**4.11 Suspension Policy**

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**Policy Statement**

This Suspension Policy outlines our process and procedures for suspending an employee from work, in accordance with the Advisory, Conciliation, and Arbitration Service (ACAS) guidelines. The purpose of suspension is to ensure that investigations into alleged misconduct or other matters affecting the employee’s ability to perform their duties can be carried out fairly and thoroughly. Suspension is not a form of punishment, but rather a neutral action to facilitate the investigation process.

**Purpose**

This policy applies to all employees within our organisation and is intended to provide a fair, consistent, and transparent approach to suspension. It is not meant to be used as a disciplinary action but rather as a temporary measure.

**Grounds for Suspension**

Suspension may be considered in the following circumstances:

* Allegations of Misconduct: Where there are allegations of serious misconduct which require investigation.
* Health and Safety Concerns: If the employee’s presence at work poses a risk to their own health, safety, or wellbeing, or to that of others.
* Potential Interference with Investigation: If there is a concern that the employee may influence witnesses, tamper with evidence, or otherwise impede an investigation.
* Serious Disruption: If the employee’s behaviour has caused significant disruption in the workplace, affecting the work of others or our organisation.

**Process for Suspension**

Initial Consideration

Suspension will only be considered after careful assessment of the situation.

Suspension is not automatic and will not be used as an assumption of guilt. It is a precautionary measure while an investigation is conducted.

Consultation and Decision-Making

The employee will be informed of the reasons for the suspension at the earliest opportunity, usually in a meeting with the manager or a designated representative.

Where possible, the employee will be given an opportunity to respond to the suspension.

The manager or HR representative will be involved in the decision-making process to ensure fairness and consistency.

**Meeting with Employee**

A meeting will be held to inform the employee of the suspension, provide reasons for it, and outline the next steps. The employee has the right to be accompanied during this meeting.

The employee will be informed of the duration of the suspension (which will be kept as short as possible) and the arrangements for keeping in contact during the suspension period.

**Duration of Suspension**

Suspension will be as brief as possible and reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains necessary.

Employees will not be suspended for longer than is absolutely necessary. If the investigation is delayed or extended, the suspension period will be reviewed to ensure it is still justified.

**Pay During Suspension**

In most cases, suspension will be on full pay unless there is a contractual provision or specific circumstances that justify withholding pay.

If the suspension extends beyond a reasonable period, we will consider whether pay should be maintained or whether the situation needs to be reviewed.

**Confidentiality**

Employees under suspension will be reminded of the importance of confidentiality during the investigation process. This includes not discussing the case with colleagues or other parties outside of the investigation.

We will also maintain confidentiality to protect the rights and privacy of both the employee and any potential witnesses.

**Support During Suspension**

Employees under suspension may experience stress and uncertainty, to reduce this as much as possible, we will ensure that the employee is kept informed of the progress of the investigation, where appropriate, and provide clear guidance on what will happen next.

**Return to Work**

Once the investigation is concluded, we will arrange a meeting with the employee to discuss the outcome.

If the employee is cleared of any wrongdoing, they will be offered a full return to work, and efforts will be made to reintegrate them into the workplace, ensuring any potential issues are addressed.

If disciplinary action is necessary, this will be handled separately from the suspension process and in accordance with our disciplinary procedures.

**Review of Suspension**

If the suspension lasts for an extended period, it will be reviewed to ensure that it remains appropriate. The review will involve the manager or HR representative who is responsible for overseeing the investigation.

The employee will be informed of any reviews and kept up to date with the status of the investigation.

**Appeal Process**

The employee has the right to appeal against the decision to suspend them. Any appeal should be made in writing and addressed to the manager.

The appeal will be heard as soon as possible, and the employee will be informed of the outcome in writing.

**Conclusion**

Suspension is a temporary and precautionary measure, not a disciplinary action. It will be handled with care and in accordance with the principles of fairness, transparency, and respect for the employee's rights. The aim will always be to ensure a fair investigation process, minimise disruption to the employee’s career, and resolve the matter in a timely manner.

This policy is designed to be flexible and in line with ACAS guidelines, which emphasise the importance of a fair and transparent process when suspending an employee. The aim is to balance the need for a thorough investigation with the employee's rights and wellbeing.

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| **This policy was adopted by Little Apples of Bramley** |
| **On 06/05/2025** |
| **Date to be reviewed** |
| **Signed on behalf of the management committee *J V Whatley*** |
| **Name of signatory J V Whatley** |
| **Role of signatory Manager** |