



Employees Handbook

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1. Welcome

Message from the Director

Welcome to HOPECFI! We are thrilled to have you join our team. At HOPECFI, we are dedicated to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, as well as upholding our British Values. We expect all staff and volunteers to wholeheartedly embrace and uphold this commitment.

About HOPECFI

The HOPE Centre For Inclusion (HOPECFI) is a recently launched SEND and Inclusion Provision located in East Leeds. Our primary goal is to provide alternative learning and educational opportunities for school-aged children who are either awaiting placement in a specialist school, require alternative provision due to complex needs while attending mainstream schools, or seek respite for parents engaged in homeschooling.

2. Mission and Vision

Mission Statement

Our mission is to ensure that every child with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities has the opportunity for a better start in life.

Vision Statement

We envision a world where every child has the opportunity to learn and develop in a safe, secure, and nurturing environment where they are valued and respected, rooted in our British Values.



Core Values

Our Core Values encompass the fundamental principles and beliefs that guide our mission and operations. We will uphold:

- **Excellence:** We are committed to high standards of academic achievement, personal development, and professional conduct.
- **Integrity:** We uphold honesty, fairness, and ethical behaviour.
- **Respect:** We value diversity and dignity.
- **Responsibility:** We take accountability, reliability, and ownership for our actions and commitments.
- **Collaboration:** We promote teamwork, cooperation, and effective communication among children, staff, parents, stakeholders, and the community.
- **Innovation:** We embrace creativity, critical thinking, and continuous improvement in teaching methods and educational practices.
- **Community:** We aim to build strong relationships within the centre community and foster a sense of belonging.
- **Compassion:** We show empathy, kindness, and support towards others, and nurture emotional well-being.
- **Sustainability:** We are committed to environmentally responsible practices.
- **Adaptability:** We emphasise flexibility and resilience in response to changes and challenges in the educational landscape.

These core values form the foundation of our culture and guide our mission to provide a nurturing and effective learning environment for children.

3. Employment

a. Equal Employment Opportunity

HOPECFI is an equal opportunity employer. We do not discriminate based on race, colour, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, or any other protected status.

b. Recruitment and Hiring

Our recruitment process is designed to attract qualified and motivated candidates who share our values and mission. All new employees will undergo a thorough background check, which includes but is not limited to:

- Enhanced DBS
- Right to Work in the UK
- Employment history
- References

c. Probation Period

New employees are subject to a six-month probationary period, during which their performance and suitability for the role will be assessed.



d. Employee Classifications

Employees are classified as full-time, part-time, temporary. Each classification has different benefits and expectations.

HOPECFI policies and procedures apply to self-employed and agency workers, student and volunteers.

e. Employment Contracts

All employees will receive an employment contract outlining their role, responsibilities, and terms of employment within two months of starting their role.

f. Place of Work

Employees will have their principal place of work specified in their employment contract. However, all employees may be required to work at any HOPECFI branch or partner organisation as needed.

g. Probationary Period

All new employees commence with a probationary period of 6 months. During this time, we will assess your work performance and overall suitability for the role. If the employee's performance meets the required standard, their employment will continue without interruption.

However, if the employee's performance does not meet the required standard or if we determine that they are generally unsuitable for the role, we may take remedial action or terminate their employment. This decision may be made without resorting to the capability or disciplinary procedures, depending on the nature of the issue.

h. Termination of Employment

All notices to terminate employment must be submitted in writing via email to the manager. We encourage employees to discuss their intention to leave with their manager beforehand.

Terminating an employee's employment is a serious decision and is considered as a last resort. Prior to formal termination, we aim to hold a meeting with the employee. During this meeting, we will discuss the notice period, the reasons for termination, any support the employee may require, and address any questions they may have. However, during the probationary period, we are not obligated to disclose the specific reasons for termination.

i. Notice Periods

The notice periods required by HOPECFI are as follows:

- Less than 1 week of service: 1 days' notice.
- Less than 1 month of service: 1 weeks' notice.
- 1 month to 6 months of service: 2 weeks' notice.
- 6 months to 2 years of service: 4 weeks' notice.
- Additional 1 weeks' notice for each year of service, up to a maximum of 12 weeks for 12 years of completed service.



Notice Periods Required from the employee are as follow:

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- 6 months to 2 years of service: 4 weeks' notice.
- Additional 1 weeks' notice for each year of service, up to a maximum of 12 weeks for 12 years of completed service.

In cases of gross misconduct, HOPECFI reserves the right to dismiss an employee without notice.

j. Termination Scenarios During Probation

During the probationary period, we may suspend employment to further assess suitability. Employment may be suspended or terminated at any time during this period if:

- We are unable to obtain satisfactory references from the employee's referees.
- Unsatisfactory references are received.
- The employee's DBS checks return unclear results.
- The employee fails to comply with the terms outlined in their offer of employment and employment contract.
- It is discovered that the employee provided incorrect, incomplete, or misleading information.
- It is determined that we are not a suitable fit for employee.
- It is determined that the employee is not a suitable fit for us.
- Following a risk assessment, it is believed that the employee pose a risk to themself, children, other employees, or the business.

k. Pay in Lieu of Notice

We reserve the right to pay you in lieu of notice.

l. Termination Without Notice

Termination of employment by HOPECFI without notice may occur under the following circumstances:

- Dismissal for gross misconduct.
- Capability grounds.

If the employee terminates their employment without providing or working the required notice period, or if we terminate their employment for gross misconduct, any additional costs incurred for covering their duties during the unworked notice period will be deducted from any termination pay owed to them.

The employee will also forfeit any contractual accrued holiday pay exceeding their statutory entitlement if they fail to provide or work the required notice period.

4. Code of Conduct

m. Professional Behaviour



Employees are expected to always conduct and present themselves in a friendly, respectful and professional manner, reflecting the values of HOPECFI.

n. Personal Information

Employees must promptly inform the manager of any changes to their name, medical condition, marital status, address and telephone number to ensure our records are accurate. This information is crucial for emergency contact purposes, especially outside normal working hours.

Additionally, employee must notify us if they have or intend to take on additional employment, allowing us to discuss any implications under current working time legislation and to avoid conflicts of interests.

o. Personal Hygiene

Employees must attend work clean, fresh, and ready for their shift. Good personal hygiene, including regular cleaning, grooming, and self-care, is essential for health and safety in the workplace. It helps prevent the spread of germs and diseases, reduces exposure to chemicals and contaminants, and prevents skin allergies and other conditions. Employees are role-models for the children we care for. Employees must wash hands regularly throughout the day.

p. Dress Code

▪ Jewellery

Minimal jewellery should be worn:

- Engagement ring and wedding band.
- Studs hearing must be used for tongue, lip, face, ear and nose piercings.
- For medical, sentimental, or religious reasons, a personal necklace, ring and bracelet can be discreetly worn (e.g., a necklace containing a loved one's ashes or fingerprint). When worn, they must not be visible.

Excessive, fancy, gang-related, or offensive jewellery is not allowed.

▪ Watches

A wristwatch may be worn, although a smart watch is not permitted.

A smart watch is any watch that can make video and voice recordings, take pictures, make and receive calls, or access the internet.

This includes all but not limited to:

- Fitbit watches
- Apple watches
- Samsung watches
- Garmin watches
- Amazfit watches
- Fossil watches
- Mobvoi watches



- TicWatch
- OnePlus watches

▪ **Make-Up**

Employees must come to work looking professional, clean, and presentable, as employees reflect the organisation and are role models to the children. However, employees should not wear excessive amounts of make-up.

▪ **False Nails**

Fingernails should be kept short and clean. False nails are permitted (Acrylic or gel nails only).

▪ **Hair and Head Covering**

Head coverings can be worn for religious reasons. They must, however, colour coordinate with the uniform. Hat, caps are not allowed indoors.

Long hair must always be tied back, leaving the face and shoulders clear. Employees can keep neck or shoulder-length hair down except for when:

- Cooking
- Serving food
- Completing intimate care
- Engaged in activities with children

Hairnets should be used when cooking and serving food.

▪ **Skin Marks, Cuts and Tattoos**

If an employee is suffering from an infectious or contagious disease or illness, have a bowel disorder, boils, or mouth infection, they must not report for work without clearance from their doctor.

Contact with any person suffering from an infectious or contagious disease must be reported by the employee, and clearance must be obtained from a doctor before returning to work.

All skin marks, spots, cuts, bruises, and large and offensive tattoos must be professionally and discreetly covered.

Small, medium, and non-offensive tattoos are permitted at the manager's discretion. Employees are advised to check with their manager.

Offensive tattoos contradict our British Values and promote:

- Racism/Discrimination
- Violence
- Crime
- War
- Hatred



Sexually explicit tattoos and tattoos that promote alcohol and drug use are not permitted.

▪ **Uniform and Presentation**

All employees must present themselves at work professionally and wear clean, ironed clothes.

Employees must wear casual but professional clothing.

A coat/jacket of preference can be worn outside and during outing. Employee must not wear a coat/jacket when working indoors.

Clothing must not have drawings, writings, studs, glitter, fringes and holes.

Hats, caps are not permitted during work hours. Head covering such as a scarf can be worn for religious reasons.

Employees are not allowed to come to work or wear clothing that:

- Shows their breast or cleavage.
- Shows their stomach or belly button.
- Shows their armpit.
- Show their back.
- Show their shoulders.

Top/Shirt must be hips length or longer

- Is below knee length.

Trouser/Short

Uniform must be

- Appropriate for a professional workplace.
- Is not offensive to anyone.

This dress code applies even if the employees are not scheduled for work but come to the workplace for any professional or personal reasons. If an employee arrives at work on special occasions, they must be professionally dressed and clean.

q. Other Personal Items

Employees must keep all belongings in the allocated space, usually in the staff room. Personal belongings such as mobile phones, smart watches, bags, boxes, water bottles, cups, containers, or medication must not be brought into the playrooms.

All drinks, including juice, tea, and coffee, must be consumed inside the staff room or allocated area and are not allowed in the rooms or office unless authorised by the manager. Water stations should always be available within the rooms for staff.



- **Medications**

All prescribed and frequently taken non-prescribed medications must be declared to the manager by completing the Medicine Record form. Unless necessary, medications should not be brought to the workplace. If brought, they must be kept in the employee's bag in the staff room and not in the playrooms or office. This applies to all types of medication, including pills, rubs, creams, and syrups. Due to their smell, rubs, unless prescribed, are not allowed on the premises. If an employee is unwell and needs medical care, it is best to stay home.

Emergency medications, such as inhalers, can be kept in the office or an allocated box, subject to prior discussion and agreement with the manager after a review of the prescription.

If employees need time away from work to take their medication, they must first seek permission from the manager and then go to the staff room. Employees are required to make an annual Health Declaration to help meet our legal duty of ensuring the health and safety of all employees and others.

- **Illnesses, Mental Health Disclosure and Mediations**

All illnesses including mental health and physical illness must be disclosed prior to starting employment with HOPECFI by completing the Health Declaration form as part of the employee's induction.

- **Disclosure of Physical Illness**

Employees must inform their manager as soon as they become aware of any illness that may affect their ability to perform their duties. This includes both short-term and long-term conditions.

The Health Declaration must be submitted annually.

- **Disclosure of Mental Health Conditions**

We recognise the importance of mental health and encourage employees to disclose any mental health conditions that may impact their work. Mental health conditions can include, but are not limited to, stress, anxiety, depression, and other related illnesses.

HOPECFI aims to foster a supportive work environment where employees feel safe to disclose health issues and receive the necessary support to manage their conditions while performing their duties effectively.

- **List of Mental Health Illnesses**

Mental health illnesses encompass a wide range of conditions that affect mood, thinking, and behaviour. Some common mental health illnesses include:

Mood Disorders

- Depression
 - Major Depressive Disorder (MDD)
 - Persistent Depressive Disorder (Dysthymia)
 - Bipolar Disorder
 - Cyclothymic Disorder



- Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)
- Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD)

Anxiety Disorders

- Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)
- Panic Disorder
- Social Anxiety Disorder (Social Phobia)
- Specific Phobias
- Agoraphobia
- Separation Anxiety Disorder

Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders

- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Body Dysmorphic Disorder
- Hoarding Disorder
- Trichotillomania (Hair-Pulling Disorder)
- Excoriation (Skin-Picking) Disorder

Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorders

- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (CPTSD)
- Acute Stress Disorder
- Adjustment Disorders

Dissociative Disorders

- Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID)
- Dissociative Amnesia
- Depersonalisation/Derealisation Disorder

Somatic Symptom and Related Disorders

- Somatic Symptom Disorder
- Illness Anxiety Disorder
- Conversion Disorder (Functional Neurological Symptom Disorder)
- Factitious Disorder

Feeding and Eating Disorders

- Anorexia Nervosa
- Bulimia Nervosa
- Binge-Eating Disorder
- Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID)

Neurodevelopmental Disorders

- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)



- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Specific Learning Disorders
- Intellectual Disabilities

Psychotic Disorders

- Schizophrenia
- Schizoaffective Disorder
- Brief Psychotic Disorder
- Delusional Disorder

Personality Disorders

- Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)
- Antisocial Personality Disorder
- Histrionic Personality Disorder
- Narcissistic Personality Disorder
- Avoidant Personality Disorder
- Dependent Personality Disorder
- Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder

Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders

- Substance Use Disorders
- Alcohol Use Disorder
- Gambling Disorder

Neurocognitive Disorders

- Delirium
- Major and Mild Neurocognitive Disorders (e.g., Alzheimer's disease)

Sleep-Wake Disorders

- Insomnia Disorder
- Hypersomnolence Disorder
- Narcolepsy
- Breathing-Related Sleep Disorders (e.g., Sleep Apnea)
- Circadian Rhythm Sleep-Wake Disorders

Impulse-Control and Conduct Disorders

- Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)
- Conduct Disorder
- Intermittent Explosive Disorder
- Kleptomania
- Pyromania



Paraphilic Disorders

- Exhibitionistic Disorder
- Fetishistic Disorder
- Pedophilic Disorder
- Sexual Masochism Disorder
- Sexual Sadism Disorder
- Voyeuristic Disorder

▪ Work Related Stress

Stress, as defined by the Health and Safety Executive, refers to the adverse reactions people experience due to excessive pressures or demands placed upon them.

We acknowledge the importance of distinguishing between motivating challenges that can have positive effects and work-related stress, which is a distressing response to pressures or demands that exceed an employee's coping abilities at a given time. While work-related stress itself is not an illness, prolonged and intense stress can lead to health issues.

Responsibilities of All Employees

Employees are responsible for taking practical steps to minimise their own stress levels and considerate actions to support colleagues who may be affected by their actions or decisions.

Employees have a legal obligation to comply with health and safety legislation and regulations, ensuring their own well-being and that of others they work with. If an employee has concerns about work-related stress that may pose a health risk to themselves or others, it is important to raise them with the manager.

Responsibilities of the Employer

HOPECFI is committed to supporting employees in managing work-related stress through open dialogue and supportive measures.

Where feasible, employees experiencing excessive and sustained work-related stress will have their work responsibilities adjusted, including potential reassignment within the organisation, to eliminate or reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Key Principles in Managing Stress

The approach to managing stress will uphold principles of non-discrimination and align with our Equal Opportunities policy. Consistency and fairness will guide how stress-related issues are handled across the organisation. Open communication is encouraged and will always be promoted to foster a supportive work environment.

Our focus is on a proactive and supportive approach to stress management rather than punitive measures. We strive to be empathetic and supportive, within reasonable limits, to employees experiencing stress. Stress management and related information will be handled confidentially, adhering to the requirements of Data Protection and Access to Medical Reports Acts.



- **Confidentiality**

All disclosures of illness and mental health conditions will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Information will only be shared with those who need to know to provide the necessary support and accommodations.

- **Procedure for Disclosure**

Initial Disclosure

- **Notification:** Employees must inform the manager as soon as possible about their illness or mental health condition.
- **Method of Disclosure:** Disclosure can be made in person, via email, or over the phone, by completing the Health Declaration form depending on the employee's comfort level.

Documentation

- **Medical Evidence:** Employees may be required to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note or medical report, to support their disclosure.
- **Mental Health:** For mental health conditions, employees may provide documentation from a mental health professional if available, though it is not mandatory.

- **Support and Adjustments**

Supportive Measures

Upon disclosure, we will work with the employee to provide appropriate support, which may include:

- Access to Employee Assistance Programs (EAP).
- Referrals to mental health professionals.
- Flexible working arrangements.

Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments will be considered and implemented where possible to help the employee manage their condition while performing their duties. This can include:

- Adjustments to workload.
- Changes to working hours or location.
- Provision of specialised equipment or resources.

Ongoing Monitoring and Review

Managers will regularly check in with employees who have disclosed an illness or mental health condition to ensure they are receiving the support they need and to make any necessary adjustments.

Periodic review meetings will be scheduled to assess the effectiveness of the support and adjustments provided, and to make any necessary changes.



Employee Responsibilities

- Employees are responsible for:
- Promptly disclosing any illness or mental health condition that may affect their work.
- Providing relevant medical documentation when requested.
- Engaging in discussions about support and reasonable adjustments.
- Notify of any medications.

Employer Responsibilities

The employer is responsible for:

- Ensuring a supportive and non-discriminatory environment for employees disclosing illness or mental health conditions.
- Maintaining confidentiality of disclosed information.
- Providing appropriate support and making reasonable adjustments to accommodate employees' needs.

Non-Discrimination and Fair Treatment

We are committed to ensuring that all employees who disclose an illness or mental health condition are treated fairly and without discrimination. Any form of harassment or unfair treatment related to health disclosures will not be tolerated and will be addressed promptly.

▪ Alcohol, Drugs and Psychoactive Substances

Under legislation, as your employer, we have a duty to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare of all our employees. Similarly, employees have a responsibility to themselves and others.

Alcohol, drugs, and psychoactive substances are strictly prohibited on our premises.

The use of alcohol, drugs, and psychoactive substances can impair the safe and efficient operation of our business and jeopardise the health and safety of both our clients and employees.

Therefore, the following rules apply:

- Employees are strictly prohibited from coming to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Employees must not attend work smelling of alcohol.
- Employees should always consider the potential consequences that alcohol and drugs may have on their professional life, future, and the well-being of those around them.

The effects of alcohol, drugs, and psychoactive substances can include:

- Increased absenteeism (such as unauthorised absence, lateness, or excessive sickness levels)
- Higher accident rates (at work, during commutes, or elsewhere)
- Impaired work performance (such as difficulty concentrating, slower task completion, increased errors)



These examples are not exhaustive.

If an employee's work performance or attendance is affected by alcohol, drugs, or psychoactive substances, or if we suspect employee's involvement in any drug-related actions or offences, the employee may face disciplinary action. Depending on the circumstances, this could lead to dismissal.

If we suspect that an employee may have issues related to alcohol or drugs, we will encourage them to seek appropriate help.

We reserve the right to initiate disciplinary measures if an employee needs medical or professional assistance but refuses to seek it.

- **Gambling**

Gambling is strictly prohibited on the premises.

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Employees must wear and use any protective clothing and equipment issued to them for their safety, as per the requirements of their role. Neglecting to do so may breach their Health & Safety responsibilities. Once issued, this protective wear and equipment becomes the employees' responsibility.

- **COSHH**

HOPECFI adheres to regulations concerning the handling of household products. These products, such as bleaches, disinfectants, drain and oven cleaners, can pose hazards. It is essential to understand their risks and follow correct procedures for storage and usage.

- **Children's Medications**

Strict policies govern the handling, storage, and administration of children's medicines. Only employees trained in Paediatric First Aid are authorised to administer First Aid and medication to children.

All employees must attend a Paediatric First Aid training within two months of starting employment. The cost of the training will be reimbursed on the next renewal. Employees must ensure that they hold a valid Paediatric First Aid certificate during the term of their employment with HOPECFI.

s. Confidentiality

Employees must maintain the confidentiality of all sensitive information relating to HOPECFI and its families and stakeholders.

Employees must comply with the Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy.

t. Conflict of Interest

Employees must avoid situations where personal interests conflict with the interests of HOPECFI.

u. Anti-Harassment and Bullying



HOPECFI has a zero-tolerance policy towards harassment and bullying. All employees are entitled to a safe and respectful workplace.

We believe that all employees have the right to work in an environment free from intimidation and disrespect, and we acknowledge our legal obligation to provide such a workplace. Our commitment is to foster a positive culture at HOPECFI that is devoid of harassment and bullying. Any allegation of such behaviour will be treated seriously, thoroughly investigated, and addressed effectively.

Activities or behaviour that tarnish our reputation or undermine trust in your integrity may warrant dismissal. Employees are expected to treat their colleagues with civility, and any form of rudeness towards children, parents, or the public is strictly prohibited. Offensive or disrespectful behaviour, including the use of inappropriate language, may result in disciplinary action.

Employees are expected to prioritise the interests of the business during working hours, devoting their full attention and effort to the business and its affairs.

▪ **Harassment**

Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. This can include actions, comments, or physical contact that are objectionable or offensive, such as offensive jokes, verbal abuse, racist remarks, or comments about personal characteristics.

Sexual Harassment

We uphold the principle that all employees should be always treated with dignity and respect. Sexual harassment involves unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature directed at an employee, which may include physical contact, sexual advances, propositions, or suggestive remarks that are offensive to the recipient.

Examples of sexual harassment include:

- Unwanted physical contact
- Unwelcome sexual advances or propositions
- Intimidating or abusive behaviour, including the display of explicit material or sexually explicit comments
- Suggestions that sexual favours could advance a person's career

Sexual harassment is considered a form of intimidation that insults and demeans the recipient and is strictly prohibited in our workplace. We are committed to preventing its occurrence through proactive measures.

▪ **Bullying**

Bullying involves the misuse of power or position to intimidate or belittle others, leaving the recipient feeling hurt, upset, vulnerable, or helpless. Examples include unjustified criticism, shouting, spreading rumours, or excluding an individual from the group.

▪ **Responsibilities of Employees**



Every employee has a personal responsibility to refrain from harassing, sexually harassing, or bullying colleagues and to condone such behaviour. Harassment, including sexual harassment and bullying, is considered serious misconduct and will result in disciplinary action under our procedures.

Employees also have a legal obligation to assist in creating a safe working environment where unacceptable behaviour is not tolerated. Any employee who becomes aware of harassment or bullying should report it to their manager promptly.

- **Procedure**

Where possible and appropriate, complaints of harassment or bullying should be addressed informally in the first instance. Informal action allows for resolution through discussions or mediation.

If informal action does not resolve the issue, or if the situation is deemed serious enough, a formal complaint should be made in writing. This formal process ensures a thorough investigation and appropriate action to address the complaint.

5. Workplace Policies and Procedures

v. Attendance and Punctuality

Employees are required to adhere to punctuality and maintain consistent attendance.

- **Notifying Lateness**

Employees should arrive at least ten minutes before the start of their shift to ensure they are ready and sign in on time.

If an employee is likely to be late, they must notify the manager as soon as possible by phone call stating the reason for lateness, location and when to be expected. If they are unable to reach the manager, they must send a message in their work group to notify senior staff.

The employee opening must take all necessary measures to arrive on time to open. If an employee who is opening is likely to be late, they must notify the manager as soon as possible by phone call stating the reason for lateness, location and when to be expected. If they are unable to reach the manager, they must call every senior staff until arrangements for opening are made to avoid disruption to the services.

- **Notifying Absence**

Employees are expected to arrive at least ten minutes before their shift begins to ensure they are prepared and able to sign in on time. If an employee anticipates being late, they must promptly notify their manager via phone call, providing details of their expected delay, current location, and reason for lateness. If unable to reach the manager directly, they should inform senior staff through their work group.

For employees responsible for opening, it is crucial they take all necessary steps to ensure punctuality. In the event they foresee being late for the opening shift, they must immediately contact the manager by phone, detailing their expected delay, location, and reason. If unable to contact the manager directly,



they must persist in reaching out to senior staff until arrangements are confirmed to avoid any disruption to services.

Failing to follow this absence notification process may impact employees' payment for sick leave.

w. Health and Safety

HOPECFI is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace. Employees must always follow the health and safety policy to ensure their safety and the safety of others.

Employees must not take any action that could threaten their health and safety, the health and safety of other employees, service users, or members of the public.

Employees should ensure they are aware of the fire and evacuation procedures and know the actions to take in an emergency.

Protective clothing and equipment issued for protection must always be worn when administering first aid and performing personal care.

The Health and Safety Officer for HOPECFI is the manager.

▪ Emergency Procedures

Employees must familiarise themselves with emergency procedures and participate in regular drills.

▪ Accidents at Work

Any accidents or incidents must be reported immediately to the manager or person in charge.

A sensible approach to seating and workplace conditions must always be taken from a safety perspective.

Reporting Accidents in the Workplace

Employees must report any workplace injuries immediately so we can thoroughly investigate the accident to prevent future occurrences. Various types of workplace accidents include:

- Major injuries, injuries that require an employee to miss work for more than seven days,
- Work-related diseases,
- Dangerous occurrences,

Examples of accidents include falls, explosions, burns, and being caught in machinery. Reporting accidents helps identify risks in the workplace, providing knowledge on how to prevent similar accidents and ensuring the safety and well-being of all employees.

▪ Computer Use

After prolonged periods at a computer or other screens, employees must switch to an alternative type of work for a short period to reduce strain.



▪ Fitness for Work

If an employee arrives at work and is deemed unfit to work, we reserve the right to exercise our duty of care. If we believe the employee may not be able to undertake their duties safely or may pose a safety risk to others, the employee will be sent home for the remainder of the day without pay.

x. Key Holders

If an employee is a key holder, it is their responsibility to ensure that the keys are always kept safe and secure. They must not copy the keys or allow unauthorised use. Employees must not enter the premises without the manager's knowledge and authorisation.

The last person to leave the premises at the end of each day must ensure that the premises are left safe and secure:

- Lights are turned off.
- Electrical equipment is switched off as appropriate.
- Windows are closed.
- Doors are locked.

If the keys are lost or stolen, the employee must inform the manager immediately.

▪ Opening Procedure

It is the employee's responsibility to check their shift. If you are on opening duty, you must:

- Confirm via the key-holder's group by 6 pm the day before that you are aware of your opening duties the next day.
- Arrive on time for work and immediately ring the manager from the work telephone (2 rings). If the work telephone is not accessible, the employee must send a text in the key holder's group.
- Open the premises and conduct a visual risk assessment of the entire building, car park, and garden and immediately report any hazard.

y. Lone Working

▪ Introduction

This policy outlines our commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of employees who work alone. Lone working can present unique risks, and it is important that all employees understand these risks and the measures in place to mitigate them.

▪ Definition

Lone working refers to situations where an employee works by themselves without close or direct supervision. This can occur in various settings, including:

- Working alone on the premises.
- Working in remote locations.
- Working outside of normal working hours.



- **Responsibilities**

Employer Responsibilities

- **Risk Assessment:** Conduct regular risk assessments to identify potential hazards associated with lone working and implement measures to mitigate these risks.
- **Training and Information:** Provide appropriate training and information to employees regarding lone working procedures and safety measures.
- **Monitoring:** Implement a system for monitoring lone workers, including regular check-ins and emergency contact protocols.
- **Equipment:** Ensure that lone workers have access to necessary safety equipment and communication devices.

Employee Responsibilities

- **Adherence to Procedures:** Follow all procedures and guidelines provided for lone working.
- **Communication:** Maintain regular communication with the manager or designated contacts.
- **Reporting:** Report any incidents, hazards, or concerns related to lone working to the manager immediately.

- **Risk Assessment**

A thorough risk assessment must be carried out for all lone working activities. This assessment should consider:

- The nature of the work being undertaken.
- The work environment, including any potential hazards.
- The health and safety of the individual employee.
- Emergency procedures and access to assistance.

- **Procedures**

Pre-Work Preparation

- **Notification:** Inform manager of intended lone working, including details of the location, duration, and nature of the work.
- **Equipment Check:** Ensure all safety and communication equipment is in good working order.

During Lone Working

- **Regular Check-Ins:** Maintain regular check-ins with a designated contact at agreed intervals.
- **Emergency Protocols:** Follow established emergency protocols if an incident occurs, including using emergency contact numbers and safety devices.



Post-Work Procedures

- **Reporting:** Report back to the manager upon completion of the lone working period.
- **Incident Reporting:** Immediately report any incidents or near misses experienced during lone working.

▪ Training

All employees engaged in lone working will receive comprehensive training on:

- Risks associated with lone working.
- Safe working practices.
- Emergency procedures and use of safety equipment.
- Communication protocols.

▪ Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency while working alone, employees should:

- Use their communication device to contact their designated emergency contact or manager.
- Follow any fire evacuation and any other emergency procedures.
- If necessary, contact emergency services directly.

z. Jury Service

Employees are entitled to time off work to attend Jury Service.

Employees should notify us immediately on receipt of the Jury Summons giving full details.

Employees will not be paid for this time off and are advised to claim the expenses which they are entitled to from the Court. This will normally include compensation for loss of earnings.

aa. Use of Electronic Devices, Technology, and Social Media

▪ Electronic Devices

Employees are strictly prohibited from using personal electronic devices during work times. These devices may only be used during lunch breaks and must be stored in the designated staff room or technology safe or box. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Mobile phones
- Tablets
- Smart watches (without exception)
- Computers

All employees must switch off their mobile phones and place them in the designated box or area before signing in for their shift. Mobile phones may be retrieved and used during lunch breaks in the designated staff room only. The use of mobile phones by employees in any other area, even during lunch breaks, is strictly prohibited.

Employees can share the work landline number for emergencies only.



If employees are provided with a work phone, tablet, or computer, these devices may only be used for HOPECFI's business purposes. Sharing the work phone number for personal use and accessing personal emails and sites using the work phone, tablet, or computer are strictly prohibited.

HOPECFI's electronic devices are monitored, and downloading documents, files, visiting websites not related to HOPECFI's business activities, or changing passwords is strictly prohibited.

All electronic devices provided by HOPECFI remain the property of the organisation and must not leave the premises unless authorised by the manager. Work mobile phones and computers may be taken home and must be returned daily for work purposes, or if the employee will be absent from work for five or more days and on termination of employment.

HOPECFI retains the right to access and reclaim work devices provided to employees at any time.

Employees must use HOPECFI's technology resources responsibly.

- **Personal and Company Mobile Phones**

While personal mobile phones can be useful for communication, their use for personal matters during normal working hours is strictly prohibited unless authorised by the manager. Personal mobile phones must be switched off and stored in the designated area, safe or box.

Employees are not permitted to receive personal calls at work. Family members should be instructed to contact the landline only in emergencies and will need to speak with a manager. The manager will assess the urgency and importance of the call, considering staffing ratios and the employee's well-being before relaying the information. In this instance, the employee will be permitted to use their personal phone to return the emergency call.

Company-provided mobile phones are to be used exclusively for business purposes. Employees must refrain from making or receiving personal calls and texts, accessing personal social media platforms, or changing the PIN without prior permission from the manager. The phone must always be accessible to the manager and returned upon request or leaving employment.

Only company equipment, including phones and iPads that remain at the place of work may be used for taking photographs of children or any business-related activities. Personal equipment is strictly prohibited for such purposes.

- **Social Media**

Social media activities should reflect the values and mission of HOPECFI.

Employees are not permitted to have parents as friends including on social media. Employees must disclose existing staff and parent connections prior to employment to inform decisions regarding their employability with HOPECFI.

Social Network Services

Social network services are platforms focused on building and verifying online social networks for communities who share interests and activities or are interested in exploring those of others. These



services are primarily web-based and offer various ways for users to interact, such as instant messaging, email, video and voice chat, file sharing, blogging, and discussion groups.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Facebook,
- Twitter,
- LinkedIn,
- Instagram,
- Snapchat,
- And personal blogs.

The purpose of a social networking policy is:

- To protect the company against potential liability.
- To provide employees with clear guidance on permissible and impermissible actions related to the company or other employees.
- To assist employees in separating their professional and personal communications.
- To ensure compliance with laws regarding data protection, discrimination, and employee protection.

Standards employees are required to comply with include:

- Employees must not maintain sites that contain:
 - Personal identifiable information of the company, children, stakeholders, contractors or employee.
 - Photographs of children.
 - Identifiable information of the company, children, stakeholders, contractors or employee in relation to their performance and character.
 - Photographs of another employee taken in the work setting or in their working uniform.
 - Defamatory statements about the company, its current or former employees, the company's services, or contractors.
- Employees must not express opinions on sites that purport to represent their own views on behalf of the company.
- Employees must never post comments on sites that purport to represent the views of the company without first consulting the manager.
- Employees must not breach company confidential information.
- As employees of the company, there is a reasonable and lawful expectation that they will not bring the company into disrepute, extending this expectation to their conduct in the home environment.
- Any grievances with the organisation should be processed through established procedures and policies within the work environment, not online.

If employees become aware of a breach of this policy, they should first contact their manager if appropriate. Such matters may be resolved locally. However, if the breach persists and employees are found to have violated this policy, disciplinary actions, including dismissal, may be imposed.

The company reserves the right to access and monitor all emails and internet activities conducted on company equipment, including the use of any social networking sites.



▪ Personal Use of HOPECFI Resources

HOPECFI's resources are strictly for business use only. Employees are prohibited from using HOPECFI's electronic devices, documents, files, and forms for personal purposes. Any documents, files, or forms owned by HOPECFI must not be shared with or used by any other organisation unless directly related to HOPECFI's business activities. No software, programs, or similar items may be installed on HOPECFI's computer systems unless they have been scanned for viruses. Employees may not copy HOPECFI's software, except, when necessary, in the course of their duties.

Employees are responsible for taking all necessary security measures to prevent unauthorised access, alteration, disclosure, destruction, accidental loss, or destruction of personal and company data. They must only access, process, use, or disclose data and passwords necessary for their job duties.

Employees must not use HOPECFI's internet to download or view inappropriate content, engage in unlawful activities, download pornographic material, or access sites promoting self-harm, violence, harassment, or discrimination. Downloading software from the internet requires prior permission.

The use of the internet by employees is strictly for business purposes while on duty. Personal emails or internet use are not permitted during work hours, except during lunch breaks using personal phones, computers or tablets. Employees must not divert work emails to personal devices. Misuse of the email system, including transmitting defamatory, offensive, obscene, untrue, malicious, or copyright-infringing material, constitutes gross misconduct. Processing sexually explicit material via HOPECFI's systems also constitutes gross misconduct. Employees are prohibited from using the company email address for personal correspondence.

Personal electronic equipment cannot be brought in, used, installed, or connected to any company electronic devices without prior consent from the manager. If special electronic equipment is needed after a risk assessment, it must be discussed with and provided by the company with managerial approval.

Upon leaving employment or at any other time requested, employees must return electronic equipment such as mobile phones or tablets, and ensure all data held on computers or portable devices is surrendered.

Company Address

Employees are not permitted to use the company's address for personal mail.

bb. Complaints and Compliments

Complaints and compliments are fundamental ways for parents and stakeholders to express satisfaction or dissatisfaction with our services. As the primary point of contact, employees are likely the first person they will communicate with. It is crucial that all feedback, whether positive or negative, is promptly relayed to manager for review and any necessary action.

The procedures for handling complaints and compliments are detailed in the complaint policy.

cc. Disciplinary Procedure



This procedure applies to all employees of HOPECFI and covers disciplinary matters, including but not limited to:

- Misconduct
- Poor performance
- Breach of company policies or procedures
- Gross misconduct

▪ Principles

- Fairness: Employees will be treated fairly and impartially throughout the disciplinary process.
- Timeliness: Disciplinary matters will be addressed promptly at each stage of the procedure, with clear timelines communicated to all parties involved.
- Investigation: Allegations will be investigated thoroughly and impartially before any disciplinary action is taken.
- Right to Representation: Employees have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at formal disciplinary meetings.
- Appeal: Employees have the right to appeal against any disciplinary decision, and appeals will be heard promptly by a senior manager or designated appeal panel.

▪ Procedure

- Informal Stage

Verbal Counselling

Minor issues of misconduct or performance may be addressed informally through verbal counselling by the employee's immediate supervisor or manager. This serves as a reminder of expected standards and provides an opportunity for improvement.

- Formal Disciplinary Process

If informal action does not resolve the issue, the following steps outline the formal disciplinary process:

Investigation

Before any formal disciplinary action is taken, the matter will be investigated thoroughly. This may involve gathering evidence, interviewing witnesses, and giving the employee an opportunity to provide their account of events.

Notification of Disciplinary Meeting

If, following the investigation, there is evidence to support disciplinary action, the employee will be notified in writing of the allegations against them, the potential consequences, and the date, time, and location of the disciplinary meeting.

Disciplinary Meeting



The disciplinary meeting will be conducted by the employee's manager or a designated disciplinary officer. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative. At the meeting, the allegations will be discussed, and the employee will have the opportunity to present their case and respond to the allegations.

Decision

After considering the evidence and the employee's representations, the manager or disciplinary officer will decide on an appropriate disciplinary action. This could range from a formal warning to dismissal, depending on the severity of the misconduct or performance issue.

Notification of Decision

The employee will be informed of the decision in writing, typically within a reasonable timeframe following the disciplinary meeting. The notification will include details of the disciplinary action taken, the reasons for the decision, and the right to appeal.

Appeal

If the employee wishes to appeal against the disciplinary decision, they must submit a written appeal to a senior manager or designated appeal panel within five working days. An appeal meeting will be arranged promptly.

Appeal Meeting

The appeal meeting will be conducted by a senior manager or appeal panel not previously involved in the disciplinary process. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at the appeal meeting. Following the meeting, a decision on the appeal will be communicated to the employee in writing 24 hours.

Final Decision

The decision made at the appeal meeting is final within the company's disciplinary process. There will be no further right of internal appeal.

Record Keeping

Records of all formal disciplinary proceedings, including investigation reports, meeting notes, decisions, and any appeal outcomes, will be retained confidentially in accordance with data protection regulations.

Conclusion

This disciplinary procedure aims to maintain standards of conduct and performance within the organisation while ensuring fairness and respect for employees' rights throughout the process. Clear communication and adherence to procedural fairness are essential to achieving a productive and harmonious working environment.

- **Gross Misconduct**



Gross misconduct typically refers to serious breaches of conduct or behaviour that significantly impact the business environment, safety, or reputation.

A list of examples:

- Theft or fraud.
- Physical violence.
- Serious misuse of organisation property.
- Deliberate access to inappropriate internet content.
- Bullying or harassment.
- Deliberate damage to the organisation property or vandalism.
- Serious breach of confidentiality or trust.
- Serious breach of health and safety regulations, posing a significant risk to others.
- Possession or distribution of illegal substances.
- Serious insubordination or refusal to follow instructions from senior staff.
- Discrimination or harassment based on protected characteristics.
- Serious breach of safeguarding policies, compromising the safety or welfare of children. Including sharing personal details with parents and building personal relationship outside of work.
- Misuse or inappropriate use of equipment, resources, or technology, including accessing inappropriate content online.
- Unauthorised sharing and distributing the organisation's documents, files and data.
- Use of the organisation's electronic devices for personal use.

Allegations of gross misconduct may result in suspension with full pay for up to five working days pending investigation. If gross misconduct is confirmed following a thorough investigation, summary dismissal without notice may occur.

Appeals

Employees have the right to appeal a disciplinary decision within five working days of receiving their dismissal notice. Appeals will be heard by a manager, whose decision will be final. The appeal will review any disciplinary penalties imposed.

dd. Grievance Procedure

▪ Scope

This procedure applies to all employees of HOPECFI and covers grievances concerning any aspect of employment, including but not limited to:

- Terms and conditions of employment
- Working environment
- Working relationships
- Discrimination or harassment
- Health and safety concerns
- Organisational changes affecting employment

▪ Principles



- Confidentiality: All grievances will be handled confidentially, with information disclosed only to those involved in the grievance process on a need-to-know basis.
- Impartiality: Grievances will be investigated impartially by individuals who have not been directly involved in the matter.
- Timeliness: Grievances will be addressed promptly at each stage of the procedure, with clear timelines communicated to the parties involved.
- Fairness: Employees will have the opportunity to state their case and be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at formal grievance hearings.
- Non-Retaliation: Employees will not be subjected to any form of retaliation for raising a grievance in good faith.

- **Procedure**

Informal Resolution

Discussion with Manager: Employees are encouraged to discuss their grievance informally with their immediate manager or supervisor as the first step. This allows for a swift resolution without the need for formal proceedings.

Formal Grievance Process

If the grievance cannot be resolved informally, the following steps outline the formal grievance process:

Submission of Grievance

The employee should submit their grievance in writing to their manager. If the grievance involves their manager and the employee feels uncomfortable approaching them, they may submit the grievance to another manager or directly to the owner.

Investigation

Upon receipt of the written grievance, the manager will investigate the grievance promptly. This may involve gathering evidence, interviewing relevant parties, and seeking any necessary information.

Grievance Hearing

The manager will arrange a grievance hearing with the employee within a reasonable timeframe, generally within five working days of receiving the written grievance. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at the hearing.

Decision and Resolution

Following the grievance hearing, the manager will provide a written decision to the employee within a reasonable timeframe, typically within 24 hours of the hearing. If more time is needed to consider the grievance, the manager will inform the employee of the expected timeline.

Appeal



If the employee is dissatisfied with the outcome of the grievance hearing, they may appeal in writing to a senior manager or the owner within five working days of receiving the decision. An appeal meeting will be arranged within five working days.

Appeal Decision

Following the appeal meeting, the senior manager or owner will provide a final written decision to the employee within 24 hours. This decision will be final and there will be no further right of appeal within the company.

ee. Capability Procedures

▪ Purpose

The capability procedure is designed to support employees who are experiencing difficulties in meeting the required standards of performance. This procedure aims to provide clear guidance and support to help employees improve their performance and achieve the standards expected by HOPECFI

▪ Scope

This procedure applies to all employees whose performance does not meet the required standards, including issues related to skills, knowledge, or competencies required for their role.

▪ Principles

- **Supportive Approach:** The procedure aims to provide support and guidance to help employees improve their performance.
- **Fairness and Consistency:** All employees will be treated fairly and consistently, with all actions and decisions documented.
- **Clear Standards and Expectations:** Employees will be informed of the performance standards and the areas where improvement is needed.
- **Right to Representation:** Employees have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at formal meetings.

▪ Procedure

Identification of Performance Issues

Performance issues will be identified through regular monitoring, supervision, and appraisal processes. Specific examples of underperformance will be documented, and the employee will be informed of the areas where improvement is required.

Informal Support and Guidance

- **Verbal Feedback:** The manager will provide informal feedback and support to address performance issues. This may include additional training, mentoring, or adjusting workloads.
- **Action Plan:** An informal action plan may be agreed upon, outlining the performance expectations, support to be provided, and a timeline for improvement.

Formal Capability Meeting



- **Notification:** If performance does not improve following informal support, the employee will be invited to a formal capability meeting. The employee will receive written notice of the meeting, including the details of the performance issues, the date, time, and location of the meeting, and the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative.
- **Meeting Conduct:** The formal capability meeting will be conducted by the employee's manager or a designated representative. The meeting will cover:
 - o Details of the performance issues and the evidence supporting them.
 - o The employee's perspective and any extenuating circumstances.
 - o Support and training that will be provided to help improve performance.
 - o A clear action plan with specific performance targets, support measures, and a timeline for review.

Monitoring and Support

- **Implementation of Action Plan:** The action plan agreed upon in the formal capability meeting will be implemented, and the employee will receive the necessary support, training, or resources to improve their performance.
- **Regular Reviews:** Performance will be reviewed regularly, with scheduled meetings to discuss progress, provide feedback, and adjust the action plan if necessary.

Second Formal Capability Meeting

- **Review Meeting:** If performance has not improved to the required standard after the initial action plan period, a second formal capability meeting will be scheduled. The employee will be given written notice of the meeting, including details of the ongoing issues, the evidence, and their right to representation.
- **Meeting Outcomes:** The second formal meeting will review progress, discuss any barriers to improvement, and determine the next steps, which may include:
 - o Extension of the action plan with revised targets and support.
 - o Consideration of a performance improvement plan with specific performance objectives and timescales.

Final Review and Decision

- **Final Capability Meeting:** If there is still insufficient improvement in performance, a final formal capability meeting will be held. The employee will be notified in writing of the meeting details, including the performance issues, the evidence, and their right to be accompanied.
- **Decision:** The final meeting will assess whether the employee has met the required performance standards. Possible outcomes include:
 - o Confirmation of satisfactory performance and conclusion of the capability process.
 - o Further extension of the action plan or performance improvement plan.
 - o Initiation of formal disciplinary action if performance does not meet the required standards, up to and including dismissal.

Appeals

- **Right to Appeal:** Employees have the right to appeal any decision made under the capability procedure. Appeals must be submitted in writing within five working days to a more senior manager or an appeal panel.



- **Appeal Meeting:** The appeal will be heard by a senior manager or an appeal panel who were not involved in the original decision. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative. The appeal decision will be communicated in writing, and the decision of the appeal panel is final.

ff. Performance Management

▪ Purpose

The performance management procedure is designed to ensure that all employees consistently achieve their full potential and contribute effectively to the goals of HOPECFI. This procedure aims to provide a structured framework for setting performance expectations, monitoring progress, providing feedback, and supporting employee development.

▪ Scope

This procedure applies to all employees of HOPECFI, regardless of their role or level within the organisation.

• Principles

- **Clear Expectations:** Employees will be provided with clear performance expectations aligned with organisational goals and objectives.
- **Regular Feedback:** Regular feedback will be provided to employees to support their development and performance improvement.
- **Support and Development:** Managers will support employees through coaching, training, and development opportunities to help them achieve their performance goals.
- **Fairness and Transparency:** The performance management process will be fair, transparent, and conducted in accordance with equal opportunities principles.

▪ Procedure

Performance Planning

- **Setting Objectives:** At the beginning of each performance cycle employees will collaborate with the managers to set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) objectives aligned with departmental and organisational goals.
- **Discussing Expectations:** Managers will clearly communicate performance expectations, responsibilities, and key deliverables required from the employee.

Performance Monitoring and Feedback

- **Regular Check-ins:** Throughout the performance cycle, managers will conduct regular check-ins with employees to monitor progress towards objectives, provide feedback on performance, and discuss any support needed.
- **Feedback Sessions:** Formal feedback sessions will be scheduled periodically to provide comprehensive feedback on performance against objectives, strengths, areas for improvement, and development opportunities.

Performance Review



- **Annual Performance Review:** At the end of the performance cycle, an annual performance review meeting will be conducted between the employee and manager. This review will:
 - o Evaluate performance against agreed objectives and competencies.
 - o Discuss achievements, successes, challenges, and areas for improvement.
 - o Identify development needs and career aspirations.
 - o Set new objectives and goals for the upcoming performance cycle.

Performance Development

- **Development Plans:** Based on the performance review discussions, a personalised development plan will be created to address skill gaps, enhance strengths, and support career progression.
- **Training and Development:** Employees will have access to relevant training, coaching, and developmental opportunities to support their professional growth and performance improvement.

Performance Improvement Process

- **Identifying Performance Issues:** If performance does not meet the required standards, managers will initiate a performance improvement process. This involves identifying specific performance issues, providing additional support or training, and setting clear improvement goals and timelines.
- **Regular Monitoring:** Progress will be regularly monitored and reviewed to assess improvements and adjust strategies if necessary.

Recognition and Rewards

- **Recognition:** Exceptional performance and achievements will be recognised and celebrated through formal and informal recognition programs.
- **Rewards:** Where applicable, performance-related rewards, bonuses, or promotions may be considered to acknowledge outstanding contributions.

Appeals

- **Right to Appeal:** Employees have the right to appeal any performance-related decisions or ratings through a formal appeals process. Appeals must be submitted in writing within a specified timeframe to a designated senior manager or appeals panel.
- **Appeal Process:** The appeal will be heard impartially by a senior manager or appeals panel not involved in the original decision. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative. The decision of the appeals panel is final.

gg. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

▪ Introduction

At HOPECFI, we are deeply committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion across all aspects of our operations. We uphold the principles of fairness, respect, and non-discrimination in our workplace, aiming to create an environment where everyone feels valued and can contribute their best.

▪ Legal Framework



Under the Equality Act 2010, we are dedicated to protecting our employees and ensuring they are not discriminated against based on the following "Protected Characteristics":

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

▪ **Recruitment and Selection**

Our recruitment and selection processes are designed to be fair and unbiased. We do not discriminate during any stage of recruitment and welcome applicants from all backgrounds. If you require reasonable adjustments to participate fully in our recruitment process, please contact us promptly by email or telephone.

▪ **Workplace Commitment**

We strive for our workforce to reflect the diversity of society and our customer base. Every employee at HOPECFI is entitled to work in an environment free from bullying, harassment, victimisation, or any form of unlawful discrimination. We value individual differences and recognise the unique contributions of all our staff members.

▪ **Objectives**

Our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy aims to:

- Ensure equality, fairness, and respect for all employees, whether they are temporary, part-time, or full-time.
- Prevent unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment, including pay, benefits, terms and conditions, grievances, discipline, dismissal, redundancy, parental leave, flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, or training.
- Promote a culture of equality, diversity, and inclusion that enhances business performance and fosters a respectful workplace environment.
- Provide training to all employees on their rights and responsibilities under this policy, emphasising the prevention of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination.
- Hold employees accountable for their conduct, ensuring they understand the consequences of acts of discrimination or harassment against colleagues, customers, suppliers, or the public.
- Take complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination seriously, addressing them promptly through grievance and/or disciplinary procedures.
- Recognise that serious complaints may constitute gross misconduct, potentially leading to immediate dismissal without notice.
- Acknowledge that sexual harassment may result in both employment and criminal proceedings, including allegations of sexual assault.



- Support the professional development of all staff, providing opportunities for training and advancement based on merit, with limited exemptions as allowed under the Equality Act.
- Regularly review our employment practices to ensure fairness and compliance with evolving legal standards.
- Monitor the composition of our workforce regarding age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability to assess the effectiveness of our equality, diversity, and inclusion initiatives.
- Evaluate the implementation of this policy and associated action plans annually, taking proactive measures to address any identified issues.

▪ **Employment Tribunal Rights**

Utilising our grievance and disciplinary procedures does not diminish an employee's right to pursue a claim at an employment tribunal within three months of alleged discrimination.

Conclusion

At HOPECFI, we are committed to fostering an inclusive workplace where diversity is celebrated, and everyone is treated with dignity and respect. By upholding these principles, we aim to create a supportive environment where employees thrive and contribute to our collective success.

HOPECFI will continually strive to uphold these standards, ensuring our workplace remains fair, inclusive, and free from discrimination of any kind.

hh. Data Protection and Privacy Notice

This privacy notice explains how and why we process employees' personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. It outlines how we handle personal information. If an employee has any questions about this privacy notice, please contact our data protection officer.

▪ **Collection of Personal Information**

Most of the personal information we process is provided directly by the employee when they:

- Make an enquiry
- Submit a compliment or complaint
- Request information (under the Freedom of Information Act, Environmental Information Regulations, or Data Protection Act)
- Book or attend an event
- Subscribe to email updates
- Apply for a job with us

▪ **Confidentiality, Storage, and Security**

HOPECFI is committed to maintaining the confidentiality and privacy of personal data. Any information provided is securely stored and will not be sold or traded to other organisations or companies. In certain circumstances, we may be required to legally share information with government departments, emergency services, law enforcement agencies, or public authorities. When sharing personal data with



external service providers, we ensure they adhere to strict security measures and use the information only for the intended purposes.

Data Protection Measures

HOPECFI employs physical, electronic, and managerial procedures to safeguard the information provided. Secure sockets layer (SSL) encryption, an industry standard, is used on web pages where personal information is collected electronically.

Legal Basis for Processing

Under data protection law, we process personal data based on legal grounds, including:

- Performing tasks in the public interest
- Fulfilling our legal obligations
- Obtaining your consent
- Contractual necessity
- Protecting your or someone else's interests
- Safeguarding our legitimate corporate interests

When sensitive personal data is processed, an additional legal basis is required.

▪ Employees' Rights

Under data protection law, an employee has the right to:

- Obtain a copy of the information we hold about them (subject access request under GDPR)
- Correct inaccuracies in their personal data (rectification under GDPR)
- Request removal of their personal data (right to erasure under GDPR)
- Limit how we use their personal data (restriction under GDPR)
- Object to the processing of their personal data (objection under GDPR)
- Receive their personal data to reuse with other services (data portability under GDPR)

Employees may also have rights related to automated decision-making and profiling.

Making Data Protection Requests

To exercise your rights under data protection law, please email us.

Complaints

If an employee is dissatisfied with how we handle their request, they have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the UK's data protection authority.

▪ Website Usage and Social Networking

When an employee visits our website, we collect their Internet Protocol (IP) address as a unique identifier. Additionally, we gather data on your website usage, computer information (including IP address and browser type), demographic data, referring website URL, and online activities such as pages viewed, and purchases made.



Our website allows employees to share information on social media networks. Please be aware that sharing personal data with a social media network may result in them collecting and possibly sharing your information publicly. We do not control the privacy practices of external social media networks and recommend reviewing their privacy policies and adjusting your privacy settings accordingly.

Use of Cookies

Cookies are small data files sent to a computer when visit our website. They help us collect information about your browsing behaviour. Cookies may be stored on your hard drive indefinitely or deleted automatically when you close your browser session. Registered users may receive a personalised website experience, enabling transactions and access to account information.

External Links

Our website may include links to other websites, including government departments and third parties. This privacy notice does not cover these external sites, and we are not responsible for their privacy practices.

▪ Data Transfers

If your personal information is processed on servers or by third-party service providers outside the European Economic Area (EEA), we ensure they provide equivalent data protection standards as required in the EEA.

▪ Changes to This Notice

We regularly review this privacy notice to keep you informed about:

- Information collected
- Use of information
- Circumstances for sharing information with third parties

ii. Whistle-blowing – Public Interest Disclosure

▪ Purpose

This whistleblowing procedure aims to provide a mechanism for employees and stakeholders to report concerns about wrongdoing, malpractice, or risks related to the organisation's activities. It encourages transparency, accountability, and the ethical conduct of all individuals associated with the organisation.

▪ Scope

This procedure applies to all employees, contractors, suppliers, and stakeholders HOPECFI, including temporary and part-time workers. It covers concerns related to:

- Financial misconduct
- Breaches of legal obligations
- Health and safety risks
- Environmental damage
- Fraud or corruption



- Unethical behaviour
- Any other serious malpractice or wrongdoing

▪ **Reporting Procedure**

How to Raise a Concern

Any individual with a concern should report it as soon as possible to the manager or, if preferred, directly to the designated whistleblowing officer or owner. If the concern involves the manager, the report should be made directly to another senior manager or the owner.

Making a Report

Reports can be made verbally or in writing. It is essential to provide sufficient detail and evidence (if available) to facilitate a thorough investigation.

The report should include:

- Nature of the concern.
- Individuals involved (if known).
- Date, time, and location of incidents (if applicable).
- Any supporting documents or evidence.

Reports can be submitted via:

- Email to the manager or owner.
- Written letter delivered to the business address.
- In-person meeting arranged with the whistleblowing officer, senior manager or owner.

▪ **Confidentiality and Anonymity**

All concerns will be handled confidentially and with sensitivity. Every effort will be made not to reveal the identity of the whistleblower if requested. However, anonymous reports may limit the ability to investigate effectively, so providing contact details is encouraged.

▪ **Handling of Reports**

Upon receiving a report, the whistleblowing officer or designated senior manager will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the report within 3 working days.
- Assess the nature and seriousness of the concern.
- Initiate an initial review or investigation as appropriate.
- Determine the appropriate course of action.

Depending on the nature of the concern, an investigation team may be appointed, involving internal or external experts if necessary.

Investigation Process



- The investigation will be conducted promptly, impartially, and objectively.
- Interviews may be conducted with relevant individuals and witnesses.
- Evidence will be gathered and reviewed thoroughly.
- The whistleblower will be kept informed of the progress and outcome to the extent possible without compromising the investigation.

Outcome and Action

After completing the investigation, the findings will be reported to:

- The whistleblowing officer
- The manager or board of directors

Based on the investigation, appropriate action will be taken, which may include:

- Disciplinary action against individuals involved in wrongdoing
- Corrective measures to address systemic issues
- Changes to policies or procedures to prevent future occurrences

Our Safeguarding Policy will be implemented in cases where the concern pertains to a risk that may affect a child's health and welfare.

Feedback to Whistleblower

The whistleblower will be informed of the investigation's outcome, subject to confidentiality and privacy considerations. If requested, the whistleblower may receive feedback on the actions taken in response to their report.

Appeal

If the whistleblower is dissatisfied with the investigation's outcome, they may request a review or appeal, which will be handled by a designated senior manager or an independent party.

Protection Against Retaliation

HOPECFI prohibits retaliation against whistleblowers. Any reprisal or victimisation against individuals reporting concerns in good faith is a serious violation and will be subject to disciplinary action.

jj. Policies

Employees must ensure that they have a good understanding of all our key policies and keep up to date with changes in the Law.

Our key policies include:

- Safeguarding
- Health and Safety
- Complaint
- Equality and Diversity
- Behaviour Management



Employees must ensure that they are familiar with the following:

- EYFS
- Development Matters
- SEND Code of Practice
- Early Years Inspection Framework (managers and leaders)

6. Staffing, Compensation and Benefits

kk. Salary and Wages

▪ Salary and Payroll Procedures

Salaries are determined based on the role, experience, competence, and legal requirements.

Payslips will be emailed by the 5th of each month. If an employee does not receive their payslip as expected, they should promptly notify a manager. Employees are responsible for retaining a copy of their payslip.

All employees must comply with applicable Tax and National Insurance contributions. If employees believe there is an error in the amount deducted for Tax or National Insurance, they should contact HMRC directly. The company does not liaise with HMRC on behalf of employees.

Qualifying employees will be automatically enrolled in our Pension Scheme in accordance with Part 1 of the Pensions Act 2008. Employees have the option to opt-out at any time by emailing the manager.

Payroll is processed monthly, on or before the 10th by 11:59 pm, covering the first to the last day of the previous month. If the 10th falls on a weekend, Bank Holiday, or business closure, payroll will be processed on the next working day by 11:59 pm. Payments are processed on the due date. Employees should only inquire about missed payments if not received after 24 hours of the due date, after confirming with their bank.

▪ Shifts and Overtime

Staff hours are annualised as prorated weekly depending on the needs of the business unless otherwise stated on the employee's employment contract. This means employees may work more hours some weeks and less other weeks. We aim to honour employees or annual contracted hours. When calculating annual contract hours, we consider any time off requests for personal and holiday leaves, unauthorised absence, sickness absences, lateness, and time early finish.

Shifts will be published weekly by 4pm before the first working day of the week. Employees are responsible for checking their shifts and attending work as scheduled.

Employees must be available to Monday to Friday between 7:30 am and 6:30 pm unless agreed otherwise or specified on their Employment Contract. Employees should be available to cover at short notice. Where employees have been given a day off during the week, they must notify the manager in advance if they have personal commitments and will not be available to cover on this day.



- **Workplace Sign-in and Break Rules**

Signing In and Out

Employees must:

- Be prepared to start work before signing in.
- Sign out punctually using the designated sign-in/out device.
- Adhere to the dress code.
- Arrive at least ten minutes early for their shift.
- Locate the person in charge for sign-in five minutes before their shift starts.
- Use the business phone for text message sign-in or paper if electronic methods are unavailable.
- Not use personal phones for sign-in/out.
- Store personal mobile phones in the designated area or box during work hours.
- Ensure personal belongings, including medications, drinks (water is available on-site), and electronic devices (such as smart watches), are left in the staff room before signing in.

These rules apply to all employees, including managers, volunteers, and students.

- **Shift Management**

Employees are prohibited from leaving their shift earlier than scheduled unless authorised by the manager. Starting a shift earlier without authorisation will result in unpaid time. Shift adjustments may occur occasionally to manage staffing budgets.

- **Time Off and Availability**

Employees should request time off for appointments and holidays at least two weeks in advance. Swapping shifts requires manager approval. Employees must be available for occasional evening, weekend, and Bank Holiday trainings/meetings.

Employees are discouraged from working remotely without prior agreement with the manager. Unauthorised remote work is unpaid unless authorised.

- **Training and Development**

Employees are encouraged to complete training and studies during work hours. Home-based training or studies are unpaid unless authorised. Failure to complete required training during work hours may require attendance at unpaid sessions.

Apprentices are contracted to a minimum of 30 hours per week, split between training at the university, college or home and working at the employer's premises. At least 20% of these contracted hours (278 hours over 12 months) must be spent on off-the-job training.

- **Overtime and Breaks**

Overtime must be pre-approved and is compensated as Time Off In Lieu (TOIL) unless otherwise agreed. Unauthorised overtime is unpaid.



Employees are entitled to breaks depending on their shift length. All breaks are unpaid unless stated otherwise in the employment contract. Breaks must be taken in the staff room or allocated rest areas. Leaving the premises during lunch breaks requires notification to the manager.

Employees are entitled by Law to a minimum 20-minute uninterrupted break if working more than six hours. Break lengths are specified in the rota unless otherwise authorised by the manager. We aim to offer a 30-minute break for shifts up to five hours and a one-hour break for shifts exceeding five hours, where possible.

Extended breaks for personal reasons (e.g., appointments or emergencies) must be authorised by the manager in advance and are unpaid. Employees should discuss and receive approval for such requests.

We offer up to one hour for:

- Breakfast.
- Lunch.

We do not offer:

- Cigarette breaks.
- Coffee breaks.
- Prayer breaks.
- Telephone call breaks unless agreed with the manager beforehand.

Employees requiring prayer breaks must do so during allocated break times, except during religious holy months, with manager approval only. All authorised prayer breaks are unpaid.

■ Paid Holiday

An employee has the right to paid holiday ('Statutory Annual Leave') whether they work:

- Full time.
- Part time.
- Under a zero-hours contract.

Self-employed staff are not entitled to paid holiday.

The amount of days holiday employees get depends on:

- How many days or hours they worked.
- Any extra agreements we have.
- The employee's contracted hours of work.

What is included in the holiday?

Holiday is built up ('accrued') from the first day of employment, including when on:

- Probation.
- Sick leave.



- Maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave.

Employees are entitled to paid holidays, sick leave, and other types of leave as per their employment contract. Due to the nature of the business, employees are encouraged to plan for their holiday during school holidays. Holidays request during school terms are at the manager's sole discretion. Employees are therefore encouraged not to make definitive holiday plans, such as buying your travel ticket, prior to holiday been approved.

Holiday period at HOPECFI runs from the 1st of April to the 31st of March each year. Holiday cannot be carried over to another financial year.

Employees will be paid for accrued holiday at the time of booking their holiday.

A maximum of two weeks paid holiday will be granted. If employees require more than two weeks holidays, the manager may grant this in exceptional circumstances. Holidays taken above two weeks will be unpaid. Employees will be paid the maximum contracted weekly hours in any given week taken as paid holiday.

Employees should state the reason for their holiday when making a holiday request. This is because holidays are approved at first come first served basis and are prioritised during busy periods. We have the right not to give employees reasons for declining a holiday request. However, we aim to always be fair when authorising holidays.

HOPECFI reserves the right to cancel or postpone an approved holiday if the employee's absence is deemed to impact the business or their training. Employees are strongly advised to consult the HOPECFI annual calendar when booking holidays, as attendance at planned trainings and meetings is mandatory for all employees.

Bank and Public Holidays are not automatically paid as holiday.

Employees must submit a request for paid holiday via the staff scheduling system or as agreed. Where a request is approved but exceed the number of accrued hours, holiday taken will not be paid unless at our sole discretion.

Taking paid holiday before you've built it up

It is our aim to only allow employees to take accrued holiday unless agreed in exceptional circumstances.

Holiday Calculator

When an employee or worker takes paid holiday, they should get the same pay when they're on holiday as when they're at work.

Holiday pay calculations can be based on:

- Days or hours worked per week
- Casual or irregular hours
- Shifts



- **Overtime, Commission and Bonus**

Overtime may be included in paid holiday calculations. However, commission and bonus payments are not included in paid holiday.

- **Smoking**

Smoking is strictly prohibited on premises and in the car park. Smoking is only permitted during official lunch breaks in designated smoking areas, away from areas frequented by and visible to the children. Employees must be free from cigarette odour at least 20 minutes before resuming duties, restricting smoking during shorter breaks.

- **Staff Room and Facilities**

The staff room is provided for breaks, making drinks, and heating food. Employees are responsible for maintaining cleanliness and orderliness in these facilities.

- **Valuables and Liability**

Employees must keep valuables at home as the company does not assume liability for lost or damaged personal property.

II. Young Employees

Employees under 18 have additional protections due to their age, and their rights can vary depending on whether they are classified as employees or workers.

Working Hours and Rest Breaks for Ages 16 or 17

By law, 16 and 17-year-olds must not work more than 8 hours a day and 40 hours a week. They are also entitled to the following minimum rest breaks:

- A 30-minute break if their working day is longer than 4.5 hours.
- 12 hours of rest in any 24-hour period in which they work (e.g., between one working day and the next).
- Two consecutive rest days each week.

- **Working Hours for Children Under 16**

Working hours for children under 16 are restricted and must comply with specific regulations.

- **Pay for Young Employees**

Anyone employed and above the school leaving age must be paid at least the National Minimum Wage.

- **Discrimination**

Age is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act. It is illegal to treat someone less favourably because of their age or the age they appear to be.



▪ **When Can Young People Start Work?**

In England, the minimum school leaving age is 16. Until they are 18, school-leavers must do one of the following:

- Full-time education or training, such as school or college
- Work-based learning, such as an apprenticeship
- Working or volunteering for 20 hours or more a week while in part-time education or training

The general rule is that a young person under 16 can get a part-time job from the age of 14. However, they can only be employed in what is considered 'light work'. This means that they cannot do any job that may affect their health and safety or interfere with their education.

mm. Maternity Leave, Pay and Other Rights

▪ **Entitlement**

Employees are entitled to 52 weeks of Maternity Leave, starting from their first day of employment.

▪ **Notification of Pregnancy**

Employees must notify their manager of their pregnancy, the expected week of childbirth, and the intended start date of Maternity Leave no later than 15 weeks before the expected due date. This notification must be in writing.

▪ **Starting Maternity Leave**

The earliest Maternity Leave can commence is 11 weeks before the expected week of childbirth.

If an employee is absent from work due to a pregnancy-related illness within 4 weeks of the expected due date, Maternity Leave will start automatically unless otherwise agreed for health and safety reasons.

Changing the Start Date of Maternity Leave

Employees must provide 28 days' notice to change the start date of their Maternity Leave. If shorter notice is given, the new date must be agreed upon by both the employee and management.

Compulsory Maternity Leave

Employees must take a minimum of 2 weeks' leave immediately following the birth of the child.

Early or Unexpected Birth

If the baby is born early, Maternity Leave will start the day after the birth.

Employees must inform the manager of the birth in writing or by telephone within 3 days. If the birth is unexpected or traumatic, someone else may inform us, but the employee must personally inform us within 2 weeks.



Miscarriage, Stillbirth, or Infant Death

Employees retain their Maternity Leave and pay rights if the baby is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy or dies soon after birth.

Eligible employees can take Parental Bereavement Leave after Maternity Leave.

Maternity Pay

During the first 6 weeks: 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings (before tax).

During the next 33 weeks: the lower of 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings or the statutory rate of Maternity Pay (SMP).

Eligibility for SMP requires continuous employment for at least 26 weeks up to the 15th week before the baby is due and average weekly earnings of at least £123.

If not eligible for SMP, employees may be eligible for Maternity Allowance from the government.

Shared Parental Leave (SPL)

Eligible employees and their partners may opt for SPL, allowing them to share up to 50 weeks of leave and 37 weeks of Shared Parental Pay (ShPP). The employee must take at least 2 weeks' maternity leave after the birth.

Holiday Accrual During Maternity Leave

Employees continue to accrue paid holiday during Maternity Leave. Holiday Leave cannot be taken simultaneously with Maternity Leave.

Redundancy During Maternity Leave

Redundancy selection will be fair and non-discriminatory. Alternatives to redundancy, such as suitable alternative work, will be considered.

Health and Safety

A risk assessment will be conducted for pregnant employees, new mothers, and breastfeeding employees.

Identified risks will be managed by adjusting working conditions or hours, or by offering suitable alternative work.

If risks cannot be mitigated and suitable work is unavailable, the employee may be suspended on full pay until it is safe to return or Maternity Leave begins.

Pregnancy-Related Illness

Pregnancy-related illnesses will be recorded separately from other sickness absences and will not count towards absence review points.



Maternity Leave will start automatically if an employee is off work due to a pregnancy-related illness within 4 weeks of the due date, unless otherwise agreed.

Additional Leave

Employees may be eligible for additional paid leave such as compassionate leave, sabbatical leave, and training and study leave at the manager's discretion.

- **Return to Work**

Employees must confirm their return-to-work date after Maternity Leave. They can change this date by providing 8 weeks' notice.

Keeping In Touch days

10 full days attendance to work must be suggested by the employee at the time to booking leave.

- **Discrimination**

HOPECFI will not discriminate against employees based on pregnancy, related illness, or maternity leave plans. Protection is provided from the start of pregnancy until the end of maternity leave or the employee's return to work.

nn. Flexible Working Request

- **Definition of Flexible Working**

Flexible working can include a range of arrangements such as:

- Part-time working
- Flexi-time
- Job sharing
- Compressed hours
- Home working
- Staggered hours
- Annualised hours

- **Eligibility**

Employees have the statutory right to request flexible working if they have:

- Worked for the HOPECFI for at least 26 weeks
- Not made another flexible working request in the past 12 months

- **Making a Request**

Employees must submit a written request outlining:

- The desired change to working conditions
- The date they wish the change to take effect



- The impact they anticipate the change may have on the business and how this could be managed
- Whether they have made a previous application for flexible working and the date of that application

▪ **Processing Requests**

- The manager will arrange a meeting to discuss the request within 28 days of receiving it.
- The meeting provides an opportunity to explore the desired working pattern and how best it might be accommodated.
- Employees may bring a colleague to the meeting for support if they wish.

▪ **Considering Requests**

Requests will be considered based on:

- The needs of the business
- The impact on service delivery and team members
- The feasibility of the proposed working arrangement
- The employee's personal circumstances

Each request will be assessed on its own merits and consideration will be given to trial periods for new arrangements.

▪ **Decision**

- A decision will be made within 14 days of the meeting.
- If the request is accepted, a written agreement outlining the new working arrangements and the start date will be provided.
- If the request is rejected, a written explanation will be provided detailing the business reasons for the refusal.

Grounds for Refusal

Requests for flexible working may be refused on the following business grounds:

- Burden of additional costs
- Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- Inability to reorganise work among existing staff
- Inability to recruit additional staff
- Detrimental impact on quality
- Detrimental impact on performance
- Insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work
- Planned structural changes

Right to Appeal

- Employees have the right to appeal the decision.
- Appeals must be submitted in writing within 14 days of receiving the decision, stating the grounds for appeal.



- An appeal meeting will be arranged within 14 days of receiving the appeal, and the employee may be accompanied by a colleague.
- A final decision will be communicated in writing within 14 days of the appeal meeting.

- **Reviewing Arrangements**

Flexible working arrangements will be subject to regular review to ensure they continue to meet both the employee's needs and those of the business.

Either party can request a review of the flexible working arrangement if circumstances change.

- **Responsibilities**

Employees

To adhere to the agreed flexible working arrangements and communicate effectively with their managers regarding any issues or changes needed.

Managers

To consider all flexible working requests fairly and consistently, and to maintain open communication with employees about the impact and success of flexible working arrangements.

Data Protection

All information provided in the flexible working request will be treated confidentially and processed in accordance with HOPECFI's data protection policy.

oo. Parental Leave

- **Definition of Parental Leave**

Parental leave allows employees to take time off work to care for their child. It is distinct from maternity, paternity, or adoption leave and provides additional time to bond with and care for a child.

- **Eligibility**

Employees are eligible for parental leave if they:

- Have completed at least one year of continuous service with the company.
- Are the parent or legal guardian of a child under the age of 18.

- **Entitlement**

Eligible employees are entitled to:

- Up to 18 weeks of unpaid leave for each child.
- A maximum of 4 weeks of parental leave per year for each child.
- Parental leave to be taken in blocks of one week unless the child has a disability, in which case leave can be taken in days.



- **Requesting Parental Leave**

- Employees must provide at least 21 days' notice of their intention to take parental leave.
- The notice must specify the start and end dates of the leave period.
- If an employee wishes to take leave immediately after the birth or adoption of a child, 21 days' notice before the expected week of childbirth or placement is required.

- **Postponing Parental Leave**

- The company may postpone parental leave for up to 6 months if the business would be significantly disrupted by the employee's absence.
- Parental leave cannot be postponed when it is taken immediately after the birth or adoption of a child.
- Employees will be given a written explanation for any postponement within 7 days of their request.

- **Conditions During Parental Leave**

Parental leave is unpaid, and employees retain their employment rights, including the right to return to the same or a similar job after the leave period. Holiday entitlement continues to accrue during parental leave.

- **Returning to Work**

Employees are required to confirm their intended return date at least 7 days before the conclusion of their parental leave. If the leave duration is 4 weeks or less, employees are entitled to return to their original role. For parental leave exceeding 4 weeks, employees may return to a similar role with equivalent terms and conditions if returning to their original role is not feasible.

pp. Lay-Offs and Short-Time Working

If we do not have enough work for employees, as a last resort we may need to consider:

- Lay-offs (sending employees home temporarily)
- Short time working (reducing employees' working hours)

These options may help avoid redundancies.

We will consider other options first, for example, agreeing with employees to:

- Take holiday
- Work from home
- Work more flexibly
- Take unpaid leave

When an employee can be laid off or put on short time working

By law, an employer can lay off employees or put them on short time working if it's either:

- Included in the employee's employment contract "Written Terms of Employment Particular"



- Custom and practice in your workplace, with clear evidence
 - A national agreement for the industry
 - An agreement between your workplace and a trade union
 - Agreed by the employer and employee to change the terms in the employment contract
- **Changing the terms of an employment contract**

An employee can agree with their employer to change the terms of their contract to include lay-offs or short time working.

If it's a permanent change to the contract, the employer must confirm in writing what's been agreed within 1 month of the change.

If it's a temporary change to the contract, it's also a good idea for the employer to confirm what's been agreed in writing.

- **Time Limits**

How long lay-offs or short-time working lasts will depend on what's been agreed in the employee's employment contract.

There's no limit for how long an employee can be laid off or put on short time working.

- **Holiday entitlement**

Employees continue to build up ('accrue') holiday in the usual way during lay-offs and short-time working.

Employees should get full pay during lay-offs or short-time working, unless:

- It's agreed otherwise
- Their contract allows unpaid or reduced pay

- **Statutory Guarantee Pay**

Employees who are laid off or put on short-time working are entitled to pay for days they do not work.

Pay during lay-offs and short-time working

This is called 'Statutory Guarantee Pay' and is the legal minimum an employer must pay.

Statutory Guarantee Pay is £38 a day for 5 days in any 3-month period.

Employees who usually earn less than £38 a day will get their usual daily rate.

If employees work part time, their entitlement is worked out in proportion to their part-time hours.

The maximum an employee is entitled to is £190.

Eligibility

To be eligible for Statutory Guarantee Pay, you must be legally classed as an employee.

You must also:

- Have been employed continuously with the same employer for at least 1 month



- Be available to work
- Not refuse any reasonable alternative work
- Not have been laid off because of industrial action

- **Claiming Benefits**

While employees are laid off or put on short time working, they might be eligible to claiming benefit.

- **Other Work**

You might do other work while laid off or put on short time working.

You must:

- Agree the work with the employer
- Not work for a competitor
- Make sure you can return to your original job once the lay-off or short-time working ends. This can be at very short notice.

qq. Redundancy

- **Redundancy Rights and Pay**

You have redundancy rights if:

- You're legally classed as an employee
- You've worked continuously for your employer for 2 years before they make you redundant

- **Redundancy Pay**

How much redundancy pay you get depends on:

- Your age
- How long you've worked for us

You might get more than the minimum amount the law says you should get ('statutory') if it's in your contract.

How redundancy pay is worked out

Redundancy pay is based on:

- Your earnings before tax (gross pay)
- The years you've worked for us
- Your age: If you're aged 22 or under

We must give you half a week's pay for each full year you've worked.

If you're aged 22 to 41:



1 week's pay for each full year you worked after age 22 half a week's pay for each full year you worked before that

If you're aged 41 or over:

1.5 week's pay for each full year you worked after age 41

1 week's pay for each full year you worked when you were between 22 and 41 half a week's pay for each year you worked before age 22

We will tell you in writing how your redundancy pay has been worked out.

How you'll get paid

We will tell you:

- When you'll get your redundancy pay – this should be no later than your final pay date, unless we both agree another date in writing
- How you'll get paid, for example in your monthly pay or separate payments

Up to £30,000 of redundancy pay is tax free.

You may not be eligible for statutory redundancy pay if we offer you a suitable alternative job and you turn it down.

Limits on redundancy pay

There are limits to how much redundancy pay you can get; You can only get it for up to 20 years of work.

This means, for example, that if you've worked for us for 22 years, you'll only get redundancy pay for 20 of those years.

The maximum weekly amount used to calculate redundancy pay is £538 – even if your wage is more per week.

The maximum Statutory Redundancy Pay you can get in total is £16,140.

You must claim for any unpaid redundancy within 6 months of your job ending.

If your employer does not pay you

If you do not get your redundancy pay you need to:

- Write to us as soon as you can.
- The date you should get your redundancy pay should be no later than your final pay date, unless you and we agree another date in writing.
- Tell us what you're entitled to and include any evidence to back it up.

▪ Redundancy Notice



If you're an employee being made redundant, by law we must:

- Tell you a minimum amount of time in advance (give notice)
- Keep paying you until you leave your job
- Give redundancy pay if you have the right to it

We will put the details of your redundancy in writing.

You'll usually carry on working until the end of your notice. How much notice you get depends on how long you've worked.

How much redundancy notice you get

How much notice we must give depends on how long you've been working for us.

You're entitled to Statutory Notice if you've been working for us for more than a month. We cannot give you less Statutory Notice.

If you've worked for your employer for:

- 1 month to 2 years – the minimum notice is 1 week
- 2 to 12 years – the minimum notice is 1 week for each year you've worked
- 12 years or more – the minimum notice is 12 weeks

When the notice period starts

If we give you redundancy notice:

- In person, your notice period should start from the next day.
- By email or post, your notice period should start when you've had time to read it.

For example, if you're told in a letter sent by registered post, your notice will start the day after you've received it, so you've had time to read it.

Pay during your notice period

You're entitled to the same pay you'd normally get if you work your notice period.

Depending on your employer's notice period, you might not be entitled to full pay during your notice period if you're:

- On holiday (annual leave)
- On sick leave
- On maternity, paternity, or adoption leave
- Temporarily laid off or on short time working
-

You're entitled to full pay if either:

- Your notice period is the legal minimum
- Your notice period is 1 to 6 days longer than the legal minimum

You're not entitled to full pay if:



- Your notice period is 1 or more weeks longer than the legal minimum

Payment in lieu of notices

We can give you 'payment in lieu of notice' if it's in your contract. This means you get paid instead of working your redundancy notice period.

If you get payment in lieu, you should get full pay and any extras that are in your contract, for example pension contributions.

We can offer you payment in lieu of notice even if it is not in your contract. If you accept you should get full pay and anything else included in your contract.

Leaving during your notice period

You can ask to leave before your notice period ends, for example if you have another job to go to. You must get management approval to leave early; If not we will consider that you have resigned, and you could lose your eligibility for redundancy pay.

If we agree, you will get the agreement in writing and we do not have to pay you for the rest of your notice period. You will still get the same amount of redundancy pay.

Garden leave

If we say you do not have to be at work (known as 'garden leave'), you must get paid as usual during your notice period.

We can ask you to take any unused holiday during your garden leave.

We will consider your annualised contracted hours when making our decisions.

▪ Redundancy Consultation

If you're an employee affected by redundancies, we will consult you. This is even if you're not at risk of redundancy yourself.

You will usually have a face-to-face or video meeting with your manager or the person leading the redundancy changes. The meeting can take place over the phone if we agree to it and there is a clear need. We will meet with you at least once. We might need to meet you more than once to make sure we can respond to your suggestions or requests.

What to discuss at the consultation

The consultation is a chance for us to talk about the changes we're planning and why you're at risk of redundancy.

You could discuss:

- Ways to avoid/reduce redundancies
- How people will be selected for redundancy
- Any issues you have with the process
- Time off to look for a new job or training



- How the business or organisation can restructure or plan

What we must do

We will listen to you, consider your ideas, and try to come to an agreement. We do not have to make the changes you suggest.

You can appeal against redundancy if you believe we have not consulted you fairly.

Large-scale Redundancies

If we are making more than 20 people redundant within 90 days in a single establishment it's known as a 'collective redundancy'. There are set rules for collective redundancies which employers must follow. They must consult staff representatives, for example trade unions, as well as speak to you individually.

During the consultation they must let you know in writing:

- Why they need to make redundancies
- Which jobs are at risk
- The number of people who could be involved
- How they will select employees for redundancy
- How they plan to carry out redundancies
- How they will calculate redundancy pay
- Details of any agency they're using

Applying for Redundancy

Employees can apply for redundancy and redundancy pay if they've been laid off or put on short time working and receive less than half a week's pay for:

- 4 or more weeks in a row
- 6 or more weeks in a 13-week period

Taking Another Job

Instead of being made redundant, you might be able to take another job with us if you have redundancy rights ('suitable alternative employment').

If a suitable job comes up, we must offer it to you rather than make you redundant. You do not have to take the job if you do not think it's suitable.

Whether a job is suitable usually depends on:

- How much you'll be paid and what benefits you'll get, for example pension
- Where the job is – it may be further for you to travel
- How similar the role is to your current job
- What terms you're being offered
- Your skills and abilities in relation to the job

When you should get a job offer



The offer of another job should come before your current job ends. The new job should also start within 4 weeks of your current job ending. If not, you will still qualify as being made redundant and will get redundancy pay, if eligible.

Trial period

You have the right to a 4-week trial period in an alternative job. This should start after you've worked your notice period and your existing contract has ended. This avoids any confusion or disputes if the trial does not work out.

We will agree the dates for the trial period in writing. If you need longer to train for a job, you will need to request an agreement in writing with a clear end date.

If we offer you more than one job, you can try each one for 4 weeks.

Turning down the job

If we both agree it's not working out during the trial period, you can still get redundancy pay.

You need to tell us in writing during the trial period if you think the job is not suitable. If you do not, you could lose your right to redundancy pay.

You need to have a good reason why it's not suitable, for example:

- The job is on lower pay
- Health issues stop you from doing the job
- You have difficulty getting there, for example because of a longer journey, higher cost, or lack of public transport
- It would cause disruption to your family life

If your contract states you must be available to work anywhere we ask you to (a 'mobility clause'), turning down a job because of its location could risk your right to redundancy pay.

If we do not accept your reasons

If we do not accept your reasons for turning down the job, we could refuse to pay your redundancy pay.

▪ Appeal

As an employee, you can appeal against being made redundant if you believe you were unfairly selected or we did not follow a fair redundancy process.

You should talk to us first and check our appeals process.

If we do not have an appeal process, you can write to us explaining why you think the redundancy is unfair.

You can get help from staff or union representatives who can attend any meetings we might set up.

You can also ask for a senior member of staff who was not involved in the selection process to come to meetings.

What we can do

We need to tell you if we accept or reject your appeal and we need to confirm this in writing.

If we accept your appeal



If you're still on your notice period, we can offer you your job back. This means your employment contract will be the same as before you were selected for redundancy.
If you've finished your notice period, we can put you back on your previous employment contract. We should consider you as having worked continuously from the date you originally started.
You will be paid for the time you were not at work.
You will need to pay back any redundancy pay.

If we reject your appeal

If you are due redundancy notice and pay these will continue as planned.
You have the right to appeal to an Employment Tribunal.

rr. Furlough

Employers might need to put some or all their employees on temporary leave ('furlough') during a pandemic.

Furlough is where an employee or worker agrees with their employer to stop work temporarily but stay employed.

Furlough must be agreed in writing.

▪ Eligibility

Any of the following can be put on furlough, whether they work full time or part time:

- Employees
- Agency
- Those on zero-hours contracts
- Apprentices

Employers can also furlough those who are temporarily unable to work because:

- They're 'shielding' (told to stay at home by the NHS because of an underlying health condition)
- Someone in their household is shielding
- They have childcare responsibilities
- They're caring for a vulnerable person in their household

▪ Starting and Ending Furlough

We will select people for furlough in a fair way to avoid any discrimination.

We will:

- Get an agreement in writing and be clear how much you will get paid during furlough
- Keep furloughed staff on the payroll and continue your employment contracts
- Follow HMRC's furlough scheme requirements
- If someone disagrees with our decision about being selected for furlough or how much they will get paid, they should talk to us and try to come to an agreement.



▪ Furlough Agreements

Any furlough agreements should be in writing. This will include:

- The date furlough starts
- How much the furloughed worker will be paid
- When the furlough will be reviewed
- How to keep in contact during furlough

Extending furlough

Furlough can be extended by going through the process of putting someone on furlough again. Any agreement to extend will be put in writing.

Ending furlough

We will regularly review furlough agreements to decide when to bring furloughed staff back to work.

We will consider:

- Which job roles and skills are needed in the workplace
- If all furloughed staff are needed back at the same time
- If any staff might be kept on furlough because they're temporarily unable to work, for example if they're caring for someone or are shielding

To end furlough, we will give staff notice in writing where possible.

There's no minimum notice period for furlough, but we will:

- Talk to staff about any plans to end furlough as early as possible
- Encourage staff to raise any concerns or problems about returning to work

Changing an employment contract

If we cannot reach an agreement, we may need to change the written terms in their contract.

If there are more than 20 people affected, we will need to consult staff representatives ('collectively consult').

Topping up wages to 100%

We will decide whether we will top up furloughed employees wages to 100%; However this is not a requirement and is at the management's discretion. If we decide not to top up the wages, we will explain why.

Minimum wage during furlough

If furloughed staff are paid 80% of their wages through the HMRC's scheme, this might mean they get less than the minimum wage; This is allowed if they are not working.



If you do any training during furlough, you must get paid at least the current national minimum wage for those hours. In most cases furlough pay will cover minimum wage for any hours spent doing training. However if it's less, the employer must top it up.

If furloughed staff take paid family-related leave on or after 25 April 2020

Your usual full pay must be used to work out your eligibility for:

- Statutory Maternity Pay
- Statutory Paternity Pay
- Statutory Adoption Pay
- Statutory Shared Parental Pay
- Parental Bereavement Pay

If you are paid less during furlough, it will not affect your entitlement to statutory pay.

We will always consider government guideline in regard to Furlough.

ss. Employee Benefits

HOPECFI offers a range of benefits including flexible working, discount on childcare fees, pension, Salary Sacrifice Car Scheme and professional development opportunities.

▪ Reclaim Money

We have the right to deduct money from an employee's or worker's pay if:

- The employment contract specifically allows it.
- It's been agreed in writing beforehand.
- There has been an overpayment.

Deductions will not lower an employee or worker pay below National Minimum Wage, unless it is for:

- Tax or National Insurance.
- Something done which the contract says you are liable for, such as damage to a vehicle through reckless driving.
- Repayment of a loan or advance wages.
- An overpayment.
- Buying shares, other securities or share options in the business.
- Accommodation provided to you.
- Something used. For example, union subscriptions or pension contributions.

▪ Agree how the money is paid back

We aim to first talk to the employee or worker and agree how the money will be paid back. For example, a deduction from wages or a bank transfer.

If needed, we can set up a payment plan to help the employee with their finances. This is especially useful if they owe a large amount, or you did not realise we were making overpayments for a long time.



- **Our right**

If we overpaid someone, we have the right to deduct money from an employee's or worker's pay. We will speak to the employee or worker and let them know how we are going to claim it back.

We will:

- Be flexible and fair claiming the money back.
- Agree a repayment plan if needed.

If the employee or worker no longer works for us

We will contact the employee and explain why we think they owe us money and how much. If they refuse to pay us back, we might be able to make a Court claim.

This staff handbook serves as a guide for employees to understand HOPECFI's policies, procedures, and expectations. It is essential for maintaining a cohesive and productive work environment.

