

## DISCIPLINARY POLICY

The purpose of the disciplinary policy is to:

- Maintain satisfactory conduct in line with Version 1's Core Values and to ensure good employment relations in the interest of all employees.
- Ensure that employees are treated fairly and consistently, and any disciplinary action is invoked for a fair reason and in accordance with fair procedures and applicable laws.

This disciplinary policy is entirely non-contractual, does not form part of an employee's contract of employment and can be amended at any time.

While the disciplinary procedure will normally be operated on a progressive basis, Version 1 may bypass stages of the procedure should the nature of an employee's conduct, actions, or attendance warrant it. The stage at which the procedure is initiated will depend on the relative seriousness and circumstances of the situation.

If you have difficulty at any stage of the procedure because of a disability, you should discuss the situation with your line manager as soon as possible.

Our aim is to deal with disciplinary matters sensitively and with due respect the privacy of any individuals involved. All employees must treat as confidential any information communicated to them in connection with an investigation or disciplinary matter.

### **CAUTIONARY MEETING**

If the standard of an employee's conduct falls below an acceptable level, the employee's line manager will informally make the employee aware of this and point out how their conduct must be improved.

This is considered to be a caution and the line manager will keep a record of the incident.

However, in cases where informal discussion with the employee does not lead to an improvement in conduct, there is a breach of Version 1 regulations/policies or where the matter is considered to be serious enough not to be classed as minor, the following disciplinary procedure will be used.

### **DISCIPLINARY MEETING**

The employee will be notified in writing of the allegations by the Chair of the meeting (a Senior Manager or a People Operations Team Member) and will be invited to a disciplinary meeting to discuss the matter. Sufficient information about the alleged misconduct will be provided, and its possible consequences, to enable the employee to prepare to discuss the case.

The employee will be advised of:

- The date and time of the disciplinary meeting.
- Who will attend the meeting as a Chair and who will attend it as a note-taker.
- A summary of relevant information.

- A copy of any relevant documents which will be used at the disciplinary hearing.
- A copy of any relevant witness statements, except where a witness' identity is to be kept confidential, in which case as much information as possible will be given while maintaining confidentiality.

Having given the employee reasonable time to prepare, a disciplinary meeting will then take place, at which the employee will be given the opportunity to state their case, answer and ask questions, and also present evidence. Please note that it is prohibited for employees to record (whether covertly or otherwise) the proceedings at the disciplinary meeting, and at any appeal meeting, without the express permission of Version 1. Following the meeting, the Chair will decide whether or not disciplinary action is justified. If the decision is that a disciplinary action is not justified, the employee will receive a confirmation via email that the outcome of the disciplinary meeting is no formal action. If the decision is that a disciplinary action is justified, the employee will be informed in writing of the Chair's decision in accordance with the stages set out below and notified of their right to appeal against that decision. It should be noted that an employee's conduct is not looked at in isolation, but each incident of misconduct is regarded cumulatively with any previous occurrences.

### **Stage 1: Verbal Warning**

Following the disciplinary meeting and when all points have been considered, the employee may be issued a formal verbal warning via email by the Chair of the disciplinary meeting. They will be advised of the reason for the warning, how they need to improve their conduct, the timescale over which the improvement is to be achieved (if applicable) and the likely consequences if the terms of the warning are not complied with. A record of any verbal warning will be retained on the employee's file for 6 months and nullified after. If there is no measurable improvement then there will be a further disciplinary meeting to re-evaluate the situation and further disciplinary action will be taken, up to and including a final written warning. Whilst in receipt of a verbal warning, an employee may not apply for any internal promotion or transfer.

### **Stage 2: Written Warning**

Following the disciplinary meeting and when all points have been considered an employee may be issued a written warning via email by the Chair of the disciplinary meeting. The employee will be advised of the reason for the warning, how they need to improve their conduct, the timescale over which the improvement is to be achieved (if applicable) and the likely consequences if the terms of the warning are not complied with. A record of any written warning will be retained on the employee's file for 1 year and nullified after. If there is no measurable improvement, then there will be a further disciplinary meeting to re-evaluate the situation and further disciplinary action will be taken up to and including dismissal. Whilst in receipt of a written warning, an employee may not apply for any internal promotion or transfer.

### **Stage 3: Final Written Warning**

Failure to improve conduct in response to the procedure so far, a repeat of misconduct for which a warning has previously been issued, or a first instance of serious misconduct, will

result in a Final Written Warning being issued via email following a disciplinary meeting. This will set out the nature of the misconduct, how the employee needs to improve their conduct, the timescale over which the improvement is to be achieved (if applicable) and warn that further disciplinary action may be taken up to and including dismissal if the terms of the warning are not complied with. A copy of the final written warning will be placed in the employee's file for a 1 year and nullified after. If there is no measurable improvement in the situation, then there will be a further disciplinary meeting to re-evaluate the situation and further disciplinary action will be taken up to and including dismissal.

Whilst in receipt of a final written warning, an employee may not apply for any internal promotion or transfer.

**Stage 4: Dismissal** If there is failure to improve conduct to the procedure so far and/or serious/gross misconduct has taken place, a disciplinary meeting will be held, which may lead to dismissal. A decision of this kind will only be made after the fullest possible investigation by the Chair of the disciplinary meeting. The employee will be informed in writing of the reasons of dismissal, the appropriate period of notice, the date on which their employment will be terminated and how the employee can appeal against the dismissal decision.

## **IMPORTANT POINTS TO NOTE**

### **Right to appeal**

Employees have the right to appeal any disciplinary action (verbal/written/final written warning) up to and including a decision to dismiss. Any such appeal must be made in writing, stating the reason for the appeal and be sent to the Practice Head by email. The written appeal must be received within 5 working days of the date of the disciplinary confirmation letter. The appeal will be heard in a reasonable timescale and normally by the Practice Head or Senior Manager within the Practice. If this is not practical, then the appeal will be heard by a manager of similar or greater seniority. At the appeal meeting, the employee will again be given the chance to state their case and will have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative to the meetings. Following the appeal meeting, the employee will be informed in writing of the results of the meeting. Version 1's decision on an appeal will be final.

### **Suspension details**

If the situation warrants it, Version 1 reserves the right to suspend an employee with pay in order to carry out an investigation into an alleged disciplinary offence. The period of suspension should be for no longer than is reasonably necessary. The period of suspension will be confirmed in writing (via email) by the Chair of the investigation (if applicable) or a People Operations Team Member. A decision to suspend an employee should not be considered as a disciplinary sanction or as an indication of prejudgement of the matter.

### **Location**

It is important to note that all meetings (formal/informal) can be held either face-to-face on Company Premises/in a neutral location, and/or online via Teams.

### **Gross Misconduct**

Gross misconduct is defined as a serious breach of Version 1's rules and procedures, or of recognised and accepted standards of conduct, which results in a breakdown of the relationship of trust and confidence between Version 1 and the employee concerned. An employee may be suspended with pay to allow an investigation into the circumstances. Following investigations of a gross breach of regulations or gross misconduct, a disciplinary meeting will be convened to discuss the findings. The employee will be informed of their right to have a colleague or a trade union representative to accompany them. Having heard the case, the meeting will be adjourned to consider the findings. The decision of Version 1 will be conveyed to the employee. In the case where the decision is to dismiss, the employee will be dismissed with immediate effect.

**The following acts of gross misconduct are provided as non-exhaustive examples of unacceptable activity:**

- Supplying false or misleading information when applying for employment, or at any time during your employment.
- Altering, destroying, willfully misplacing, discarding or falsifying Company records.
- Failure to maintain the confidentiality of company information, including but not limited to documents, reports, records, files, correspondence and communications or breach of the Company's confidentiality standards.
- Unauthorised use, processing or disclosure of personal or other data contrary to our Privacy Policy, Information Security Policy and Data Retention Policy.
- Fraud, theft, forgery or other dishonesty, including fabrication of expense claims and time sheets.
- Destruction or defacing of property owned or operated by the Company.
- Engaging in any unethical conduct. Committing illegal, immoral or indecent conduct, soliciting persons for these purposes, or aiding and/or abetting any of the above.
- Serious misuse of our property or name.
- Bringing the organisation into serious disrepute.
- Possession, using or being under the influence of illegal drugs at any time while conducting the Company business, or possessing, using or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages while conducting Company business.
- Refusal or failure to perform assigned work, to follow Management's instructions, or any serious act of insubordination.
- Serious breach of health and safety rules.
- Violation of the Company's equal employment opportunity rules.
- Violation of the Company's policy against harassment, discrimination, victimisation and/or bullying.

- Deliberately accessing internet sites containing pornographic, offensive or obscene material.
- Engaging in any act of discourteous conduct, using abusive language, rudeness, or similar acts, to customers or fellow employees.
- Offering, giving, requesting, receiving or accepting any gift (financial or otherwise) which could be construed as a bribe or other breach of our Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy.
- Giving false information as to qualifications or entitlement to work (including immigration status) in order to gain employment or other benefits.
- Serious neglect of duties, or a serious or deliberate breach of your contract or operating procedures.
- Abuse/Misuse of sick leave or other leave programmes.
- Excessive tardiness and/or absenteeism.
- Uttering, publishing, or distributing false, vicious, or malicious statements concerning the company or any of its customers or employees.
- Excessive amount of personal telephone calls or personal use of the internet.
- Taking company or client files off the company-owned or operated premises without permission from Management.

This list is intended as guide and is not exhaustive. Offences of similar seriousness will merit similar treatment. Any charge or criminal offence may be treated as a disciplinary matter.