



South England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Employee Handbook

Prepared by

Citation Ltd

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Purpose

The purpose of the South England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is to proclaim the everlasting gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to teach the commandments of God as the supreme rule of life and to persuade people to become His disciples and responsible members of the church and to support charitable work which is in harmony with the doctrines and principles of Seventh-day Adventists.

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About this Handbook

This Handbook has been drawn up by the South England Conference to provide you with information on employment policies and procedures. It is important for you to read the Handbook carefully as this, together with your Contract of Employment, sets out your main terms and conditions of employment.

The information covers a wide range of subjects relating to your employment and in the event that information in this Handbook conflicts with terms and conditions as stated in your Contract of Employment, the Contract will take precedence.

If you have any questions or any part of the Handbook is unclear to you, please do not hesitate to raise any queries with the South England Conference Human Resources.

It is important that you do this before signing that you have read, understood and are willing to abide by all the South England Conference's terms and conditions.

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Annual holiday entitlement and authorisation

Entitlement

Full details of your holiday entitlement are in your Contract of Employment.

Carrying over holidays to the following year

You are encouraged to take your full holiday entitlement during the calendar year.

However, in consultation with the South England Conference, up to eight (8) days may be

carried forward into the next calendar year.

Request for holidays

In order to submit a request for holidays, you should complete the relevant form and have the holiday authorised by South England Conference Human Resources Manager. If you have been given access to the self service holiday planner you should complete your holiday request online.

The amount of notice required is one month except for single days, when one week's notice is normally required.

All requests, providing they have been received in time, will be processed in date and time order.

Length and timing of holidays

The South England Conference will not normally agree a request for a holiday that involves more than three consecutive weeks.

You are required to reserve annual holidays to take during the South England Conference's "shut down" periods, the dates of which will be notified to you on an annual basis.

Holiday will not normally be granted if it is a requirement of your position that you attend, during the Camp meeting period and during any working meetings.

Refusal of holidays

In the event that the South England Conference has to refuse a holiday request because of business needs, the South England Conference is not responsible for any financial commitment made by you prior to authorisation. You are therefore advised **not** to book

holidays with tour operators, travel agents, hotels or passenger carriers, etc. until your holiday request has been authorised.

Adjustment to holidays

At the commencement of your employment you will be entitled to holiday leave in proportion to the holiday year remaining on the date when your employment began.

On leaving you will be entitled to holiday leave in proportion to the holiday year worked on the date when your employment ended. If you have been paid for more holidays than your entitlement then the balance will be deducted from your final payment. If you have been paid for fewer holidays than your entitlement then the balance will be paid to you with your final payment.

Sabbatical Leave

Preamble

The Seventh-day Adventist church recognises the contribution made by ministerial employees, bible workers and administrative officers. It also recognises the benefit to such employees of a substantial break in the work pattern which gives him/her time to reflect on and evaluate the course and content of his/her ministry; and an opportunity to pursue some form of self development that will benefit his/her future ministry.

Purpose

Sabbatical leave is designed to provide qualifying employees with a period away from the routine of pastoral ministry and administration for reflection and study. It is intended that this time should be used in such ways as will provide for the personal and professional development of the employee for future service.

Guidelines

Ministerial employees, bible workers and administrators who have completed seven years of continuous ministry within the territory of the South England Conference, excluding periods of study leave, shall be eligible to be considered for sabbatical leave subject to the following conditions:

- Requests for sabbatical leave are subject to the approval of the employing body's executive committee and are not an automatic right.
- As the purpose of sabbatical leave is to provide opportunity for individual development that will also benefit the church, employees should ordinarily be expected to be able to continue in employment within the territory of the South England Conference for three years following completion of a period of sabbatical leave.
- The employee will have demonstrated an active programme of pastoral/evangelistic or administrative leadership.
- Adequate arrangements can be made for the continuation of preaching ministry, visitation and pastoral care, and/or administration during the leave period.

- The sabbatical period must be at least one month and should not be more than three months. This is to ensure that the benefits of a significant break from regular duties can be experienced.
- The employee will agree to forgo one week of annual holiday entitlement for each month of sabbatical leave, pro-rated for periods extending beyond a month. Any remaining holiday entitlement will be taken separately and not concurrently with the sabbatical leave.
- Employees who have been granted a period of sabbatical leave will need to complete seven further years of continuous service within the territory of the South England Conference, excluding periods of study leave, before they can make a further application to benefit under this policy.

Procedure

- Employees will seek, in writing, an informal meeting with their administrative officers to discuss their desire to benefit from the provisions of sabbatical leave. Alternatively, employees may be recommended for sabbatical by their employer in which case this informal meeting will be initiated by the administrative officers.
- On receipt of provisional approval from their administrative officers, a formal application for consideration will be submitted to the employing body's executive committee/board nine months prior to any proposed commencement date. This application will include a draft plan indicating the employees' reasons for wanting the leave, the objectives he or she hopes to achieve, how this will be done and the perceived benefits for both the employee and the employer.
- Following committee approval the employees shall submit, in counsel with their administrative officers, a detailed application, including a financial plan. This submission should be made six months in advance of the start of the sabbatical leave and should be approved by the executive committee of the employing organisation prior to the commencement of such leave. The Ministerial Association secretary will be willing to assist employees in giving advice on subjects, courses and venues amongst other matters relating to the drafting of the sabbatical programme.
- Employees absent on sabbatical leave are required to keep in contact with their personnel department on a monthly basis and must not do any paid work without the prior approval of their administrative officers.
- Employees are expected to complete a written report on their sabbatical of 1,500 words minimum. This process ensures maximum benefit by helping the individual to draw together and to reflect on the various strands of study, reading, research, or practical experience undertaken. This report must be submitted to the Ministerial Association Secretary no later than two months after the end of the sabbatical. Normally the last week of the sabbatical should be devoted to writing the report.

Provisions

- While on sabbatical leave employees will continue to receive their regular monthly salary, but excluding travel budget reimbursement, except as the latter forms part of their approved financial plan for the leave period.
- Employees away on sabbatical leave will remain under contract during their absence and all contractual benefits will continue to accrue and apply during sabbatical leave.
- The costs of the short-term sabbatical programme will be met by the employing organisation up to a maximum figure of 50% of the prevailing monthly package salary factor.

Implementation

The Executive Committee will be responsible for implementation.

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Absence from work Appointments

If you need to be absent from work to keep a medical, dental or other essential appointment, prior permission should always be obtained from your Manager. Payment for absences of this nature will be at the discretion of the South England Conference. You must try to arrange such appointments outside normal working hours wherever possible and any regular appointments that have to be made during working hours must be supported by an appointment card. Any such absences from the workplace should be minimal.

Sickness and injury Notification of absence

If you are absent from work without prior authorisation, you or someone on your behalf should notify the Human Resources Department by phone as soon as possible and before 10 am, but on the first day of absence. Text messages and emails are not acceptable. Any unauthorised absence must be properly explained in that first contact and, if the absence continues, you must keep us fully informed. This applies to both short and long term situations and you will be expected to contact us on a daily basis during the first week and weekly thereafter.

Period of absence

If your sickness extends for more than seven calendar days then you must provide the South England Conference with a doctor's medical certificate. You must continue to provide medical certificates to cover the whole of the absence period.

Please note that the South England Conference will review the attendance levels of all employees on a regular basis. In deciding whether to take further action in respect of sickness absence, the evidence of a medical certificate may not be sufficient and the South England Conference may seek alternative medical information.

Returning from absence

On your return to work after absence because of sickness, irrespective of the length of absence, you must complete a sickness self-certification form.

If you have been suffering from a notifiable disease such as food poisoning, measles, mumps, scarlet fever, etc., you must not report for work without clearance from your doctor.

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

The South England Conference is responsible for paying SSP to you if you are eligible.

The maximum period for which SSP is payable is 28 weeks in one period of sickness absence and is paid at a rate specified by law. As with other earnings, SSP is subject to the deduction of income tax and all other normal deductions. We will inform you if you are not eligible for SSP.

SSP is paid in respect of qualifying days on which you are unable to work through sickness. Qualifying days are those days on which you would normally work. Generally SSP is not payable for the first three qualifying days of sickness which are known as "waiting days", but this may not always be the case if you are absent on more than one occasion within a short period of time.

SSP is only paid when the period of sickness absence is for four or more consecutive qualifying days.

Group Income Protection Plan (GIP)

If at the commencement of sickness absence you have twelve months' continuous service you will continue to receive your normal pay, offset by SSP, up to a total of three months in any one twelve-month period. When the above period has elapsed it will be at the discretion of the South England Conference Executive Committee as to whether you will continue to be paid for up to a maximum of a further twelve weeks. If not, your sick pay will be subject to statutory sick pay limitations.

If your incapacity to work because of sickness or injury extends beyond six months, you may apply to benefit from the Group Income Protection policy (GIP) if qualified to do so. GIP may be paid for up to a maximum of three years, subject to its terms and conditions. The terms of the GIP policy will be definitive in all such cases.

The South England Conference provides GIP cover for employees with more than two years' continuous service.

In the event of GIP, payments will only be made up to the state pension age of the individual.

"Family friendly" rights

Information on the current statutory provisions relating to the following is available from the South England Conference Human Resources, with whom you should raise any queries.

- Leave and pay connected with the birth of a baby.
- Leave and pay on the adoption of a child.
- Unpaid parental leave.

Time off for dependants

This provision gives employees the right to a reasonable amount of time off during working hours to take action which is necessary in the following circumstances:

- To provide assistance when a dependant falls ill, gives birth, is injured or assaulted;
- To make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured;

- To attend or arrange a dependant's funeral;
- Due to unexpected disruption or termination of the arrangements for the care of a dependant;
- To deal with an incident involving a child during the time when an educational establishment has the care of that child (this could involve dealing with unexpected incidents that occur during school hours or while the child is on a school trip).

Who Is a Dependant?

A dependant is a spouse, partner, child, parent or a person who lives with the employee (but not a lodger). However, it could also be someone else who reasonably relies on the employee for care, e.g. an elderly neighbour.

How Much Time Is Reasonable?

The right is to reasonable time off. This amount of time isn't fixed; it should simply allow the employee to deal with the immediate problem and put any other necessary care arrangements in place. For example, an employee would not normally be permitted to take two weeks off to care for a sick child but could take one or two days to take the child to the doctor and arrange for someone else to look after him or her.

Salary Payment

The legislation does not provide for any right to be paid during this time off. The South England Conference's policy permits an employee to take a maximum of five days urgent family leave per year with pay. Urgent Family Leave/Time off for Dependants over and above this amount will be unpaid.

Application

The employee must inform the South England Conference Human Resources Manager as soon as reasonably practicable of the reason for the absence and how long the employee expects to be absent. Usually this will be when the need arises; however on occasion employees may know in advance that they will need to care for a dependent and should advise the South England Conference Human Resources Manager at that time although it is accepted that there are some unusual circumstances in which the employee is unable to communicate with the South England Conference Human Resources Manager until the morning of their return.

Flexible working

If you have at least 26 weeks' continuous service with the South England Conference you have a statutory right to ask for your contract of employment to be varied.

Any request for a variation must relate to:

- the hours you are required to work,
- the time when you are required to work, or
- the place where you are required to work (i.e. at home or at any place operated by the South England Conference).

Requests must be made in writing and must include the following information:

- a statement that it is a request for a variation of your contract of employment,
- the variation you are seeking and the proposed commencement date,
- an explanation of the effect you think the change would have on the South England Conference and how it might be dealt with.

On receipt of your formal request, the South England Conference Human Resources Manager will arrange to meet with you to discuss it.

You can only make one request in any 12-month period for your contract of employment to be varied and, if the South England Conference grants your request, the variation will be a permanent change to your contract of employment.

Jury service and attendance at court as a witness

If you are called for jury service or as a court witness, you will be granted unpaid leave of absence and you should claim for loss of earnings from the court. You will normally be given a form from the court asking for confirmation of your normal salary, which should be completed by the South England Conference.

Public duties

The South England Conference will allow reasonable time off without pay for designated public duties, such as a Justice of the Peace.

General

If there are any aspects of this section that are unclear, you are encouraged to put any questions you may have to the South England Conference Human Resources Department.

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General information Insurance whilst on South England Conference business

The South England Conference's employers' liability insurance covers all employees for injury or death from an incident at work. This is only payable when the South England Conference is found to have been negligent in its role as an employer.

If the South England Conference arranges business travel abroad, including the Republic of Ireland, adequate travel insurance to include accident and illness cover will automatically be arranged. However, if employees make their own travel arrangements they must take out adequate insurance at their own expense. This may be obtained through the services of Adventist Risk Management.

Damage or loss to personal property

Compensation for damage to or loss of personal possessions will only be considered if the South England Conference can be held to have been negligent. All damage or loss should be reported to your Manager immediately. Where there is evidence that the accident or loss occurred through lack of care on your part, compensation will not normally be paid and you should check whether a claim could be made on your personal insurance policy to cover such circumstances.

You are advised not to leave any personal possessions or valuables unattended on the premises.

Return of South England Conference property

On the termination of your employment for whatever reason, or at any time as required by the South England Conference, you must return all South England Conference property in your possession or for which you have responsibility. Failure to return all such items will result in the cost of the unreturned items being deducted from any monies outstanding to you. This is an express written term of your contract of employment.

Change of address or personal circumstances

You must always advise the South England Conference, in writing, when you have a change in personal circumstances that will affect your personnel record. Particular examples include details of your address, telephone number, emergency contact, bank details and any qualifications.

You must also seek authority from the South England Conference if you wish to take additional employment. In order to work more than an average of 48 hours in a week, you must sign an individual waiver form.

Health and safety

You are required to take reasonable care of your own well-being and that of all other employees. The relevant health and safety notices are posted around the premises and you are expected to be familiar with their requirements.

Office safety is treated with the same degree of importance as any other activity within the South England Conference. This includes the need for good housekeeping and tidiness, necessary safety training, strict reporting of accidents and dangerous situations or 'near miss' incidents.

All accidents within office areas must be recorded in the appropriate accident book.

Safety training will be made available for administrative and clerical personnel as required.

The South England Conference respects the right of employees to report breaches of Health and Safety legislation to the HSE where the South England Conference has been previously notified and has failed to take corrective action. The South England Conference will not victimise or treat any employee less favourably who does so.

Periodic health evaluation

Periodic health evaluations conforming to a designated range of tests are available to employees upon their request, following consultation with the South England Conference.

The normal frequency of authorised health evaluations is every three years from the date of employment and the cost of authorised health evaluations will be met in full by the South England Conference.

Hygiene for food handlers

Many employees are involved in preparing and serving food for human consumption and the South England Conference will maintain strict compliance with mandatory food hygiene rules.

The requirement for protective clothing, pest-free premises, hand washing, temperature control and storage, product protection, plant cleaning and sterilising, reporting of transmittable illness and a positive commitment to ensuring many of its food handlers obtain a basic hygiene certificate are just some of the measures that will be taken by the South England Conference. Where kitchen premises do not meet the required hygiene standards, improvements will be given priority to bring them up to standard, or food preparation will not be carried out in these areas.

Pay Payslips

At the relevant payment interval you will receive a payslip giving details of all payments and deductions e.g. gross pay, income tax, national insurance, etc.

Overpayments

If you are overpaid for any reason you are required to notify the person who pays the wages. The amount of overpayment will normally be deducted from the following payment but if this would cause hardship, alternative arrangements to repay may be made. Any failure to report an overpayment may result in disciplinary action.

Income tax

In compliance with the law, you will receive a P60 each year detailing earnings and payment of income tax and National Insurance. This document should be kept in a safe place.

Facilities and amenities

Unless specified to the contrary in your Contract of Employment, the benefits and facilities in this section are discretionary and may be withdrawn or altered by the South England Conference at any time.

Food and drink facilities

These facilities are provided at South England Conference offices for the convenience of all employees. Please ensure that all facilities are left in a clean and tidy condition after use. Care must be taken when using hot/electrical equipment and all health and safety rules concerning their use should be adhered to.

Please note that for health and safety reasons portable electrical appliances must **not** be brought onto the premises.

Car parking

The South England Conference provides car parking facilities for use by customers and employees at the offices in Watford. Cars must be parked sensibly and the South England Conference does not accept liability for damage or loss to employees' private vehicles.

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Procedures

Disciplinary procedure

Purpose

The South England Conference firmly believes that the fairest way to resolve any problems relating to conduct or performance is to have a well-structured disciplinary procedure. The procedure is designed to help and encourage all employees to achieve and maintain the South England Conference's standards of conduct, attendance and performance and should be looked upon as a corrective process.

Please read the following principles and procedures carefully as they form an important part of your terms and conditions of employment:

Principles

Apart from an informal verbal warning, you have the following rights in relation to disciplinary action:

- to be informed of the allegations of misconduct or poor performance to be addressed at any disciplinary hearing,
- to be accompanied by a work colleague or by an accredited trade union official,
- to appeal against any disciplinary action.

The procedure

Formal verbal warning

In the case of conduct, attendance or performance not reaching the required standard, the problem will be discussed with you at a disciplinary hearing where you will be given the opportunity to offer a satisfactory explanation. If the explanation is unsatisfactory, you will be issued with a formal verbal warning. The topics discussed at the meeting will be confirmed in writing to you and the verbal warning will remain on your file for six months.

Written warning

A written warning will be issued following a disciplinary hearing where there is a current formal verbal warning on your file and sufficient improvement has not been made or where the misconduct or poor performance is serious enough to warrant us bypassing the formal verbal warning stage. A written warning will remain on file for 12 months.

Final written warning

If there is still insufficient improvement in your conduct, or if your performance is still unsatisfactory, you will be asked to attend a further disciplinary hearing. If no satisfactory explanation is offered for the lack of improvement, you will be issued with a final written warning that will remain on file for 12 months.

If the misconduct is sufficiently serious to warrant only one warning but is not sufficiently serious to justify dismissal, a final written warning will be issued. You will be informed in your final written warning that any further misconduct or failure to meet the required standard will result in your dismissal.

Dismissal

Dismissal will normally result if you still fail to achieve the standard of conduct or performance required by the South England Conference. You will be given every opportunity to offer an explanation for your failure to meet the required standards at a final disciplinary hearing. As with all previous stages of the disciplinary procedure you will be offered the right to be accompanied and the right to appeal against the decision.

If you are dismissed, you will be provided, as soon as is reasonably practicable, with the reasons for dismissal, the date on which your employment will terminate and details of how you may appeal.

In exceptional circumstances, the South England Conference reserves the right, as an alternative to dismissal, to impose a penalty of suspension without pay for up to a maximum of five working days, together with a final written warning that will remain on file for 12 months.

General

You will always be given as much information as possible regarding the allegations of misconduct, or any documentation detailing the shortfall in performance or capability that will form the basis of the disciplinary hearing. You will also be given fair and reasonable notice of the date and time of the hearing and whenever possible the disciplinary hearing will be held during your normal working hours.

Any disciplinary action will only be taken after a full investigation of the facts, and if it is necessary to suspend you for this period of time, you will receive your normal rate of pay.

The South England Conference reserves the right to vary the disciplinary procedure dependent on either the seriousness of the allegations of misconduct or capability to be addressed, or if you only have a short amount of service.

If you are a short service employee or are still within the probationary period, you may not be issued with any warnings before dismissal.

NB The South England Conference reserves the right to deduct from pay the cost of any damage or loss to property or goods, which after a disciplinary hearing was found to have been caused by your negligence or vandalism.

Conduct covered

Conduct at work

The South England Conference expects all employees to behave in a normal and reasonable manner. The following list provides examples of the type of conduct that the South England Conference would expect:

- To be punctual for the start of work and to keep within the break times.
- To give regular attendance at work and to minimise all absenteeism.
- To be courteous, helpful and polite to all those with whom you have contact.
- To devote all your time and attention, whilst at work, to the South England Conference and ensure that all its property including confidential information, records, equipment, information technology, etc., is kept safe and used correctly.
- To comply with all the South England Conference rules and regulations and to observe and perform all the terms of your employment as set out or referred to in your Contract of Employment.
- Not to be involved with any organisation, client or agent who is in direct competition with or whose business is in conflict with the South England Conference. You are expected to devote all your loyalty to the South England Conference.

Conduct outside working hours

Normally the South England Conference has no jurisdiction over employee activity outside working hours. Behaviour outside working hours will only become an issue if the activities adversely affect the South England Conference.

Adverse publicity, bringing the South England Conference or the church name into disrepute, or actions that result in loss of faith in the South England Conference or the church, resulting in loss of business, or loss of faith in the integrity of the individual, will result in the disciplinary procedure being instigated.

The detriment suffered by the South England Conference or the church will determine the level of misconduct and it will also determine which disciplinary stage is most appropriate to suit the circumstances.

If the actions cause extreme embarrassment or serious damage to the South England Conference's reputation or image, a decision may be taken to terminate the employment.

The South England Conference's procedures covering disciplinary hearings and appeals still apply.

Gross misconduct

Gross misconduct will result in summary dismissal, which means you lose your right to notice or pay in lieu of notice.

Here is a list of offences that are normally regarded as "gross misconduct". It is not exhaustive, but it describes the kind of offence that can result in summary dismissal.

- Deliberate failure to comply with the published rules of the South England Conference, including those covering cash handling, security, health and safety, equal opportunities, the Internet, etc.
- Deliberate falsification of records.
- The committing of offences against current discrimination legislation whilst acting on behalf of the South England Conference.
- Fighting or assaulting another person.
- Using threatening or offensive language towards others.
- Making yourself unfit to work by solvent abuse, drinking alcohol, taking of illegal substances or failing to follow medical instructions on prescribed drugs.
- Being in unauthorised possession of South England Conference property.
- Being in possession of illegal drugs and substances or alcohol whilst on South England Conference premises.
- Obscene behaviour.
- Behaviour likely to bring the South England Conference or the church into disrepute.
- Wilful and deliberate damage to or misuse of South England Conference property.
- Refusal to carry out reasonable duties or instructions.
- Conviction on a criminal charge that is relevant to your employment with the South England Conference.
- The misuse including use for personal gain, of confidential information in the course of working for the South England Conference.
- Undertaking private or other work without permission.

Disciplinary appeal procedure

At each stage of the disciplinary procedure, you will be given the right of appeal. If you wish to exercise your right of appeal, you should put your reasons in writing to the Human Resources Manager within five days of receiving written confirmation of the disciplinary decision taken against you. You will need to explain why you feel the decision is unfair, or inappropriate in relation to the matters addressed at the disciplinary hearing.

If you have any new information or evidence to support your appeal, please give details in full and include the names of any witnesses you may wish to call to support you in your appeal. This is in order that there will be sufficient time to investigate any additional information before the appeal hearing. You are entitled to be accompanied at the appeal hearing by a work colleague or by an accredited trade union official.

Although the purpose of the appeal is to review any disciplinary penalty imposed, it cannot increase the disciplinary penalty.

The decision of the person dealing with your appeal is final.

Grievance procedure

A grievance procedure is quite simply a way for all employees to discuss any problems, or air their views on any dissatisfaction that relates to their work. An informal discussion can often resolve matters, but if you wish to raise the grievance formally, it should be done in the following way.

Submit your formal written grievance to the Human Resources department who will make every effort to hear your grievance within five working days. If you feel that you need help in putting your point of view across, you may ask a work colleague or an accredited trade union official to be present to help you explain the issue you are raising.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your meeting, tell the person who dealt with your grievance that you wish to take the matter further and intend to appeal against the outcome.

Submit your formal written appeal to the Administrative Committee within five days of receiving written confirmation of the grievance decision, including an explanation of why you are dissatisfied with the original decision. Every effort will be made to hear your appeal within five working days and you may ask a work colleague or an accredited trade union official to be present to help you. Although the South England Conference will always be willing to try to resolve your grievance as amicably as possible, a decision reached at the appeal stage is final.

Please note that the Company reserves the right to call on a third party to assist in resolving grievances.

Public interest disclosures

Employees and workers who make public disclosures, generally about wrong doings in the workplace, are commonly referred to as "whistleblowers". Under certain circumstances "whistleblowers" are protected under legislation for disclosing information that is known as "qualifying". A qualifying disclosure must relate to:

- committing a criminal offence,
- failing to comply with a legal obligation,
- a miscarriage of justice,
- endangering the health and safety of an individual,
- environmental damage,
- concealing any information relating to the above.

All employees are legally protected if they make a qualifying disclosure relating to any of the above points. Anyone wishing to make a disclosure is strongly recommended to raise the issue with the Human Resources Department in the first instance so that, where appropriate, there is an opportunity to address the area of concern.

Where an employee wishes to make a disclosure that concerns a matter that cannot be dealt with through the above procedure, it should be raised with *Protect*, an independent whistleblowing charity, on 0207 404 6609.

Claiming and accounting for expenses

If you incur or anticipate incurring legitimate expenses on the South England Conference's behalf then you can claim them back on production of valid receipts in accordance with the South England Conference guidelines. Claims can only be made for expenses incurred wholly in respect of business purposes.

Rights of search

The South England Conference has a contractual right of search in order to combat misappropriation of South England Conference or employee property, stock losses, or if the South England Conference genuinely believes that drugs or any illegal substances are on the premises. The right of search is to address problems relating to the above issues.

Under the rights of search procedure the South England Conference may carry out random checks on the identity, person, and property, including vehicles of employees at any time whilst they are on South England Conference premises or business. It is understood that such checks in themselves do not imply suspicion in relation to the individual concerned.

You may be asked to remove the contents of your pockets, bags, vehicle, etc., and you will have the right to be accompanied by a third party who is on the premises at the time of search.

If a personal search is deemed to be necessary, you will be entitled to be searched by a member of the same sex.

Any refusal will be regarded as a refusal to carry out a reasonable instruction and will normally result in dismissal.

The South England Conference reserves the right to call the police for assistance at any stage.

South England Conference vehicles

The use of South England Conference vehicles requires express approval from Management and the private use of commercial vehicles requires further authorisation. Unauthorised passengers must not be carried in commercial vehicles, nor may any vehicle be used for personal gain.

Once the use of a vehicle has been approved you must ensure that the vehicle is kept clean and tidy, in a roadworthy condition, and that all normal engine and vehicle inspections are carried out at the designated intervals.

If you have an incident involving a vehicle, whether or not personal injury or vehicle damage occurs, you must make a full written report of the incident. All driving accidents will be investigated and if an investigation shows you to be at fault, you will be subject to disciplinary action. The South England Conference also reserves the right to recover the insurance excess from you or the cost of the repairs if this is less than the excess.

You must produce your driving licence before permission to use a vehicle is first given and it must be produced at regular intervals thereafter, as notified by us. Any type of driving conviction or summons must be reported immediately to Management and you agree to allow us to access your online driving licence information.

You must comply with all statutory regulations and/or South England Conference regulations regarding the recording of daily mileage, journeys undertaken and driving hours.

Whilst you may find it necessary to use a mobile phone during the course of your work, we prohibit the use of hand held mobile phones while driving and will not be liable for any fines or penalties incurred by you using a South England Conference mobile phone unlawfully.

On termination of your employment you must return the vehicle to our premises. It is an express term of your contract of employment that failure to return the vehicle will result in the cost of its recovery being deducted from any monies outstanding to you.

Fines

Any fines or prosecutions arising from any motoring offence either moving or static will be your responsibility. Notices relating to such fines received by the South England Conference will be passed to you. Fines not paid will be settled by the South England Conference on receipt of the first reminder and deducted from any monies, including salary and expenses, due to you. In this event the South England Conference will also charge you 50% of such fines (a minimum of £5.00) as an administration fee.

Use of private vehicles on South England Conference business

The use of your own vehicle for South England Conference business requires authorisation. Once authorised, you may claim a mileage allowance providing the South England Conference has agreed the travel in advance.

You must have a valid licence to drive the vehicle and you are responsible for ensuring that your vehicle is in a roadworthy condition, with a valid MOT certificate (if applicable) and current vehicle tax, and that you have adequate insurance cover in place before undertaking any business travel. The South England Conference will not accept any liability in the event of an accident, prosecution or fine.

Drivers policy

Any employee reimbursed for travel connected with work is required to have a full Drivers Licence, a copy of the photocard should be made available to Human Resources.

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South England Conference policies

Equal opportunities and discrimination policy

Statement of policy

The aim of the policy is to ensure no job applicant or employee is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on any unlawful grounds.

The South England Conference Executive Secretary has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account will be taken of all available guidance and in particular any relevant Codes of Practice.

The South England Conference will ensure that the policy is circulated to any agencies responsible for its recruitment and a copy of the policy will be made available for all employees and made known to all applicants for employment.

The policy will be communicated to all private contractors reminding them of their responsibilities towards the equality of opportunity.

The South England Conference will maintain a neutral working environment in which no worker feels under threat or intimidated.

Discrimination is unacceptable and breaches of the policy will lead to disciplinary proceedings and, if appropriate, disciplinary action.

Recruitment and selection

The South England Conference will endeavour, through appropriate training, to ensure that employees making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions.

Promotion and advancement will be made on merit and all decisions relating to this will be made within the overall framework and principles of this policy.

Job descriptions, where used, will be in line with this equal opportunities policy. Job requirements will be reflected accurately in any personnel specifications.

All employees involved in the selection process will periodically review their selection criteria to ensure that they are related to the job requirements and do not unlawfully discriminate.

Short listing and interviewing will be carried out by more than one person where possible.

Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the job and will not be of a discriminatory nature.

Selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of other employees.

Training and promotion

Senior staff will receive training in the application of this policy to ensure that they are aware of its contents and provisions.

All training and promotion will be in line with this policy.

Monitoring

The South England Conference will maintain and review the employment records of all employees in order to monitor the progress of this policy.

Monitoring may involve:

- the collection and classification of information regarding the race in terms of ethnic/national origin, the sex, age and disability of all current employees,
- the examination by ethnic/national origin, sex, age and disability of the distribution of employees and the success rate of the applicants,
- recording recruitment, training and promotional records of all employees, the decisions reached and the reason for those decisions.

The results of any monitoring procedure will be reviewed at regular intervals to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy. Consideration will be given, if necessary, to adjusting this policy to afford greater equality of opportunities to all applicants and employees.

Harassment policy

The South England Conference will not tolerate any form of harassment or bullying.

The purpose of this policy is to inform employees of the type of behaviour that is totally unacceptable and to explain what solutions there are to employees who may suffer harassment or bullying.

The South England Conference intends to provide a neutral working environment in which no one feels threatened or intimidated.

Harassment is a discriminatory act and is also a criminal offence. It is very difficult to define as it can take many forms, but in the main it takes the form of unwanted behaviour by one employee towards another, for example:

- Patronising or belittling comments.
- Comments about appearance/body/clothes.
- Leering or staring at a person's body.

- Unwelcome sexual invitations or pressure.
- Promises or threats, concerning employment or conditions, in exchange for sexual favours.
- Displaying offensive or sexually explicit material.
- Touching, caressing, hugging or indecent assault.

Please remember the test is that the behaviour is UNWELCOME, UNINVITED AND UNRECIPROCATED.

Bullying is also difficult to define. Obvious examples are:

- Threats of or actual physical violence.
- Unpleasant or over repeated jokes about a person.
- Unfair or impractical work loading.

Procedure

If you encounter a problem of this nature, it is vital that you make the person responsible aware that his/her remarks or conduct are offensive to you. This should be done in a simple, straightforward way.

It is recognised that complaints of harassment or bullying are often of a sensitive or worrying nature and that it may be difficult to speak directly to the other employee involved. If this is the case, you should put your request in writing and hand it to the harasser or bully.

When or if the informal approach fails or if you believe that the harassment or bullying is of a very serious nature you must bring the matter to the attention of the Human Resources Department. If possible, you should keep notes of the harassment or bullying so that the formal complaint can be investigated, including the date, time and whereabouts of the act.

If you make a formal complaint it will be dealt with under the grievance procedure and all possible actions will be taken to separate you from the alleged harasser or bully.

If you bring a complaint of harassment or bullying you will not be victimised for having brought the complaint. However, following a full investigation, if the South England Conference has grounds to believe that the complaint was brought with malicious intent, you will be subject to disciplinary action under the South England Conference's disciplinary procedure.

The South England Conference's appeal procedures apply to appeals against decisions made under the equal opportunities and discrimination policy and the harassment policy.

Anti-bribery policy

Introduction

The South England Conference values its reputation for ethical behaviour and for financial probity and reliability. It recognises that over and above the commission of any crime, any involvement in bribery will also reflect adversely on its image and reputation.

Its aim therefore is to limit its exposure to bribery by:

- setting out a clear anti-bribery policy,
- establishing and implementing anti-bribery procedures as appropriate,
- communicating this policy and any relevant procedures to employees and to others who will perform services for the South England Conference,
- undertaking appropriate due diligence measures before engaging others to represent the South England Conference in its business dealings,
- monitoring and reviewing the risks and the effectiveness of any anti-bribery procedures that are in place.

Policy

The South England Conference prohibits the offering, giving, solicitation or acceptance of any bribe (whether cash or other inducement)

- to or from any person or company (wherever they are situated and whether they are a public official or body or private person or company),
- by any individual employee, agent or other person or body acting on behalf of the South England Conference,
- in order to gain any commercial, contractual or regulatory advantage for the South England Conference in a way that is unethical,
- or in order to gain any personal advantage (pecuniary or otherwise) for the individual or anyone connected with the individual.

This policy prohibits any inducement that results in a personal gain or advantage to the recipient or any person or body associated with them, and which is intended to influence them to take action that may not be solely in the interests of the South England Conference or of the person or body employing them or whom they represent.

This policy is not meant to prohibit normal and appropriate hospitality or the giving of a gift on a festival or at another special time, providing they are customary in a particular market, are proportionate and are properly recorded.

Inevitably, decisions as to what is acceptable may not always be easy. If you are in any doubt as to whether a potential act constitutes bribery, the matter should be referred to the Human Resources Department before proceeding.

Employees' responsibility

The prevention, detection and reporting of bribery is the responsibility of all employees and the South England Conference is committed to:

- encouraging employees to be vigilant and to report any suspicion of bribery,
- providing employees with suitable channels of communication and ensuring that sensitive information is treated appropriately,
- investigating instances of alleged bribery and assisting the police and other appropriate authorities in any resultant prosecution,
- taking disciplinary action against any individual(s) involved in bribery.

Any suspicion of bribery should be reported in confidence to the Human Resources Department who has overall responsibility for bribery prevention.

Protection of vulnerable groups

All South England Conference employees are required to familiarise themselves with our child protection policy, "Keeping our Church Family Safe".

Criminal records

Many posts within the South England Conference are exempt, because of the nature of the work, from the provisions of Section 4(2) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, by virtue of the Exceptions Order 1975 as amended. This means that all convictions, including those that are "spent" under the terms of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, but excluding those that are "protected" under the Exceptions Order, will be made known to us. Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are carried out on relevant employees at the commencement of their employment and any subsequent safeguarding investigations or suspensions, police arrests, criminal charges or convictions must be notified to the South England Conference Executive Secretary. "Convictions" include convictions in a court of law, police cautions, reprimands and final warnings.

The Children List

If you work with children or on premises in which children are present we will also be required to check whether or not your name is included on the Children List maintained by the DBS as being barred from working with children.

In addition, if we believe that you are guilty of misconduct that harmed a child or placed a child at risk of harm, we have a statutory duty to refer your name to the DBS. This duty also applies in relation to former employees.

Communication and representation policy

Introduction

The South England Conference will take every step to communicate to all employees with particular respect to its products, services, and plans for the future, etc. It also encourages employees to express their views in terms of suggestions and opinions.

Notice boards

All statutory notices, vacancies, internal information and all other matters of general interest will be displayed on the official notice board. Employees wishing to display notices relating to social, sporting or domestic activities should obtain permission from the Secretariat to do so.

The Employee Handbook

All employees will be issued with this Handbook at the beginning of their employment with the South England Conference. After that time a copy will always be available online or on request.

Trade Union membership and recognition

The South England Conference recognises your right either to join or not to join a trade union of your choice.

The South England Conference has no recognition agreement with any union and as a result no paid union officials will be allowed on the premises except for the purpose of representation at a disciplinary or individual grievance meeting or any associated appeal meeting.

Telephones (including mobile phones)

Employees may use the South England Conference telephone system for local calls within reason and in cases of personal emergency. If possible authority should be sought from your line manager before the call is made and if not as soon as possible afterwards.

Postal mail

All posted mail delivered to the South England Conference is normally opened centrally even if it is addressed as personal or has confidentiality marking. Therefore, no personal mail should be sent to the South England Conference without permission (e.g. 'signed for' parcels) or personal mail sent out using the South England Conference's system.

Computer policy

Computer usage

Employees must keep their passwords confidential and must not disclose them to any other party.

Employees are not permitted to load any software on to the South England Conference's computer system without prior permission from the Human Resources Department.

On the termination of employment, or at the South England Conference's request, employees must return all information that they have in a computer compatible format to a nominated member of staff.

All information, programs and systems created by employees during the course of their employment with the South England Conference will remain the property of the South England Conference.

Employees are not permitted to play computer games in South England Conference time or on South England Conference terminals or laptops.

Email

The South England Conference gives designated employees access to an email facility in order to improve business communication and efficiency. This is the primary purpose of this facility and although personal emails are permitted, the primary purpose of this facility should be remembered. The South England Conference expects that you will not abuse the facility.

With this in mind it is important that emails are not used to spread gossip or to distribute information, jokes or graphics that are or could be said to be, any of the following:

- sexist or sexual in nature,
- racist or otherwise discriminatory,
- obscene,
- offensive,
- defamatory,
- malicious and/or unacceptable nature,
- otherwise conflicting with the interests of the South England Conference.

The distribution of chain letters by email is also expressly forbidden.

Employees must not use emails to distribute information that is confidential in nature, unless the permission of the customer and/or your Manager has been given in advance. Employees must not use emails to distribute anything that is copyright protected or to pursue or promote personal business interests. If in doubt, guidance should be sought from your Manager.

Messages sent by email could give rise to legal action against the South England Conference. It is therefore important that thought is given to the content of all emails and that hard copies are taken when necessary.

The South England Conference reserves the right to retrieve messages in order to assess whether the facility is being used for legitimate purposes, to retrieve information following suspected computer failure or to investigate alleged acts of wrongdoing. The South England Conference will not, however, monitor emails as a matter of course.

Misuse of the email facility will result in disciplinary action.

Internet use

Employees have a duty to use the Internet responsibly.

Employees must not access or display any sites or pages that are sexually explicit or offensive. Any breach of this rule may result in dismissal. If an employee receives information from, or accesses any such site unintentionally, the computer must be closed down or disconnected from the network and your Manager must be informed immediately.

Although sensible and limited personal use of the Internet is permitted, the South England Conference reserves the right to take disciplinary action against employees where their use amounts to an abuse of this rule, such as excessive downloading or streaming to computers or mobile devices.

The use of social networking sites for personal purposes during working time or on South England Conference terminals or laptops is not permitted and is a breach of our rules.

Employees using social networking sites away from work must ensure that, if adding personal news items, they do not include reference to the South England Conference by name or by photograph, or to any employee, client, customer or any other person or organisation connected with the South England Conference, or any of their relations or friends. Failure to comply with this policy will be treated as a serious breach of the rules and will result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including summary dismissal.

Any use of social networking sites that brings the South England Conference into disrepute, or breaches our equal opportunities and discrimination policy or harassment policy, will be regarded as gross misconduct and will result in summary dismissal.

Training policy

Introduction

Day to day training is the responsibility of the South England Conference who can call on specialised skills and knowledge within the South England Conference and from external sources for advice on training matters.

Aims

The aims of the policy are:

- To provide induction training for all new employees, including relevant health and safety information.
- To provide job specific training to all new employees and to existing employees who are changing job within the South England Conference, including health and safety information.
- To identify the longer-term development needs of those employees with potential to progress beyond their present job and to meet those needs including the granting of study leave and sabbatical leave, when they are consistent with the needs of the South England Conference.

Procedures

The procedures for training are:

- A record will be kept for each employee showing the training received.
- The training records will be monitored on a regular basis and the needs checked.
- All training programmes will be monitored and revised as necessary in order to meet changing business needs.

The South England Conference will provide any necessary training and will meet the costs involved.

However, if an employee fails to complete the training or their employment ends within one year of completing any external training course for any reason except redundancy, the employee must reimburse the cost of any training on a pro-rata basis.

Employees will be required to sign an 'Agreement to deduct from pay' prior to starting any external course, which authorises the South England Conference to make this deduction.

Appraisal/review policy

The performance of all employees is monitored on a continuous basis. This is so that the South England Conference can maximise employees' strengths and help them to overcome any weaknesses. The South England Conference also carries out formal annual appraisals on all employees.

Lay off/short time working

If a situation arises where there is a reduction of work, or there is any other occurrence that affects the normal running of the business, the South England Conference has a right to either lay off without pay other than Statutory Guarantee Pay or implement shorter working hours. This procedure is in line with your terms and conditions of employment.

The South England Conference also reserves the right to select the employees best suited to carry out whatever work is available.

Employees will be offered alternative work wherever possible.

Employees who are laid off must still be available for work as and when necessary since continuity of service is not affected by any period of lay off.

The South England Conference will pay Statutory Guarantee Pay in accordance with the current government regulations.

Any employee who is laid off for longer than the Statutory Guarantee Pay period will be given a letter to take to the relevant government agency. Employees should then be able to sign on as temporarily unemployed, even though they will still be employed by the South England Conference.

Redundancy policy

If a redundancy situation arises, for whatever reason, the South England Conference will take whatever steps are reasonable in an effort to avoid compulsory redundancies, for example:

- Analyse overtime requirement.
- Reduce hours.
- Lay off with Statutory Guarantee Pay.
- Ask for voluntary redundancies, whether anyone has plans to retire or is considering a career move.

If compulsory redundancies are necessary, employees will be involved and consulted at various meetings to discuss selection criteria, any alternative positions, and be given every opportunity to put forward any views of their own.

Employees will be given the opportunity to discuss the selection criteria drawn up. The South England Conference reserves the right to reject any voluntary applications for redundancy if it believes that the volunteer has skills and experience that need to be retained for the future viability of the business.

Copyright and intellectual property rights

Any invention, improvement, design, process, information, copyright, work, software, trade mark or trade name or set-up made, created or discovered by an employee in the course of their employment (whether capable of being patented or registered or not and whether or not made, created or discovered in the course of their normal duties) in conjunction with or in any way affecting or relating to the business of the South England Conference or of any associated business or capable of being used or adapted for use in

or in connection with such business shall be disclosed immediately to the South England Conference and shall (subject to sections 39 to 43 of the Patents Act 1977) belong to and be the absolute property of the South England Conference or such associated business as the South England Conference may direct.

Privacy notice – employee data

We process personal data relating to those we employ to work as, or are otherwise engaged to work as, part of our workforce. We do this for employment purposes, to assist in the running of the business and/or to enable individuals to be paid.

The personal data we process may include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- data relating to your identity (including name, data of birth, gender, photographs, passport, National Insurance Number, immigration status, marital status, dependants),
- contact details (business and home address, telephone numbers, email addresses, emergency contact details),
- employment details (position, office location, terms of employment, performance and disciplinary records, sickness and holidays),
- background information (CV, previous experience, qualifications and certifications, criminal records check (for vetting purposes, where permissible and in accordance with applicable law)),
- financial information (bank details, tax information, salary, benefits, expenses),
- IT information – information related to your access to our systems (login details, IP addresses, log files, access/times/duration of use, location).

The collection of this information will benefit us by:

- improving the management of workforce data across the business,
- enabling development of a comprehensive picture of the workforce and how it is deployed,
- informing the development of recruitment and retention policies,
- allowing better financial modelling and planning,
- ensuring compliance with our policies and procedures and our legal obligations,
- enabling monitoring of selected protected characteristics.

We will not share information about you with third parties without your consent unless the law allows or requires us to do so.

Under the data protection legislation you have the right to:

- object to processing of personal data that is likely to cause, or is causing, damage or distress,
- prevent processing for the purpose of direct marketing,
- object to decisions being taken by automated means,

- in certain circumstances, have inaccurate personal data rectified, blocked, erased or destroyed,
- claim compensation for damages caused by a breach of the data protection legislation.

If you would like to find out more about our data retention policy and how we use your personal data, or if you want to see a copy of the information about you that we hold, please contact the Human Resources Manager.

If you have a concern about the way we are collecting or using your personal data, you should raise your concern with us in the first instance or directly to the Information Commissioner's Office at <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>

Environment policy

There is a growing awareness of the need to protect the environment, a view supported by the South England Conference. Employees should make every effort within their sphere of control to minimise any adverse effect of the South England Conference on the environment. Examples include:

- Turning off lights when not required.
- Turning down heating levels.
- Planning journeys to minimise the fuel used on South England Conference business.
- Co-operating with any recycling systems for waste paper etc. that are introduced.

Drugs and alcohol policy

The South England Conference is committed to maintaining a healthy, safe and productive environment for its employees.

The South England Conference recognises the impact that drugs and alcohol may have on an individual's ability to work safely and correctly and the South England Conference aims to ensure a working environment free from the inappropriate use of substances and where employees are able to carry out their duties in a safe and efficient manner.

The use of drugs or the consumption of alcohol by employees is inappropriate at any time during working hours and before work. If an employee's doctor prescribes drugs that may affect their ability to perform work, the employee must discuss this with their Manager.

The dispensing, distribution, possession, use, sale or offering to buy controlled drugs or alcohol while at work is prohibited. Any such activity (including reasonable suspicion) will be reported to the police. Any employee found to be in breach of these rules will be liable to disciplinary action that may result in dismissal. This will apply whether or not there is any actual threat to health and safety.

Testing for illegal substances and alcohol

The South England Conference reserves the right to introduce testing, including random testing, for illegal substances and alcohol.

When testing for alcohol a trained employee will use a standard breathalyser. When testing for drugs a trained employee will use an oral fluid test device from a Food and Drugs Administration accredited or similar supplier.

Any refusal to be tested will be regarded as a refusal to carry out a reasonable instruction and will normally result in dismissal.

Smoke-free policy

It is illegal to smoke in enclosed or substantially enclosed workplaces and the South England Conference has a policy that prohibits smoking throughout the entire workplace with no exceptions. This policy applies to all employees and to visitors to the premises.

Failure to comply with this policy will result in disciplinary action and possible criminal prosecution.

This policy also applies to the use of e-cigarettes.

Dress code policy

Employees represent the South England Conference while carrying out their duties and when meeting members of the public and we expect you to dress appropriately for the occasion.

Employees who have been given a uniform or name badge should wear them at all times whilst on South England Conference business. Uniforms must be kept clean, pressed and presentable.

When at work, any personal protective equipment issued by the South England Conference must be worn at the relevant time. Failure to wear this equipment may result in disciplinary action.

Employee Handbook receipt

This Handbook has been drawn up by the South England Conference to provide you with information on employment policies and procedures. It is important for you to read the Handbook carefully as this, together with your Contract of Employment, sets out your main terms and conditions of employment.

The information covers a wide range of subjects relating to your employment and in the event that information in this Handbook conflicts with terms and conditions as stated in your Contract of Employment, the Contract will take precedence.

If you have any questions or any part of the Handbook is unclear to you, please do not hesitate to raise any queries with the South England Conference Human Resources.

It is important that you do this before signing that you have read, understood and are willing to abide by all the South England Conference's terms and conditions.

I acknowledge receipt of this Employee Handbook, which is the property of the South England Conference, and which forms an integral part of my Contract of Employment.

Received by (Employee)

Signed

Date