THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF

ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON

Registered Charity No. 252878

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Version: November 2026

Introduction

The Arundel and Brighton Diocesan Trust (registered charity number 252878) supports the mission and activities of the Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. The charity's sole trustee is The Arundel and Brighton Roman Catholic Diocesan Corporation Limited (company number 00946255). The Corporation is the legal employer of diocesan staff, acting in its capacity as trustee of the charity. Throughout this handbook, references to "the Diocese" or "the employer" mean the Corporation acting in that capacity, unless otherwise stated.

The Diocese serves the Catholic community in Brighton and Hove, Sussex and Surrey (outside of the London Boroughs). It is made up of the parishes served by a central curial office in Crawley.

The Corporation's directors are responsible for the overall governance of the charity. Day-to-day employment matters are managed by authorised diocesan officers under delegated authority. The Chief Operating Officer (COO) is responsible for maintaining employment policies for the Diocese and for supporting the application of policies and good practice. Employees should contact the COO with any queries about this handbook or other questions or issues about their employment:

T: 01293 651145
E: coo@abdiocese.org.uk

Chief Operating Officer, The Diocese of Arundel and Brighton
The St Philip Howard Centre, 4 Southgate Drive, Crawley RH10 6RP

This handbook is intended as a complete guide to the policies and procedures which apply to the employment of individuals by the Diocese. The contents are non-contractual unless specifically stated otherwise. It is reviewed annually and updated to comply with legislation and best practice.

The contents of the handbook are divided into two sections:

- **Family Friendly Policies**

- **Employment Policies**

Family Friendly Policies

The Diocese recognises that employees may need support at different stages of their family life. These policies explain the statutory family-related rights available to employees together with any additional support provided by the Diocese. Employees who are unsure which policy applies to their circumstances are encouraged to speak to their line manager or the Chief Operating Officer at an early stage.

The following sections of the Handbook explain different aspects of this support:

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Maternity Policy

Purpose

This policy explains employees' entitlement to maternity leave and maternity pay, together with the notification requirements that apply.

Scope

This policy applies to employees who are eligible for statutory maternity leave.

Maternity Leave

All employees are entitled to take up to 52 weeks' maternity leave, regardless of their length of service.

Maternity leave consists of:

- 26 weeks' Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML); followed by
- 26 weeks' Additional Maternity Leave (AML).
- Notification

To take maternity leave, you should notify the Diocese no later than the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth, or as soon as reasonably practicable if this is not possible.

You should tell the Diocese:

- that you are pregnant;
- your expected week of childbirth;
- the date you intend your maternity leave to begin; and
- provide your MATB1 certificate (or any replacement document required by law) when available.

You may change your intended start date by giving at least 28 days' notice, or as much notice as is reasonably practicable.

Starting Maternity Leave

Maternity leave may begin at any time from the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth.

If your baby is born before your planned maternity leave start date, your maternity leave will begin automatically on the day after the birth.

If you are absent from work for a pregnancy-related reason during the four weeks before the expected week of childbirth, your maternity leave may begin automatically in accordance with the statutory rules.

Statutory Maternity Pay

Employees who satisfy the statutory qualifying conditions will receive Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) in accordance with the legislation in force at the relevant time.

Details of current eligibility requirements and payment rates are available from HR or on the GOV.UK website.

Occupational Maternity Pay

In addition to Statutory Maternity Pay, the Diocese provides enhanced Occupational Maternity Pay.

Employees who have completed at least two years' continuous service by the qualifying week for Statutory Maternity Pay purposes will receive:

- 13 weeks' full basic salary (inclusive of any Statutory Maternity Pay payable); followed by
- 23 weeks' pay at 90% of normal basic salary (inclusive of any Statutory Maternity Pay payable).

Following the occupational maternity pay period, any remaining entitlement to Statutory Maternity Pay will be paid at the statutory rate where applicable. Any remaining maternity leave after Statutory Maternity Pay ends will be unpaid.

Enhanced Occupational Maternity Pay is conditional upon the employee:

- remaining employed by the Diocese throughout the maternity leave period; and
- returning to work for a minimum period of three months following maternity leave.

If an employee does not return to work for at least three months following maternity leave, the Diocese reserves the right to recover the occupational enhancement only (being the amount paid in excess of Statutory Maternity Pay), unless the Diocese decides otherwise in exceptional circumstances.

Antenatal Appointments

Pregnant employees are entitled to paid time off to attend antenatal appointments where they satisfy the statutory requirements.

Employees should give as much notice as possible of appointments. The Diocese may ask for evidence of appointments where this is permitted by law.

Health and Safety

The Diocese is committed to providing a safe working environment for pregnant employees and new mothers.

Where necessary, the Diocese will carry out an appropriate workplace risk assessment and take reasonable steps to remove or reduce any identified risks. Where this is not reasonably practicable, suitable alternative work or maternity suspension on appropriate terms may be considered in accordance with the law.

During Maternity Leave

With the exception of terms relating to pay, your terms and conditions of employment remain in force during OML and AML.

Your contractual annual leave entitlement will continue to accrue throughout OML and AML. This includes any entitlement in respect of public (bank) holidays that forms part of your contractual annual leave entitlement.

Annual leave cannot be taken at the same time as maternity leave. Please discuss with your line manager whether you will take your accrued annual leave immediately before or after your maternity leave or at another agreed time.

If you are unable to take your accrued annual leave in the relevant holiday year because of maternity leave, it may be carried forward in accordance with the Holiday Policy.

Keeping in Touch

During maternity leave, employees may agree to work for up to the statutory number of Keeping in Touch (KIT) days without bringing maternity leave to an end.

Participation in KIT days is voluntary and must be agreed between the employee and the Diocese.

Returning to Work

Employees returning from maternity leave have the statutory right to return to work.

Employees returning during or at the end of Ordinary Maternity Leave are normally entitled to return to the same job.

Employees returning after Additional Maternity Leave are normally entitled to return to the same job unless this is not reasonably practicable, in which case a suitable and appropriate alternative role will be offered on terms and conditions that are no less favourable.

Employees who wish to return to work before the end of their maternity leave should give the Diocese at least eight weeks' notice.

Redundancy Protection

The Diocese recognises the additional statutory protections that apply during pregnancy and maternity leave.

Where applicable, employees will receive the protection provided by current legislation, including any entitlement to be offered suitable alternative employment in a redundancy situation.

Related Policies

- Adoption Policy
- Paternity Leave Policy
- Shared Parental Leave Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Holiday Policy
- Sickness Absence Policy

Please ask the Chief Operating Officer for any further advice or information.

Adoption Policy

Purpose

This policy explains employees' entitlement to adoption leave and adoption pay, together with the notification requirements that apply.

Scope

This policy applies to employees who are eligible for statutory adoption leave.

Adoption Leave

Employees who are matched with a child for adoption may be entitled to take up to 52 weeks' adoption leave.

Adoption leave is also available to employees fostering a child under the Fostering for Adoption scheme.

Where two parents are adopting a child, only one may take adoption leave. The other parent may be entitled to paternity leave and, where eligible, both parents may choose to take Shared Parental Leave in accordance with the Diocese's Shared Parental Leave Policy.

Notification

If you intend to take adoption leave, you should notify the Diocese within seven days of being notified that you have been matched with a child for adoption (or as soon as reasonably practicable).

You should tell the Diocese:

- the date the child is expected to be placed with you; and
- the date you wish your adoption leave to begin.

You may change your intended start date by giving at least 28 days' notice, or as much notice as is reasonably practicable.

The Diocese may ask you to provide evidence of the adoption placement, normally in the form of the matching certificate issued by the adoption agency.

Taking Adoption Leave

Eligible employees may take up to 52 weeks' adoption leave.

Adoption leave may begin on the date the child is placed with you or up to 14 days before the expected placement date.

If the placement ends after adoption leave has started, adoption leave will normally continue for eight weeks after the placement ends, unless your adoption leave would otherwise end earlier.

Statutory Adoption Pay

Employees who satisfy the statutory qualifying conditions will receive Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) in accordance with the legislation in force at the relevant time.

Details of current eligibility requirements and payment rates are available from HR or on the GOV.UK website.

Occupational Adoption Pay

In addition to Statutory Adoption Pay, the Diocese provides enhanced Occupational Adoption Pay.

Employees who have completed at least two years' continuous service with the Diocese by the relevant matching week for Statutory Adoption Pay purposes will receive:

- 13 weeks' full basic salary (inclusive of any Statutory Adoption Pay payable); followed by
- 23 weeks' pay at 90% of normal basic salary (inclusive of any Statutory Adoption Pay payable).

Following the occupational adoption pay period, any remaining entitlement to Statutory Adoption Pay will be paid at the statutory rate where applicable. Any remaining adoption leave after Statutory Adoption Pay ends will be unpaid.

Enhanced Occupational Adoption Pay is conditional upon the employee:

- remaining employed by the Diocese throughout the adoption leave period; and
- returning to work for a minimum period of three months following adoption leave.

If an employee does not return to work for at least three months following adoption leave, the Diocese reserves the right to recover the occupational enhancement only (being the amount paid in excess of Statutory Adoption Pay), unless the Diocese decides otherwise in exceptional circumstances.

Returning to Work

Employees returning from adoption leave have the same rights and obligations as employees returning from maternity leave. Further information is set out in the Returning to Work section of the Maternity Policy.

Related Policies

- Maternity Policy
- Paternity Leave Policy
- Shared Parental Leave Policy
- Flexible Working Policy

For further information, contact the Chief Operating Officer

Paternity Policy

Purpose

This policy explains employees' entitlement to paternity leave and paternity pay, together with the notification requirements that apply.

Scope

This policy applies to employees who are eligible for statutory paternity leave.

Paternity Leave

Eligible employees may take statutory paternity leave following:

- the birth of a child; or
- the placement of a child for adoption.

Paternity leave is available to employees who meet the statutory eligibility requirements in force at the relevant time.

Notification

If you wish to take paternity leave, you should notify the Diocese as early as possible and provide the information required under the statutory notification rules.

You should tell the Diocese:

- the expected week of childbirth or, in the case of adoption, the expected placement date;
- the date on which you wish your leave to begin; and
- the amount of leave you intend to take.

You should also notify the Diocese if your plans change, giving as much notice as reasonably practicable.

Paternity Pay

If you qualify for Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP), you will receive it in accordance with the legislation in force at the relevant time.

Details of current eligibility requirements and payment rates are available from HR or on the GOV.UK website.

Taking Paternity Leave

Eligible employees may take up to two weeks' statutory paternity leave, which may be taken in accordance with the statutory rules in force at the relevant time.

The leave may be taken as permitted by current legislation and must normally be taken within the statutory period following the birth of the child or the adoption placement.

Returning to Work

At the end of paternity leave, you are entitled to return to the same job on the same terms and conditions, subject to your statutory rights.

Protection from Detriment

The Diocese will not treat you less favourably because you have taken, or requested to take, paternity leave. Employees taking paternity leave have the statutory employment protections that apply to paternity leave. If your employment is affected by a proposed redundancy or organisational change whilst you are on paternity leave, the Diocese will apply the relevant statutory protections in force at the time

Related Policies

- Maternity Policy
- Adoption Policy
- Shared Parental Leave Policy
- Neonatal Care Leave Policy
- Flexible Working Policy

Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave and Pay Policy

Purpose

The Diocese recognises that the death of a child's mother or primary adopter is an exceptionally difficult and distressing circumstance.

The purpose of this policy is to explain employees' statutory entitlement to Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave.

The Diocese is committed to supporting employees compassionately and applying statutory entitlements fairly and consistently.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies to employees who satisfy the statutory eligibility requirements.

This policy should be read alongside the Diocese's:

- Paternity Policy;
- Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay Policy;
- Neonatal Care Leave and Pay Policy;
- Compassionate Leave Policy;
- Flexible Working Policy;
- Holiday Policy; and
- Wellbeing Policy.

Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave

Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave provides statutory leave for an employee whose spouse, civil partner or partner dies following the birth of a child or following placement for adoption, where the employee has responsibility for caring for the child.

The leave is intended to provide support during an exceptionally difficult period while enabling the employee to care for the child.

Eligibility

Employees may qualify for Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave if they satisfy the statutory eligibility requirements.

Eligibility will depend upon the legislation in force at the relevant time and may include:

- the employee's relationship to the deceased parent or adopter;
- responsibility for caring for the child;
- the timing of the death; and
- compliance with the statutory notification requirements.

Employees who believe they may qualify are encouraged to contact the Chief Operating Officer as soon as reasonably practicable.

Entitlement

Eligible employees may take Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave in accordance with the statutory entitlement in force at the relevant time.

The amount of leave available, the period during which it may be taken and any associated statutory pay will be determined by the applicable legislation.

Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave is separate from any entitlement to Parental Bereavement Leave.

Notification

The Diocese recognises that it may not be possible to comply fully with normal notification requirements in these circumstances.

Employees should notify their line manager or the Chief Operating Officer as soon as reasonably practicable.

The Diocese will apply the statutory notification requirements with appropriate sensitivity and compassion.

Reasonable evidence may be requested where permitted by legislation.

Terms During Leave

During Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave:

- continuity of employment will be preserved;
- contractual benefits, other than remuneration where applicable, will continue in accordance with statutory requirements;
- annual leave will continue to accrue in accordance with the Holiday Policy; and
- pension arrangements will continue in accordance with the applicable pension scheme rules and statutory requirements.

Returning to Work

Employees returning from Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave have the statutory right to return to work in accordance with the relevant legislation.

The Diocese recognises that returning to work following bereavement may be particularly difficult and managers should discuss any reasonable workplace support or temporary adjustments that may assist the employee's return.

Additional Support

The Diocese recognises that statutory leave may not always be sufficient to meet an employee's individual circumstances.

Employees who require additional support or time away from work are encouraged to discuss their circumstances with their line manager.

Depending on individual circumstances, additional support may include:

- Compassionate Leave;
- annual leave;
- unpaid leave;
- flexible working arrangements;
- temporary workplace adjustments;
- sickness absence where medically appropriate;
- the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP); and

- Occupational Health, where appropriate.

Each situation will be considered individually.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- apply statutory entitlements fairly and consistently;
- treat employees with compassion, dignity and sensitivity;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality;
- provide guidance on statutory entitlements; and
- offer appropriate support wherever reasonably practicable.

Managers will:

- respond sensitively to requests for leave;
- maintain confidentiality;
- seek advice from the Chief Operating Officer where appropriate;
- discuss appropriate workplace support; and
- support employees during leave and on their return to work.

Employees are encouraged to:

- notify the Diocese as soon as reasonably practicable;
- provide any information reasonably required to administer the leave;
- discuss any ongoing support needs; and
- maintain appropriate communication during periods of leave where practicable.

Related Policies

- Paternity Policy
- Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay Policy
- Neonatal Care Leave and Pay Policy
- Compassionate Leave Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Holiday Policy
- Wellbeing Policy

Shared Parental Leave Policy

Purpose

The Diocese recognises that eligible parents may wish to share responsibility for caring for their child during the first year following birth or adoption.

The purpose of this policy is to explain employees' statutory entitlement to Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and, where eligible, Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP).

The Diocese is committed to supporting employees fairly and consistently while ensuring that statutory requirements are met.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies to employees who satisfy the statutory eligibility requirements for Shared Parental Leave.

This policy should be read alongside the Diocese's:

- Maternity Policy;
- Adoption Policy;
- Paternity Policy;
- Neonatal Care Leave and Pay Policy;
- Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay Policy;
- Unpaid Parental Leave Policy;
- Carer's Leave Policy;
- Flexible Working Policy; and
- Holiday Policy.

Shared Parental Leave

Shared Parental Leave enables eligible parents to share leave following the birth or adoption of a child.

It allows eligible parents greater flexibility in deciding how to care for their child during the first year after birth or placement for adoption.

Shared Parental Leave is available only where the child's mother or primary adopter has brought their maternity or adoption leave to an end early (or given binding notice to do so) and the statutory eligibility requirements are satisfied.

Eligibility

Employees wishing to take Shared Parental Leave must satisfy the statutory eligibility and notification requirements.

Eligibility depends upon a number of factors, including:

- continuity of employment;
- employment and earnings tests applying to both parents;
- the amount of maternity or adoption leave and pay available to be shared; and
- the required statutory notices.

Because these rules are complex, employees are encouraged to discuss their circumstances with the Chief Operating Officer as early as possible.

Amount of Leave

Eligible parents may share up to:

- 50 weeks' Shared Parental Leave; and
- 37 weeks' Statutory Shared Parental Pay,

depending upon how much maternity or adoption leave and pay remains available.

Shared Parental Leave must normally be taken within the first 52 weeks following the child's birth or placement for adoption.

Taking Shared Parental Leave

Shared Parental Leave may be taken:

- by one parent while the other remains at work;
- by both parents at the same time; or
- in separate periods,

subject to the statutory rules and the required notices.

Employees wishing to take Shared Parental Leave should discuss their proposed arrangements with the Chief Operating Officer at an early stage.

The Diocese will consider requests for discontinuous periods of leave in accordance with the statutory scheme.

Notification

Employees must provide the statutory notices required to take Shared Parental Leave.

These include:

- notice of entitlement and intention to take Shared Parental Leave;
- a period of leave notice; and
- any declarations required by legislation.

The Diocese may request the information and declarations permitted by law in order to confirm eligibility.

Employees should provide as much notice as possible.

Statutory Shared Parental Pay

Employees who satisfy the statutory qualifying conditions will receive Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) in accordance with the legislation in force at the relevant time.

Employees who receive enhanced occupational maternity or adoption pay should note that choosing Shared Parental Leave may affect the amount of enhanced occupational pay available.

Employees are encouraged to seek advice before making decisions about Shared Parental Leave.

Terms During Leave

During Shared Parental Leave:

- continuity of employment will be preserved;
- contractual benefits, other than remuneration where applicable, will continue in accordance with statutory requirements;
- annual leave will continue to accrue in accordance with the Holiday Policy; and
- pension arrangements will continue in accordance with the applicable pension scheme rules and statutory requirements.

Shared Parental Leave in Touch (SPLIT) Days

Employees may agree with the Diocese to work during Shared Parental Leave without bringing the leave to an end.

Eligible employees may work up to 20 Shared Parental Leave in Touch (SPLIT) days in accordance with the statutory scheme. There is no obligation on either the employee or the Diocese to agree to SPLIT days. Any arrangements should be agreed in advance.

Returning to Work

Employees returning from Shared Parental Leave have the statutory right to return to work in accordance with the relevant legislation.

The Diocese will support employees returning from Shared Parental Leave and will discuss any reasonable workplace arrangements that may assist their return where appropriate.

Support for Employees

Shared Parental Leave is one of the more complex statutory family leave arrangements.

Employees considering Shared Parental Leave are encouraged to discuss their plans with the Chief Operating Officer as early as possible so that they can receive guidance about:

- eligibility;
- statutory notices;
- pay arrangements;
- leave patterns; and
- return-to-work arrangements.

Employees may also find support through:

- the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP);
- Flexible Working arrangements following their return;
- the Wellbeing Policy; and
- Occupational Health, where appropriate.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- apply statutory entitlements fairly and consistently;
- provide guidance on the statutory process;
- consider requests in accordance with the legislation;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality; and
- support employees throughout the process.

Managers will:

- respond sensitively to requests;
- seek advice from the Chief Operating Officer where appropriate;
- maintain confidentiality; and
- support employees during leave and on their return to work.

Employees are encouraged to:

- discuss Shared Parental Leave at an early stage;
- provide the required statutory notices;
- supply any information reasonably required to administer the leave; and
- maintain appropriate communication during periods of leave where appropriate.

Related Policies

- Maternity Policy
- Adoption Policy
- Paternity Policy
- Neonatal Care Leave and Pay Policy
- Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay Policy
- Unpaid Parental Leave Policy
- Carer's Leave Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Holiday Policy
- Wellbeing Policy

Neonatal Care Leave and Pay Policy

Purpose

The Diocese recognises that the birth of a child requiring neonatal care can be an extremely difficult and stressful time for families.

The purpose of this policy is to explain employees' statutory entitlement to Neonatal Care Leave and, where eligible, Statutory Neonatal Care Pay.

The Diocese aims to support employees compassionately while ensuring that statutory rights are applied fairly and consistently.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies to employees who meet the statutory eligibility requirements for Neonatal Care Leave.

The policy should be read alongside the Diocese's:

- Maternity Policy;
- Adoption Policy;
- Paternity Policy;
- Shared Parental Leave Policy;
- Parental Leave Policy; and
- Compassionate Leave Policy.

Eligibility for Neonatal Care Leave

Eligible employees have a statutory right to Neonatal Care Leave where:

- their child is born on or after the date from which the legislation applies;

- the child requires neonatal care beginning within the first 28 days after birth; and

- the neonatal care continues for at least seven continuous days.

Neonatal care includes care provided:

- in hospital;
- following discharge from hospital under the direction of a consultant; or
- in other circumstances recognised by the legislation in force at the relevant time.

Employees should speak to their line manager or the Chief Operating Officer as soon as reasonably practicable if they believe they may qualify.

Amount of Leave

Eligible employees may take up to 12 weeks' Neonatal Care Leave, depending upon the length of qualifying neonatal care received by their child.

The amount of leave available is determined in accordance with the statutory rules in force at the relevant time.

Neonatal Care Leave is in addition to other statutory family leave, including maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave where applicable.

Taking Leave

Neonatal Care Leave may be taken in accordance with the statutory rules governing the timing and notice requirements.

The way in which leave may be taken will depend on when the leave is requested and the circumstances of the employee and their child.

Employees should provide as much notice as reasonably practicable.

The Diocese recognises that, due to the nature of neonatal care, it may not always be possible to provide advance notice.

Notification

Employees should notify their line manager or the Chief Operating Officer as soon as reasonably practicable that they wish to take Neonatal Care Leave.

Employees should normally provide:

- the child's date of birth;
- the date neonatal care began;
- the expected or actual duration of the neonatal care (where known);
- the intended dates of leave; and
- any other information reasonably required to administer the leave.

The Diocese may request reasonable evidence where permitted by legislation.

Statutory Neonatal Care Pay

Employees who satisfy the statutory qualifying conditions will receive Statutory Neonatal Care Pay (SNCP) in accordance with the legislation in force at the relevant time.

Details of the qualifying conditions and current statutory rates are available from the Chief Operating Officer or GOV.UK.

The Diocese does not currently provide enhanced occupational Neonatal Care Pay.

Terms and Conditions During Leave

During Neonatal Care Leave:

- continuity of employment will be preserved;
- contractual benefits, other than remuneration where applicable, will continue in accordance with statutory requirements;
- annual leave will continue to accrue in accordance with the Holiday Policy; and
- pension arrangements will continue in accordance with the applicable pension scheme rules and statutory requirements.

Returning to Work

Employees returning from Neonatal Care Leave have the statutory right to return to work in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Where Neonatal Care Leave is taken alongside other statutory family leave, return-to-work rights will be determined in accordance with the applicable legislation.

The Diocese will support employees returning to work and will discuss any reasonable support or temporary workplace arrangements that may assist with their return where appropriate.

Support Available

The Diocese recognises that neonatal care can have a significant emotional impact on employees and their families.

Employees are encouraged to speak to their line manager or the Chief Operating Officer if additional support may be helpful.

Support may also be available through:

- the Diocese's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP);
- Occupational Health, where appropriate;
- the Wellbeing Policy; and
- other family-friendly policies.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- apply statutory entitlements fairly and consistently;
- treat requests with compassion and sensitivity;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality; and
- provide employees with information about their statutory rights.

Managers will:

- respond sensitively to requests for leave;

- seek advice from the Chief Operating Officer where appropriate;
- maintain confidentiality; and
- support employees during their absence and return to work.

Employees are encouraged to:

- notify the Diocese as soon as reasonably practicable;
- provide any information reasonably required to administer the leave; and
- maintain appropriate communication during periods of leave where practicable.

Related Policies

- Maternity Policy
- Adoption Policy
- Paternity Policy
- Shared Parental Leave Policy
- Parental Leave Policy
- Compassionate Leave Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Holiday Policy
- Wellbeing Policy

Parental Bereavement Leave Policy

Purpose

The Diocese recognises that the death of a child is an exceptionally distressing experience.

The purpose of this policy is to explain employees' statutory entitlement to Parental Bereavement Leave.

The Diocese is committed to supporting employees compassionately during these circumstances.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies to employees who satisfy the statutory eligibility requirements.

It should be read alongside the:

- Compassionate Leave Policy
- Wellbeing Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Sickness Absence Policy
- Holiday Policy

Eligibility

Employees may be entitled to Parental Bereavement Leave where they:

- are the parent of a child who dies under the age of 18; or
- experience a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy; or

- otherwise qualify under the relevant legislation.

Employees may also qualify if they are an adoptive parent, intended parent through surrogacy or another individual recognised by the legislation.

Entitlement

Eligible employees are entitled to:

- up to two weeks' statutory Parental Bereavement Leave.

The leave may be taken:

- as one block of two weeks; or
- as two separate weeks,

in accordance with the statutory rules.

Timing of Leave

Parental Bereavement Leave may be taken within the statutory period following the death of the child.

Employees should provide notice in accordance with the statutory requirements wherever reasonably practicable.

The Diocese recognises that immediate notification may not always be possible.

Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay

Employees who satisfy the statutory qualifying conditions will receive Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay in accordance with the legislation in force at the relevant time.

Current eligibility and payment rates are available from the Chief Operating Officer or GOV.UK.

The Diocese does not currently provide enhanced occupational parental bereavement pay.

Additional Support

The Diocese recognises that two weeks' statutory leave may not always be sufficient.

Employees who require additional time away from work are encouraged to discuss their circumstances with their line manager.

Depending upon individual circumstances, additional support may include:

- Compassionate Leave;
- annual leave;
- unpaid leave;
- flexible working;
- temporary workplace adjustments;
- sickness absence where medically appropriate; and
- Employee Assistance Programme or Occupational Health support.

Each case will be considered individually.

Returning to Work

The Diocese recognises that returning to work following the death of a child can be particularly difficult.

Managers should discuss any support or temporary workplace adjustments that may assist the employee's return.

Protection

Employees will not be subjected to detriment or dismissed because they have requested or taken statutory Parental Bereavement Leave.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- apply statutory entitlements fairly;
- treat employees with compassion and dignity;
- maintain confidentiality; and
- provide appropriate support wherever reasonably practicable.

Managers will:

- respond sensitively;
- maintain confidentiality;
- discuss appropriate workplace support;
- seek advice from the Chief Operating Officer where appropriate.

Employees are encouraged to:

- notify the Diocese as soon as reasonably practicable;
- discuss any ongoing support needs; and
- maintain communication where appropriate.

Related Policies

- Compassionate Leave
- Wellbeing
- Flexible Working
- Holiday

- Sickness Absence

Unpaid Parental Leave Policy

Purpose

The Diocese recognises that employees may occasionally need time away from work to care for or spend time with their children.

The purpose of this policy is to explain employees' statutory entitlement to unpaid parental leave and the arrangements for requesting and taking that leave.

The Diocese is committed to considering requests fairly and consistently while balancing the operational needs of the Diocese.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies to eligible employees.

This policy should be read alongside the Diocese's:

- Maternity Policy;
- Adoption Policy;
- Paternity Policy;
- Shared Parental Leave Policy;
- Carer's Leave Policy;
- Compassionate Leave Policy;
- Flexible Working Policy; and
- Holiday Policy.

Eligibility

Employees may be entitled to statutory unpaid parental leave if they:

- have, or expect to have, parental responsibility for a child; and
- meet the statutory eligibility requirements.

Parental leave may generally be taken up to the child's 18th birthday.

Entitlement

Eligible employees may take up to 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave for each child.

The statutory entitlement applies to each child individually.

Where an employee has more than one eligible child, a separate entitlement applies for each child.

Taking Parental Leave

Unless otherwise agreed, parental leave should normally be taken:

- in blocks of one week; or
- in accordance with the statutory provisions for disabled children.

A maximum of four weeks' parental leave may normally be taken in respect of any individual child during any 12-month period.

Employees should give at least 21 days' notice of the dates on which they wish to take parental leave.

Employees are encouraged to provide as much notice as reasonably practicable.

Postponement of Leave

The Diocese recognises employees' statutory entitlement to parental leave.

However, where the operation of the Diocese would be unduly disrupted, the Diocese may postpone a period of parental leave in accordance with the statutory provisions.

Any postponement will:

- be discussed with the employee;
- be confirmed in writing;
- explain the reasons for the postponement; and

- specify alternative dates on which the leave may be taken.

Parental leave will not be postponed where this is prohibited by law.

Pay

Parental leave under this policy is unpaid.

Employees may request annual leave instead of unpaid parental leave, subject to the Holiday Policy and managerial approval.

Terms During Leave

During parental leave:

- continuity of employment will be preserved;
- contractual terms, other than pay, will generally continue where required by law;
- annual leave entitlement will continue in accordance with statutory requirements; and
- pension arrangements will continue in accordance with the applicable pension scheme rules and statutory requirements.

Returning to Work

Employees returning from parental leave have the statutory right to return to work in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Where parental leave is taken alongside other statutory family leave, return-to-work rights will be determined in accordance with the applicable legislation.

The Diocese will support employees returning to work and will discuss any reasonable workplace arrangements that may assist their return where appropriate.

Support for Employees

Employees who have ongoing caring responsibilities are encouraged to discuss their circumstances with their line manager where workplace support may be helpful.

Depending on individual circumstances, support may include:

- Flexible Working arrangements;
- annual leave;
- Carer's Leave;
- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP);
- Occupational Health, where appropriate; or
- other support agreed by the Diocese.

Protection from Detriment

Employees will not be subjected to detriment or dismissed because they have requested or taken parental leave in accordance with this policy.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- apply statutory entitlements fairly and consistently;
- consider requests promptly;
- balance operational requirements with employees' family responsibilities;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality; and
- comply with employment legislation.

Managers will:

- consider requests fairly;
- discuss any operational issues openly with employees;
- seek advice from the Chief Operating Officer where appropriate;
- maintain confidentiality; and
- support employees returning from parental leave.

Employees are encouraged to:

- provide appropriate notice;
- discuss requests at an early stage where possible;
- maintain appropriate communication during periods of leave where appropriate; and
- notify the Diocese promptly if circumstances change.

Related Policies

- Maternity Policy
- Adoption Policy
- Paternity Policy
- Shared Parental Leave Policy
- Neonatal Care Leave and Pay Policy
- Carer's Leave Policy
- Compassionate Leave Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Holiday Policy
- Wellbeing Policy

Carer's Leave Policy

Purpose

The Diocese recognises that many employees have caring responsibilities alongside their work.

The purpose of this policy is to explain employees' statutory entitlement to Carer's Leave and the support available where employees need time away from work to provide or arrange care for a dependant with a long-term care need.

The Diocese is committed to considering requests fairly, sensitively and consistently while balancing the operational needs of the Diocese.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees.

The policy should be read alongside the Diocese's:

- Compassionate Leave Policy;
- Flexible Working Policy;
- Holiday Policy;
- Wellbeing Policy;
- Sickness Absence Policy; and
- Disability Policy.

Eligibility

Employees have a statutory right to take unpaid Carer's Leave from the first day of employment.

The entitlement applies where an employee needs to provide or arrange care for a dependant with a long-term care need.

For the purposes of this policy, a dependant includes:

- a spouse, civil partner or partner;
- a child;
- a parent;
- a person who lives in the same household as the employee (other than by reason of being their employee, tenant, lodger or boarder); or
- a person who reasonably relies on the employee for care.

A long-term care need includes:

- an illness or injury that requires, or is likely to require, care for more than three months;
- a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010; or
- care needs associated with old age.

Entitlement

Eligible employees may take up to one working week of unpaid Carer's Leave during any rolling 12-month period.

For employees who work part-time, the entitlement will be pro-rated in accordance with the statutory rules.

Carer's Leave is intended to enable employees to provide or arrange care for a dependant. It is not intended for emergencies, which may instead be covered by the statutory right to time off for dependants or, where appropriate, the Diocese's Compassionate Leave Policy.

Taking Leave

Carer's Leave may be taken:

- as individual days;
- half-days; or
- a single block of up to one working week,

provided that the statutory notice requirements are met.

Employees should give notice that is at least twice the length of the leave requested, subject to a minimum of three days' notice, unless a longer period is required by law.

Employees are encouraged to provide as much notice as reasonably practicable.

Postponement of Leave

The Diocese recognises that employees have a statutory entitlement to Carer's Leave.

Where the operation of the Diocese would be unduly disrupted by the leave requested, the Diocese may postpone the leave in accordance with the statutory provisions.

Any postponement will:

- be discussed with the employee;
- be confirmed in writing;
- explain the reasons; and
- allow the employee to take the leave within the statutory timescale.

The Diocese will not unreasonably postpone requests.

Evidence

The Diocese will not normally require employees to provide evidence of their entitlement to Carer's Leave.

Employees are expected to request leave honestly and in good faith.

Pay

Carer's Leave is unpaid.

Employees may, if appropriate and with managerial agreement, choose instead to use annual leave or other authorised leave.

Nothing in this policy prevents the Diocese exercising discretion to provide additional paid leave in exceptional circumstances where this is considered appropriate.

Support for Employees

The Diocese recognises that caring responsibilities can place significant demands upon employees.

Employees who have ongoing caring responsibilities are encouraged to speak with their line manager if they believe additional workplace support may be helpful.

Depending on the circumstances, support may include:

- Flexible Working arrangements;
- temporary adjustments to working patterns;
- annual leave;
- unpaid leave;
- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP);
- Occupational Health, where appropriate; or
- other support agreed with the Diocese.

Protection from Detriment

Employees will not be subjected to detriment or dismissed because they have requested or taken Carer's Leave in accordance with this policy.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- apply statutory entitlements fairly and consistently;
- consider requests sensitively;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality;
- balance employee needs with operational requirements; and
- support employees with caring responsibilities wherever reasonably practicable.

Managers will:

- consider requests promptly;
- maintain confidentiality;
- seek advice from the Chief Operating Officer where appropriate;
- discuss alternative arrangements where appropriate; and
- support employees returning from leave.

Employees are encouraged to:

- provide as much notice as reasonably practicable;
- discuss ongoing caring responsibilities where workplace support may be helpful;
- comply with the notification requirements of this policy; and
- maintain appropriate communication during periods of leave.

Related Policies

- Flexible Working Policy
- Compassionate Leave Policy
- Holiday Policy
- Wellbeing Policy
- Disability Policy
- Sickness Absence Policy

Compassionate Leave Policy

Purpose

The Diocese recognises that employees may occasionally experience bereavement, serious illness or other exceptional personal circumstances where compassionate leave may be appropriate. The Diocese recognises that situations requiring compassionate consideration are each unique and that it is neither possible nor desirable to prescribe a fixed entitlement for every circumstance. Managers are therefore expected to exercise sound judgement, seek advice where appropriate and treat each request with compassion, fairness and consistency

The purpose of this policy is to provide managers with a framework for considering requests for compassionate leave fairly, consistently and sensitively while recognising that every situation is different.

The Diocese wishes to support employees during difficult times while balancing the operational needs of the organisation.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees.

It should be read alongside the:

- Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay Policy
- Carer's Leave Policy
- Sickness Absence Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Holiday Policy
- Wellbeing Policy

General Principles

Compassionate leave is intended to provide short-term support where employees experience exceptional personal circumstances.

Examples may include:

- the death of a close family member;
- serious illness or injury affecting a dependant or close family member;
- making urgent care arrangements;
- attending a funeral;
- other exceptional compassionate circumstances.

Each request will be considered on its individual circumstances.

Paid Compassionate Leave

The Diocese may grant a reasonable period of paid compassionate leave where appropriate.

There is no automatic entitlement to paid compassionate leave (except where required by law).

When considering requests, managers will take account of:

- the nature of the circumstances;
- the employee's relationship to the individual concerned;
- the likely duration of absence required;
- operational requirements; and
- any statutory leave available.

Additional Leave

Where further time away from work is required, the Diocese may consider:

- annual leave;
- unpaid leave;
- flexible working arrangements;
- temporary adjustments to working patterns;
- Carer's Leave (where applicable);

- sickness absence where medically appropriate; or
- other arrangements agreed with the employee.

Requesting Leave

Employees should notify their line manager as soon as reasonably practicable.

Managers may seek advice from the Chief Operating Officer where appropriate.

The Diocese recognises that it may not always be possible to provide advance notice in compassionate circumstances.

Support

Employees experiencing bereavement or other difficult circumstances are encouraged to speak with their line manager if further support would be helpful.

Support may include:

- Employee Assistance Programme;
- Occupational Health;
- temporary workplace adjustments;
- wellbeing support; and
- other appropriate assistance.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- consider requests compassionately;
- apply this policy fairly and consistently;
- maintain confidentiality; and
- support employees wherever reasonably practicable.

Managers will:

- consider requests sensitively;
- seek advice where appropriate;
- maintain confidentiality; and

- support employees returning to work.

Employees are encouraged to:

- notify the Diocese promptly where possible;
- discuss any additional support required; and
- maintain appropriate communication during any period of absence.

Related Policies

- Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay Policy
- Carer's Leave Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Wellbeing Policy
- Holiday Policy
- Sickness Absence Policy

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Time Off for Dependants Policy

Purpose

The law recognises and we respect that there may be occasions when you will need to take time off work to deal with unexpected events involving one of your dependants. The purpose of this policy is to explain employees' statutory right to a reasonable amount of unpaid time off in those circumstances.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies to employees only. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants, self-employed contractors, volunteers or interns.

It should be read alongside the Diocese's:

- Compassionate Leave Policy;
- Carer's Leave Policy;
- Unpaid Parental Leave Policy;
- Flexible Working Policy;
- Holiday Policy;
- Wellbeing Policy; and
- Disability Policy.

Reasonable unpaid time off

Employees have a right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work when it is necessary to:

- provide assistance when a dependant falls ill, gives birth, is injured or assaulted;
- make longer-term care arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured;
- take action required in consequence of the death of a dependant;
- deal with the unexpected disruption, termination or breakdown of arrangements for the care of a dependant (such as a childminder falling ill); or

- deal with an unexpected incident involving your child while a school or another educational establishment is responsible for them.

2. A **dependant** for the purposes of this policy is:

- your spouse, civil partner, parent or child;
- a person who lives in the same household as you, but who is not your tenant, lodger, boarder or employee; or
- anyone else who reasonably relies on you to provide assistance, make arrangements or take action of the kind referred to in paragraph 1 above.

This policy applies to time off to take action which is necessary because of an immediate or unexpected crisis. This policy does not apply where you need to take planned time off or provide longer-term care for a dependant. If this is the case, you should discuss your circumstances with your line manager (and it may be that one or more of our other policies applies – please refer to the list above).

Whether action is considered necessary will depend on the circumstances, including the nature of the problem, the closeness of the relationship between you and the dependant, and whether appropriate alternative assistance is reasonably available. Time off may not be reasonable where an employee knew of the problem in advance and could reasonably have made alternative arrangements but did not take steps to do so.

There is no fixed amount of time off available. In many cases, one or two days will be sufficient to deal with the immediate problem and, where necessary, make longer-term arrangements. However, each situation will be considered on its individual facts.

In some circumstances, particularly bereavement, serious illness or injury, the nature of the situation may mean that compassionate leave is more applicable. Please refer to our Compassionate Leave Policy for further information.

Exercising the right to time off

You will only be entitled to time off under this policy if, as soon as is reasonably practicable, you tell your line manager:

- the reason for your absence; and
- how long you expect to be away from work.

Where it is not reasonably practicable to make contact before leaving or missing work, the employee should notify their line manager as soon as possible afterwards.

Any unreasonable failure to comply with these notification requirements may result in the absence being treated as unauthorised and may be considered under the Disciplinary Policy.

Evidence

The Diocese will not normally require employees to provide evidence of their entitlement to time off for dependants.

Employees are expected to request leave honestly and in good faith. Suspected abuse of this policy will be investigated as a potential disciplinary issue under our Disciplinary Policy.

Pay

Time off for dependants is unpaid.

Employees may, if appropriate and with managerial agreement, choose instead to use annual leave or other authorised leave.

Nothing in this policy prevents the Diocese exercising discretion to provide additional paid leave in exceptional circumstances where this is considered appropriate.

Support for Employees

The Diocese recognises that caring responsibilities can place significant demands upon employees.

Employees who have ongoing caring responsibilities are encouraged to speak with their line manager if they believe additional workplace support may be helpful.

Depending on the circumstances, support may include:

- Flexible Working arrangements;
- temporary adjustments to working patterns;
- annual leave;

- unpaid leave;
- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP);
- Occupational Health, where appropriate; or
- other support agreed with the Diocese.

Protection from Detriment

Employees will not be subjected to detriment or dismissed because they have sought or taken time off for dependants in accordance with their statutory rights and/or this policy.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- apply statutory entitlements fairly and consistently;
- consider requests sensitively;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality; and
- support employees with caring responsibilities wherever reasonably practicable.

Managers will:

- maintain appropriate confidentiality;
- seek advice from the Chief Operating Officer where appropriate;
- discuss alternative arrangements where appropriate; and
- support employees during and following their absence as appropriate.

Employees are encouraged to:

- notify their line manager as soon as reasonably practicable;
- discuss ongoing caring responsibilities where workplace support may be helpful;
- comply with the notification requirements of this policy; and
- maintain appropriate communication during periods of leave.

Related Policies

- Carer's Leave Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Compassionate Leave Policy
- Holiday Policy
- Wellbeing Policy
- Disability Policy

Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy

The Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- set out our responsibilities, and of those working for us, in observing and upholding our position on bribery and corruption; and
- provide information and guidance to those working for us in the Diocese on how to recognise and deal with bribery and corruption issues.

Purpose

The Diocese is committed to conducting its activities honestly, fairly and with integrity. This policy explains the Diocese's approach to preventing bribery and corruption and the responsibilities of those working on its behalf.

Scope

This policy applies to everyone working for or on behalf of the Diocese, whether paid or unpaid, including members of the Diocesan Trustee's Board of Directors, committee and panel members, employees, volunteers, agency workers, consultants and contractors. Throughout this policy these individuals are referred to as workers.

This policy also applies to those undertaking procurement or purchasing activities on behalf of the Diocese or a parish.

Separate guidance applies to clergy under the Diocese's Clergy Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

The Diocese's Commitment

The Diocese takes a zero-tolerance approach to bribery and corruption.

We are committed to conducting all of our activities lawfully, honestly and ethically, and to maintaining effective systems and controls to prevent bribery and corruption.

The Diocese will comply with all applicable legislation, including the Bribery Act 2010.

The Diocese periodically assesses the risk of bribery and corruption arising from its activities and reviews its procedures to ensure they remain appropriate and proportionate.

What is Bribery?

Bribery is offering, promising, giving, requesting or accepting a financial or other advantage in order to influence someone to act improperly or to reward improper conduct.

Bribes can take many forms, including:

- money;
- gifts;
- hospitality;
- loans;
- services;
- discounts;
- employment opportunities;
- preferential treatment; or
- anything else of value.

Bribery is a criminal offence and may result in criminal prosecution, disciplinary action and serious reputational damage to the Diocese.

What is Corruption?

Corruption is the abuse of a position of trust or authority for personal benefit or for the benefit of another person or organisation.

Gifts and Hospitality

Reasonable and proportionate gifts and hospitality are a normal part of building positive working relationships and are not prohibited by this policy.

However, gifts and hospitality must never:

- influence, or appear to influence, a decision;
- create a sense of obligation;
- be offered or accepted in return for a favour or business advantage;
- include cash or cash equivalents (such as gift cards or vouchers); or
- damage the reputation of the Diocese.

Any gift purchased using diocesan or parish funds must:

- represent an appropriate use of charitable funds;
- be modest and proportionate;
- be given openly and transparently; and
- clearly be given on behalf of the Diocese or parish rather than an individual.

Gifts or hospitality must not be offered to, or accepted from, government officials, politicians or political parties without the prior written approval of the Chief Operating Officer or a member of the Trustee's Board of Directors.

Conflicts of Interest

Workers involved in procurement, purchasing or the award of contracts must declare any personal, family or financial interest that could influence, or reasonably appear to influence, their decision-making.

Any actual or potential conflict of interest must be declared immediately and managed in accordance with the Diocese's Conflicts of Interest arrangements.

Unacceptable Conduct

Workers must not:

- offer, promise or give a bribe;
- request or accept a bribe;
- offer gifts or hospitality to obtain an improper advantage;
- accept gifts or hospitality intended to influence a decision;
- offer or make facilitation payments;
- accept kickbacks;
- give or receive lavish or excessive hospitality;

- retaliate against anyone who raises a genuine concern under this policy; or
- engage in any activity that could breach this policy.

Facilitation Payments and Kickbacks

The Diocese prohibits facilitation payments and kickbacks.

If you are asked to make a payment on behalf of the Diocese, you should ensure that:

- you understand what the payment is for;
- the amount is reasonable;
- you obtain an appropriate receipt; and
- you raise any concerns immediately with the Chief Operating Officer.

Political and Charitable Donations

The Diocese does not make donations to political parties.

Any charitable donation made on behalf of the Diocese must:

- be lawful;
- support the charitable purposes of the Diocese;
- be properly authorised; and
- be accurately recorded.

Responsibilities

All workers are responsible for complying with this policy.

You must:

- read and understand this policy;
- avoid any activity that could breach it;
- report any suspected bribery or corruption immediately; and
- cooperate with any investigation.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that workers understand this policy and receive appropriate guidance and training.

Record Keeping

Accurate financial records must be maintained at all times.

Any gift or hospitality with an estimated value exceeding £50 must be declared to the Chief Operating Officer and recorded in the Diocese's Gifts and Hospitality Register.

Workers should also declare any gift or hospitality below this value where it could reasonably be perceived as influencing, or appearing to influence, a decision.

Expenses relating to gifts or hospitality must be accurately recorded and supported by appropriate documentation.

The Diocese prohibits the creation of false, misleading or off-book accounts or records.

Raising Concerns

Any concerns about suspected bribery or corruption should be reported immediately to the Chief Operating Officer.

Concerns may also be raised in accordance with the Diocese's Whistleblowing Policy.

Protection

The Diocese will not tolerate retaliation against anyone who raises a genuine concern in good faith or refuses to participate in bribery or corruption.

Any worker who believes they have suffered detrimental treatment should report this immediately.

Employees may also raise concerns under the Diocese's Grievance Policy where appropriate.

Breaches of this Policy

Employees who breach this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal for gross misconduct.

The Diocese may terminate its relationship with contractors, consultants, volunteers or other workers who breach this policy.

Breaches of this policy may also constitute criminal offences under the Bribery Act 2010 and may be reported to the appropriate authorities where appropriate.

Training

Training on this policy will form part of the induction process where appropriate.

Additional training will be provided to workers whose roles involve greater exposure to bribery or corruption risks, including procurement and contract management.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will normally be reviewed every two years, or earlier where there are significant changes in legislation, regulatory guidance or the activities of the Diocese.

Attendance at Work Policy

Purpose

The Diocese is committed to providing a safe, professional and welcoming working environment for employees, clergy, volunteers, parishioners and visitors.

This policy sets out some of the practical expectations that apply when employees attend work. It aims to ensure that our workplaces operate safely, professionally and fairly while recognising that individual circumstances may occasionally require flexibility.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the Diocese.

It should be read alongside the:

- Flexible Working Policy;
- Home Working Policy;
- Health & Safety Policy;
- Wellbeing Policy;
- Sickness Absence Policy;
- Carer's Leave Policy; and
- Compassionate Leave Policy.

Attendance and Punctuality

Employees are expected to attend work regularly and punctually in accordance with their contractual hours unless another arrangement has been agreed.

If you are unable to attend work, or expect to be late, you should notify your line manager as soon as reasonably practicable and follow the Diocese's Sickness Absence Policy or any other relevant procedure.

Employees should ensure that they are ready to begin work at their agreed start time.

Fitness for Work

Employees are expected to be fit to carry out their duties safely and effectively.

If you believe that illness, fatigue, medication or another health issue may affect your ability to work safely, you should discuss this with your line manager as soon as possible.

The Diocese will seek to provide appropriate support where reasonably practicable, including considering temporary adjustments where appropriate.

Children and Dependants in the Workplace

The Diocese recognises that employees may occasionally experience unexpected childcare or caring difficulties. Wherever reasonably practicable, managers will seek to support employees in these circumstances.

Employees are expected to make appropriate childcare or dependant care arrangements so that they are able to carry out their duties during their contracted working hours.

Diocesan offices, parish offices, presbyteries and other workplaces are not intended to provide childcare or care for dependants. Employees must not routinely bring children or other dependants into the workplace whilst they are working.

Many Diocese workplaces are shared with clergy, volunteers, parishioners or members of the public and may contain confidential information or present health and safety or safeguarding considerations. For these reasons, they are generally not suitable environments for children or other dependants while employees are undertaking their duties.

Where an unexpected emergency arises, employees should speak to their line manager as soon as reasonably practicable.

In exceptional circumstances, a manager may agree that a child or dependant may be present in the workplace for a short period while alternative arrangements are made. Any such agreement will depend upon:

- health and safety considerations;
- safeguarding requirements;

- confidentiality;
- the suitability of the workplace;
- the employee's duties; and
- the impact on colleagues, visitors and the effective operation of the workplace.

Permission given on one occasion does not create an ongoing entitlement.

Employees remain responsible for the supervision and welfare of any child or dependant they bring into the workplace with permission. Managers may withdraw permission at any time if they consider that it is no longer appropriate.

Pets

Employees must not bring pets or other animals into the workplace, onto Diocese premises, or to work-related events without prior written approval from their manager. This restriction is intended to ensure the health, safety, wellbeing and comfort of colleagues, visitors and others, and to protect the Diocese's property and operations.

This provision does not apply to assistance dogs or other animals required as a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010, or where the Diocese has expressly authorised an animal to be present for operational reasons.

Visitors

Employees should not invite personal visitors into the workplace during working hours unless there is a legitimate reason and the agreement of their line manager.

Visitors must comply with any health and safety, safeguarding and security arrangements that apply to the premises.

Security and Confidentiality

Employees are responsible for helping to maintain the security of Diocese premises and confidential information.

Confidential documents and information should not be left where they can be accessed by unauthorised persons.

Employees should challenge or report any security concerns in accordance with local arrangements.

Alternative Arrangements

Where unexpected personal circumstances make attendance at work difficult, the Diocese will consider, where appropriate:

- temporary home working (where suitable for the role);
- annual leave;
- unpaid leave;
- Carer's Leave;
- Compassionate Leave;
- flexible working arrangements; or
- other reasonable arrangements.

Each situation will be considered on its own circumstances.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- provide a safe and professional working environment;
- apply this policy fairly and consistently;
- consider individual circumstances with appropriate discretion; and
- support employees wherever reasonably practicable.

Managers will:

- apply this policy consistently and proportionately;
- consider requests for flexibility where appropriate;
- seek advice from the Chief Operating Officer where necessary; and
- ensure that health and safety, safeguarding and confidentiality are maintained.

Employees are expected to:

- attend work in accordance with their contractual arrangements;
- notify their manager promptly if they are unable to attend work;
- make appropriate childcare or dependant care arrangements;

- follow health and safety and security requirements; and
- discuss any circumstances that may affect their attendance or ability to work.

Related Policies

- Carer's Leave Policy
- Compassionate Leave Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Home Working Policy
- Sickness Absence Policy
- Wellbeing Policy

Capability Policy

Purpose

The Diocese is committed to supporting employees to achieve and maintain the standards of performance required in their role. The purpose of this policy is to provide a fair and consistent framework for managing situations where an employee is unable to meet the required standards of performance due to capability.

This policy applies to issues of capability (lack of skill, knowledge, aptitude or ability). Concerns relating to misconduct, attitude or behaviour should be managed under the Disciplinary Policy.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

Capability concerns may arise where an employee is unable to perform their duties satisfactorily because of:

- a lack of knowledge, skills or experience;
- insufficient aptitude or ability;
- inadequate training; or
- other factors affecting their capability to perform the role.

Where poor performance arises wholly or mainly from sickness absence or an underlying medical condition, the matter will normally be managed under the Sickness Absence Policy.

Principles

The Diocese wishes all employees to succeed in their work and recognises that individual success contributes to the success of the Diocese.

Managers should therefore seek to:

- ensure employees understand the standards expected of them;
- provide appropriate induction, supervision and training;
- identify performance concerns promptly;
- address concerns informally wherever appropriate; and
- support employees to improve before formal action is considered.

The primary purpose of this policy is to help employees achieve and maintain the required standards of performance.

Informal Performance Management

Managers should normally seek to resolve performance concerns informally before commencing the formal Capability Procedure.

Informal discussions should:

- identify the areas of concern;
- clarify the required standards;
- explore the reasons for the performance concerns;
- identify any training, support or supervision required; and
- agree a reasonable Performance Improvement Plan with review dates.

The Diocese expects managers to make reasonable efforts to support employees before formal capability action is considered.

However, where poor performance presents a serious risk to health and safety, safeguarding, service delivery or the Diocese's legal or financial interests, the Diocese may commence the formal procedure immediately.

Before Commencing the Formal Procedure

Before commencing the formal Capability Procedure, managers should normally be satisfied that:

- the employee understands the requirements of the role;
- the expected standards have been clearly explained;
- appropriate training, supervision and support have been provided;
- informal performance management has been undertaken where appropriate; and
- the employee has had a reasonable opportunity to improve.

Managers should seek advice from the Chief Operating Officer before commencing formal capability proceedings.

Equality and Reasonable Adjustments

Before any formal warning or dismissal is considered, the Diocese will consider whether:

- the employee may have a disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010;
- medical advice or an Occupational Health assessment should be obtained;
- reasonable adjustments may assist the employee to perform their role; and
- any additional support, training or workplace adjustments are appropriate.

The Diocese will comply with its obligations under equality legislation throughout the capability process.

Formal Capability Procedure

Capability concerns should be addressed promptly and fairly.

Employees will normally receive at least 48 hours' written notice of any formal capability meeting.

The notice will explain:

- the concerns about performance;
- any evidence relied upon;
- the possible outcomes of the meeting; and
- the employee's right to be accompanied.

Employees may be accompanied by a workplace colleague or a trade union representative.

Reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate.

The timescales set out in this policy are intended as guidance and may be varied where this is reasonable in the circumstances.

Stage One – Written Warning

Where performance remains unsatisfactory following informal management, or where the seriousness of the performance concerns justifies formal action, a formal capability meeting will be held.

After considering all the information, the manager may issue a Written Warning.

The Written Warning will:

- explain the areas requiring improvement;
- identify the standard expected;
- confirm any support or training to be provided;
- set a reasonable review period;
- explain the consequences of failing to improve; and
- confirm the employee's right of appeal.

Review periods will normally be between two weeks and three months, depending upon the nature of the performance concerns.

The Written Warning will normally remain live for 12 months.

Stage Two – Final Written Warning

Where sufficient improvement has not been achieved, or performance subsequently falls below the required standard during the live warning period, a further formal capability meeting will normally be held.

After considering all the circumstances, the manager may issue a Final Written Warning.

The Final Written Warning will:

- explain the continuing concerns;
- identify the required improvements;
- confirm any further support to be provided;
- specify a further review period; and
- explain that failure to achieve and maintain the required standard may result in dismissal.

The Final Written Warning will normally remain live for 12 months.

Stage Three – Dismissal or Alternative Outcome

If performance remains unsatisfactory following the Final Written Warning, a further capability meeting will normally be held.

After considering all relevant information, the Diocese may decide to:

- dismiss the employee on the grounds of capability;
- redeploy the employee into a suitable alternative vacancy, where one exists and both parties agree;
- demote the employee into an alternative role, by agreement; or
- in exceptional circumstances, extend the review period where there is a reasonable prospect of sustained improvement.

Dismissal will normally be with contractual notice or payment in lieu of notice where appropriate.

Appeals

Employees have the right to appeal against any formal warning or dismissal issued under this policy.

Appeals should be submitted in writing within seven calendar days of the date of the written outcome.

Appeals will normally be heard by a manager or panel not previously involved in the matter and, where practicable, more senior than the original decision-maker.

The appeal decision will normally be confirmed in writing and will be final.

Records

Records relating to capability proceedings will be retained confidentially in accordance with the Diocese's Data Protection Policy and applicable data protection legislation.

Related Policies

- Disciplinary Policy
- Sickness Absence Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Disability Policy
- Recruitment Policy

Appendix: Performance Action Plan	
Name:	
Job Title & location:	
Date objectives set:	Date for review:
Name of person conducting review:	
Details of Key Objectives to be achieved (be specific & ensure measurable):	Timescale to be achieved by:
1. 2. 3. 4.	
Details of support measures to be provided:	Timescale/who is responsible:
1. 2. 3. 4.	

Additional Comments: ___

Signed (Manager) Date

Signed (Employee) Date

Criminal Records and DBS Policy

Purpose

The Diocese is committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults and to ensuring that appropriate pre-employment checks are carried out where required.

This policy explains the Diocese's approach to criminal record information, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and the obligations of employees to disclose relevant criminal matters that may affect their employment.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees.

Additional requirements apply to posts that require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check because of the nature of the duties undertaken.

This policy should be read alongside the Recruitment Policy, Safeguarding Guidelines, Disciplinary Policy and Data Protection Policy.

Recruitment

The Diocese is committed to recruiting fairly and lawfully.

Applicants will only be asked to disclose criminal record information that the Diocese is legally entitled to request, taking account of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975, the Police Act 1997 and the level of DBS check applicable to the role.

A criminal conviction will not automatically prevent employment with the Diocese. Each case will be considered individually, taking account of:

- the nature and seriousness of the offence;
- its relevance to the role;
- the time that has elapsed since the offence;
- any pattern of offending;
- safeguarding responsibilities; and
- any other relevant circumstances.

Where a role involves safeguarding responsibilities, applicants should inform the Diocese if they are currently subject to criminal proceedings or other circumstances that may reasonably affect their suitability for the role.

Offers of employment may be made subject to satisfactory references, DBS clearance where required and any other appropriate pre-employment checks.

Managers must consult the Chief Operating Officer before an offer of employment is withdrawn because of criminal record information.

Current Employees

Employees must notify the Chief Operating Officer as soon as reasonably practicable if they are:

- arrested;
- charged with; or
- convicted of

a criminal offence where the matter may reasonably affect their employment, safeguarding responsibilities, the reputation of the Diocese or their ability to carry out their role safely and effectively.

Employees are not required to disclose matters that are unrelated to their employment or which the Diocese is not legally entitled to take into account.

A criminal investigation, charge or conviction does not automatically result in disciplinary action.

Each case will be considered individually, taking account of all relevant circumstances.

Where appropriate, the Diocese may investigate the circumstances independently and will not normally wait for the conclusion of criminal proceedings before deciding whether any employment action is necessary.

Where an employee is unable, or has been advised not, to comment because of ongoing criminal proceedings, the Diocese may make decisions based upon the information reasonably available at the time.

Failure to disclose relevant information, or deliberately providing false or misleading information, may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

Certain posts within the Diocese require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check because of their safeguarding responsibilities or other legal requirements.

The level of DBS check required will depend upon the duties of the post.

Where a DBS check is required, employees are expected to:

- cooperate fully with the application process;
- provide any information reasonably required;
- maintain the level of clearance required for the role where repeat checks are necessary; and
- notify the Diocese of any matter that may affect their DBS status where appropriate.

Failure to obtain or maintain the level of DBS clearance required for the role, or failure to cooperate with the DBS process without reasonable explanation, may result in formal action under the Disciplinary Policy.

Managers must consult the Chief Operating Officer before formal action is taken in relation to DBS matters.

Safeguarding

The Diocese has a statutory and moral responsibility to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Where criminal record information raises safeguarding concerns, the Diocese will carefully consider the information alongside:

- the requirements of the role;
- safeguarding guidance;
- the DBS Code of Practice;
- any relevant statutory guidance; and
- the Diocese's Safeguarding Guidelines.

Where appropriate, safeguarding advice may be obtained before any employment decision is made.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Information relating to criminal records, DBS checks and criminal proceedings will be handled sensitively and confidentially.

Such information will only be processed by those with a legitimate business need to know and will be managed in accordance with the Diocese's Data Protection Policy, the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018 and any applicable DBS guidance.

Criminal record information will only be retained for as long as is necessary and lawful.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- comply with safeguarding and employment legislation;
- process criminal record information fairly and confidentially;
- consider each case individually;
- ensure DBS checks are undertaken where required; and
- comply with the DBS Code of Practice where applicable.

Managers will:

- treat criminal record information confidentially;
- seek advice from the Chief Operating Officer before making decisions;
- consider safeguarding responsibilities carefully; and
- avoid making assumptions based solely on the existence of a criminal record.

Employees will:

- disclose relevant criminal matters as required by this policy;
- cooperate with DBS processes where applicable;
- provide accurate information; and
- notify the Diocese of relevant changes affecting their role.

Breaches of this Policy

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Serious breaches, including the deliberate concealment of relevant criminal matters or knowingly providing false information, may constitute gross misconduct and may result in dismissal.

Related Policies

- Recruitment Policy
- Safeguarding Guidelines
- Disciplinary Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Disability Policy

Purpose

The Diocese is committed to creating a working environment in which everyone is treated with dignity, respect and fairness.

We are committed to complying with the Equality Act 2010 and to supporting employees and job applicants with disabilities by removing barriers wherever it is reasonable to do so. The Diocese aims to ensure that employees with disabilities are able to obtain, remain in and develop within employment on an equal basis with others.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees and job applicants.

It should be read alongside the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Sickness Absence Policy, Capability Policy and Health & Safety Policy.

Definition of Disability

For the purposes of this policy, disability has the meaning given by the Equality Act 2010.

In broad terms, a disability is a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

A condition will normally be regarded as long-term if it has lasted, or is likely to last, at least 12 months or for the rest of the person's life. Some progressive conditions may also be disabilities, as are cancer, HIV infection and multiple sclerosis from the point of diagnosis.

Disabilities may be visible or non-visible and may include physical health conditions, sensory impairments, learning differences, neurodivergent conditions and mental health conditions where they meet the legal definition of disability.

The examples above are illustrative only. If you believe you require support because of a health condition or disability, you are encouraged to discuss this with your line manager or the Chief Operating Officer, even if you are unsure whether the legal definition of disability applies.

Our Commitment

The Diocese values the contribution of all employees and is committed to creating a working environment in which people with disabilities can participate fully in the life and work of the Diocese.

We aim to:

- provide equality of opportunity;
- remove unnecessary barriers to employment;
- consider reasonable adjustments wherever appropriate;
- support employees who become disabled during their employment;
- promote an inclusive working environment; and
- comply with our legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Recruitment

The Diocese welcomes applications from people with disabilities.

Applicants are encouraged to tell us about any adjustments they may require during the recruitment process.

Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments may include:

- providing information in an alternative format;
- ensuring interview venues are accessible;
- arranging interpreters, readers or other support;
- adapting assessment methods; or
- making other reasonable arrangements to enable applicants to participate fully in the recruitment process.

Appointment decisions will always be based on the requirements of the role and the applicant's skills, experience and ability to perform it.

Support for New Employees

Where a newly appointed employee requires workplace adjustments, the Diocese will work with them to identify any reasonable support required before or shortly after employment begins.

Discussions will normally take place between the employee and their line manager.

Where appropriate, specialist advice may be obtained to assist in identifying suitable workplace adjustments.

Supporting Employees

Where an employee becomes disabled, or an existing disability changes, the Diocese will seek to support the employee in remaining in their role wherever reasonably practicable.

Support may include:

- reviewing duties or working arrangements;
- considering flexible working arrangements where appropriate;
- providing additional training or supervision;
- making reasonable workplace adjustments;
- obtaining Occupational Health or other specialist advice; and
- considering redeployment where reasonable adjustments to the existing role are not sufficient and a suitable alternative vacancy exists.

Redeployment will normally only be considered after reasonable adjustments to the employee's existing role have been explored.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Diocese recognises that reasonable adjustments are often straightforward and inexpensive to implement and can make a significant difference to an employee's ability to work effectively.

Where appropriate, a confidential meeting will be held with the employee to discuss possible adjustments.

Examples of reasonable adjustments may include:

- adjustments to premises or equipment;
- changes to working hours or working patterns;
- temporary or permanent changes to duties;
- flexible working arrangements;
- providing specialist equipment or software;
- providing information in an accessible format;
- modifying procedures or working practices;
- additional supervision or support;
- time off for assessment, rehabilitation or treatment; and
- retraining where appropriate.

This list is not exhaustive.

The Diocese will consult with the employee throughout the process and, where appropriate, seek advice from Occupational Health or other specialist advisers before deciding what adjustments are reasonable.

Where appropriate, the Diocese may seek support through the Government's Access to Work scheme or other available funding.

Confidentiality

Information relating to an employee's disability or health condition will be handled sensitively and confidentially.

Such information will only be shared where there is a legitimate business need to do so and in accordance with the Diocese's Data Protection Policy and applicable data protection legislation.

Health and Safety

The Diocese is committed to providing a safe working environment for all employees.

Managers should consider the needs of employees with disabilities when carrying out workplace and fire risk assessments and should ensure that appropriate emergency evacuation arrangements are in place where required.

Managers should also take account of temporary injuries or medical conditions when carrying out health and safety risk assessments, even where these do not amount to a disability under the Equality Act 2010.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- promote equality of opportunity;
- consider requests for reasonable adjustments fairly;
- consult employees about appropriate support;
- obtain specialist advice where appropriate; and
- comply with its legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Managers will:

- treat employees fairly and respectfully;
- seek advice where appropriate;
- consider reasonable adjustments before making management decisions;
- avoid assumptions about an employee's capabilities; and
- maintain appropriate confidentiality.

Employees should:

- discuss any support they may require with their line manager;
- cooperate with any agreed assessment process;
- provide relevant information where appropriate; and
- work with the Diocese to identify suitable workplace adjustments.

Monitoring

The Diocese may collect information relating to disability for monitoring purposes and to help evaluate the effectiveness of its equality arrangements.

Any personal information will be processed in accordance with the Diocese's Data Protection Policy and applicable data protection legislation.

Concerns

Any employee who believes they have been treated unfairly because of a disability should raise the matter with their line manager or the Chief Operating Officer.

Where appropriate, concerns may be raised under the Grievance Policy.

Related Policies

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Capability Policy
- Sickness Absence Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Menopause Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Grievance Policy

Disciplinary Policy

Purpose

The Diocese is committed to maintaining appropriate standards of conduct and behaviour whilst treating all employees fairly, consistently and with respect.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a fair and transparent framework for dealing with concerns about employee conduct. Wherever reasonably practicable, issues will be addressed informally before formal disciplinary action is considered.

This policy applies to matters of conduct (what an employee does or fails to do). Concerns relating to an employee's skills, competence or ability to perform their role should normally be managed under the Capability Policy.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the Diocese.

Managers are expected to apply this policy consistently and fairly and must seek advice from the Chief Operating Officer before commencing formal disciplinary proceedings. Where the matter concerns the Chief Operating Officer, or the Chief Operating Officer has been materially involved in the circumstances giving rise to the disciplinary proceedings, the manager must instead seek advice from the Vicar General, who will arrange for appropriate independent oversight of the process.

Principles

The Diocese will normally seek to resolve concerns about conduct informally wherever appropriate.

Where formal action is necessary, the Diocese will ensure that:

- matters are investigated fairly before any disciplinary decision is made;
- employees are informed of the concerns raised against them;
- employees are given the opportunity to respond before any decision is reached;
- employees have the right to be accompanied at formal disciplinary hearings by a workplace colleague or trade union representative;
- disciplinary action is proportionate to the circumstances of the case;
- no employee will normally be dismissed for a first act of misconduct unless it amounts to gross misconduct or dismissal is otherwise reasonable in the circumstances;
- employees have the right to appeal against any formal disciplinary sanction; and
- disciplinary matters are handled confidentially.

The Diocese recognises that disciplinary procedures are intended to support improvements in conduct and standards and are not simply punitive.

Throughout the disciplinary process the Diocese will comply with its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and will consider whether reasonable adjustments are required for employees with disabilities or other protected needs.

Informal Resolution

Managers should normally seek to resolve concerns about conduct informally before commencing the formal disciplinary procedure.

Informal action may include:

- discussing the concerns with the employee;
- clarifying the standards expected;
- providing guidance, coaching or additional supervision;
- agreeing appropriate improvements; and
- monitoring conduct over a reasonable period.

A brief written note of any informal discussion may be retained for management purposes but does not form part of the formal disciplinary procedure.

Where the alleged misconduct is sufficiently serious, or where informal action has not resulted in the required improvement, the Diocese may commence the formal disciplinary procedure.

Management Responsibilities

Managers are responsible for managing conduct issues promptly, fairly and consistently.

Managers must comply with the processes in this policy when:

- commencing the formal disciplinary procedure;
- issuing a Final Written Warning;
- recommending dismissal; or
- taking any action where there is uncertainty regarding the appropriate course of action.

A manager may recommend dismissal following the disciplinary process. However, no dismissal will take effect unless it has been authorised by the Chief Operating Officer, who will satisfy themselves that:

- the disciplinary procedure has been followed fairly;
- the investigation has been completed appropriately;
- the evidence supports the proposed outcome; and
- dismissal is reasonable in all the circumstances.

Where the Chief Operating Officer is the subject of the disciplinary proceedings, has been materially involved in the circumstances giving rise to them, or is otherwise unable to act impartially, the dismissal must instead be authorised by an appropriately authorised person or panel appointed through the Vicar General.

Investigation

No formal disciplinary action will be taken until the matter has been appropriately investigated.

The purpose of the investigation is to establish the relevant facts fairly and objectively before any decision is made about whether there is a disciplinary case to answer.

The extent of the investigation will depend upon the nature and seriousness of the allegations.

Investigations may include, where appropriate:

- interviewing the employee concerned;

- interviewing witnesses;
- reviewing documents, records or correspondence;
- examining electronic records or other relevant information; and
- obtaining any other evidence considered relevant.

The investigating manager will keep an open mind throughout the investigation and will not make assumptions about the outcome.

Where the investigation concludes that there is no case to answer, no further action will normally be taken. In appropriate cases, informal management action or additional guidance may be considered instead.

Where there is sufficient evidence to suggest that formal disciplinary action may be appropriate, the employee will be invited to attend a disciplinary hearing.

Suspension

Suspension is not a disciplinary sanction and does not imply that any decision has been made regarding the allegations.

Suspension will only be considered where it is reasonable and necessary, for example where:

- there is a risk to children, vulnerable adults or other individuals;
- there is a risk of interference with witnesses or evidence;
- there is a potential safeguarding concern;
- there is a significant health and safety risk;
- the continued presence of the employee could seriously disrupt the workplace; or
- the circumstances are sufficiently serious to justify temporary removal from the workplace while the investigation is completed.

Suspension will normally be on full contractual pay and will be kept under regular review.

The period of suspension will be no longer than reasonably necessary. The Diocese will keep the employee informed of progress throughout the investigation wherever reasonably practicable.

While suspended, employees must remain available during normal working hours unless otherwise agreed and must not:

- attend any Diocese premises without prior permission;

- contact potential witnesses about the matters under investigation unless authorised to do so; or
- undertake any activity that may prejudice the investigation.

These requirements do not prevent an employee from contacting their trade union representative, workplace companion or professional adviser.

Arranging the Disciplinary Hearing

Where there is a disciplinary case to answer, the employee will be invited in writing to attend a formal disciplinary hearing.

The written invitation will normally include:

- the date, time and location of the hearing;
- details of the allegations;
- the possible consequences of the hearing, including where dismissal is a potential outcome;
- copies of the documents to be considered; and
- details of the employee's right to be accompanied.

Employees will be given reasonable notice of a disciplinary hearing, normally at least 48 hours, taking account of the seriousness and complexity of the allegations and the time reasonably required to prepare.

If either party wishes to rely on additional documents that were not previously disclosed, these should normally be exchanged before the hearing wherever reasonably practicable.

The Right to be Accompanied

Employees have the statutory right to be accompanied at a formal disciplinary hearing by:

- a fellow worker; or
- a trade union representative.

The chosen companion may address the hearing, confer with the employee and ask questions on the employee's behalf, but may not answer questions on the employee's behalf.

If the chosen companion is unavailable on the proposed hearing date, the employee may request an alternative date, provided it is reasonable and falls within the statutory time limits.

The Diocese will make reasonable adjustments where required to enable employees or companions with disabilities to participate fully in the disciplinary process.

Conduct of the Hearing

The purpose of the disciplinary hearing is to consider all the available evidence before reaching a fair and reasonable decision.

The manager hearing the case will normally:

- explain the allegations;
- review the evidence;
- allow the employee to respond fully;
- consider any mitigation;
- ask questions where appropriate; and
- adjourn the hearing before reaching a decision.

Where further enquiries are required, the hearing may be adjourned and reconvened at a later date.

Notes will normally be taken during the hearing. A copy of the notes, or an agreed summary, will be made available to the employee on request.

Possible Outcomes

Following the disciplinary hearing, and after considering all the evidence and any mitigation, the Diocese may decide that:

- no further action is required;
- informal management guidance is appropriate;
- a Written Warning should be issued;
- a Final Written Warning should be issued;
- dismissal is appropriate, with or without notice;
- an alternative disciplinary sanction should be applied; or
- further investigation is required before a decision can be made.

The outcome will depend upon all of the circumstances of the case, including the seriousness of the misconduct, any previous disciplinary record, the employee's explanation and any mitigating factors.

The Diocese will normally follow the stages set out in this policy. However, depending upon the seriousness of the misconduct or the circumstances of the case, it may be appropriate to commence the procedure at any stage, including dismissal where the alleged misconduct amounts to gross misconduct.

The outcome of the hearing will normally be confirmed in writing as soon as reasonably practicable.

Written Warning

Where misconduct is established but is not sufficiently serious to justify a Final Written Warning or dismissal, a Written Warning may be issued.

The Written Warning will normally:

- explain the nature of the misconduct;
- identify the standards of conduct expected;
- specify any improvement required;
- confirm any support or guidance to be provided where appropriate;
- explain the consequences of further misconduct; and
- explain the employee's right of appeal.

A Written Warning will normally remain live for six months, after which it will normally be disregarded for disciplinary purposes, provided there has been no further misconduct.

Final Written Warning

A Final Written Warning may be issued where:

- the misconduct is sufficiently serious to justify a Final Written Warning;
- there has been further misconduct during the currency of a Written Warning; or
- the circumstances otherwise justify a Final Written Warning.

The Final Written Warning will normally:

- explain the nature of the misconduct;
- identify the standards expected;
- specify any required improvement;
- explain that further misconduct may result in dismissal; and
- explain the employee's right of appeal.

A Final Written Warning will normally remain live for 12 months, after which it will normally be disregarded for disciplinary purposes, provided there has been no further misconduct.

Before issuing a Final Written Warning, the manager must consult the Chief Operating Officer. Where the Chief Operating Officer is the subject of the proceedings, has been materially involved in the matter or is otherwise unable to act impartially, the manager must instead consult the Vicar General or an appropriate person appointed by the Vicar General.

Dismissal

Where misconduct continues following a Final Written Warning, or where the misconduct is sufficiently serious to justify dismissal, a disciplinary hearing may consider dismissal.

A manager may recommend dismissal following the disciplinary process. However, no dismissal will take effect unless it has been authorised by the Chief Operating Officer, who will satisfy themselves that:

- the investigation has been completed appropriately;
- the disciplinary procedure has been followed fairly;
- the evidence supports the proposed outcome;
- dismissal is reasonable in all the circumstances; and
- any appropriate alternatives have been considered.

Where the Chief Operating Officer is unable to authorise dismissal impartially, the alternative authorisation arrangements set out under Management Responsibilities will apply.

Where dismissal is confirmed, the employee will normally receive written confirmation setting out:

- the reason for dismissal;
- the date employment will end;
- any contractual or statutory notice (or payment in lieu where applicable); and
- the employee's right of appeal.

Gross Misconduct

Gross misconduct is misconduct that is sufficiently serious to justify summary dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice.

Examples of gross misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- theft, fraud or deliberate dishonesty;
- deliberate falsification of records or expenses;
- serious financial irregularity;
- serious safeguarding breaches;
- serious breach of confidentiality;
- serious misuse or unauthorised disclosure of personal data;
- serious misuse of diocesan IT systems or electronic communications;
- unauthorised access to confidential information;
- violence, fighting or threatening behaviour;
- serious bullying, harassment (including sexual harassment) or discrimination;
- serious insubordination or deliberate refusal to follow a lawful and reasonable management instruction;
- working whilst impaired by alcohol or illegal drugs;
- possession, use or supply of illegal drugs in the workplace;
- serious or deliberate breach of health and safety requirements;
- deliberate damage to Diocese property;
- conduct likely to bring the Diocese into serious disrepute;
- serious breach of the Diocese's safeguarding policies; or
- any other act that fundamentally destroys the relationship of trust and confidence between the Diocese and the employee.

This list is illustrative only and is not exhaustive. Each case will be considered on its own facts.

Alternative Sanctions

Where appropriate, and where dismissal is not considered necessary, the Diocese may consider alternative disciplinary sanctions.

These may include:

- redeployment to another role;
- transfer to another workplace;

- demotion, by agreement;
- removal of supervisory or management responsibilities;
- withdrawal of discretionary benefits;
- additional training or supervision; or
- any other reasonable sanction appropriate to the circumstances.

The choice of sanction will depend upon the nature of the misconduct and the circumstances of the individual case.

Appeals

Employees have the right to appeal against any formal disciplinary sanction issued under this policy.

An appeal must be submitted in writing to the Chief Operating Officer within seven calendar days of the date of the written outcome. Where the Chief Operating Officer authorised or determined the original disciplinary sanction, is the subject of the proceedings or has otherwise been materially involved in the matter, the appeal should instead be submitted to the Vicar General at vg@abdiocese.org.uk.

Grounds of appeal may include:

- new evidence that was not reasonably available at the original hearing;
- a procedural irregularity;
- the disciplinary sanction being unreasonable or disproportionate; or
- any other substantial reason why the decision should be reconsidered.

Appeals will normally be heard as soon as reasonably practicable by an appropriately authorised person or panel who has not previously been involved in determining the disciplinary outcome. This may include a member of the Diocesan Corporation's Board of Directors. Where necessary, the Diocese may appoint an appropriate independent person or panel to hear the appeal.

Employees have the same right to be accompanied at an appeal hearing as at the original disciplinary hearing.

An appeal is not normally a complete re-hearing of the case, although this may be appropriate in exceptional circumstances.

Following the appeal hearing, the Diocese may:

- uphold the original decision;
- revoke the disciplinary sanction;
- substitute a lesser disciplinary sanction where appropriate; or
- require further investigation or a further disciplinary hearing.

The outcome of the appeal will normally be confirmed in writing as soon as reasonably practicable.

The decision following the appeal is final.

Criminal Charges and Convictions

Criminal investigations, charges or convictions relating to an employee will not automatically result in disciplinary action.

The Diocese will consider whether the circumstances have any bearing on:

- the employee's suitability to perform their role;
- the relationship of trust and confidence;
- safeguarding responsibilities;
- the reputation of the Diocese; or
- any legal or regulatory obligations.

Where appropriate, the Diocese may investigate the circumstances and consider disciplinary action independently of any criminal proceedings.

Record Keeping and Confidentiality

The Diocese will maintain appropriate records of disciplinary proceedings.

Records will normally include:

- the allegations;
- the investigation;
- evidence considered;
- notes of meetings;
- disciplinary decisions;
- appeals; and
- any sanctions imposed.

Records will be retained confidentially and processed in accordance with the Diocese's Data Protection Policy and applicable data protection legislation.

Information relating to disciplinary matters will only be shared with those who have a legitimate business need to know.

Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Capability Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Disability Policy
- Sickness Absence Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Safeguarding Guidelines
- Data Protection Policy
- Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Purpose

The Diocese is committed to providing equality of opportunity and creating a working environment in which everyone is treated with dignity, courtesy and respect.

The Diocese values the diversity of its workforce and is committed to ensuring that employment decisions are based on merit, skills, experience and the requirements of the role.

This policy explains the Diocese's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and the standards of behaviour expected from everyone working within the Diocese.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees and job applicants.

The Diocese expects everyone working on its behalf to uphold the principles of equality, dignity and inclusion.

This policy should be read alongside the Disability Policy, Recruitment Policy, Harassment and Bullying Policy, Grievance Policy and Disciplinary Policy.

Equality and Diversity

The Diocese believes that every individual should be treated fairly and with respect.

We value the different backgrounds, experiences, perspectives and skills that employees bring to the workplace and recognise that an inclusive working environment benefits both our employees and the communities we serve.

The Diocese is committed to providing equality of opportunity throughout employment, including:

- recruitment and selection;
- terms and conditions of employment;
- training and development;
- promotion;
- flexible working;
- performance management;
- disciplinary and grievance procedures; and
- dismissal.

Employment decisions will be made fairly, objectively and without unlawful discrimination.

Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 protects individuals from discrimination because of the following protected characteristics:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

The Diocese will not unlawfully discriminate against any employee or job applicant because of a protected characteristic.

Catholic Ethos and Occupational Requirements

The Diocese is a Catholic organisation whose mission and values are central to its work.

Certain roles require the postholder to be a practising Catholic in order to carry out the responsibilities of the post and to promote and represent the Catholic faith.

Where this is an occupational requirement permitted by law, it will be clearly identified in the job description, person specification and recruitment documentation.

Examples include diocesan school Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers and Chaplains.

Recruitment

The Diocese welcomes applications from suitably qualified candidates from all backgrounds.

Selection decisions will be based on merit, qualifications, experience, skills and the requirements of the role.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered throughout the recruitment process where appropriate.

Because of the nature of the Diocese's work and the importance of building effective working relationships, interviews will normally be conducted in person. The Diocese considers face-to-face interviews to be the most appropriate way of assessing candidates for most roles. However, alternative arrangements, including remote interviews, may be considered where there are exceptional circumstances or where this is appropriate as a reasonable adjustment or for another legitimate reason.

Religious Observance

The Diocese recognises that employees may wish to observe religious festivals or fulfil religious obligations.

Employees may request annual leave, unpaid leave or other appropriate arrangements for this purpose.

Employees may also request reasonable time during the working day for prayer or to attend Mass, including on Holy Days of Obligation.

Requests will be considered sympathetically, taking account of the needs of the service and operational requirements.

Expected Standards of Behaviour

All employees are expected to:

- treat colleagues, volunteers, clergy, parishioners, contractors and members of the public with dignity and respect;

- contribute to an inclusive working environment;
- avoid unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation;
- comply with this policy; and
- raise concerns where inappropriate behaviour is witnessed or experienced.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- promote equality of opportunity;
- provide a working environment free from unlawful discrimination;
- investigate complaints fairly;
- consider reasonable adjustments where appropriate;
- keep employment policies under review; and
- comply with its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Managers will:

- apply employment policies fairly and consistently;
- promote respectful behaviour;
- challenge inappropriate conduct where necessary;
- seek advice from the Chief Operating Officer where appropriate; and
- ensure that employment decisions are based on objective criteria.

Employees will:

- comply with this policy;
- treat others fairly and respectfully;
- cooperate with investigations where appropriate; and
- report concerns promptly.

Raising Concerns

Employees who believe they have experienced or witnessed discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation should raise the matter as soon as possible.

Concerns may be raised with:

- their line manager;

- the Chief Operating Officer; or
- through the Grievance Policy or Harassment and Bullying Policy, as appropriate.

Complaints will be treated seriously, handled sensitively and investigated fairly.

Breaches of this Policy

The Diocese takes breaches of this policy seriously.

Any employee who engages in unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Serious or deliberate breaches of this policy may constitute gross misconduct.

No employee will suffer victimisation because they have raised a genuine concern or supported another person's complaint in good faith.

However, deliberately false or malicious allegations made in bad faith may themselves constitute misconduct and may be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy.

Monitoring

The Diocese may monitor equality information where appropriate in order to review the effectiveness of its employment practices and to help identify opportunities to improve equality of opportunity.

Any personal information will be processed in accordance with the Diocese's Data Protection Policy and applicable data protection legislation.

Related Policies

- Disability Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Flexible Working, Policy
- Sickness Absence Policy.

Eye Care Policy

Purpose

The Diocese is committed to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of employees who use display screen equipment (DSE) as a significant part of their work.

This policy explains the arrangements for eyesight tests and, where appropriate, contributions towards the cost of corrective appliances in accordance with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended).

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies to employees who habitually use display screen equipment as a significant part of their normal work.

The Diocese will also ensure that workstations are assessed and that display screen equipment is used in accordance with applicable health and safety legislation.

Eye Tests

Eligible employees may request an appropriate eyesight test where they regularly use display screen equipment as part of their normal duties.

Before arranging an eyesight test, you should obtain approval from your line manager or the Chief Operating Officer to confirm that you are eligible under this policy.

The eyesight test should be carried out by a registered optometrist or other appropriately qualified practitioner.

The Diocese will reimburse the reasonable cost of an approved eyesight test on production of a valid receipt.

The Diocese may also request an employee to undergo an eyesight test where there is a reasonable concern that their eyesight may be affecting their ability to perform their duties safely or effectively. In these circumstances, the Diocese will meet the reasonable cost of the test.

Corrective Appliances

Where an eyesight test confirms that special corrective appliances are required solely for display screen equipment work, the Diocese will contribute towards the cost of:

- basic frames; and
- the prescribed lenses required for display screen equipment use.

Employees who choose frames or lenses costing more than the Diocese's standard contribution will be responsible for meeting the additional cost.

Where ordinary prescription glasses are suitable for both general use and display screen equipment work, the Diocese is not normally required to contribute towards the cost unless it chooses to do so.

Repeat Eye Tests

Employees may request further eyesight tests at intervals recommended by their optometrist or where they experience visual difficulties that may reasonably be related to display screen equipment work.

Requests for additional tests should be discussed with your line manager before an appointment is arranged.

Display Screen Equipment

Employees who regularly use display screen equipment should:

- take appropriate changes of activity or short breaks from prolonged screen work;
- report any concerns about their workstation, eyesight or discomfort to their line manager; and
- participate in any workstation assessment required by the Diocese.

Where an employee experiences discomfort or visual difficulties whilst using display screen equipment, the Diocese will consider whether any workstation adjustments, equipment changes or other reasonable measures are appropriate.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- comply with its duties under the Display Screen Equipment Regulations;
- provide eyesight tests where required by this policy;
- contribute towards the cost of corrective appliances where appropriate;
- ensure workstation assessments are undertaken where required; and
- take reasonable steps to reduce risks associated with display screen equipment work.

Managers will:

- confirm employee eligibility where appropriate;
- arrange workstation assessments where required;
- respond promptly to concerns about display screen equipment; and
- seek advice where appropriate.

Employees will:

- use display screen equipment safely;
- report any concerns regarding eyesight or workstation comfort;
- attend approved eyesight tests where appropriate; and
- follow reasonable health and safety guidance.

Related Policies

- Health & Safety Policy
- Disability Policy
- Home Working Policy
- Flexible Working Policy

Flexible Working Policy

Purpose

The Diocese recognises that flexible working arrangements can benefit both employees and the organisation where they can be accommodated.

The Diocese will give careful consideration to all requests for flexible working whilst recognising that, because of the diverse nature of its work, the scope for flexible working varies considerably between different roles. Some roles require employees to work at particular locations or at specified times to meet operational needs, whilst others may allow greater flexibility.

This policy explains how requests for flexible working will be considered.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees.

It does not apply to agency workers, consultants or self-employed contractors.

No employee will be treated less favourably because they have made, or intend to make, a request for flexible working.

Flexible Working

Flexible working may include, for example:

- changes to working hours;
- changes to working days;
- part-time working;
- job sharing;
- compressed hours;

- annualised hours;
- term-time or part-year working;
- flexitime; or
- working from a different location, including home working where appropriate.

This list is not exhaustive.

Home working is one form of flexible working but is not an automatic entitlement. Requests will be considered on their individual merits, taking account of the requirements of the role and the operational needs of the Diocese.

Statutory Right to Request Flexible Working

Employees have the statutory right to request flexible working from the first day of their employment.

An employee may make up to two statutory flexible working requests during any twelve-month period.

Employees are encouraged to discuss any proposed request informally with their line manager before submitting a formal application.

Making a Request

A formal request should be made in writing to your line manager.

Your request should include:

- clarification that you are making a request for flexible working;
- the working arrangements you are requesting;
- when you would like the arrangements to begin; and
- any information you believe may assist the Diocese in considering your request.

Although not required, employees are encouraged to explain how they believe the proposed arrangements could work in practice.

Considering the Request

The Diocese will consider every request carefully and individually.

In most cases, a meeting will be arranged to discuss the request before a decision is made. This provides an opportunity to explore the proposed arrangements, consider alternatives where appropriate and discuss any practical implications.

Managers must consult the Chief Operating Officer before refusing a formal flexible working request.

The Diocese will normally notify the employee of its decision within two months of receiving the request unless a longer period is agreed.

Trial Periods

Where appropriate, the Diocese may agree to a trial period before reaching a final decision.

The purpose of a trial period is to assess whether the proposed arrangements meet both the employee's needs and the operational requirements of the Diocese.

Following the trial period, the Diocese will confirm whether:

- the arrangements will become permanent;
- modified arrangements are proposed; or
- the request cannot be accommodated.

Decisions

Each request will be considered on its own merits.

In reaching a decision, the Diocese will take account of:

- the requirements of the role;
- the operational needs of the Diocese;
- the impact on colleagues and service delivery;
- the feasibility of the proposed arrangements; and
- any other relevant circumstances.

Where a request is approved, the Diocese will confirm in writing:

- the agreed working arrangements;
- the date they will commence;

- whether a trial period applies; and
- any changes to the employee's terms and conditions of employment.

Unless otherwise agreed, approved flexible working arrangements will normally constitute a permanent variation to the employee's contract of employment.

Refusing a Request

The Diocese recognises the importance of flexible working and will only refuse a statutory request where there is a genuine business reason for doing so.

The statutory reasons for refusing a request are:

- the burden of additional costs;
- a detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer or service demand;
- an inability to reorganise work amongst existing employees;
- an inability to recruit additional employees;
- a detrimental impact on quality;
- a detrimental impact on performance;
- insufficient work during the periods the employee proposes to work; or
- planned organisational changes.

Where a request is refused, the Diocese will explain the reasons for its decision in writing.

Appeal

If your request is refused, you may appeal the decision.

An appeal should be submitted in writing to the Chief Operating Officer within 14 calendar days of the date of the written decision.

Your appeal should explain why you believe the decision should be reconsidered.

Where practicable, the appeal will be heard by a manager who has not previously been involved in the decision.

The Diocese will notify you of the outcome of the appeal in writing as soon as reasonably practicable.

The appeal decision is final.

Withdrawal of a Request

A request may be treated as withdrawn where an employee repeatedly fails to attend meetings arranged to discuss the request without good reason.

Before treating a request as withdrawn, the Diocese will make reasonable attempts to contact the employee and establish whether the request should continue.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- consider all requests fairly and objectively;
- consult with employees before refusing a statutory request;
- comply with its legal obligations; and
- ensure decisions are consistent across the Diocese.

Managers will:

- discuss requests openly and constructively;
- consider alternative arrangements where appropriate;
- consult the Chief Operating Officer before refusing a formal request; and
- communicate decisions promptly.

Employees should:

- submit requests in good time;
- provide sufficient information to enable the request to be considered;
- engage constructively in discussions; and
- recognise that flexible working arrangements must be compatible with the operational requirements of the Diocese.

Related Policies

- Home Working Policy
- Family Friendly Policies
- Disability Policy

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Recruitment Policy

Grievance Policy

Purpose

The Diocese is committed to maintaining positive working relationships and to resolving concerns fairly, promptly and, wherever possible, in a manner that is pastorally sensitive.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a fair and consistent framework for raising and resolving concerns relating to employment.

Employees are encouraged to raise concerns as early as possible so that they can be addressed promptly and, where appropriate, resolved informally.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees.

It covers concerns relating to any aspect of employment with the Diocese, including terms and conditions of employment, working relationships, management decisions and workplace concerns.

This policy should be read alongside the Disciplinary Policy, Harassment and Bullying Policy, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.

Informal Resolution

The Diocese encourages employees to resolve concerns informally wherever possible.

In many cases, concerns can be resolved through an open discussion with your line manager, who is usually best placed to help.

If your concern relates to your line manager, or you do not feel able to discuss the matter with them, you may raise the matter directly with the Chief Operating Officer, who will seek to identify support for you in addressing your concerns informally.

Where a concern relates to the Chief Operating Officer, or the employee does not feel able to raise it with the Chief Operating Officer, they may instead contact the Vicar General at vg@abdiocese.org.uk.

At any stage, the Diocese may suggest an informal facilitated discussion or mediation where it believes this may assist in resolving the matter. Participation will normally be voluntary.

Informal resolution does not prevent an employee from raising a formal grievance if the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily.

Raising a Formal Grievance

If informal attempts to resolve the matter have not been successful, or you consider the matter sufficiently serious, you may raise a formal grievance.

A formal grievance should be submitted in writing to your line manager or, if it involves your line manager, directly to the Chief Operating Officer.

Where a grievance concerns the Chief Operating Officer, or where the Chief Operating Officer has been materially involved in the circumstances giving rise to the grievance, it should be submitted to the Vicar General E: vg@abdiocese.org.uk, who will arrange for an appropriate person to consider the grievance independently.

Your grievance should include:

- a clear description of the concern;
- any relevant background information;
- the outcome you are seeking; and
- copies of any documents you wish to be considered.

Formal Grievance Meeting

The Diocese will investigate the grievance as appropriate and will normally arrange a grievance meeting as soon as reasonably practicable, usually within 14 calendar days of receiving the written grievance.

Where this timescale cannot reasonably be met, you will be informed of the reasons and advised of the anticipated timescale.

You have the right to be accompanied at a formal grievance meeting by:

- a fellow worker or
- a trade union representative.

The purpose of the meeting is to:

- understand the issues raised;
- allow you to explain your concerns fully;
- consider any supporting evidence;
- explore possible solutions; and
- determine whether further investigation is required.

The Diocese may adjourn the meeting where additional enquiries are necessary.

The outcome will normally be confirmed in writing within 14 calendar days of the meeting, together with details of your right of appeal.

Appeal

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your grievance, you may appeal.

Your appeal should be submitted in writing to the Chief Operating Officer within seven calendar days of the date of the written outcome. Where the Chief Operating Officer determined the original grievance, is the subject of the grievance or has otherwise been materially involved in the matter, the appeal should instead be submitted to the Vicar General E: vg@abdiocese.org.uk.

Appeals will normally be heard by a manager or panel who has not previously been involved in determining the grievance and who, wherever practicable, is more senior than the original decision-maker. Where necessary, the Diocese may appoint an appropriate independent person or panel to hear the appeal.

You have the same right to be accompanied at the appeal hearing as at the original grievance meeting.

The Diocese will normally confirm the outcome of the appeal in writing within 14 calendar days of the appeal hearing.

Where this is not reasonably practicable, you will be informed of the reasons for the delay and advised when a decision can be expected.

The outcome of the appeal is final.

Grievances Raised During Other Procedures

Where a grievance is raised during disciplinary, capability or another formal employment procedure, the Diocese will consider whether the issues are sufficiently related to require that procedure to be suspended whilst the grievance is considered.

Where appropriate, the Diocese may appoint a different manager to deal with either matter to ensure fairness and impartiality.

Grievances Raised After Employment Has Ended

Where a grievance is raised after employment has ended, the Diocese may, with the agreement of the former employee, deal with the matter in writing without holding a formal meeting where this is appropriate.

Support

Employees may seek advice from the Diocese's Employee Assistance Programme before raising a grievance and at any stage of this procedure.

If English is not your first language, or if you require assistance because of a disability or another communication need, the Diocese will make reasonable arrangements to support you in presenting your grievance. Please contact the Chief Operating Officer to request this. Where the grievance concerns the Chief Operating Officer, appropriate arrangements may instead be requested through the Vicar General.

Anonymous Grievances

Anonymous concerns will be considered where appropriate. However, anonymity may limit the Diocese's ability to investigate the matter fully or to provide feedback on the outcome.

Where appropriate, employees are encouraged to raise concerns openly so that they can be investigated effectively.

Confidentiality

All grievances will be handled as confidentially as reasonably practicable.

Information relating to a grievance will only be shared with those who have a legitimate need to know in order to investigate or resolve the matter.

Employees are expected to maintain appropriate confidentiality whilst a grievance is being considered.

Records

The Diocese will maintain appropriate records of grievances, investigations, meetings, decisions and appeals.

Records will be processed and retained in accordance with the Diocese's Data Protection Policy and applicable data protection legislation.

Where appropriate, employees may be provided with copies of meeting notes or an agreed summary. Certain information may be withheld where this is necessary to protect the rights of other individuals or to comply with legal obligations.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- consider grievances fairly and promptly;
- seek to resolve concerns informally where appropriate;
- investigate grievances objectively;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality; and
- comply with the ACAS Code of Practice and employment legislation.

Managers will:

- listen to concerns respectfully;
- seek to resolve issues informally where appropriate;

- investigate concerns fairly; and
- communicate decisions clearly.

Employees will:

- raise concerns promptly;
- cooperate with any investigation;
- provide honest and accurate information; and
- maintain appropriate confidentiality during the process.

Related Policies

- Disciplinary Policy
- Capability Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy

Harassment & Bullying Policy

Purpose

The Diocese is committed to providing a working environment in which everyone is treated with dignity, courtesy and respect.

Harassment, sexual harassment, bullying and victimisation will not be tolerated. The Diocese is committed to taking reasonable steps to prevent such behaviour and to dealing promptly, fairly and sensitively with any concerns that arise.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- promote a respectful and inclusive working environment;
- prevent harassment, bullying and victimisation;
- provide a clear procedure for raising concerns; and
- ensure that complaints are investigated fairly and consistently.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees and workers.

The Diocese expects all employees, clergy, volunteers, trustees, contractors and anyone working on behalf of or with the Diocese to treat others with dignity, courtesy and respect.

The Diocese will take reasonable steps to protect employees from harassment, bullying or victimisation by third parties, including parishioners, volunteers, contractors, visitors and members of the public.

This policy should be read alongside the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy, Grievance Policy, Disciplinary Policy and Safeguarding Guidelines.

Standards of Behaviour

Everyone working for or with the Diocese is expected to contribute to a working environment that is respectful, inclusive and free from inappropriate behaviour.

Employees must:

- treat others with dignity and respect;
- avoid behaviour that could reasonably cause offence, humiliation or distress;
- challenge inappropriate behaviour where it is safe and appropriate to do so;
- report concerns promptly; and
- cooperate with any investigation.

Managers are expected to lead by example and take prompt action where concerns arise.

Definitions

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment.

Harassment may relate to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, including age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Harassment may consist of a single serious incident or a pattern of behaviour.

Examples include:

- offensive or derogatory comments;
- inappropriate jokes or banter;
- mocking or mimicking someone;
- unwanted physical contact;
- exclusion from normal workplace activities;
- offensive emails, messages or social media communications; or
- displaying offensive material.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Examples include:

- unwanted physical contact;
- sexual comments, jokes or innuendo;
- intrusive questions about a person's private life;
- displaying or sharing sexually explicit material;
- unwelcome requests for dates or sexual favours;
- treating someone less favourably because they rejected or gave in to sexual conduct;
- repeated unwanted attention; or
- sending inappropriate electronic messages or images.

The Diocese recognises its legal duty to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace and expects managers to act promptly where concerns arise.

Bullying

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour or an abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates, denigrates or injures another person.

Bullying does not need to be related to a protected characteristic to be unacceptable.

Examples include:

- persistent unjustified criticism;
- shouting or aggressive behaviour;
- spreading malicious rumours;
- deliberately excluding someone from workplace activities;
- unreasonable monitoring or supervision;
- setting unrealistic objectives intended to undermine an employee; or
- misuse of authority.

Reasonable management action carried out fairly and appropriately, including performance management, capability procedures, disciplinary action or giving constructive feedback, will not normally constitute bullying.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs where someone is treated unfavourably because they have:

- raised a complaint of discrimination or harassment;
- supported another person's complaint;
- acted as a witness; or
- done anything else protected under the Equality Act 2010.

Victimisation is prohibited and will normally be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

Harassment by third parties

Third-party harassment occurs where a person is harassed by someone who does not work for, and who is not an agent of, the Diocese, but with whom they have come into contact during the course of their employment. Third-party harassment could include, for example, derogatory comments about a person's age, disability, colour, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, by someone visiting our premises, or where a person is visiting a supplier's premises or other location in the course of their employment.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- promote a respectful and inclusive working environment;
- take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment;
- encourage staff to report any acts of harassment or bullying that they experience or witness, to enable appropriate action to be taken;
- investigate complaints fairly and promptly;
- maintain confidentiality wherever reasonably practicable;
- protect employees from victimisation;
- take appropriate action where misconduct is established
- take steps to remedy a complaint or prevent it happening again.

Managers will:

- lead by example;
- address inappropriate behaviour promptly;

- seek advice from the Chief Operating Officer where appropriate;
- maintain confidentiality;
- support employees raising concerns; and
- ensure complaints are investigated fairly and without unnecessary delay.

Employees and workers will:

- behave respectfully towards others;
- comply with this policy;
- report concerns promptly; and
- cooperate with investigations.

Raising Concerns

Employees who believe they have experienced harassment, sexual harassment, bullying or victimisation are encouraged to raise the matter as soon as reasonably practicable.

Where appropriate, and where the employee feels comfortable doing so, they may explain to the individual concerned that the behaviour is unwelcome and should stop.

Where this is not appropriate, or the behaviour continues, concerns should be raised with:

- the employee's line manager;
- the Chief Operating Officer; or
- through the Grievance Policy.

The Diocese may suggest informal facilitated discussion or mediation where this is appropriate and likely to assist in resolving the matter. Mediation will normally be voluntary and will not normally be appropriate where allegations involve serious misconduct, sexual harassment or safeguarding concerns.

Investigation

The Diocese will investigate complaints promptly, fairly and impartially.

The person investigating the complaint will, wherever practicable, have had no previous involvement in the matter.

Both the complainant and the person against whom the complaint is made will have an opportunity to explain their account and provide relevant evidence.

Employees raising concerns and those participating in investigations are expected to maintain appropriate confidentiality.

Employees have the right to be accompanied at formal meetings by a workplace colleague or a trade union representative.

Outcomes

Following an investigation, the Diocese may determine that:

- no further action is required;
- informal resolution is appropriate;
- mediation is appropriate;
- management guidance is required;
- the matter should be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy; or
- another appropriate course of action should be taken.

Where allegations are upheld, disciplinary action may be taken up to and including dismissal.

Support

The Diocese recognises that concerns involving harassment or bullying can be distressing for everyone involved.

Employees, managers and witnesses may seek advice and support from the Chief Operating Officer at any stage of the process.

Where appropriate, the Diocese may signpost employees to independent sources of support.

Malicious Complaints

Employees will not suffer any detriment for raising a genuine concern in good faith, even if the complaint is not upheld.

However, deliberately false or malicious allegations made in bad faith may themselves constitute misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.

Confidentiality

The Diocese will handle complaints as confidentially as reasonably practicable.

Information will only be shared with those who have a legitimate need to know in order to investigate or resolve the matter.

Records will be processed and retained in accordance with the Diocese's Data Protection Policy and applicable data protection legislation.

Related Policies

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Safeguarding Guidelines
- Disability Policy
- Data Protection Policy

Holiday Policy

Purpose

The Diocese recognises the importance of employees taking annual leave for their health and wellbeing and expects employees to take their annual leave during the holiday year wherever reasonably practicable.

This policy explains the Diocese's arrangements for annual leave, public holidays and related matters.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees.

Separate arrangements apply to casual workers and other workers with irregular or part-year hours, as set out in this policy.

Annual Leave Entitlement

Your contractual annual leave entitlement is set out in your contract of employment.

For the majority of your annual leave, you can request when to take your time off, subject to the approval process set out in the Booking Annual Leave section below.

However, please note that some of your annual leave is allocated to public (bank) holidays. If you have any queries about your annual leave entitlement and or the number of days remaining for you to request, please speak to your line manager.

In your particular parish or department, at the Diocese's discretion, additional office closure days may also be granted, for example for the days between Christmas and New Year that are not public holidays. Where granted, these days will be in addition to employees' contractual annual leave entitlement. An employee who does not normally work on an

additional discretionary office closure day will not ordinarily receive an alternative day off, unless the Diocese confirms otherwise.

For employees based in the central diocesan offices, office closure days are determined by the Moderator of the Curia. These are notified annually via an all-staff memo from the Chief Operating Officer.

For parish employees, office closure arrangements are determined by the Parish Priest with responsibility.

Part-Time and Fixed-Term Employees

Part-time and fixed-term employees receive annual leave on a pro-rata basis, calculated according to their contractual working pattern.

Where office closure days are granted, these will normally apply to all employees within the relevant office regardless of working pattern, unless operational requirements or contractual arrangements require a different approach.

Employees who do not normally work on the day of a public holiday will receive their pro-rata entitlement through their overall annual leave entitlement rather than an additional day's leave.

Holiday Year

The Diocese's holiday year runs from 1 January to 31 December.

Annual leave accrues throughout the holiday year and during periods of statutory family leave in accordance with employment legislation.

Booking Annual Leave

Annual leave must be approved by your line manager before any travel or other commitments are made.

When considering requests, managers will take account of:

- operational requirements;
- adequate staffing levels;

- the needs of colleagues;
- the timing of previous leave requests; and
- the importance of enabling employees to take adequate rest.

Requests for more than three consecutive working days should be submitted with double the amount of leave as notice. Requests for longer periods of leave should be submitted as early as reasonably practicable.

The Diocese may decline or propose alternative dates where operational requirements make the requested leave impracticable.

Employees will not normally be permitted to take more than two consecutive weeks' annual leave, although longer periods may be agreed where operational requirements allow.

Carrying Forward Annual Leave

Annual leave should normally be taken in the holiday year in which it accrues. Untaken leave may only be carried forward where the following provisions apply:

(a) With your manager's approval, you may carry over no more than five days of untaken annual leave to the following holiday year. Any annual leave carried over will be lost if not taken by 31 March of that holiday year.

(b) You may carry over annual leave that you have been unable to take due to being on sick leave. Carry over is limited to four weeks of statutory annual leave, less any statutory annual leave already taken in the relevant holiday year. It will be lost if not taken within 18 months of the end of the holiday year in which it accrued.

(c) You may carry over annual leave (including any bank holidays that form part of your contractual annual leave) that you have been unable to take due to being on maternity, paternity or adoption leave, unpaid parental leave, shared parental leave, parental bereavement leave, carer's leave or neonatal care leave. It will be lost if not taken by the end of the following holiday year.

Sickness During Annual Leave

If you become unwell whilst on annual leave, you should notify your line manager as soon as reasonably practicable and comply with the Diocese's Sickness Absence Policy.

Where appropriate evidence of incapacity is provided, the period of sickness will normally be treated as sickness absence rather than annual leave.

Annual leave lost because of certified sickness absence may be retaken at a later date, subject to operational requirements and applicable legislation.

Annual Leave During Notice

During a period of notice, the Diocese may:

- require an employee to take outstanding annual leave;
- refuse requests for annual leave where operationally necessary; or
- make a payment in lieu of outstanding accrued but untaken statutory holiday on termination of employment where required by law.

Where an employee has taken more annual leave than they have accrued at the date employment ends, the Diocese may recover the appropriate amount from final salary where permitted by law and the employee's contract of employment.

Joining and Leaving Employment

Annual leave entitlement during the first and final year of employment will be calculated on a pro-rata basis in accordance with the employee's contractual entitlement and applicable legislation.

Any payment for accrued but untaken annual leave, or recovery of overtaken leave, will be calculated in accordance with the employee's contract of employment and statutory requirements.

Unpaid Leave

Employees who wish to take additional time away from work may request unpaid leave.

Requests should normally be submitted to the line manager at least 14 days in advance.

Approval is discretionary and will depend upon operational requirements and the circumstances of the request.

Casual Workers and Irregular Hours Workers

The Diocese employs a small number of casual workers and employees whose hours vary according to operational requirements.

Where permitted by law, employees engaged on irregular-hours or part-year arrangements may receive rolled-up holiday pay in accordance with current employment legislation.

Details of the applicable arrangements will be set out in the individual's contract or written statement of employment particulars.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- provide annual leave in accordance with contracts of employment and statutory requirements;
- encourage employees to take adequate annual leave for their health and wellbeing;
- consider leave requests fairly and consistently; and
- comply with the Working Time Regulations and other applicable legislation.

Managers will:

- consider leave requests promptly and fairly;
- balance operational requirements with employees' wellbeing;
- ensure adequate service cover; and
- encourage employees to take their annual leave during the holiday year.

Employees will:

- request annual leave in good time;
- not commit to travel or other arrangements until leave has been approved;
- take annual leave responsibly and in accordance with this policy; and
- notify their manager promptly if sickness affects a period of annual leave.

Related Policies

- Sickness Absence Policy
- Flexible Working Policy

- Family Friendly Policies
- Health & Safety Policy
- Time Off in Lieu Policy

Home Working Policy

Purpose

The Diocese recognises that home working can provide flexibility and support employee wellbeing where it is appropriate for the role. However, many diocesan roles require employees to work on site because of the nature of the work or the need to provide face-to-face support. Home working is therefore not suitable for every role and will always be considered on an individual basis, taking account of operational requirements and the needs of the service.

This policy sets out the arrangements that apply where home working has been agreed.

Nothing in this policy gives an employee a contractual right to work from home. Regular requests to work from home will normally be considered under the Diocese's Flexible Working Policy.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy primarily applies to employees whose role includes an agreed element of home working.

It is particularly relevant to employees within the central diocesan teams but may also apply to parish employees where home working has been agreed for part of their role.

This policy does not normally apply to occasional home working undertaken for a specific task or project, such as preparing reports or completing work requiring uninterrupted concentration.

Principles

Home working will only normally be agreed where:

- it is compatible with the operational requirements of the Diocese;

- the duties of the role can be carried out effectively away from the normal workplace;
- communication with colleagues and service users can be maintained;
- appropriate supervision and support can be provided;
- the employee has a suitable and safe working environment; and
- appropriate information security arrangements can be maintained.

The Diocese does not normally appoint employees to roles that are permanently home based. Employees will usually have a Diocese office or other Diocese workplace as their contractual place of work.

Home working arrangements may be agreed on appointment, following a successful flexible working request, or where operational requirements make this appropriate.

Home Working Arrangements

Home working arrangements will normally be agreed between the employee, their line manager and the Chief Operating Officer.

Employees who work from home remain expected to attend their normal workplace, parish offices or other Diocese locations for:

- team meetings;
- supervision meetings;
- training;
- one-to-one meetings;
- collaborative working;
- meetings with external organisations; and
- any other operational requirements reasonably requested by the Diocese.

Home working arrangements will be kept under regular review.

Home Working Environment

Employees are responsible for ensuring that they have:

- a suitable workspace that enables them to work safely, securely and effectively;
- a reliable internet connection;
- an environment that supports productive working; and
- appropriate arrangements for maintaining confidentiality.

The Diocese will undertake any necessary Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessment and will consider reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

Where additional equipment is required to enable safe and effective home working, this should be discussed with the Chief Operating Officer.

Equipment

The Diocese will provide appropriate IT equipment where required to enable employees to carry out their duties effectively.

All equipment supplied by the Diocese remains the property of the Diocese and must be used in accordance with the Diocese's IT and information security policies.

Employees are responsible for taking reasonable care of Diocese equipment and must report any loss, theft or damage promptly.

Employees remain responsible for ensuring that any personally owned equipment used in connection with their work is safe and suitable.

Health and Safety

The Diocese remains committed to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of employees who work from home.

Employees must:

- follow all health and safety guidance issued by the Diocese;
- complete any required workstation assessments;
- report any work-related accidents or health and safety concerns promptly; and
- take appropriate rest breaks during the working day.

Managers should maintain regular contact with home workers to support communication, wellbeing and inclusion within the team.

Working Hours

Employees are expected to work their normal contractual hours unless alternative arrangements have been agreed.

Home workers should remain available and contactable during their agreed working hours unless otherwise agreed.

Employees remain responsible for taking appropriate rest breaks and complying with the Working Time Regulations.

Home working should not result in excessive working hours or adversely affect employees' health and wellbeing.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Employees working from home remain responsible for protecting confidential information.

Employees must:

- prevent unauthorised access to Diocese information;
- ensure confidential conversations cannot be overheard where reasonably practicable;
- store confidential documents securely;
- return confidential waste to Diocese premises for secure disposal unless other approved arrangements apply;
- comply with the Diocese's Data Protection Policy and IT Acceptable Use Policy; and
- report any actual or suspected data breach immediately.

Members of the employee's household or other third parties must not have access to Diocese equipment or confidential information.

Performance and Communication

Employees working from home remain subject to the same performance standards, objectives and management arrangements as employees working from Diocese premises.

Managers will:

- maintain regular communication;
- provide appropriate supervision;
- ensure employees remain informed about organisational developments; and
- review home working arrangements regularly.

Review of Home Working Arrangements

The Diocese may review home working arrangements at any time.

Where it is reasonably necessary for operational, organisational or performance reasons, the Diocese may require an employee to return to office-based working, or may amend the balance between home and office working, following appropriate consultation and reasonable notice.

Employees who move home must notify the Diocese. Home working arrangements may be reviewed if the new location is no longer suitable for home working.

Employees are responsible for ensuring that working from home does not breach the terms of any home insurance, tenancy agreement or mortgage conditions where applicable.

Expenses

The Diocese will not normally reimburse household utility costs associated with home working.

Where an employee experiences a significant financial disadvantage because they have been required by the Diocese to work from home, they should discuss this with the Chief Operating Officer. Individual circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The Travel and Expenses Policy continues to apply.

Normal commuting costs between home and the employee's contractual workplace are not reimbursable.

Working from Other Diocese Locations

Where appropriate, employees may work from other Diocese premises instead of their normal office.

Any regular use of parish premises by employees of the central diocesan teams will be agreed with the relevant Parish Priest and the Chief Operating Officer.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- consider home working requests fairly;
- provide appropriate equipment where agreed;
- support employees' health, safety and wellbeing;
- maintain effective communication with home workers;
- review arrangements regularly; and
- comply with employment and health and safety legislation.

Managers will:

- agree clear expectations with home workers;
- maintain regular communication and supervision;
- monitor workload and wellbeing;
- ensure employees remain integrated within their teams;
- consult the Chief Operating Officer regarding significant changes to home working arrangements; and
- review arrangements periodically.

Employees will:

- work their agreed contractual hours;
- remain available during working hours;
- maintain confidentiality and information security;
- care for Diocese equipment;
- comply with health and safety requirements; and
- notify their manager promptly of any issues affecting their ability to work safely or effectively from home.

Related Policies

- Flexible Working Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Eye Care Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- IT Acceptable Use Policy
- Travel and Expenses Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Disability Policy

Menopause Policy

Purpose

The Diocese recognises that menopause and perimenopause affect individuals differently. Whilst many people experience few or no difficulties, others may experience symptoms that have a significant impact on their health, wellbeing and working life. The Diocese is committed to supporting colleagues sensitively and reasonably, taking account of both individual circumstances and the operational requirements of the role. No employee will be treated less favourably because they are experiencing menopause symptoms.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- promote understanding of menopause and perimenopause;
- encourage open and supportive conversations;
- provide guidance for employees and managers;
- support colleagues to remain healthy and productive at work wherever possible; and
- ensure menopause-related concerns are considered fairly and consistently.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Understanding Menopause

Menopause is a natural stage of life and is not an illness. However, for some women, the symptoms can have a significant impact on their health, wellbeing and working life.

Perimenopause is the period leading up to menopause, during which hormonal changes may begin to cause symptoms. Menopause is generally reached when a woman has not had a menstrual period for twelve consecutive months.

Symptoms vary considerably between individuals and may fluctuate over time.

Common symptoms may include:

- sleep disturbance;
- hot flushes;

- night sweats;
- anxiety or low mood;
- reduced concentration or memory ("brain fog");
- headaches;
- muscle or joint pain;
- fatigue;
- irregular or heavy periods; and
- other physical or psychological symptoms.

Support in the Workplace

The Diocese encourages employees to speak to their line manager if menopause symptoms are affecting them at work.

Support will always be considered on an individual basis, recognising that symptoms, roles and operational requirements vary considerably.

Possible support may include, where appropriate:

- temporary adjustments to working patterns;
- planned flexible working arrangements;
- additional rest breaks;
- access to drinking water;
- adjustments to workplace temperature, such as the provision of a desk fan where practicable;
- temporary changes to duties where appropriate;
- home or hybrid working where suitable for the role and operationally practicable;
- referral to Occupational Health where appropriate; and
- consideration of any other reasonable measures that may assist.

The availability of any adjustment will depend upon the circumstances of the individual role and the operational needs of the Diocese.

Legal Considerations

There is currently no standalone legal right to menopause leave or specific menopause legislation.

However, menopause symptoms may be relevant under the:

- Equality Act 2010;
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;
- Employment Rights Act 1996; and
- other applicable employment legislation.

Where menopause symptoms amount to a disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, the Diocese will consider reasonable adjustments in accordance with its Disability Policy.

Responsibilities of Line Managers

Line managers are usually the first point of contact where an employee wishes to discuss menopause-related concerns.

Managers should:

- listen sensitively and respectfully;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality;
- discuss possible workplace support;
- consider requests fairly and consistently;
- review any agreed adjustments regularly;
- consider whether advice from Occupational Health or HR would be helpful; and
- seek advice from the Chief Operating Officer before refusing requests for workplace adjustments related to menopause.

Managers should also consider whether workplace factors, including temperature, access to drinking water, rest facilities or working arrangements, could reasonably be adjusted to support the employee.

Confidentiality

Discussions regarding menopause symptoms are confidential and will be handled sensitively.

Information will only be shared with others where necessary and with the employee's knowledge wherever reasonably practicable.

Employees should be consulted about what information, if any, they would like shared with colleagues.

Support Available

Employees who feel that menopause symptoms are affecting them at work are encouraged to seek support at an early stage.

Support may be available through:

- their line manager;
- the Chief Operating Officer;
- Occupational Health, where appropriate;
- the Diocese's outsourced HR advisers; and
- their GP or other healthcare professional.

The Chief Operating Officer can provide confidential advice to managers and employees on workplace support and appropriate adjustments.

Health and Wellbeing

The Diocese recognises that maintaining health and wellbeing benefits both employees and the organisation.

Managers should encourage open conversations and create an environment in which employees feel comfortable discussing wellbeing concerns where they wish to do so.

Employees are encouraged to seek appropriate medical advice where symptoms are affecting their health or ability to carry out their role.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- promote awareness and understanding of menopause;
- consider requests for workplace support fairly;
- maintain confidentiality;
- support managers in responding appropriately to menopause-related issues; and
- comply with its obligations under employment, equality and health and safety legislation.

Managers will:

- respond sensitively and appropriately to concerns;
- consider possible workplace adjustments;
- maintain confidentiality;
- seek advice where appropriate; and
- review any agreed support arrangements periodically.

Employees are encouraged to:

- speak to their manager if symptoms are affecting them at work;
- seek appropriate medical advice where necessary;
- engage openly in discussions about workplace support where they feel comfortable doing so; and
- inform their manager if agreed adjustments are no longer effective.

Further Information

Employees may find the following organisations helpful:

- NHS
- ACAS
- CIPD
- Menopause Matters W: www.menopausematters.co.uk
- Women's Health Concern W: Help and advice - Women's Health Concern
- Menopause Exchange W: www.menopause-exchange.co.uk
- Menopause Café W: Gather to eat cake, drink and discuss menopause

Related Policies

- Sickness Absence Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Home Working Policy
- Disability Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Health & Safety Policy

Recruitment Policy

Purpose

The Diocese is committed to recruiting fairly, lawfully and consistently. We seek to appoint the person who best meets the requirements of each role and who is committed to supporting the mission and values of the Diocese.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a fair and transparent framework for recruiting, selecting and appointing employees, while promoting equality of opportunity and supporting the Diocese's commitment to safeguarding.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Principles

The Diocese is committed to the following principles throughout the recruitment process:

- recruiting fairly, consistently and objectively;
- appointing the candidate who best meets the requirements of the role;
- ensuring recruitment decisions are based on merit, skills, qualifications, experience and suitability for the role;
- providing reasonable adjustments throughout the recruitment process where appropriate to ensure applicants are not disadvantaged;
- supporting successful applicants through appropriate induction, training and development;
- encouraging career development within the Diocese;
- promoting equality of opportunity and not unlawfully discriminating on any of the protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act 2010; and
- applying safer recruitment principles where appropriate to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The Diocese seeks to recruit people who not only possess the skills and experience required for the role but who are also committed to supporting the mission, values and work of the Diocese.

Most vacancies will normally be advertised openly. However, there may be circumstances where this is not appropriate, as set out in this policy.

The Diocese does not tolerate unlawful discrimination during any stage of the recruitment process.

For certain roles, being a practising Catholic is a genuine occupational requirement permitted by Schedule 9 of the Equality Act 2010. Where this applies, it will be clearly identified in the advertisement, job description and person specification.

Recruitment Process

Vacancies will normally be advertised on the Diocese's website together with any other appropriate recruitment channels.

Internal applicants should inform their line manager before attending an interview wherever reasonably practicable.

Shortlisting will normally be undertaken against the essential and desirable criteria contained within the person specification.

Selection methods will be appropriate to the requirements of the role and may include:

- competency-based interviews;
- technical interviews;
- presentations;
- practical exercises;
- written assessments;
- role-play exercises; or
- other assessment methods appropriate to the vacancy.

Because of the nature of the Diocese's work and the importance of building effective working relationships, interviews will normally be conducted in person. The Diocese considers face-to-face interviews to be the most appropriate way of assessing candidates for most roles. However, alternative arrangements, including remote interviews, may be considered where there are exceptional circumstances or where this is appropriate as a reasonable adjustment or for another legitimate reason.

Appointments will normally be made following an interview conducted by a panel of at least two people. The composition of the panel will depend upon the nature of the role and may include the Parish Priest, managers or other appropriate advisers.

The successful applicant will normally be the candidate who best demonstrates that they meet the essential requirements of the role and who is judged to be the best overall fit for the position.

All applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application as soon as reasonably practicable.

Pre-Employment Checks

Offers of employment will normally be conditional upon satisfactory completion of appropriate pre-employment checks.

Depending upon the role, these may include:

- proof of the right to work in the United Kingdom;
- satisfactory employment references;
- verification of qualifications or professional registrations where relevant;
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance where required;
- occupational health or medical clearance where appropriate; and
- any other checks reasonably required for the role.

The Diocese reserves the right to withdraw a conditional offer where satisfactory pre-employment checks are not obtained.

Vacancies That May Not Be Advertised

There may be circumstances where it is appropriate to fill a vacancy without advertising it.

Examples include:

- where speed of appointment is essential;
- where a managed move forms part of an employee's development;
- where specialist knowledge or experience exists within a limited group of employees;
- where a colleague is being redeployed following redundancy or organisational change;

- where redeployment forms part of a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010;
- where departments or parishes are reorganised; or
- where there is another legitimate organisational reason for making a direct appointment.

Each decision will be made on its individual merits.

Recruitment Records and Privacy

The Diocese will process personal information obtained during recruitment in accordance with its Privacy Notice and applicable data protection legislation.

If an application is unsuccessful, recruitment records will normally be retained for twelve months after the recruitment process has concluded before being securely deleted, unless a longer retention period is required by law.

Where an applicant is appointed, relevant recruitment information will become part of the employee's personnel record and will be retained in accordance with the Diocese's Data Protection Policy and retention arrangements.

Appointments Reserved for Practising Catholics

Some roles within the Diocese require the postholder to be a practising Catholic.

Where this is a genuine occupational requirement permitted by law, this requirement will be clearly identified before applications are invited.

Applicants for these posts will normally be asked to provide a reference from their Parish Priest confirming that they satisfy the occupational requirement for the role.

Safeguarding

The Diocese is committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Recruitment processes for roles involving safeguarding responsibilities will reflect safer recruitment principles and any relevant statutory or diocesan safeguarding requirements.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- conduct recruitment fairly, consistently and lawfully;
- promote equality of opportunity;
- make reasonable adjustments where appropriate;
- apply safer recruitment practices where required;
- ensure recruitment decisions are based on merit; and
- process applicants' personal information in accordance with data protection legislation.

Recruiting Managers will:

- prepare accurate job descriptions and person specifications;
- participate in fair and objective selection processes;
- maintain confidentiality;
- ensure appropriate pre-employment checks are completed before employment begins; and
- seek advice from the Chief Operating Officer where necessary.

Applicants are expected to:

- provide accurate and truthful information;
- participate honestly in the recruitment process;
- provide evidence required to support their application where requested; and
- disclose information required for pre-employment checks.

Related Policies

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Criminal Records and DBS Policy
- Safeguarding Guidelines
- Disability Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Privacy Notice

Redundancy Policy

Purpose

The Diocese is committed to avoiding compulsory redundancies wherever reasonably practicable. Where organisational change results in a potential redundancy situation, the Diocese will consult meaningfully with affected employees, consider all reasonable alternatives to redundancy and apply a fair, transparent and legally compliant process.

The Diocese recognises that redundancy can be a difficult experience and is committed to treating employees with dignity, sensitivity and respect throughout the process.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies where the Diocese is considering dismissing one or more employees by reason of redundancy.

Redundancy has the meaning given by the Employment Rights Act 1996 and generally arises where:

- the Diocese ceases, or intends to cease, carrying on the relevant business or activities;
- the Diocese ceases, or intends to cease, operating from the place where the employee works; or
- the need for employees to carry out work of a particular kind has ceased, diminished or is expected to cease or diminish.

Avoiding Redundancy

The Diocese is committed to retaining employees wherever reasonably practicable.

Before making compulsory redundancies, the Diocese will consider appropriate alternatives, which may include:

- natural turnover;
- restricting external recruitment;
- reducing overtime;
- reducing the use of agency or temporary workers where appropriate;
- voluntary reduction in working hours;
- voluntary redundancy where appropriate;
- redeployment to suitable alternative vacancies; and
- reasonable retraining or upskilling to enable employees to undertake alternative roles.

Not every option will be appropriate in every situation.

Consultation

Where employees are identified as being at risk of redundancy, the Diocese will begin a meaningful consultation process.

Employees will receive written confirmation that their role is at risk together with information explaining:

- the reasons for the proposed redundancy;
- the proposed timetable;
- where applicable, the proposed selection pool;
- where applicable, the proposed selection criteria;
- the consultation arrangements; and
- the support available.

Employees can be accompanied at formal consultation meetings by:

- a workplace colleague; or
- a trade union representative.

Consultation will provide employees with a genuine opportunity to:

- understand the proposals;
- ask questions;
- suggest alternatives;
- comment on any proposed selection process; and
- discuss redeployment opportunities.

The Diocese will carefully consider all representations before any final decision is made.

Where collective consultation obligations arise, the Diocese will comply with its statutory duties.

Managers must consult the Chief Operating Officer before confirming any redundancy dismissal.

Selection for Redundancy

Where selection between employees is necessary, the Diocese will identify an appropriate selection pool and apply fair, objective and non-discriminatory selection criteria.

Selection criteria may include factors such as:

- skills and qualifications;
- experience;
- performance;
- disciplinary record where relevant; and
- attendance record, excluding any absence that should properly be disregarded under employment or equality legislation such as disability, pregnancy and family leave absences.

Selection decisions will not be based upon unlawful discrimination or protected characteristics.

Redeployment

Throughout the consultation process the Diocese will actively consider whether suitable alternative employment is available.

Employees are encouraged to discuss redeployment opportunities and may be offered suitable alternative vacancies where available.

Where suitable alternative employment is offered, statutory trial periods will apply where required by law.

Employees who are entitled to statutory priority for redeployment, including those who are pregnant or within a protected period following maternity, adoption or shared parental

leave, will be given priority for suitable alternative vacancies in accordance with employment legislation.

Decision

Following consultation, the Diocese will confirm its decision in writing.

Where redundancy is confirmed, the employee will receive written notice including:

- the reason for the redundancy;
- the notice period;
- details of redundancy pay where applicable;
- any outstanding annual leave arrangements;
- details of any redeployment opportunities considered; and
- the right of appeal.

Redundancy Pay

Employees who satisfy the statutory qualifying requirements will receive statutory redundancy pay.

The Diocese does not normally make enhanced redundancy payments unless expressly authorised.

Employees will also receive any outstanding contractual payments due on termination, including payment for accrued but untaken annual leave where applicable.

Time Off to Seek Work

Employees who have received notice of redundancy and who have at least two years' continuous service are entitled to reasonable paid time off during working hours to:

- look for alternative employment; or
- arrange or attend training to assist them in obtaining future employment.

Requests should be discussed with the line manager in advance wherever reasonably practicable.

Appeal

Employees have the right to appeal against a decision to dismiss them by reason of redundancy.

Appeals should:

- be submitted in writing to the Chief Operating Officer within 10 working days of the date of written confirmation of the redundancy;
- state the grounds of appeal; and
- include any additional information the employee wishes to be considered.

The appeal will normally be heard by a panel consisting of:

- the Chief Operating Officer; and
- a member of the Trustee's Board of Directors,

neither of whom will normally have had any material previous involvement in the decision.

Where the Chief Operating Officer has had significant prior involvement, another appropriate senior manager, senior member of clergy or additional member of the Trustee's Board of Directors will take their place.

Employees have the statutory right to be accompanied at the appeal hearing by:

- a workplace colleague; or
- a trade union representative.

The appeal panel may:

- uphold the appeal;
- dismiss the appeal; or
- substitute another appropriate outcome.

The Diocese will normally confirm the outcome in writing within seven working days of the appeal hearing.

The appeal decision is final.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- seek to avoid compulsory redundancies wherever reasonably practicable;
- consult meaningfully with affected employees;
- consider alternatives to redundancy;
- apply fair and objective selection processes;
- consider redeployment opportunities; and
- comply with employment legislation.

Managers will:

- consult the Chief Operating Officer before commencing or concluding a redundancy process;
- conduct consultation fairly and sensitively;
- consider alternatives to redundancy;
- support employees throughout the process; and
- maintain appropriate confidentiality.

Employees are encouraged to:

- engage constructively in consultation;
- suggest alternatives where appropriate;
- consider suitable redeployment opportunities; and
- raise any questions or concerns promptly.

Related Policies

- Recruitment Policy
- Capability Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Family Friendly Policies
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Data Protection Policy

Sickness Absence Policy

Purpose

This policy explains the arrangements that apply when you are absent from work because of illness or injury. It sets out your responsibilities, the support available from the Diocese and the arrangements for Statutory Sick Pay and Occupational Sick Pay.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the Diocese.

Reporting Sickness Absence

If you are unable to attend work because of illness or injury, you must notify your line manager as soon as reasonably practicable on your first day of absence, and preferably before your normal start time.

You should explain:

- the reason for your absence;
- when you expect to return to work, if known; and
- any urgent work that may need to be dealt with during your absence.

You should keep your line manager informed of your progress and maintain reasonable contact throughout your absence.

Text messages or emails should only be used where speaking to your manager is not reasonably practicable.

Medical Evidence

You may self-certify sickness absence for the period permitted by legislation. Currently, employees may self-certify sickness absence for the first seven consecutive calendar days, including weekends, bank holidays and non-working days.

Where your absence exceeds the statutory self-certification period, you must provide a fit note or any replacement medical evidence required by law.

The Diocese may ask you to provide further medical information where appropriate and, with your consent where required, may seek a medical report or refer you to an Occupational Health adviser.

Statutory Sick Pay

If you qualify for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), it will be paid in accordance with the legislation in force at the relevant time.

Details of current eligibility requirements and payment arrangements are available from HR or on the GOV.UK website.

Occupational Sick Pay

The Diocese provides an enhanced Occupational Sick Pay Scheme.

Employees who have completed at least one year's continuous service may receive:

- three months' full basic pay, followed by
- three months' half basic pay

during any rolling twelve-month period.

Occupational Sick Pay during the first year of employment is entirely at the Diocese's discretion.

Payment under the Occupational Sick Pay Scheme is subject to:

- compliance with the Diocese's sickness reporting procedures;
- the provision of appropriate medical evidence where required; and
- reasonable cooperation with any Occupational Health referral or other measures intended to support a return to work.

The Diocese reserves the right to withhold or withdraw Occupational Sick Pay where these requirements are not met.

Keeping in Contact

The Diocese recognises that maintaining appropriate contact during periods of sickness absence is important for both the employee and the organisation.

Your line manager will maintain reasonable contact with you during your absence to:

- discuss your wellbeing;
- receive updates on your recovery;
- consider any support that may assist your return to work; and
- discuss any significant workplace developments where appropriate.

The frequency and method of contact will depend upon the nature and expected duration of your absence.

Medical Appointments

The Diocese recognises that employees will occasionally need to attend medical, dental, hospital or other healthcare appointments.

Where reasonably practicable, appointments should be arranged outside normal working hours. However, the Diocese recognises that this will not always be possible.

Employees should discuss appointments with their line manager as early as possible.

The Diocese aims to support employees in attending necessary medical appointments whilst balancing the operational requirements of the service.

Occupational Health

Where appropriate, the Diocese may refer you to an Occupational Health adviser or request medical advice to help understand:

- the likely duration of your absence;
- whether any workplace adjustments may assist your return;
- whether alternative duties may be appropriate; or
- any other support that may reasonably assist your return to work.

The Diocese will normally discuss any proposed referral with you in advance.

Returning to Work

Following any period of sickness absence, your line manager may meet with you to discuss:

- your fitness to return to work;
- whether any support or adjustments are required;
- whether there are any continuing health concerns; and
- any other matters arising from your absence.

The purpose of this discussion is to support your return to work and to identify any assistance that may be appropriate.

Long-term Sickness Absence

Where sickness absence continues for an extended period, the Diocese will work with you to understand your circumstances and consider appropriate support.

Depending on the circumstances, this may include:

- obtaining medical advice;
- referral to Occupational Health;
- considering reasonable workplace adjustments;
- exploring temporary or permanent adjustments to duties where appropriate;
- considering alternative employment where suitable vacancies exist; and
- discussing an appropriate timescale for returning to work.

Each case will be considered individually, taking account of the needs of the employee and the operational requirements of the Diocese.

Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

The Diocese is committed to supporting employees whose health condition may amount to a disability under the Equality Act 2010.

Before any formal action is considered in relation to sickness absence, the Diocese will consider whether:

- reasonable adjustments may be appropriate;
- medical or Occupational Health advice should be obtained; and

- any other support could reasonably assist the employee in returning to or remaining in work.

Pregnancy-related Sickness

Pregnancy-related sickness absence will be managed in accordance with the statutory provisions and the Diocese's Maternity Policy.

Annual Leave During Sickness

Annual leave continues to accrue during periods of sickness absence in accordance with your contract of employment and the law.

If you become ill whilst on annual leave, or wish to take annual leave during a period of sickness absence, the arrangements set out in the Holiday Policy will apply.

Formal Action

The Diocese hopes that, wherever possible, employees will recover and return to work with appropriate support.

However, where attendance levels or medical advice indicate that an employee may be unable to fulfil the requirements of their role, the Diocese may consider formal action under the Capability Policy.

Each case will be considered on its own merits, taking account of all relevant circumstances.

Related Policies

- Capability Policy
- Holiday Policy
- Maternity Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Disability Policy
- Menopause Policy

Appendix: Employee Self-Certification Form

Name:	
Parish/Department:	
First day of sickness:	
Date returned to work:	
Total days absent:	
Nature of Illness:	*(e.g. asthma, flu etc.)*
Please state if the absence was related to work	
Signed:	
Date:	

Notes:

- This form should be submitted following absence from work due to sickness unless a Fit Note has been obtained from a doctor or other authorised healthcare professional. Absences of up to one week can be certified using this form.
- Employees must give their employer a Fit Note from their doctor or other authorised healthcare professional if they have been ill for more than 7 days in a row and have taken sick leave. This includes non-working days, such as weekends and bank holidays.
- Please remember if you feel unwell you should not delay in seeking medical help.

Time Off In Lieu (TOIL) Policy

Purpose

The Diocese recognises that some roles occasionally require employees to work outside their normal contractual hours, for example to attend evening meetings, weekend events or other authorised activities. Where appropriate, the Diocese may agree that equivalent time off is taken instead of additional payment.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that occasional additional working is managed fairly and consistently while supporting employee wellbeing and maintaining an appropriate work-life balance.

TOIL is intended to recognise exceptional working arrangements. It is not intended to compensate for normal workload, to replace effective workload management or to create additional annual leave.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies to employees whose contracts provide for fixed contractual hours.

It does not normally apply to employees whose contracts require flexibility in working hours without additional payment or TOIL, nor to employees engaged on variable-hours or casual contracts, unless expressly agreed.

This policy should be read alongside the employee's contract of employment.

General Principles

TOIL may be authorised where an employee is required to work outside their normal contractual hours in order to undertake authorised Diocese business, including:

- evening meetings;
- weekend events;

- authorised work on a non-working day;
- other exceptional operational requirements.

TOIL should normally be approved in advance by the employee's line manager.

Working additional hours without prior approval does not automatically create an entitlement to TOIL.

Where overtime payments are exceptionally appropriate, these must be authorised in accordance with the Diocese's payroll approval procedures.

Workload Management

TOIL is intended to compensate for specific authorised events rather than ongoing workload pressures.

Where an employee regularly finds that they cannot complete their duties within their contractual hours, this should be discussed with their line manager.

Managers should consider whether work can be:

- reprioritised;
- redistributed;
- streamlined;
- deferred; or
- otherwise managed more effectively.

Employees should not routinely work excessive additional hours.

Where additional working becomes frequent, managers should review workloads and priorities rather than relying on continued TOIL.

Using TOIL

TOIL should normally be taken as soon as reasonably practicable after it has been accrued.

Any TOIL must be taken at a time agreed with the line manager, taking account of operational requirements and the need to maintain appropriate service levels.

TOIL should normally be taken within six months of being accrued.

Any exception should be agreed in writing by the line manager.

TOIL is not intended to be accumulated to create additional annual leave.

Circumstances Where TOIL May Apply

Subject to prior approval, TOIL may be authorised for:

- attendance at evening committee or governance meetings;
- authorised weekend events;
- work undertaken on a contractual non-working day;
- other exceptional operational requirements agreed in advance.

TOIL does not normally arise because an employee chooses to work beyond their normal hours in order to complete routine duties.

Changes to normal working patterns do not automatically give rise to TOIL.

Travel

Normal commuting time between home and the employee's usual place of work does not qualify for TOIL.

Where authorised work requires travel beyond the employee's normal daily commute, additional travel time may be considered for TOIL where agreed in advance.

Where work is undertaken on a contractual non-working day, reasonable travel time associated with that work may also be considered.

Breaks

TOIL does not apply to lunch breaks.

Employees are expected to take appropriate rest breaks throughout the working day in accordance with the Working Time Regulations.

Where operational requirements make a lunchtime meeting necessary, employees should take an equivalent break at another suitable time during the day.

Nothing in this policy overrides employees' statutory entitlement to rest breaks or daily and weekly rest periods.

Recording TOIL

Employees are responsible for maintaining an accurate record of TOIL accrued and taken.

TOIL should be authorised by the line manager and recorded using the Diocese's normal leave recording arrangements.

Managers should regularly review TOIL balances to ensure that excessive accrual does not occur.

Calculating TOIL

TOIL begins when authorised work extends beyond the employee's contractual working hours.

TOIL:

- cannot normally be claimed for periods of less than 30 minutes;
- should be recorded in 15-minute increments;
- must not be rounded up.

The maximum amount of TOIL normally recognised in any one day is seven hours.

Any exception must be approved in advance by the line manager.

Conferences, Training and Retreats

Attendance at conferences, training events, retreats or similar activities does not automatically give rise to TOIL.

Where attendance forms part of the employee's normal duties, any TOIL arrangements should be agreed in advance, taking account of:

- the purpose of the event;
- the employee's contractual working arrangements; and
- the operational needs of the Diocese.

Ending Employment

TOIL should normally be taken before employment ends.

TOIL has no automatic cash value and will not normally be paid in lieu unless this is required by the employee's contract of employment or expressly authorised by the Diocese.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- apply this policy fairly and consistently;
- support employee wellbeing through appropriate use of TOIL;
- ensure managers monitor excessive working hours; and
- comply with working time legislation.

Managers will:

- approve TOIL in advance wherever possible;
- monitor workloads and TOIL balances;
- ensure TOIL is used appropriately and within reasonable timescales;
- discourage excessive working hours; and
- review workloads where additional working becomes frequent.

Employees are expected to:

- seek approval before working additional hours where TOIL is requested;
- accurately record TOIL;
- take TOIL within the agreed timescale;
- discuss workload concerns promptly with their manager; and
- comply with working time and health and safety requirements.

Related Policies

- Working Hours (Contract of Employment)

- Holiday Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Home Working Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Wellbeing Policy
- Travel and Expenses Policy

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Travel and Expenses Policy

Purpose

The Diocese will reimburse employees for reasonable and necessary expenses properly incurred in the course of their duties, provided they are authorised and claimed in accordance with this policy.

Employees are expected to exercise good judgement when spending diocesan funds and to obtain best value wherever reasonably practicable. As a registered charity, the Diocese is committed to ensuring that charitable funds are used responsibly, transparently and in accordance with applicable tax legislation.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the Diocese.

Different arrangements may apply to clergy, volunteers, casual workers or others where appropriate.

General Principles

Employees may only claim reimbursement for expenses:

- necessarily incurred in carrying out Diocese business;
- properly authorised;
- supported by appropriate receipts or other satisfactory evidence of expenditure; and
- submitted in accordance with the Diocese's expense claim procedures.

Employees may only claim their own expenses unless specifically authorised to incur expenditure on behalf of other Diocese employees or for an approved Diocese event.

Employees should submit claims promptly.

Approval

Expenditure should normally be approved by the appropriate line manager before it is incurred wherever reasonably practicable.

Some categories of expenditure require approval from the Chief Operating Officer before costs are incurred, as set out in this policy.

Business Travel

Employees are expected to use the most appropriate, economical and practical method of travel, taking account of:

- cost;
- time;
- operational requirements; and
- sustainability where reasonably practicable.

Mileage

Employees who use their own vehicle for authorised Diocese business may claim business mileage at the rates approved by the Diocese from time to time.

The Diocese currently reimburses authorised business mileage for cars and vans at 55 pence per business mile up to 10,000 miles, and 25p per mile after that.

Motorcycle and bicycle mileage will be reimbursed at the rates approved by the Diocese.

Employees are responsible for ensuring that:

- their vehicle is roadworthy;
- they hold a valid driving licence;
- their vehicle has a valid MOT where required;
- appropriate business use motor insurance is in place; and
- accurate business mileage records are maintained.

Mileage may be claimed irrespective of whether the vehicle is petrol, diesel, hybrid or electric.

Where the Diocese provides a vehicle for business use, reimbursement will be limited to the rate approved by the Diocese for employer-provided vehicles.

Parking fines, speeding fines, congestion charge penalties, private parking penalties or other driving offences will not be reimbursed.

Air Travel

Air travel should only be used where appropriate.

Employees should:

- book the lowest appropriate fare;
- book as far in advance as reasonably practicable; and
- obtain prior approval from the Chief Operating Officer before booking flights.

Where required, employees must also comply with the Diocese's travel insurance arrangements.

Reasonable excess baggage costs may be reimbursed where additional business equipment or materials must be transported.

Rail Travel

Employees should normally travel using Standard Class and book tickets sufficiently in advance to obtain best value wherever practicable.

If a non-refundable ticket has already been claimed, the Diocese will not normally reimburse the cost of an alternative ticket for the same journey unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Parking and Other Travel Costs

Reasonable parking charges incurred on authorised Diocese business will normally be reimbursed.

Where overnight travel is required, employees should use the most economical parking option reasonably available.

Reasonable taxi fares may be reimbursed where:

- public transport is impractical;
- safety considerations make this appropriate; or
- operational requirements justify their use.

Accommodation

Accommodation may be claimed where an overnight stay is reasonably necessary for Diocese business.

Employees should normally use reasonably priced accommodation, such as Premier Inn, Travelodge or equivalent.

Flexible booking rates should be used where appropriate to minimise cancellation costs.

Any higher-cost accommodation should be approved in advance by the Chief Operating Officer.

Meals and Subsistence

Reasonable meal costs incurred while travelling on authorised Diocese business may be reclaimed with supporting receipts.

The Diocese currently regards the following as guideline maximum amounts:

Meal	Guideline Maximum
Breakfast	£15
Lunch	£20
Evening meal	£25

These figures are guidance only and are not automatic entitlements.

Business Hospitality

Reasonable hospitality involving external organisations or individuals may be reimbursed where:

- there is a genuine Diocese business purpose;
- the expenditure is proportionate;
- appropriate approval has been obtained; and
- the expenditure represents appropriate stewardship of charitable funds.

Expense claims should record:

- the names of those attending;
- the organisation represented;
- the business purpose; and
- supporting receipts.

Staff Events

Team meetings and staff events should, wherever reasonably practicable, be held in Diocese or parish premises.

Any expenditure on staff meals or social events should be approved in advance by the Chief Operating Officer.

Claims should include the names of attendees and the business purpose of the event.

Meetings

Meals provided during work meetings should normally only be purchased where there is a genuine operational need, such as a working lunch or an all-day meeting.

Miscellaneous Business Expenses

Employees may reclaim reasonable business expenditure, including:

- stationery;
- printing;
- postage;
- books;
- equipment purchased on behalf of the Diocese; and

- other authorised business supplies.

Receipts must be provided.

Prior approval from the Chief Operating Officer should normally be obtained before miscellaneous purchases exceeding £50.

Gifts

Any gift purchased on behalf of the Diocese with a value exceeding £50 must receive prior approval from the Chief Operating Officer.

This includes:

- flowers;
- retirement gifts;
- leaving gifts;
- seasonal gifts; and
- other gifts purchased using Diocese funds.

Employees should always remember that charitable funds should be used responsibly and proportionately.

Travel Insurance

Employees travelling on Diocese business where significant travel costs have been incurred should comply with the Diocese's travel insurance procedures before travelling.

Claims Procedure

Expense claims should:

- be submitted promptly;
- include sufficient information to explain the business purpose;
- include supporting receipts wherever possible; and
- be authorised in accordance with Diocese procedures.

Claims should clearly identify:

- the date;
- destination;
- purpose of the journey or expenditure;
- names of attendees where relevant; and
- any other information reasonably required to support the claim.

HMRC Requirements

The Diocese will reimburse expenses in accordance with applicable tax legislation and HM Revenue & Customs requirements.

Ordinary commuting between an employee's home and their normal contractual place of work is not reimbursable.

Business travel between Diocese workplaces, schools, parishes, meeting venues and other temporary workplaces may normally be claimed in accordance with HMRC rules.

Employees whose contractual place of work remains a Diocese office may not claim travel between home and that workplace simply because they also undertake home working.

Fraudulent Claims

Employees are expected to submit accurate and honest expense claims.

Knowingly submitting a false, misleading or fraudulent claim may be treated as misconduct and could result in disciplinary action.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- reimburse authorised business expenses promptly;
- provide clear guidance on allowable expenditure;
- ensure appropriate financial governance; and
- comply with applicable tax legislation.

Managers will:

- authorise expenditure appropriately;

- ensure value for money;
- monitor expenditure within their areas of responsibility; and
- seek advice from the Chief Operating Officer where necessary.

Employees are expected to:

- spend Diocese funds responsibly;
- obtain approval where required;
- retain receipts;
- submit claims promptly;
- ensure claims are complete and accurate; and
- comply with this policy and applicable tax requirements.

Related Policies

- Home Working Policy
- TOIL Policy
- Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy
- Financial Regulations
- Data Protection Policy
- Health & Safety Policy

Wellbeing Policy

Purpose

The Diocese is committed to promoting the health, safety and wellbeing of all employees. We recognise that wellbeing includes both physical and mental health and that a supportive working environment benefits employees, the Diocese and the communities we serve.

The Diocese recognises that everyone experiences pressure at work from time to time. Appropriate levels of pressure can be positive and motivating. However, excessive or prolonged pressure may have an adverse effect on health and wellbeing.

The Diocese encourages employees and managers to have open, supportive conversations about wellbeing wherever appropriate. Early discussion of concerns often enables practical support to be identified before issues become more serious and helps to maintain a healthy, productive and supportive working environment.

This policy explains how the Diocese seeks to promote wellbeing, reduce work-related stress where reasonably practicable, and provide appropriate support to employees.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Principles

The Diocese is committed to:

- promoting a healthy, safe and supportive working environment;
- identifying, so far as reasonably practicable, workplace factors that may adversely affect employee wellbeing;
- reducing work-related stress where reasonably practicable;
- encouraging open communication between employees and managers;
- supporting employees experiencing health or wellbeing concerns sensitively and appropriately;
- maintaining a workplace free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation;
- encouraging employees to take appropriate rest breaks and annual leave;

- supporting managers to recognise and respond appropriately to wellbeing concerns; and
- providing access to appropriate support services where available.

The Diocese recognises that wellbeing may be affected by both work-related and personal circumstances. While it may not always be possible to remove every source of pressure, the Diocese will seek to provide appropriate support wherever reasonably practicable.

Supporting Wellbeing

The Diocese seeks to support employee wellbeing through:

- effective communication;
- appropriate workload management;
- clear job roles and responsibilities;
- appropriate training and development;
- regular supervision and support;
- access to confidential wellbeing services where available;
- Occupational Health advice where appropriate; and
- promoting a positive and respectful working environment.

Managers are encouraged to discuss wellbeing as part of regular one-to-one meetings where appropriate.

Work-Related Stress

The Diocese recognises that work-related stress is a health and safety issue.

Managers should seek to identify, so far as reasonably practicable, workplace factors that may contribute to excessive stress and consider appropriate measures to reduce or manage those risks.

Where employees regularly work excessive hours or experience sustained workload pressures, managers should review priorities, workloads and available support.

Nothing in this policy removes the Diocese's obligations under health and safety legislation.

Employee Responsibilities

Employees are encouraged to take reasonable care of their own health and wellbeing.

Employees are expected to:

- comply with health and safety requirements;
- raise concerns at an early stage where work is affecting their wellbeing;
- work with managers to identify appropriate support where required;
- attend appropriate Occupational Health appointments where reasonably requested;
- identify any training or support needs; and
- treat colleagues with dignity, respect and consideration.

Employees are also encouraged to make full use of their annual leave entitlement and to take appropriate rest breaks throughout the working day.

Responsibilities of Managers

Managers play an important role in promoting employee wellbeing.

Managers should:

- maintain regular communication with employees;
- encourage open and supportive conversations;
- monitor workloads and working hours;
- ensure employees are able to take appropriate breaks and annual leave;
- identify potential wellbeing concerns at an early stage where reasonably practicable;
- consider whether temporary workplace adjustments may be appropriate;
- seek advice from the Chief Operating Officer where appropriate;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality; and
- ensure employees are aware of available support.

Managers should never ignore concerns relating to employee wellbeing.

Confidentiality

Information relating to an employee's health or wellbeing will be handled sensitively and confidentially.

Information will only be shared where necessary for legitimate employment purposes or where required by law.

Employees will normally be informed where information needs to be shared with others in order to provide appropriate support.

Support Available

Employees who are experiencing wellbeing concerns are encouraged to seek support at an early stage.

Support may be available through:

- their line manager;
- the Chief Operating Officer;
- the Diocese's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP);
- Occupational Health, where appropriate;
- their GP or other healthcare professional; and
- other appropriate support services.

Referral to Occupational Health will normally be discussed with the employee before any referral is made.

Equality and Reasonable Adjustments

The Diocese recognises that some physical or mental health conditions may amount to a disability under the Equality Act 2010.

Where appropriate, the Diocese will consider reasonable adjustments in accordance with the Disability Policy.

Responsibilities

- The Diocese will:
- promote employee wellbeing;
- provide a healthy and safe working environment;
- comply with health and safety legislation;
- support managers in responding appropriately to wellbeing concerns;
- encourage early intervention where concerns arise; and

- provide access to appropriate support services where available.

Managers will:

- promote a positive working environment;
- monitor workloads and working hours;
- support employees experiencing wellbeing concerns;
- seek advice where appropriate;
- maintain confidentiality; and
- encourage employees to take appropriate leave and rest breaks.

Employees are encouraged to:

- take reasonable care of their own wellbeing;
- raise concerns promptly;
- participate in discussions about appropriate support;
- cooperate with agreed workplace adjustments where appropriate; and
- contribute to a respectful and supportive working environment.

Related Policies

- Sickness Absence Policy
- Disability Policy
- Menopause Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Home Working Policy
- Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) Policy
- Holiday Policy
- Harassment & Bullying Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Grievance Policy

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Whistleblowing Policy

Purpose

The Diocese is committed to the highest standards of honesty, integrity, accountability and safeguarding. We encourage workers to raise genuine concerns about wrongdoing at an early stage without fear of retaliation.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear procedure for reporting concerns about wrongdoing, to ensure those concerns are investigated appropriately, and to protect those who make qualifying disclosures in accordance with the law.

Nothing in this policy replaces the Diocese's safeguarding reporting procedures where safeguarding concerns arise.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Diocese from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies to all workers connected with the Diocese, including:

- employees;
- workers;
- agency workers;
- consultants;
- clergy;
- trustees and directors;
- contractors;
- trainees;
- volunteers; and
- fixed-term and part-time workers.

This policy applies to concerns about wrongdoing affecting the Diocese or those connected with it.

What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the reporting of information that a worker reasonably believes shows wrongdoing or a danger affecting the public interest.

Examples include concerns about:

- criminal offences;
- fraud or financial misconduct;
- bribery or corruption;
- safeguarding failures;
- breaches of legal or regulatory obligations;
- miscarriages of justice;
- risks to health and safety;
- sexual harassment;
- environmental damage; or
- deliberate concealment of any of the above.

This policy is intended to deal with concerns affecting the wider public interest. Personal employment concerns should normally be raised under the Grievance Policy.

Raising a Concern

The Diocese recognises that individuals may sometimes be concerned about the

consequences of speaking up.

Workers are encouraged to raise concerns openly wherever possible, as this usually makes investigation easier.

However, where a worker wishes their identity to remain confidential, the Diocese will make every reasonable effort to protect their confidentiality and will only disclose their identity where necessary to investigate the concern or where required by law.

Anonymous disclosures will be considered but may be more difficult to investigate fully.

Reporting a Concern

Concerns should normally be raised with one of the following:

- the Chief Operating Officer;

- the Vicar General; or
- a member of the Trustee's Board of Directors.

Where the concern relates to the Chief Operating Officer, the Vicar General or another senior manager, the concern may be raised directly with any member of the Trustee's Board of Directors.

Where appropriate, the Diocese may appoint another independent senior person to investigate the concern.

Safeguarding concerns should always be reported in accordance with the Diocese's Safeguarding Guidelines.

Protected Disclosures

Workers are protected by law when they make a qualifying disclosure in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

To qualify for legal protection, the worker must reasonably believe:

- that the information disclosed tends to show one or more types of wrongdoing recognised by law; and
- that making the disclosure is in the public interest.

Workers do not need to prove that the wrongdoing has occurred.

Investigation

The Diocese will acknowledge concerns promptly and will begin an investigation as soon as reasonably practicable.

The nature and extent of any investigation will depend upon the circumstances of the concern raised.

Investigations will normally be carried out by:

- the Chief Operating Officer;
- an external HR adviser;
- a member of the Trustee's Board of Directors; or

- another appropriately appointed investigator.

The investigating officer will normally have had no material previous involvement in the matters under investigation.

Where appropriate, workers will receive updates on the progress of the investigation.

The Diocese will determine what action, if any, should be taken following completion of the investigation.

Where appropriate, matters may be referred to:

- the Police;
- the Charity Commission;
- safeguarding authorities;
- statutory regulators; or
- other appropriate external bodies.

Protection from Detriment

No worker will suffer dismissal, victimisation or any other detriment because they have made a protected disclosure or raised a genuine concern under this policy.

Any employee who subjects another person to retaliation, victimisation or detrimental treatment because they have raised a concern may be subject to disciplinary action.

Workers who believe they have suffered retaliation should report this immediately to the Chief Operating Officer or, where appropriate, to a member of the Trustee's Board of Directors.

False or Malicious Allegations

The Diocese encourages workers to raise genuine concerns.

No action will be taken against a worker who raises a concern honestly and with a reasonable belief that it is true, even if the concern is ultimately not upheld.

However, knowingly making a false allegation or making an allegation maliciously or for personal gain may result in disciplinary action.

External Disclosure

The Diocese hopes that concerns can usually be resolved through its internal procedures.

However, the Diocese recognises that, in some circumstances, it may be appropriate to report concerns externally to a prescribed person, regulator or law enforcement authority in accordance with the law.

Workers are encouraged to seek independent advice before making an external disclosure.

It will rarely, if ever, be appropriate to disclose concerns to the media.

Independent Advice

Workers who are unsure whether a concern should be raised under this policy are encouraged to seek confidential advice.

Independent advice is available from Protect, the UK's whistleblowing charity, which provides confidential guidance on whistleblowing and reporting concerns.

Confidentiality and Records

The Diocese will maintain confidential records of whistleblowing concerns and investigations.

Information will only be shared with those who need it for legitimate purposes or where required by law.

Responsibilities

The Diocese will:

- encourage a culture of openness and integrity;
- investigate concerns fairly and promptly;
- protect workers from unlawful detriment for making protected disclosures;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality; and
- comply with whistleblowing legislation.

Managers will:

- take concerns seriously;
- report concerns promptly where appropriate;
- maintain confidentiality;
- cooperate with investigations; and
- ensure that no worker suffers retaliation for raising a genuine concern.

Workers are encouraged to:

- raise concerns promptly;
- provide as much information as reasonably possible;
- cooperate with investigations where appropriate; and
- treat the process responsibly and confidentially.

Related Policies

- Safeguarding Guidelines
- Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection Policy

Links to Other Policies

All Diocesan policies are shared on our website Home | Arundel & Brighton Diocese

Data Protection Policy and IT Acceptable Use Policy Diocesan Guidance & Policies | Administration & Finance | Arundel & Brighton Diocese

Health & Safety Policy and Guidelines Health & Safety | Administration & Finance | Arundel & Brighton Diocese

Safeguarding Guidelines Training Events & Resources | Safeguarding | Arundel & Brighton Diocese

Social Media Policy Diocesan Guidance & Policies | Administration & Finance | Arundel & Brighton Diocese

Volunteer Policy Diocesan Guidance & Policies | Administration & Finance | Arundel & Brighton Diocese

Complaints Policy Diocesan Guidance & Policies | Administration & Finance | Arundel & Brighton Diocese