

Employee code of conduct template

A code of conduct is not required by law, but your disciplinary rules are: employers must tell staff in writing what those rules are or where to find them. A code is the simplest way to do that. It also does two jobs the law rewards. Clear standards on harassment are evidence of the reasonable steps employers must take to prevent sexual harassment, and a gifts and hospitality rule is part of the adequate procedures defence under the Bribery Act 2010.

Download the code ? PDF • edit the [bracketed] parts

The template

Replace each [bracketed placeholder]. Copy it from this page, or download the PDF above.

1. Purpose and who this applies to

This code sets out the standards of behaviour [Company name] expects. It applies to everyone who works for us - employees, workers, contractors and agency staff - at work, at work events, when travelling for work and when communicating about work online. Breaches may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. This code is not contractual and may be updated; the current version is at [location].

2. Respect at work

Treat colleagues, customers, suppliers and visitors with courtesy and respect. Bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination are not tolerated from anyone, at any level, towards anyone. Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature and includes comments, jokes, messages, images and touching. If you experience or witness behaviour like this, report it under clause 10. You will not be treated badly for raising a concern in good faith.

3. Honesty and integrity

Be honest in everything you record and report: hours, expenses, sales, test results, absence and qualifications. Do not falsify, alter or withhold records. Use company money as carefully as you would your own, and claim only expenses that were genuinely incurred for work.

4. Conflicts of interest

Tell [role] in writing if you, or someone close to you, has a financial or personal interest that could affect, or appear to affect, a decision you make at work. This includes an interest in a supplier, customer or competitor, a close personal relationship with someone you manage or recruit, and any other paid work. Other work must not conflict with your duties to us or take your working time above the legal limits.

5. Gifts, hospitality and bribery

Never offer, give, ask for or accept anything of value to influence a business decision or gain an improper advantage. Modest hospitality in the normal course of business is acceptable. Record any gift or hospitality worth more than [£50] in the register at [location], and get approval from [role] before accepting anything worth more than [£100]. Gifts of cash or vouchers must always be declined. If you are unsure, ask first.

6. Confidentiality and personal data

Do not disclose confidential information about [Company name], its customers, suppliers or people, during or after your employment, except where your job requires it or the law permits it. Handle personal data only as your role requires, keep it secure and report any loss or mistaken disclosure to [role] immediately. Nothing in this code stops you making a protected disclosure (whistleblowing).

7. Company property, systems and money

Equipment, vehicles, software, accounts and information provided for work belong to [Company name], are recorded against your name and must be returned when asked or when you leave. Look after them, use them for work, and do not install software or connect devices that have not been approved. Limited personal use of [email and the internet] is permitted where it does not interfere with work, break the law or bring the company into disrepute.

8. Health, safety and fitness for work

Follow safety instructions and training, use the protective equipment provided, and report hazards, accidents and near misses to [role] promptly. Come to work fit to do your job. Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at work is not permitted. [Alcohol at company events: moderate consumption is permitted; the standards in this code still apply.]

9. Representing the company

Only [named roles] may speak to the media or make public statements on behalf of [Company name]. On personal social media, do not share confidential information, do not post content about colleagues or customers that would breach clause 2, and make clear that views are your own. Follow the dress standard for your role: [describe].

10. Raising a concern

If you see something that breaks this code or the law, raise it with your manager, or with [alternative named person] if it concerns your manager. Concerns about your own treatment are handled under the grievance procedure. Concerns about wrongdoing that affects others, such as a criminal offence, a danger to health and safety or a cover-up, are handled under [the whistleblowing policy]. Every concern raised in good faith will be taken seriously, and retaliation against anyone who raises one is itself a breach of this code.

Using it well

- Keep it short enough to be read. A code that takes an hour to read is acknowledged and forgotten. Detail belongs in the policies it points to.
- Get it acknowledged, with a date. A signed or recorded acknowledgement is what lets you rely on it later.
- Make clause 2 real. From 30 October 2026 the duty to prevent sexual harassment is due to rise from taking reasonable steps to taking all reasonable steps, and employers are due to become liable for harassment of staff by third parties such as customers. A paragraph in a code is a start, not a defence: see the duty to prevent sexual harassment and the anti-harassment policy template.
- Set gift limits that suit your sector. The figures in clause 5 are placeholders. The Bribery Act defence depends on procedures proportionate to your own risk.
- Name a second person in clause 10. A reporting line that runs only through the manager fails when the manager is the problem.

The code states the standards; the disciplinary policy template states what happens when they are not met.

A free template from CoDash - codash.co.uk/templates. Edit it to match how your company actually works, and take advice on anything unusual.