

Conduct and Standards

Adopted (7th November 2019) – Personnel Sub Committee – Minute 468 Employee Handbook

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 Council would normally 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 Council 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 Council'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 Council reserves the right not to pay you in respect of working time lost because of poor timekeeping.

Persistent poor timekeeping may 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 Council's public image and preserve positive relationships with all persons and organisations connected to the Council
- ensure that you behave in a way that does not constitute unlawful discrimination
- comply with the Council's Operating Policies and Procedures

Unless otherwise instructed, personal mobile telephones must be switched off or switched to silent mode at all times during normal working hours.

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 Council and that of all persons and organisations connected to the Council.

Conduct while representing the Council

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

On these occasions you are expected to behave in an appropriate and responsible manner, keeping in mind that you are representing the Council. You are instructed specifically not to consume any alcohol at such events where you are driving.

Any employee whose conduct brings the Council into disrepute will be subject to the Council's disciplinary procedure. Such behaviour may be viewed as a gross misconduct offence and could 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 Council that could reasonably be interpreted as competing with the Council.

You are required to seek permission from management before taking on any other employment while employed by the Council 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 Council or any third party's health and safety policies and procedures. Breach of these rules may 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 Council's Accident Book.

Dress and Appearance

The personal appearance of employees makes an important contribution to the Council's reputation and image. For this reason, it is important that your dress and appearance is professional and reflects 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 Council or a third party's telephone, fax, postal or other services for personal purposes.

You must not remove property or equipment from Council 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 Council either through misuse or carelessness, the Council 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 Council property, such as keys, laptops, mobile telephones, Council vehicles, documents or any other items belonging to the Council.

Clear desk policy

To improve the 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 should 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 should not be left unattended at a desk.

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

Personal searches

The Council 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 Council will require the appropriate authorities to conduct the search on behalf of the Council. Failure to co-operate with the Council in this respect may be treated as gross misconduct.

Personal property

You are solely responsible for the safety of your personal possessions on Council premises and should 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 Council 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 Council's standards of behaviour is likely to result in disciplinary action being taken.