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DISCIPLINARY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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1. INTRODUCTION

This policy applies to employees only.

This policy outlines the procedures that the Association will follow should there be a need to take disciplinary action and your right to appeal. In administering this Disciplinary Policy and Procedure the Association may delegate authority to a Sub-Committee.

The Association reserves the right to discipline or dismiss you without following the Disciplinary Procedure if you:

- Are an employee with less than 24 months' continuous service; or
- Are engaged as a worker.

2. YOUR ENTITLEMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy is designed to ensure that all disciplinary matters are dealt with promptly, fairly and consistently and to encourage an improvement in individual conduct and/or performance.

You have the right to appeal against a decision the Association makes at a disciplinary meeting. In these cases, the Association will make every effort for the appeal to be dealt with by a different manager to the person who dealt with the matter initially.

The Association's decision at the appeal stage is final and there is no further right of appeal.

You have a responsibility to assist the Association, if required, to investigate the matters raised at disciplinary meetings and comply with the disciplinary procedures.

3. DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

The level of the disciplinary sanction, if any, will be determined by the severity of the offence. The Association will normally select one of the following:

Informal Warning

An informal verbal warning will usually be applied as the first step of corrective action following unsatisfactory performance or conduct offences.

You will be advised of any breach of conduct or standards or which aspect of your conduct has led to the meeting and the Association will explain the conduct or standards required in the future. The warning will be given verbally and you will be advised that a failure to improve the standard of conduct or performance may result in further disciplinary action. This will subsequently be confirmed in writing. A time limit will be placed on the warning.

Written Warning

A Written Warning will normally be applied following further breaches of conduct or standards but may be applied as the first step of corrective action following unsatisfactory performance or conduct offences. The Association will define the unacceptable acts and explain the conduct or standards required in the future. You will be advised in writing that a failure to improve the standard of conduct or performance may result in further disciplinary action. A time limit will be placed on the warning.

Final Written Warning

A Final Written Warning is usually applied after a Written Warning has been given and performance or conduct has not improved but may be applied after a more serious first or a second offence.

You will be advised in writing that a failure to improve the standard of conduct or performance may result in dismissal. A time limit will be placed on the warning.

Dismissal

Dismissal occurs when your contract is terminated either with or without notice. Dismissal without notice is also referred to as 'summary dismissal' and is restricted to cases of gross misconduct.

The Association reserves the right, at its complete discretion, to impose a sanction short of dismissal if it is deemed appropriate. This may include demotion, transfer to a different post or another appropriate sanction. Any such decision will be confirmed to you in writing once you have been informed of the outcome.

Authority of Warnings

The authority of issuing warnings is defined below:

- **Verbal Warning** - Line Manager
- **Written Warning** - HR
- **Final Written Warning** - Directorate or Corporate Services Manager
- **Dismissal** - Director or Management Committee

4. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

Suspension from Work

If the Association believes it is appropriate, it may decide to suspend you from your work pending further investigation or disciplinary action. Suspension itself is not a disciplinary sanction.

If a decision to suspend is made, you will be informed verbally and this will usually be followed up in writing. While you are suspended, you should not attend work or make contact with anyone connected to the Association unless otherwise instructed by the Association. If you need to contact anyone connected to the Association while you are suspended, you must notify your Manager or HR. Any reasonable request will not be refused. Breach of the terms of your suspension may result in additional disciplinary action up to and including dismissal without notice.

The Association will endeavour to keep any suspension as brief as possible. Any period of suspension will be on full pay. However, should you fail to co-operate at any time with the investigatory process, for example by failing to attend any meeting, without good reason then the Association reserves the right to treat this as unauthorised absence and this may result in pay being withheld until such time as you attend any rearranged meeting.

Investigation Meetings

Depending on the circumstances, you may be required to attend Investigation Meetings before a decision is taken to invoke the disciplinary procedure. An Investigation Meeting is an informal meeting and so you are not permitted to be accompanied unless you are under the age of 18 (when a parent or guardian will be permitted).

You must notify and obtain the consent of all those present at the meeting if you intend to record it.

Depending on the outcome of the investigation, the Association will decide whether or not to proceed with a Disciplinary Meeting.

If it is decided that there is no case to answer then you will be informed of this fact either verbally or in writing. You will be expected to return to work at the agreed date and time. This will end the process.

Recording Meetings

The Association will normally arrange for summary minutes to be taken at any formal meeting. It is not the policy of the Association to record meetings by any other means (e.g. digital, audio recording and photographs). You (or any party accompanying you) must not record any meeting without the express permission of the Association in advance. Where a meeting is to be recorded then parties must agree to it in advance. If requested, a copy of the minutes/recording will be provided (in line with data protection principles).

Invitation to a Disciplinary Meeting

If you are required to attend a Disciplinary Meeting, the Association will inform you of this in writing.

In the letter, the Association will set out the issues that are to be considered, how seriously these are being viewed, the potential consequences and details of any intention to call witnesses. The letter will also inform you of the date and time of the meeting to allow you sufficient time to prepare your case.

As this is a formal meeting, the letter will also detail your right to be accompanied.

Your right to be accompanied at a Disciplinary Meeting

You are entitled to be accompanied at a Disciplinary Meeting by a fellow worker or a trade union official. With the exception of those under the age of 18, when a parent or guardian will be permitted, no other person will be permitted to attend.

Should you wish to be accompanied, you must notify the Association of the name and position of your chosen companion as soon as possible. The Association may refuse to allow your companion to attend the disciplinary meeting if we consider there may be a conflict of interest. If so, the Association must allow you to choose a different companion.

The meeting may be delayed for up to five working days if your companion is not available to attend.

Your companion is permitted to put forward and summarise your case, respond on your behalf to views expressed in the meeting, ask questions and confer with you, but will not be entitled to answer questions directly on your behalf.

Trade Union involvement at Disciplinary Meetings

If you are a member of a recognised trade union, you have the right to be accompanied at formal meetings by your trade union representative.

Your trade union representative has the same rights as any other companion as detailed above. A trade union representative who is not an employed official must have been certified by their Union as being competent to accompany a worker.

The Association will request that your trade union representative provides their identity card to prove they are permitted to accompany you to the meeting.

Action if you cannot attend the meeting on the proposed date

If you feel that you have a legitimate reason as to why you cannot attend the meeting on the proposed date, you must contact the person named on the invitation letter to advise them of this fact immediately. The meeting may then be delayed to facilitate your attendance, if this is considered reasonable.

Attending the Disciplinary Meeting

You must attend the meeting at the proposed time. Failure to participate in the process or attend arranged meetings without good reason may result in additional disciplinary action or a decision being made in your absence.

Prior to the meeting, you should ensure that you are fully prepared to answer questions relating to the incident/circumstances in question. At the meeting you will be given every opportunity to state your case, present any evidence and call relevant witnesses before any decision is made.

You must notify and obtain the consent of all those present at the meeting if you intend to record it.

After the Disciplinary Meeting

At the end of the meeting there will normally be an adjournment to allow for consideration of the facts. You will be informed of the outcome and any sanction will be confirmed in writing to you as soon as possible.

In some circumstances there may be a need to adjourn and reconvene a meeting at a later date, to allow further investigation. In this case you will be advised accordingly.

Notification of the decision and disciplinary sanction

Following the Disciplinary Meeting, the Association will notify you of its decision and the disciplinary sanction it will apply. This letter will also explain your right to appeal against any decision taken and sanction applied.

5. APPEALS PROCEDURE

Your right of appeal against disciplinary action

If you wish to appeal against a decision you must submit your request in writing to the Secretary of the Management Committee, stating the reasons for the appeal. This should be submitted within ten working days of receiving notification.

The Appeal Meeting

Appeals will be heard by the Management Committee (or the relevant Sub-Committee). Appeals will be held promptly, and normally within 10 working days after receipt of your Appeal, unless mutually agreed after consultation with you and any Trade Union official.

You will be informed of the date and time of the Appeal Meeting. If you feel that you have a legitimate reason as to why you cannot attend the meeting on the proposed date, you must contact the person named on the invitation letter to inform them of this fact immediately. The meeting may then be delayed to facilitate your attendance, if this is considered reasonable. You will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow worker or a Trade Union official.

You must notify and obtain the consent of all those present at the meeting if you intend to record it.

At the Appeal Meeting you will be given an opportunity to state your case. Your companion is permitted to put forward and summarise your case, respond on your behalf to views expressed in the meeting, ask questions and confer with you, but will not be entitled to answer questions directly on your behalf.

The meeting will then be adjourned to allow the Association to consider the facts and the decision will be confirmed in writing. The outcome will be communicated as soon as possible, taking into account the complexity of the issues raised in the appeal. The decision at this stage will be final.

The Management Appeals Committee (or a Sub-Committee) has the power to confirm, amend or reject the disciplinary action. If any disciplinary action is reconsidered and effectively withdrawn, any written references to this will be removed from your employee record. This will be confirmed to you and any Trade Union official in writing.

6. POLICY REVIEW

The Disciplinary Policy and Procedure will be reviewed on a biennial basis, or as otherwise deemed necessary, by the Governance Sub-Committee or RBS Mentor to comply with Employment Law legislation.