

15 Policies Every Irish Hospitality Staff Handbook Must Include

Use this guide to check your staff handbook is complete — and legally sound — before your next new hire or WRC inspection.



A staff handbook is one of the most important HR documents your business can have — but only if it actually contains the right policies. Many hospitality businesses have a handbook that's out of date, incomplete, or missing the sections that matter most to the Workplace Relations Commission. Use this checklist to find the gaps.

Foundation Policies

The starting point — every handbook needs these

1



Welcome & Company Information

A brief overview of the business, its values, and what the handbook covers. Sets the tone and confirms the document is part of the employment relationship.

2



Terms of Employment

WRC Priority

Covers working hours, pay frequency, location, and job title. Should complement — not replace — the employee's written contract. Must be reviewed every time legislation changes.

3



Attendance & Leave Policies

WRC Priority

Annual leave, public holidays, sick leave, and reporting procedures for absences. Must reflect the Sick Leave Act 2022, which introduced statutory sick pay for Irish employees.

4



Equality, Dignity & Respect at Work

WRC Priority

Covers the nine protected grounds under the Employment Equality Acts. One of the most important sections from a WRC perspective — must include what constitutes discrimination and how complaints are handled.

5



Code of Conduct

Professional standards expected of all employees — punctuality, appearance, behaviour with colleagues and customers. Grounds for disciplinary action should be clearly

connected to this section.

Conduct & Procedures

The sections WRC inspectors look for first

6



Grievance Procedure

WRC Priority

A formal process for employees to raise workplace concerns — who to approach, timelines for response, and the right to appeal. Absence of a written grievance procedure is a common WRC finding.

7



Disciplinary Procedure

WRC Priority

Must align with the WRC Code of Practice on Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures. Should cover verbal warnings, written warnings, final written warnings, and dismissal — each with rights of appeal and representation.

8



Bullying & Harassment Policy

WRC Priority

Required under the Employment Equality Acts. Must define what constitutes bullying and harassment, provide examples, and set out the reporting process. Should reference the HSA Code of Practice on the Prevention of Workplace Bullying.

9



Performance Management

Common Gap

How performance is reviewed, what the process looks like, and what happens if performance is not meeting expectations. Probation period performance should be explicitly covered here.

10



Termination of Employment

Notice periods, redundancy procedures, and the process for resignation. Should cross-reference contract terms and confirm the procedure for returning company property.

Legal, Compliance & Modern Workplace

Frequently missing — and increasingly important

11



Health & Safety

WRC Priority

A major compliance area. The handbook should cross-reference the company's separate Safety Statement and confirm employee responsibilities. All staff must be made aware of emergency procedures, fire safety, and incident reporting.

12



Data Protection & Confidentiality

WRC Priority

Covers how employee and customer data is handled under GDPR, confidentiality obligations, and what happens if data is misused. Employees should know what personal data the business holds about them.

13



IT, Email & Internet Usage

Acceptable use of company devices, systems, and social media. Particularly important in hospitality where staff may use shared devices or post content about the venue. Sets expectations and provides grounds for disciplinary action if misused.

14



Flexible & Remote Working

Common Gap

Particularly important following recent Irish legislation. Employees now have the right to request remote working. The policy should set out the process for making requests and the criteria used to assess them.

15



Whistleblowing / Protected Disclosures

WRC Priority

Strongly recommended — and mandatory for many employers following the Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act 2022. Should set out how disclosures are made, who they're made to, and the protections available to the person making the report.

Is your handbook actually up to date?

Having all 15 policies in your handbook is the first step — but a handbook that was written three years ago may already be out of date. Irish employment legislation has changed significantly in recent years, including the Sick Leave Act 2022, the Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act 2022, and the Right to Request Remote Working legislation.

If you can tick all 15 boxes above and your handbook has been reviewed in the past 12 months, you're in good shape. If not, it's worth getting a proper review done before your next new hire or inspection.

Need help building or updating your staff handbook?

Beacon's HR consultants work exclusively with Irish hospitality businesses. We can review your existing handbook or build one from scratch — quickly and in plain language your team will actually read.

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