying
- unacceptable use of obscene or abusive language
- possession or use of or being under the influence of non-medicinal drugs or alcohol on Charity premises or during working hours
- wilful damage to Charity, employee or third-party property
- serious insubordination
- serious or gross negligence
- bringing the Charity into disrepute
- falsification of records or other Charity documents, including those relating to obtaining employment
- unlawful discrimination, including acts of indecency or harassment
- refusal to carry out reasonable management instructions
- gambling, bribery, or corruption
- serious breach of health and safety policies and procedures
- breach of confidentiality, including the unauthorised disclosure of the Charity's information to the media or any other party
- unauthorised accessing or use of computer data
- unauthorised copying of computer software



S05- DISCIPLINARY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

DISCIPLINARY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

WHAT THIS POLICY COVERS

This policy is designed to ensure that all disciplinary matters are dealt with promptly, fairly and consistently and to encourage an improvement in individual conduct and/or performance. It outlines the procedures that the Charity will follow should there be a need to take disciplinary action and your right to appeal.

The Charity reserves the right to dismiss you without following the Disciplinary Procedure within your probationary period.

YOUR ENTITLEMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Charity aims to deal with disciplinary matters promptly and fairly.

You have the right to appeal against a decision the Charity makes at a disciplinary meeting. In these cases, the Charity will make every effort for the appeal to be dealt with by a different manager to the person who dealt with the matter initially.

The Charity's decision at the appeal stage is final and there is no further right of appeal. You have a responsibility to assist the Charity, if required, to investigate the matters raised at disciplinary meetings and comply with the disciplinary procedures.

DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

The level of the disciplinary sanction, if any, will be determined by the severity of the offence. The Charity will select one of the following:

WRITTEN WARNING

A Written Warning will usually be applied as the first step of corrective action following unsatisfactory performance or conduct offences.

The Charity will define the unacceptable acts and explain the conduct or standards required in the future. You will be advised in writing that a failure to improve the standard of conduct or performance will result in further disciplinary action. A time limit will be placed on the warning.



FINAL WRITTEN WARNING

A Final Written Warning is usually applied after a Written Warning has been given and performance or conduct has not improved but may be applied after a more serious first or second offence.

You will be advised in writing that a failure to improve the standard of conduct or performance will result in dismissal. A time limit will be placed on the warning.

DISMISSAL

Dismissal occurs when your employment is terminated either with or without notice. Dismissal without notice is also referred to as 'summary dismissal' and is restricted to cases of gross misconduct.

The Charity reserves the right, at its complete discretion, to impose a sanction short of dismissal if it is deemed appropriate. This may include demotion, transfer to a different post or another appropriate sanction. Any such decision will be confirmed to you in writing once you have been informed of the outcome.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

SUSPENSION FROM WORK

If the Charity believes it is appropriate, it may decide to suspend you from your work pending further investigation or disciplinary action. Suspension itself is not a disciplinary sanction.

If a decision to suspend is made, you will be informed verbally and this will usually be followed up in writing. While you are suspended, you must not attend work or make contact with anyone connected to the Charity unless otherwise instructed by the Charity. If you need to contact anyone connected to the Charity while you are suspended, you must notify your manager. Any reasonable request will not be refused. Breach of the terms of your suspension will result in additional disciplinary action up to and including dismissal without notice.

The Charity will endeavour to keep any suspension as brief as possible. Any period of suspension will be on full pay. However, should you fail to co-operate at any time with the investigatory process, for example by failing to attend any meeting, without good reason then the Charity reserves the right to treat this as an unauthorised absence and this may result in pay being withheld until such time as you attend any rearranged meeting.

INVESTIGATION MEETINGS

Depending on the circumstances, you may be required to attend Investigation Meetings before a decision is taken to invoke the disciplinary procedure. An Investigation



Meeting is an informal meeting, you are permitted to have an adult in attendance or support, but they may not comment on the investigation.

Depending on the outcome of the investigation, the Charity will decide whether or not to proceed with a Disciplinary Meeting.

If it is decided that there is no case to answer then you will be informed of this fact either verbally or in writing. You will be expected to return to work at the agreed date and time. This will end the process.

INVITATION TO A DISCIPLINARY MEETING

If you are required to attend a Disciplinary Meeting, the Charity will inform you of this in writing.

In the letter, the Charity will set out the issues that are to be considered, how seriously these are being viewed, the potential consequences and details of any intention to call witnesses. The letter will also inform you of the date and time of the meeting to allow you sufficient time to prepare your case.

As this is a formal meeting, the letter will also detail your right to be accompanied.

YOUR RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED AT A DISCIPLINARY MEETING

You are entitled to be accompanied at a disciplinary meeting by a fellow worker, a trade union official, or any other companion of your choice (e.g., a family member or friend). Should you wish to be accompanied, you must notify the Charity of the name and position of your chosen companion as soon as possible.

Your companion is permitted to put forward and summarise your case, respond on your behalf to views expressed in the meeting, ask questions and confer with you, but will not be entitled to answer questions directly on your behalf.



ACTION IF YOU CANNOT ATTEND THE MEETING ON THE PROPOSED DATE

If you feel that you have a legitimate reason as to why you cannot attend the meeting on the proposed date, you must contact the person named on the invitation letter to advise them of this fact immediately. The meeting may then be delayed facilitating your attendance, if this is considered reasonable.

ATTENDING THE DISCIPLINARY MEETING

You must attend the meeting at the proposed time. Failure to participate in the process or attend arranged meetings without good reason will result in additional disciplinary action or a decision being made in your absence.

Before the meeting, you should ensure that you are fully prepared to answer questions relating to the incident/circumstances in question. At the meeting, you will be given every opportunity to state your case, present any evidence and call relevant witnesses before any decision is made.

AFTER THE DISCIPLINARY MEETING

At the end of the meeting, there will normally be an adjournment to allow for consideration of the facts. You will be informed of the outcome and any sanction will be confirmed in writing to you as soon as possible.

In some circumstances there may be a need to adjourn and reconvene a meeting at a later date, to allow further investigation. In this case, you will be advised accordingly.

NOTIFICATION OF THE DECISION AND DISCIPLINARY SANCTION

Following the Disciplinary Meeting, the Charity will notify you of its decision and the disciplinary sanction it will apply. This letter will also explain your right to appeal against any decision taken and sanction applied.

YOUR RIGHT OF APPEAL AGAINST DISCIPLINARY ACTION

If you wish to appeal against a decision you must submit your request in writing, stating the reasons for the appeal, to the individual identified in the letter confirming the sanction. This must be submitted within five working days of receiving notification.

THE APPEAL MEETING

You will be informed of the date and time of the Appeal Meeting. If you feel that you have a legitimate reason as to why you cannot attend the meeting on the proposed date, you must contact the person named on the invitation letter to inform them of this fact immediately. The meeting may then be delayed to facilitate your attendance if this is considered reasonable. You will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow worker or a Trade Union official.



At the Appeal Meeting, you will be given an opportunity to state your case. Your companion is permitted to put forward and summarise your case, respond on your behalf to views expressed in the meeting, ask questions and confer with you, but will not be entitled to answer questions directly on your behalf.

The meeting will then be adjourned to allow the Charity to consider the facts and the decision will be confirmed in writing. The outcome will be communicated as soon as possible, taking into account the complexity of the issues raised in the appeal. The decision at this stage will be final.



S06- FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

WHAT THIS POLICY COVERS

The Charity recognises that employees may be interested in reducing working hours, working from home or changing working patterns.

This policy outlines who is eligible to make a formal flexible working request, the procedure that must be followed and the issues that will be taken into account when deciding whether to agree to the request.

The Charity will make every effort to accommodate requests for flexible working, provided that an employee's duties can still be carried out effectively.

YOUR ENTITLEMENTS

ELIGIBILITY FOR FLEXIBLE WORKING

To be eligible to request flexible working, you must:

- have been employed by the Charity for at least 26 weeks before the request is made
- not have made a formal request to work flexibly during the past 12 months

PROCEDURE

Any employee considering making an application to the Charity in terms of this policy has a responsibility to think carefully about their desired working pattern before making an application.

MAKING AN APPLICATION

You are only permitted to make one formal application per year; each year runs from the date when the application was made.

Applications must be made in writing and submitted to your manager. An application will be considered to have been made on the day that it was received by the Charity.

For an application to be considered by the Charity, you must:

- set out the date of the application, the change to working conditions that you are seeking and when you would like the change to come into effect
- explain what effect, if any, you think the proposed change would have on the Charity and how any such effect might be dealt with
- state that this is a statutory request and whether a previous application has been made to the Charity and, if so, when it was made

To help the Charity consider the request please also provide details of the reasons for your application.



If you fail to provide all the required information, the Charity reserves the right to ask you to re-submit the application. An application may not be considered unless it is completed and submitted in full.

HOW YOUR APPLICATION WILL BE CONSIDERED

Unless your Manager intends to approve the request straight away, they will arrange to meet with you. The proposed changes will be considered in light of the impact on the Charity financially, from a service viewpoint and in terms of the impact upon colleagues, as well as other practical considerations.

The meeting provides an opportunity to explore the desired work pattern in depth and to discuss how best it might be accommodated. It will also provide an opportunity to consider other alternative working patterns, should there be difficulties in accommodating the desired work pattern outlined in your application. You can be accompanied by a work colleague at this meeting.

If the application for flexible working is granted, it will mean a permanent change to your terms and conditions of employment. Accordingly, it will be important that, before making an application, you give careful consideration to:

- any financial implications it might have on you in cases where the desired working pattern will involve a drop in salary
- any effects it will have on the Charity and how these might be addressed.

THE CHARITY'S RESPONSE

Following the meeting, your manager will write to you to either:

- agree to a new work pattern and confirm the date from which the contract variation shall take effect

Or

- provide clear business grounds as to why the application cannot be accepted and set out your right to appeal.



Business reasons for which the Charity may reject your request are:

- the burden of additional costs
- detrimental effect on its ability to meet customer demand
- inability to reorganise work among existing employees
- inability to recruit additional employees
- detrimental impact on quality
- detrimental impact on performance
- insufficiency of work during the periods that you propose to work
- planned changes

There may also be occasions on which the Charity will need further time to consider an application or to put in place other arrangements before notifying you of the final decision. Accordingly, all time periods can be extended by agreement.

APPEALING IF YOUR APPLICATION IS REFUSED

If you wish to appeal against a decision, you must submit your request in writing to the individual identified in the letter confirming the outcome, no later than the end of the fifth working day after you have been notified in writing of the decision.

You will be informed of the date and time of the subsequent appeal. If you cannot attend on this day, you must contact the person named on the invitation letter to inform them of this fact. You can be accompanied by a work colleague.

After the appeal meeting, the Charity shall write to you notifying you of the decision reached. This decision will be final and you will not be permitted to make another formal application until 12 months after the date of your original application.

The law requires that all requests, including any appeals, must be considered and decided on within three months from first receipt.



S07- STAFF ABSENCE POLICY

ABSENCE

WHAT THIS POLICY COVERS

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that genuinely unwell employees are treated fairly and consistently while minimising the impact of sickness absence on the Charity.

The policy sets out procedures for reporting sickness absences and for the Charity's management of short-term and long-term absences. Any disability-related absences will be managed following the relevant legislation and related codes of practice.

This policy also contains information on your entitlements about paid and unpaid time off work for reasons other than sickness.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

BREACH OF ABSENCE PROCEDURES

Breach of any of the absence reporting procedures detailed below, including those relating to the notification of absence or provision of a medical certificate, will result in disciplinary action. Unauthorised periods of absence will be treated as gross misconduct and could lead to your dismissal without notice from the Charity. Unauthorised absence will not be subject to pay.

FREQUENT SHORT-TERM ABSENCE

Persistent absence has a detrimental impact on your colleagues and the Charity as a whole. If it is considered that your absence level is a cause for concern, your Manager will meet with you to investigate the situation further and should the need arise this will be escalated through the Finance, Buildings and Personell Committee and then onto the Board of Trustees. The Charity may require you to undergo an occupational health assessment.

The Charity cannot sustain frequent short-term absences, even if the reasons for the absences are genuine. Therefore, unacceptable levels of absence will be subject to disciplinary proceedings. The Charity will take into account the reasons, frequency and pattern of your non-attendance in determining an appropriate course of action.

If you are issued with a formal disciplinary warning, you will be advised as to the level of attendance that the Charity expects of you. If you fail to achieve this level of attendance, further disciplinary action will be taken.

MEDICAL REPORT

It may be necessary for the Charity to obtain a medical report during your employment to gather further information about your medical condition, its probable effect on your



future attendance at work, your ability to do your job and whether there are any reasonable adjustments to be made, if appropriate.

Although you have the statutory right to withhold your consent to the Charity to approach your GP or consultant for a medical report, if you do choose to withhold your consent to our application, the Charity may need to assess your state of health and its impact on your continued employment without the benefit of professional medical advice.

MEDICAL SUSPENSION

If the Charity becomes concerned about your health and safety at work, or that the health and safety of others is being affected by your physical and/or mental health, you may be suspended on medical grounds pending further investigation to establish that you are fit to work. You will receive full pay during the period of your suspension.

YOUR ENTITLEMENTS

MEDICAL AND DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

Where possible, you are requested to arrange any medical or dental appointments outside working hours.

If this is not possible, you must obtain agreement from your manager before taking any time off, and appointments should be arranged at the beginning or end of your working day to minimise any disruption to the Charity. Unless otherwise agreed, you will not be paid for any time off as a result of medical or dental appointments, except for antenatal appointments.

JURY SERVICE

You are entitled to time off work for jury service. You must notify management immediately upon receipt of the jury summons, giving full details.

You will not be paid for this time off, and you are advised to claim the expenses to which you are entitled from the Court. These will typically include compensation for loss of earnings.

TIME OFF FOR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

You must make any requests for time off for religious observance to your manager as early as possible. Although you have no legal or contractual right to religious leave or time off to pray, the Charity will consider all such requests.

Time off for religious observance must be taken from your rest periods or annual leave entitlement. Alternatively, at the Charity's discretion, you may work additional hours in lieu of the time taken off.



If you wish to take the time off as annual leave, you must request following the Charity's annual leave procedures. For the avoidance of doubt, the Charity's rules relating to annual leave will apply.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

In addition to your right to take reasonable unpaid time off following the death of a dependant, the Charity may, at its discretion, permit you to take paid or unpaid leave following the death of an immediate or close relative. Please ask your manager for further information.

ADVERSE WEATHER AND OTHER EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

If you are unable to attend work due to adverse weather conditions or other exceptional circumstances, you will not be paid for any periods of non-attendance. You may request to take paid holidays or work additional hours at an alternative time to make up for the time you have been absent. The Charity reserves the right to refuse such requests depending on the needs of the business.

If the Charity cannot operate due to these exceptional circumstances, it reserves the right to require you to take holidays during this time or impose a period of lay-off, when appropriate. The Charity also reserves the right not to provide you with advance notice of this requirement.

OTHER TYPES OF LEAVE

The Charity will adhere to statutory requirements in providing time off when you have commitments relating to public office or role, trade union duties and activities and the Armed Forces Reserves. You should discuss such requests for time off with your manager at the earliest opportunity to work out the necessary arrangements, allow planning time and work with your manager to minimise any potential disruption to the Charity.

DISABILITIES

If you have a disability that impacts your attendance at work, the Charity will consider reasonable adjustments to minimise absenteeism or assist your return to work. This may include adjustments to your role, working hours, or workplace environment.

MEDICAL CERTIFICATION

If your absence lasts for seven calendar days or fewer, you must complete an absence form immediately upon your return to work.

However, if you are entitled to contractual sick pay (please see your contract of employment for details) you will also be required to provide the appropriate medical certification for absences of fewer than seven days.



If your absence lasts more than seven calendar days, you must forward a medical certificate, completed by a medical practitioner, to management to cover the absence.

The medical certificate must be submitted as soon as possible. If you unreasonably delay in providing a medical certificate, your absence will be classed as unauthorised.

If, on a medical certificate, your doctor recommends any adjustments to your duties, hours or working conditions, the Charity will discuss these with you and implement the recommendations, if these are reasonably practicable.

Failure to comply with the arrangements to assist your return to work without good reason will be treated as misconduct and will result in disciplinary action.

You must keep the Charity updated on the reasons for your continued absence and its estimated duration. You must contact the Charity daily during periods of absence unless you are instructed otherwise by your manager. You must also contact the Charity before the expiry of your medical certificate if you continue to be unwell. In addition, a further medical certificate must be submitted immediately on expiry of the previous certificate. Failure to contact the Charity or submit a medical certificate at this time will result in the interim absence being classed as unauthorised.

PROCEDURE FOR RETURN TO WORK

You must contact your manager as soon as you become aware of your intended return date. If this date changes, you must update the Charity immediately.

RETURN TO WORK MEETING

Your manager will interview you on your return to work following a period of absence. The reasons for your absence will be discussed and your manager will decide whether the absence should be authorised. The onus is on you to satisfy management that there was a genuine medical reason for the absence.

LONG-TERM ABSENCE

WELFARE MEETINGS

During a period of long-term absence, you are required to attend any scheduled welfare meetings with the Charity. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss your current state of health, how long you expect to be absent from work and what steps, if any, the Charity can take to facilitate your return to work.

If you are medically incapable of attending your place of work, a representative of the Charity will come out to visit you. If the time scheduled for the meeting is not suitable, you should contact the Charity immediately so that an alternative time can be agreed. You are also required to respond to any correspondence from the Charity and any requests for information about your health.



MEDICAL CERTIFICATION

You must continue to provide medical certificates, completed by your medical practitioner, even if you have exhausted your entitlement to sick pay.

FAILURE TO CO-OPERATE

The Charity will always be sensitive to your physical and mental wellbeing during periods of long-term absence. However, where there is a failure, without good reason, to co-operate with the Charity concerning attending meetings, communicating effectively, attending occupational-health assessments and providing necessary information, this will be treated as misconduct and the Charity will take disciplinary action.

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

The Charity is committed to supporting you during your absence and assisting your return to work. However, a prolonged period of absence cannot be sustained indefinitely, and the Charity will need to review your continued employment periodically. Before any decision is made about termination of your employment on the grounds of capability, the Charity will consult fully with you and will obtain up-to-date medical advice.

SICK PAY

WHAT THIS POLICY COVERS

This policy sets out your entitlement to sick pay and outlines the basic rules and qualifying criteria that apply to sick pay. The payment of sick pay is dependent on your adherence to the Charity's Absence Procedures, which can be found in this Employee Handbook.

YOUR ENTITLEMENTS

STATUTORY SICK PAY

Regardless of your length of service, if you are absent from work because of sickness or injury, you will be entitled to receive Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) from the Charity at the prevailing rate. The payment of SSP is conditional upon you satisfying the following qualifying conditions:

- your period of absence consists of at least four consecutive days
- you earn at least the 'Lower Earnings Limit' for National Insurance Contributions (NIC), which is reviewed on an annual basis

The first three days of sickness absence are classed as waiting days, and SSP will not be paid.



Once you have met the necessary qualifying conditions and provided the required medical evidence that you are unfit for work, SSP will be paid for each subsequent work day that you remain absent due to sickness or injury. You will only be paid for those days on which you would normally work or are scheduled to work.

SSP is payable for a maximum of 28 weeks.

If your absence is a result of an injury or illness caused by a third party, any Statutory Sick Pay paid is required to be repaid if any compensation for loss of earnings is recovered from the third party.

The provisions relating to SSP are extremely complex. If you have any questions about this policy, you should discuss them with your manager.



PROCEDURE

You must comply with the Charity's Absence Procedure, which is outlined in this Employee Handbook.

TIME OFF FOR DEPENDANTS

WHAT THIS POLICY COVERS

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that employees who are genuinely in need of unpaid time off to deal with an emergency are treated fairly and consistently while minimising the impact on the Charity.

You are entitled to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off during working hours to deal with particular situations affecting your dependants. The amount of time off will depend on the nature of the incident and your circumstances.

This policy explains what is meant by dependant and in which circumstances unpaid time off can be granted and sets out the notification procedures.

YOUR ENTITLEMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

DEFINITION OF DEPENDANT

A dependant is:

- a spouse
- a civil partner
- a child
- a parent
- a person who lives in the same household as you other than as your tenant, lodger, boarder or employee
- any person who would reasonably rely on you for assistance or who would rely on you to make arrangements for the provision of care in the event of illness or injury
- any other person who relies on you for the provision of care or arrangements for the provision of care

WHAT COUNTS AS TIME OFF

Reasonable time off will be granted in the following circumstances:

- to assist when a dependant falls ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted
- to make arrangements for the care of a sick or injured dependant or to make arrangements to deal with an unexpected disruption to their care provision
- in consequence of the death of a dependant
- to deal with an unexpected incident involving your child during school hours or those of another educational establishment



The right is only to deal with emergencies and to put care arrangements in place - for example, arranging to employ a temporary carer or arranging for the dependant to stay with relatives. You would not be entitled to time off under this policy for the ongoing care of the dependant.

PROCEDURE

You must inform the Charity as soon as practicable of your unavailability for work, the reason for it and how long you expect to be away from work.

You do not have to do this in writing, but you will need to give the Charity sufficient information for it to be determined that your time off falls under the Time Off for Dependants provision.

You will be required to provide evidence to the Charity of your need to take time off under this provision.

If you fail to inform the Charity as soon as is reasonably practicable that you need time off, or if you abuse the rights under this provision, you will be subject to disciplinary proceedings, up to and including dismissal without notice.



S08- GRIEVANCE POLICY

GRIEVANCE

WHAT THIS POLICY COVERS

A grievance is any concern, problem or complaint that you have concerning your employment.

Where possible, you should try to settle any grievance informally with your manager at the earliest opportunity. Where any grievance is unable to be resolved informally, this policy sets out the Charity's Grievance Procedure.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

You have a responsibility to raise any grievances promptly and reasonably, assist the Charity, if required, in any investigation of the matters raised in your grievance, follow the grievance procedure and attend all meetings arranged under it.

You may raise grievances either informally or formally. If you raise a grievance informally first, you may still raise the grievance formally subsequently if it is not resolved to your satisfaction.

The Charity aims to deal with all grievances promptly and impartially and to make all reasonable efforts to achieve a satisfactory outcome.

You have the right to appeal against a decision the Charity makes in respect of a grievance raised by you. In these cases, the Charity will make every effort for the grievance to be dealt with by a different manager to the person who dealt with the grievance initially.

The Charity's decision at the appeal stage is final and there is no further right of appeal.

PROCEDURE

DEALING WITH GRIEVANCES INFORMALLY

If you have any grievance, you should discuss this with your manager in the first instance, who will then attempt to resolve the situation on an informal basis.

If you feel unable to approach your manager directly, you should approach another manager or a more senior member of the Charity, who will discuss with you ways of dealing with the matter.

If attempts to resolve the matter informally do not work, it may be appropriate for you to raise a formal grievance under the following formal procedure.

YOUR RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED AT GRIEVANCE MEETINGS



At all formal stages of this procedure, you are entitled to be accompanied at a grievance meeting by a fellow worker, a trade union official, or any other companion of your choice (e.g., a family member or friend). Your companion is permitted to:

- o Put forward and summarise your case.
- o Respond on your behalf to views expressed in the meeting.
- o Confer with you during the meeting.

Should you wish to be accompanied, you must notify the Charity of the name and position of your chosen companion as soon as possible.

FORMAL PROCEDURE

The Charity will make all reasonable efforts to deal with formal grievances fairly and consistently. While the Charity will make every effort to settle any grievance within the time limits detailed in this procedure, this may not be possible on some occasions.

You must set out the nature of the grievance, and the full particulars of it, in writing. The written grievance must be submitted to your manager in the first instance, or to the person identified in your contract of employment. If your grievance is against your manager, you must submit it to another manager or a more senior member of the Charity.

ATTENDING THE GRIEVANCE MEETING

You will be invited to a meeting to discuss the grievance, normally within five working days of the Charity receiving your grievance. You must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting.

Before the meeting, you should ensure that you are fully prepared to present your grievance, share any supporting evidence and answer any questions relating to the incident/circumstances in question.

NOTIFICATION OF THE OUTCOME

After the Grievance Meeting, an appropriate period of time may be taken to allow for any further investigation and/or the consideration of all the facts before a decision is reached. The Charity will then, inform you in writing of its decision regarding the raised grievance without unreasonable delay. The letter will also explain your right to appeal against any decision taken.

APPEALS AGAINST GRIEVANCE OUTCOMES

If you are dissatisfied with a decision made regarding a grievance you have raised, you have the right of appeal. Whenever possible, the appeal will be dealt with by a different manager to the person who dealt with the grievance.



Your appeal must be made in writing, stating the reasons for the appeal, to the individual identified in the decision letter. This must be submitted no later than the end of the fifth working day after you received written notification.

THE APPEAL MEETING

The Charity will arrange and hold an Appeal Meeting as quickly as possible, normally within five days. You will be entitled to attend the Appeal Meeting and will be given an opportunity to state your case.

You must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting. If you feel that you have a legitimate reason as to why you cannot attend the meeting on the proposed date, you must contact the person named on the invitation letter to inform them of this fact immediately. The meeting may then be delayed to facilitate your attendance, if this is considered reasonable.



S09- HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

WHAT THIS POLICY COVERS

As part of the Charity's overall commitment to equality of opportunity, it is fully committed to promoting a fair and harmonious working environment in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity and in which no individual feels bullied, threatened or intimidated. This policy aims to prevent harassment and bullying in the workplace which includes harassment and bullying by other workers or by third parties you encounter while doing your job.

Harassment or bullying at work in any form is unacceptable behaviour and will not be permitted or condoned and will be viewed as a gross misconduct offence which may result in dismissal without notice.

WHAT IS HARASSMENT AND BULLYING?

Harassment and bullying detract from a productive working environment and can impact the health, confidence, morale and performance of those affected by it, including anyone who witnesses or has knowledge of the unwanted or unacceptable behaviour.

DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct based on sex, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, religion or belief, age, race or disability which affects the dignity of anyone at work or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

A single incident of unwanted or offensive behaviour can amount to harassment. Some examples are given below, but many forms of behaviour can constitute harassment.

These examples are:

- physical conduct, ranging from touching, pushing or grabbing to punching or serious assault
- verbal or written harassment through jokes, offensive language, defamatory remarks, gossip, threats or letters
- unwelcome sexual behaviour, including unwanted suggestions, propositions or advances
- the sending or displaying of material that is pornographic or obscene, including e-mails, text messages, video clips, photographs, posters, emblems or any other offensive material



- inappropriate posts or comments on or via social media commonly known as "cyber bullying"
- isolation, non-co-operation at work or exclusion from social activities
- coercion, including pressure for sexual favours
- inappropriate personal contact, including intrusion by pestering or spying

It should be noted that it is the impact of the behaviour that is relevant and not solely the motive or intent behind it.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating or insulting behaviour, which, through the abuse of power, makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable.

Bullying can be a form of harassment and can undermine an individual's self-confidence and self-esteem and cause them to suffer stress.

Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. As with harassment, there are many examples of bullying, which can include:

- shouting at or humiliating others
- high-handed or oppressive levels of supervision
- unjustified, offensive and/or insulting remarks about performance
- excluding employees from meetings, events or communications without good cause
- physical or emotional threats

Bullying can occur in the workplace and outside of the workplace at events connected to the workplace, such as social functions or business trips.

YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

YOUR RIGHTS

You have the right to work in an environment which is free from any form of harassment or bullying. The Charity recognises your right to complain about harassment or bullying should it occur. All complaints will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

Every effort will be made to ensure that, when you make a complaint, you will be protected from further acts of bullying and harassment. If others also give evidence or information in connection with the complaint, they equally will be protected.

Perpetrators of these acts will be subject to disciplinary action which may warrant dismissal.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES



You have a responsibility to help ensure a working environment in which the dignity of everyone is respected. You must comply with this policy and you must ensure that your behaviour to colleagues and anyone connected to the Charity, does not cause offence and could not in any way be considered to be harassment or bullying.

You should discourage harassment and bullying by making it clear that you find such behaviour unacceptable. You should also support colleagues who suffer such treatment and are considering making a complaint. You must alert a manager or supervisor immediately to any incident of harassment or bullying to enable the Charity to deal with the matter promptly and effectively.

THE CHARITY'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Charity will ensure that adequate resources are made available to promote respect and dignity in the workplace and to deal effectively with complaints of harassment and bullying. This policy and procedure will be communicated effectively to all employees, and the Charity will ensure that all employees are aware of their responsibilities. Appropriate training, where necessary, will be provided.

PROCEDURE

To raise a complaint of harassment or bullying, please refer to the Charity Grievance Procedure (outlined elsewhere in this Employee Handbook).



S10- MATERNITY AND ADOPTION LEAVE POLICY

MATERNITY AND ADOPTION LEAVE

WHAT THIS POLICY COVERS

This policy outlines your statutory rights and responsibilities when you are pregnant, give birth or adopt a child. It also outlines the arrangements and notification requirements before, during and after a period of Maternity or Adoption Leave, your statutory entitlements to pay during your leave and your right to return to work following Maternity or Adoption Leave.

This policy also covers associated issues such as holidays.

Entitlements and procedures that apply to Shared Parental Leave are contained in a separate policy in this Handbook.

YOUR ENTITLEMENTS

TIME OFF FOR ANTENATAL CARE

If you are pregnant, you have the right to take reasonable time off work, with pay, during your working hours to receive antenatal care, regardless of your length of service. This includes relaxation and/or parent craft classes, when this has been recommended on medical grounds by your registered medical practitioner or registered midwife.

The Charity requires you to give reasonable notice when requesting to take time off for scheduled antenatal appointments. Before time off is authorised, you will also be required to provide a copy of your appointment card and/or medical certificate confirming your pregnancy, except for your first appointment.

TIME OFF FOR ADOPTION APPOINTMENTS

If you intend to adopt a child, you are entitled to time off to attend adoption appointments. Adoption appointments refer to those which take place after you are notified that a child is to be placed with you for adoption or for a fostering for-adoption placement and before the placement occurs.

The amount of time off (and any entitlement to pay) depends on whether you have elected to be the main adopter or are the partner of the main adopter. No request for time off will be unreasonably refused.

If you are the main adopter, you are entitled to time off to attend adoption appointments on up to five occasions. The maximum time off which can be taken on each occasion is six and a half hours. Time off will be paid at your normal rate of pay.



If you are the partner of the main adopter, you are entitled to time off to attend up to two adoption appointments. The maximum time off which can be taken on each occasion is six and a half hours. Time off is unpaid.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF LEAVE AVAILABLE

If you are pregnant or you have recently given birth, you are entitled to Maternity Leave.

If you adopt a child, either you or your partner will be entitled to Adoption Leave. Adoption leave can be taken by either partner adopting a child jointly, regardless of your gender. To obtain the benefit of these rights, you must comply with the qualifying conditions that are outlined below.

Where you meet the eligibility criteria, you are entitled to 52 weeks' Maternity or Adoption Leave, to care for a new baby or a newly adopted child who is up to 18 years of age.

Maternity and Adoption Leave is made up of 26 weeks of ordinary Leave, followed by 26 weeks of additional Leave. Additional Maternity Leave (AML) or Additional Adoption Leave (AAL) follows immediately after the end of your Ordinary Leave. There can be no gap between the two types of leave.

New mothers and adoptive parents have the right to transfer all, or part, of their AML or AAL entitlement to the other parent or to share Parental Leave. Further details can be found in the Paternity Leave policy and the Shared Parental Leave policy (outlined elsewhere in the Employee Handbook).

COMPULSORY MATERNITY LEAVE

When you give birth, you are legally compelled to take a minimum of two weeks' Maternity Leave immediately after giving birth. For health and safety reasons, new mothers who work in a factory have a longer minimum period of four weeks.



BENEFITS DURING MATERNITY OR ADOPTION LEAVE

During Maternity or Adoption Leave, you are entitled to receive all your normal contractual benefits, including annual leave entitlement, except for your normal pay.

STATUTORY MATERNITY AND ADOPTION PAY (SMP/SAP)

SMP and SAP are payable for up to 39 weeks.

The first six weeks are payable at a higher rate, which is the equivalent of 90% of your normal earnings. For SMP your normal earnings are calculated based on the eight weeks before the Qualifying Week, i.e. the 15th week before your expected week of childbirth. For SAP your normal earnings are calculated over the eight weeks ending with the week in which you are notified of having been matched with the child for adoption.

The remaining 33 weeks are payable at a standard rate for the relevant tax year and can change each year.

If your earnings are below the standard rate set by the Government, you will be paid at the equivalent of 90% of your average earnings in the eight weeks before the Qualifying Week or the date the child is matched.

If you do not qualify for SMP or SAP, you may be entitled to claim an allowance of financial support by contacting your local benefits office.

QUALIFYING FOR SMP AND SAP

To qualify for SMP or SAP you must:

- have average weekly earnings equal to or above the Lower Earnings Limit for National Insurance purposes during the eight weeks up to and including the Qualifying Week or the date you are matched with a child
- have been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks, ending with the 15th week before your expected week of childbirth (the 'Qualifying Week') or the date you are informed by the approved adoption agency, or the central authority, that you have been matched with a child
- (if you are pregnant) still be pregnant at the 11th week before your expected week of childbirth or have had the child by that time
- give the Charity at least 28 days' notice (or, if that is not possible, as much notice as is reasonably practicable) of the day you would like your SMP or SAP to start
- provide the Charity with the appropriate medical certification of your expected week of childbirth, using the medical certificate MAT B1, or provide a written declaration that you have chosen to receive SAP rather than Statutory Paternity Pay

RETURNING TO WORK AFTER MATERNITY OR ADOPTION LEAVE



You do not need to give notice of your return to work if you simply return at the end of your Maternity or Adoption Leave period.

If you wish to return to work before the full entitlement of your Maternity or Adoption Leave has ended or change your mind about the intended date of return to work, you must give the Charity a minimum of eight weeks' notice of the intended date of your return.

If you fail to give the required eight weeks' notice of an earlier date of return, the Charity may postpone your return until the end of the eight weeks' notice you should have given, or until the end of the Maternity or Adoption Leave period, whichever is earlier.

You are entitled to return to your original job at the end of Ordinary Maternity or Adoption Leave. Where you take Additional Maternity or Adoption Leave, you are also entitled to return to your original job at the end of the Additional Leave. However, if this is not reasonably practicable, you will be offered a similar role on no less favourable terms and conditions.

You will not lose the right to return to work if you do not follow the correct notification procedures. However, the Charity will take appropriate disciplinary action if you fail to return to work at the end of the Maternity or Adoption Leave period. If you are unable to return to work at the end of the Maternity or Adoption Leave due to ill health, the Charity's normal sickness absence rules, procedures and payments will apply.

HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENT AND MATERNITY OR ADOPTION LEAVE

Annual leave entitlement will continue to accrue during the whole of your Maternity or Adoption Leave. You must discuss and agree with the Charity, in advance, when your accrued holiday entitlement can be taken.

Holiday entitlement cannot be taken simultaneously with Maternity or Adoption Leave. Accrued holiday can only be taken either before the beginning of the Leave or after the end of the Leave. Authorisation must be obtained from the Charity in the normal way before your accrued holiday being taken.

CONTACT DURING MATERNITY OR ADOPTION LEAVE

The Charity may make reasonable contact with you during your Maternity or Adoption Leave. In addition, you may attend work during your Maternity or Adoption Leave, for a limited period, without affecting your Maternity or Adoption Leave. These days are referred to as Keeping in Touch days (see below).

KEEPING IN TOUCH (KIT) DAYS



During your Maternity or Adoption Leave, you may work up to 10 days for the Charity, without losing your right to your Maternity or Adoption Leave pay.

Any days worked will be paid at your normal rate of pay, and any SMP or SAP will be taken into account for these purposes.

Neither you nor the Charity is under any obligation to agree to work or provide work for KIT days.

PROCEDURES

NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR MATERNITY LEAVE

If you are pregnant and give birth to a child, you are entitled to take Maternity Leave. To be eligible, you must comply with the rules and procedures set out below:

- no later than the end of the 15th week before the week your child is due, you must give the Charity notice of:
 - the fact that you are pregnant and the date on which you intend to start your Maternity Leave
 - the expected week of childbirth, which must be confirmed by providing the medical certificate MAT B1
- within 28 calendar days of you giving notice, the Charity will respond in writing, to confirm the date on which your Maternity Leave will end. This will be 52 weeks from the start of your Maternity Leave
- the earliest you may start your Maternity Leave is 11 weeks before your expected week of childbirth. However, Maternity Leave will start automatically if you give birth before this date

Your Maternity Leave will automatically start if you are absent from work for a pregnancy-related illness during the four weeks before your expected week of childbirth.

CHANGING THE START OF YOUR MATERNITY LEAVE

You may change your mind about when you want to start your Maternity Leave, as long as you notify the Charity, in writing, of your new start date. You must give the Charity the relevant notice by whichever date is the earlier of the following notice periods:

- 28 days before the date on which you originally intended to start your leave
- Or
- 28 days before the new date on which you want to start your leave

NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR ADOPTION LEAVE

If you adopt a child, you are entitled to Adoption Leave. This right applies to both men and women.



The partner of an individual who adopts, or the other partner of a couple adopting a child jointly, may also be entitled to Paternity Leave and Statutory Paternity Pay.

If you are part of a couple that adopts a child, you can choose which partner will take Adoption Leave and which will take Paternity Leave. Either partner can choose the type of leave that applies to them.

To qualify for Adoption Leave, you must:

- be newly matched with a child for adoption by an approved adoption agency (this includes placement of a child with local authority foster parents who are prospective adopters under the fostering for adoption scheme)
- have notified the agency that you agree that the child should be placed with you and have agreed to the date of placement
- notify the Charity
- of when you want to take Adoption Leave no more than seven calendar days after being notified that you have been matched with a child
- in the case of surrogacy adoption leave, be in receipt of, or in the process of applying for, a parental order.

You must also give the Charity the matching certificate from the approved adoption agency as evidence of your entitlement to Adoption Leave. Only one period of Adoption Leave will be available, irrespective of whether you have more than one child placed with you for adoption as part of the same arrangement.

Within 28 calendar days of you giving notice, the Charity will respond in writing to you, confirming the date when your Adoption Leave will end. This will be 52 weeks from the start of the Adoption Leave.

You may choose to start your Adoption Leave either from;

- the date of the child's placement

Or

- a fixed date, which can be up to 14 calendar days before the expected date of the child's placement

CHANGING THE START OF YOUR ADOPTION LEAVE

You may change your mind about when you want to start Adoption Leave, as long as you notify the Charity, in writing, of your new start date. You must give the Charity the relevant notice by whichever date is the earlier of the following notice periods;

- 28 days before the date you originally intended to start your leave or
- 28 days before the new date you want to start your leave

OVERSEAS ADOPTION



If you are adopting a child from overseas, you must have received official notification that the adoption has been approved by the central authority and give the Charity notice, in writing, at each of the three notification stages.

The Charity will require copies of official notification as evidence of the child's arrival in the UK and to support your request to take Adoption Leave.

The procedures for overseas adoption are determined by the central authority and are thorough. In the first instance, you must discuss your intention to take Adoption Leave within 28 days of the date on which you received the official notification.



S11- MONITORING POLICY

MONITORING

WHAT THIS POLICY COVERS

This policy sets out the Charity's approach to employee monitoring and provides information relating to the types of monitoring used and the Charity's obligations concerning such monitoring and in introducing additional monitoring.

THE CHARITY'S RESPONSIBILITIES

You should be aware that the Charity may carry out monitoring of employees, workers and contractors.

Monitoring may be necessary either to allow the Charity to perform its contract with you or for the Charity's own legitimate interests. The Charity's reasons for monitoring include:

- security and the prevention and detection of crime;
- ensuring appropriate use of the Charity's telecommunications and computer systems;
- ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements;
- monitoring attendance, work and behaviour;

TYPES OF MONITORING

The monitoring carried out may include:

- monitoring of premises using video cameras
- monitoring e-mails and analysing e-mail traffic
- monitoring websites visited by employees using Charity systems
- recording telephone calls and checking call logs
- monitoring the use of Charity's vehicles via vehicle-tracking systems
- entry and exit systems, including the use of biometric data such as fingerprints
- tracking via mobile devices

The Charity may use information gathered through employee monitoring as the basis for disciplinary action against employees.

If disciplinary action results from information gathered through monitoring, you will be given the opportunity to see or hear the relevant information in advance of the disciplinary meeting.

The Charity will ensure data collected through monitoring is processed in accordance with the The Charity Data Protection Policy and data protection legislation and, in particular, it will be kept secure and access will be limited to authorised individuals.



ADDITIONAL MONITORING

The Charity reserves the right to introduce additional monitoring. Before doing so, the Charity will:

- identify the purpose for which the monitoring is to be introduced
- ensure that the type and extent of monitoring is limited to what is necessary to achieve that purpose
- where appropriate, consult with affected employees in advance of introducing the monitoring
- weigh up the benefits that the monitoring is expected to achieve against the impact it may have on employees

The Charity will ensure employees are aware of when, why and how monitoring is to take place and the standards they are expected to achieve.

COVERT MONITORING

If the Charity has reason to believe that certain employees are engaged in criminal activity, the Charity may use covert monitoring to investigate that suspicion. In such instances, any monitoring will take place under the guidance of the police and will be carried out in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

TRANSPARENCY AND PROPORTIONALITY

The Charity will ensure that employees are explicitly informed about the extent and purpose of monitoring through the Charity's **Privacy Notice**. Monitoring will be proportionate and limited to what is necessary to achieve legitimate business purposes.

Covert monitoring will only be used in exceptional circumstances, such as suspected criminal activity, and will be conducted in compliance with data protection laws.



S12- PATERNITY LEAVE AND PATERNITY PAY POLICY

PATERNITY LEAVE AND PATERNITY PAY

WHAT THIS POLICY COVERS

This policy outlines your statutory right to Paternity Leave, the qualifying conditions and the procedure that you need to follow when requesting Paternity Leave. It also provides information relating to your contractual rights and your right to return to work following Paternity Leave.

You may also be eligible to take Shared Parental Leave. Entitlements and procedures that apply to Shared Parental Leave are contained in a separate policy in this Handbook.

The following sections provide only a general guide; further guidance and clarification must be sought from Management.

YOUR ENTITLEMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

RIGHT TO ACCOMPANY A PREGNANT WOMAN TO ANTENATAL APPOINTMENTS

You have the right to take unpaid time off during working hours to accompany a pregnant woman to antenatal appointments where you:

- are the pregnant woman's husband or civil partner, or
- live with the woman in an enduring family relationship (whether heterosexual or same-sex relationship) and are not a relative of the woman, or
- are the expected child's father, or
- are one of a same-sex couple who is to be treated as the child's other parent under the assisted reproduction provisions, or
- are the potential applicant for a parental order under surrogacy laws.

This time off is limited to:

- no more than two occasions
- each lasting no more than six and a half hours



PATERNITY LEAVE

You can take Paternity Leave (PL) in relation to the birth or adoption of a child. If you are the partner of an individual who adopts, or you are the other member of a couple who is adopting jointly, you may be entitled to Paternity Leave.

If you have adopted the child, you can choose who will take the Adoption Leave and who will take the Paternity Leave. Only one period of Maternity or Adoption Leave and one period of Paternity Leave may be taken between the couple even if your partner works for a different charity.

Further details of Adoption Leave entitlement are set out in the Maternity and Adoption Policy (outlined elsewhere in the Employee Handbook).

QUALIFYING CONDITIONS FOR PATERNITY LEAVE

To qualify for Paternity Leave you must:

- have worked continuously for the Charity for 26 weeks leading into the 15th week before the child is due; or by the week in which an approved adoption agency matches you with the child (the notification week)
- be the biological father of the child or the mother's husband or partner (male or female) or have, or expect to have, responsibility for the child's upbringing
- confirm the requested leave is intended to care for the child or to support the child's mother or adoptive parent in caring for the child.

Eligible employees are entitled to take up to two weeks paid PL. PL must be taken in units of either one whole week or two consecutive whole weeks. Leave may start on any day of the week, on or following the child's birth, but must be completed:

- within 56 calendar days of the actual date of birth of the child; or
- if the child is born early, within the period from the actual date of birth up to 56 calendar days after the expected week of birth.

You may change your mind about the starting date for PL, providing you tell the Charity at least 28 calendar days in advance of the changed start date (or as soon as is reasonably practicable, if not in a position to do so within the prescribed period).

STATUTORY PATERNITY PAY

Eligible employees are entitled to be paid during their PL following the birth or placement of their child in order to care for the child or support its mother or adoptive parent.

During PL, most employees will be entitled to Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP), which will be the same as the standard rate of Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP). To qualify for SPP you must:



- meet the PL qualifying conditions mentioned above and
- have average weekly earnings equal to or above the Lower Earnings Limit for National Insurance purposes over the eight weeks leading up to and including, the 15th week before the child is due or, in adoption cases, the Notification Week

In addition to meeting the conditions detailed above, the Charity may request you to provide a self-certificate as evidence that the mother or adoptive parent meets these conditions. The self-certificate must also provide the information required above and include a declaration that you meet the necessary conditions.

CONTRACTUAL BENEFITS DURING YOUR PATERNITY LEAVE

You are entitled to enjoy your normal terms and conditions of employment, except for pay, whilst on Paternity Leave. You are also entitled to return to the same job following your leave.

If the Charity provides you with an enhanced contractual right to Paternity Leave or Paternity Pay you should clearly understand, that when payment of contractual paternity pay is made this is inclusive of any SPP entitlement i.e. you are not entitled to both.

CONTACT DURING PATERNITY LEAVE

The Charity may make reasonable contact with you during your Paternity Leave.

PROCEDURE

REQUESTING PATERNITY LEAVE

If you wish to take PL you must notify the Charity by the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth or no more than seven days after you are notified of being matched with the child, stating the week the child is due, or the expected placement date; whether you wish to take one week's or two weeks' continuous leave; and the date you want the leave to start.

The Charity will consider all requests for Paternity Leave. However, you must be aware that Paternity Leave can only be authorised to be taken immediately after the birth or the placement of the child or if later at a time to suit the needs of the business.

TAKING PATERNITY LEAVE

You are permitted to take PL in units of either one whole week or two consecutive whole weeks.

Leave may start on any day of the week on or following the child's birth or the date of adoption placement. Your leave must be completed within 56 calendar days of the actual date of birth of the child, or the date of the adoption placement.



If the child is born early, leave must be taken within the period from the actual date of birth up to 56 calendar days after the expected week of birth.

CHANGING THE START OF YOUR PATERNITY LEAVE

Where you are to take PL in respect of a child's birth or to coincide with the day a child is placed with you, you can give written notice to vary the start date of your leave from that which you originally specified.

At least 28 days before the Expected Week of Childbirth or the Expected Placement Date, notice must be given where you wish to:

- vary your leave to start on the day of the child's birth
- vary your leave to start a specified number of days after the child's birth or after the placement date of the child (minus the specified number of days)
- vary your leave to start on a specific date (or a different date from that you originally specified).

RETURNING TO WORK AFTER YOUR PATERNITY LEAVE

You are entitled to return to work following Paternity Leave in the same position you held before commencing your leave. Your terms of employment will continue to be the same as they would have been had you not been on Paternity Leave.

If your PL has been combined with a period of Shared Parental Leave totalling more than 26 weeks or a period of Parental Leave of more than four consecutive weeks, and it is not reasonably practicable for you to return to the job you held before commencing leave, the Charity will offer you a suitable and appropriate alternative position.

If you are unable to return to work following a period of Paternity Leave due to sickness or injury, this will be treated as sickness absence and the normal reporting procedures will apply.

You should be aware if you do not return to work for any other reason, the Charity will treat a late return as an unauthorised absence, which will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal without notice.

BREACH OF THIS POLICY

If you take a period of Paternity Leave under this policy for any purpose other than to care for the child, you may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.



S13- PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE POLICY (‘WHISTLEBLOWING’)

PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE (‘WHISTLEBLOWING’)

WHAT THIS POLICY COVERS

The Charity constantly strives to safeguard and act in the interest of the public and its employees. It is important to the Charity that any fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing, by employees or other agents, is reported and properly addressed.

This policy applies to all employees and all other agents of the Charity, who are encouraged to raise concerns responsibly. The Charity prefers that a concern is raised and dealt with properly, rather than kept quiet.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

You are encouraged to bring to the attention of the Charity any practice or action of the Charity, its employees or other agents that you reasonably believe is against the public interest, in that the practice or action is:

- a criminal offence
- a failure to comply with any legal obligation
- a miscarriage of justice
- a danger to the health and safety of any individual
- an attempt to conceal information on any of the above

Any individual raising legitimate concerns will not be subject to any detriment, either during or after employment. The Charity will also endeavour to ensure that the individual is protected from any intimidation or harassment by any other parties.

This policy must not be used for complaints relating to your own personal circumstances, such as the way you have been treated at work, which must be raised under the Charity's Grievance Procedure.

PROCEDURE

In the first instance, you must raise any concerns you have with your manager. If you believe your manager to be involved, or if, for any reason, you do not wish to approach your manager, then you must raise it with a more senior person in the Charity.

Any matter raised under this policy will be investigated promptly and confidentially. The outcome of the investigation, as well as any necessary remedial action to be taken, will be confirmed to you. If no action is to be taken, the reason for this will be explained to you.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated thoroughly. If you raise any concerns under this policy, the Charity is



committed to ensuring that you are protected from victimisation, harassment or less favourable treatment. Any such incidents will be dealt with under the Charity's Disciplinary Procedures.

ESCALATING YOUR CONCERN

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you must raise your concerns in writing directly with a more senior person in the Charity.

If, after escalating your concerns, you believe that the appropriate remedial action has not been taken, you must then report the matter to the proper authority.

These authorities include:

- HM Revenue & Customs
- the Financial Conduct Authority
- the Health and Safety Executive
- the Environment Agency or Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
- the Information Commissioner

This list is not intended to be exhaustive, and you must take care to ensure you contact the proper authority concerning the particular concerns you have.

If you are unsure as to the appropriate authority, advice can be sought from Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work) which is an independent Whistleblowing Charity. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

If you raise a false allegation and you are found to be culpable, or in any way involved in the wrongdoing, or if you raise a concern maliciously or in a manner not prescribed in this policy, then you will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal without notice for gross misconduct.

You must not disclose to a non-relevant third party any details of any concern raised following this policy, and you must not, in any circumstances, publicise your concerns in any way.

INDEPENDENT ADVICE

Independent advice and support can be obtained from Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work), an Independent Whistleblowing Charity:

Telephone: 020 3117 2520

Web: <https://protect-advice.org.uk/contact-protect-advice-line/>