

EMPLOYMENT GUIDE



**Congregational
Federation**

The

Congregational Church

EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

Hours of work: your hours of work are specified in your Terms and Conditions of Employment.

Pay: You will be paid by before the end of each month in arrears.

You will receive a payslip that will give you a detailed breakdown of your pay and deductions for each pay period. Very occasionally mistakes may be made in the calculation of your pay. Any such under payments will be adjusted in the next pay period.

TIME OFF FROM WORK

Holidays: the holiday year runs from _____date of commencement/January to December (delete as required). You will be paid for 4 weeks holiday per calendar year; in addition, statutory holidays should also be taken off if they fall on days that you normally work.

You need to agree your holiday days in advance with your line manager.

When you leave our employment, any outstanding holiday entitlement will be paid to you.

Sick Absence: if you are not able to come to work through illness, or for some other reason, you must telephone your line manager as soon as practical before 9.00 am on the first day of absence and notify her/him of the reason and give an indication of the likely duration of your absence.

Please ensure that you keep in regular contact with her/him about your absence and date of return to work. This is likely to be through regular telephone contact or email.

You will need to complete a Self Certification Form for any absence up to 7 days and provide a Fitness Note from your doctor on a regular basis for any absence after this.

If you are off sick and comply with the above procedures you will be paid for up to 4 week's absence in each year from your date of commencement less any Statutory Sick Pay [SSP] although this is not payable for the first three days of absence. Qualifying days for statutory sick pay purposes are your normal working days.

Other absence from work: if you need to be absent from work in order to care for a dependent because of some emergency or accident, please let your line manager know as soon as possible. This time will be unpaid.

Occasions may occur when you need to resolve urgent and unexpected personal domestic problems such as a water leak. Please inform your line manager as soon as possible. Medical, hospital (other than ante-natal), optical, chiropody and dental appointments should be made in your own time if you are employed part-time. Where this is not possible, unpaid leave of absence will be given by your line manager provided you notify her/him as far in advance as possible.

There are special arrangements if you wish to take parental leave, maternity leave, and paternity leave or wish to apply for flexible working arrangements. Please ask your line manager for further details.

RESOLVING ISSUES ABOUT WORKING AT THE CHURCH

There may be occasions when you have concerns or a complaint to make about your work, your working environment or working relationships. It is important that if you are unhappy about anything that you get it settled as soon as possible rather than let it simmer.

The aim of our grievance procedure¹ is to resolve problems quickly and fairly before they develop into anything major. At all stages of the procedure shown below, you have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or a friend if you do not have a fellow work colleague.

Step 1: Bring the matter verbally to the attention of your line manager as well as detailing fully the specific grounds of your complaint, in writing. She/he will arrange to discuss the matter with you within 7 working days. If the situation is not resolved after this discussion, then you should proceed to the second step.

Step 2: If you believe that the outcome has not been dealt with satisfactorily and you wish to appeal, the matter can be referred in writing within 7 working days of the above meeting to one of the other Church Leaders. A meeting will be arranged to discuss the matter with you within 14 working days. The outcome of this meeting will be communicated to you both verbally and in writing within 7 working days. The decision of this appeal will be final.

Sometimes, after you have left a job you may feel that you need to write to us to raise a grievance about an employment matter while you were employed by us. If this occurs, you should put the specific reason in writing within 3 months to your line manager who will investigate the matter. If we were not aware of the matter before you left and you did not start the grievance procedure, or it had not been completed by the time you left, then your complaint will be responded to in writing. Please note that there are no further stages to this procedure and the decision will be final.

RESOLVING ISSUES ABOUT YOUR CONDUCT OR PERFORMANCE

There may be occasions when it is felt that your conduct or performance is unacceptable to the Church. The aim of our disciplinary procedure is to make sure that we bring to your attention issues of performance or conduct which fall short of our standards. This is in order that they can be corrected and improved upon – and to make sure we act consistently and fairly.

We will make every effort to assist you to improve through coaching, training or other means. Unfortunately, there will be some occasions where the seriousness of the matter (such as theft) or the failure to improve after various warnings about your performance, may require dismissal.

The following principles govern how we deal with these matters:

¹ Please note that this procedure is non contractual

- no disciplinary action will be taken against you until the situation has been fully investigated. If a disciplinary meeting is called, you will be advised of the reasons for disciplinary action being considered and this will be confirmed in writing.
- You may be suspended from your duties, on basic pay, in cases where a fuller investigation or consideration of the facts need to be made. This period should normally be no more than 5 working days.
- At every stage of the procedure you will be advised of the nature of the complaint made against you, provided with documents that will be considered and will be given every opportunity to state your case before any decision is made. All decisions taken will be confirmed in writing to you.
- At every stage, including any appeal, you have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague.
- You will not be dismissed for the first breach of discipline except in the case of gross misconduct when the penalty will be dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice.
- The level of disciplinary action taken will reflect the alleged misconduct. A very serious matter could result in a final written warning, or, in the event of gross misconduct, dismissal.
- You have the right to appeal against any disciplinary decision taken following the procedure given below.

Please note that where standards of attendance, conduct and or/or job performance are not being achieved, it may be due to ill health. In such circumstances, the disciplinary procedure will not be appropriate and the matter will be dealt with under the procedure for ill health capability.

Procedure: the main purpose of our procedure is to help you when your conduct or standard of work is considered unsatisfactory and needs to improve. Minor problems will be dealt with informally and if dealt with early enough may be resolved to everyone's satisfaction. However, where performance standards or conduct requires formal action, the matter will be handled in the way shown below².

Depending on the severity of your conduct or poor performance some of the steps outlined below may be left out. Also, for a very serious first offence, you may be issued with a First and Final Written Warning only.

During your first months of employment, after the probationary period, not all the disciplinary stages shown below will apply. However, as a minimum, you will receive one final written warning to enable you to make the necessary improvements. Unfortunately, if these standards are not met, then you will be dismissed.

² Please note that disciplinary procedures are non contractual

Please note that if you fail to attend an investigatory or disciplinary interview and you are unable to provide a valid reason for your non attendance, you will not continue to be paid for your absence

◆ **Stage 1 – Counselling**

If your performance or conduct falls below our standards, you will be counselled about this and suggestions discussed about how you can achieve improvement. A letter confirming the discussion and required outcome will be given to you.

◆ **Stage 2 – Verbal Warning**

If your performance or conduct does not improve, (or possibly the gravity of the situation requires that counselling is not appropriate), then you will be given a formal verbal warning. A letter confirming the reason for the warning, together with your right to appeal, will be given to you. A copy will be kept in your personal file and it will normally be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 6 months, subject to satisfactory conduct and performance.

◆ **Stage 3 - Written Warning**

If the required improvement specified in Stage 2 does not occur, or if it is a matter previously not dealt with but nevertheless serious, you will be given a written warning. Again, a letter, together with the required outcome, will confirm the discussion. The warning will advise you of your right of appeal and that a final written warning will be considered if there is no sustained satisfactory improvement or change. A copy will be kept in your personal file and it will normally be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 12 months, subject to satisfactory conduct and performance

◆ **Stage 4 - Final Written Warning**

If there is still a failure to improve and your performance or conduct still falls short of our standards, or if the misconduct is sufficiently serious to warrant only one written warning (but not serious enough to justify dismissal), you will receive a final written warning. You will receive a letter that will give you details of the complaint, the improvement required and the time-scale needed to reach the standard discussed. You will also be advised of your right of appeal and informed that dismissal will be considered if there is no sustained and satisfactory improvement or change within a given time scale or reoccurrence within the term of the warning. A copy will be kept in your personal file and it will normally be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 12 months, subject to satisfactory conduct and performance

NB At each stage of the warning process, where an absence occurs during the life of the warning, and the absence exceeds 4 weeks, your warning will be suspended for the duration of the absence and be re-stated on your return to work.

◆ **Stage 5 - Dismissal**

If you have previously received a final written warning and your performance or conduct has not improved to a satisfactory level, then you will be given formal notice that your employment will be terminated. As soon as reasonably practicable, you will receive written reasons for your dismissal, the date on which your employment ended and your right of appeal.

As an alternative to dismissal, you may be demoted to a position of less responsibility at a reduced rate of pay. As far as possible, the demotion will be for a specified period that will be detailed in the letter confirming the disciplinary decision. After that period of time has lapsed,

consideration will be given (as long as there is evidence of sustained improvement and if vacancies exist) for a role at your former level.

You will receive a letter confirming your dismissal or demotion, the reasons for the decision, the effective date and your right of appeal.

Depending on the severity of your performance or conduct and length of service some of the steps outlined above may be left out. Also, for a very serious first offence, you may be issued with a First and Final Written Warning.

Gross Misconduct: if an allegation of gross misconduct is made against you, you will normally be suspended from work on full pay, generally for no more than 5 working days. In some instances paid suspension may be longer if the time taken to complete the investigation requires it.

Unfortunately, someone's conduct may be so serious that, after proper investigation, the only appropriate disciplinary action will be summary dismissal without notice, or payment in lieu of notice.

The examples given below are not exhaustive but give an indication of the type of behaviour that constitutes gross misconduct:

- Theft, fraud, deceit or dishonesty both during the course of employment and outside of employment.
- Assault of, or improper/insulting behaviour towards children, colleagues, members of the church, external officials and members of the public.
- Refusal to carry out a reasonable instruction.
- Serious act of insubordination.
- Serious omission or neglect of Church property or proper precautions for the security, safety or health of our children, colleagues or others.
- Negligence resulting in loss of church assets
- Incapability of carrying out duties due to the influence of alcohol/unprescribed drugs or illegal substances.
- Sexual or racial harassment, or unlawful discrimination or intimidation.
- Malicious damage to our property.

Suspension: If you are suspected of misconduct, or it appears necessary for some other reason, you may be suspended from your duties on full pay, normally for no more than 5 working days, while we investigate the alleged offence. In some instances, paid suspension may be longer if the time taken to complete the investigation requires it.

While you are suspended from work, you are required to return any keys you have to the premises, as well as any other property as we may request. You should not visit our premises, nor have contact with any other employees without our express permission. This does not infer or imply guilt or pre-judge the outcome of the disciplinary hearing.

At the end of a period of suspension, a decision will be taken on the information available to either:

- Withdraw any suspicion and you will return to work.

This Handbook is for information and guidance in good employee practices and is non contractual⁶

- Arrange a disciplinary hearing.

Appeals procedure: if you wish to appeal against a disciplinary decision, you should do so in writing stating clearly your reasons. Your letter should be received by the Chair of the Church Trustees (*delete insert other official as appropriate*) within 5 working days of you receiving the letter confirming the outcome of the disciplinary hearing.

Your appeal will heard by the Chair of the Church Trustees or another Trustee appointed by him/her.

Any disciplinary penalty imposed will be reviewed but it cannot be increased. The decision of the person hearing the appeal will be final and the outcome of the hearing will be confirmed to you in writing.

Lack of capability due to illness: sometimes the reason for poor standards of performance or attendance may be a result of illness. This will be established by any of the following:

- An initial meeting to ascertain the problem.
- A full investigation conducted and each case considered on its own merits
- Referral to a doctor
- A reasonable time limit will be set for the employee to reach the required standard and this will be confirmed in writing, together with the probable outcome if the standard is not achieved.
- The possibility of suitable alternative work will be considered. If the difficulties that have occurred are due to a disability, then consideration will be given to reasonable adjustments of your workplace or working arrangements.
- If there is no alternative work available and no reasonable adjustments can be made, you will be advised that as all other alternatives have been explored, your employment regretfully will be ended.

GENERAL MATTERS

Personal belongings: please note that the Church cannot take responsibility for personal belongings which are damaged or stolen whilst you are at work.

Changes of personal circumstances: please make sure that you let your line manager to know if your personal circumstances change i.e. change of name, address, contact details etc. so that our records can be updated.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY

The Church attaches great importance to the health, safety and the security of everyone using its premises and of course, there is a special duty of care that exists for young people.

Those working with children & young people must be have enhanced clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service [DBS] as a condition of employment.

Please read our Health & Safety policy which is available as separate document so you are clear of your responsibilities and discuss any queries with your line manager.

OTHER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

There are other policies and procedures which relate to your employment which are available as separate documents.

LEAVING EMPLOYMENT

If you wish to leave us, you will need to give at least 4 weeks' notice in writing. The length of notice that you are entitled to receive from the Church depends on your length of continuous service at the time your employment is ended. Up to 5 years service this is 4 weeks notice. The length of notice increases after this by one week for each year of service up to a maximum of 12 weeks. The above conditions do not apply if you are dismissed because of gross misconduct

We will be pleased to provide standard references to potential employers that confirm your position, place of work and dates of employment.

You will normally be expected to work your full notice period. However, we reserve the right not to require employees to work their notice period and may ask you to leave earlier than your specified leave date. In this instance, you will be paid salary in lieu of notice.