

## DISCIPLINARY POLICY

### Introduction

The Company's aim is to maintain standards of performance and behaviour. This procedure is designed to ensure that Search Associates are fully aware of the standards of performance, action and behaviour expected.

### Informal Procedure

In cases of minor instances of misconduct or poor performance, the Company may elect to deal with the Search Associate informally through verbal discussions. A note of these discussions will be kept by the Company, but these discussions will not form part of any subsequent formal disciplinary proceedings. The Search Associate does not have the right to be accompanied to informal meetings.

### Investigation

Prior to taking any disciplinary action, the Company will fully investigate any allegations of wrongdoing. Notes will be taken of all interviews and meetings in connection with the investigation.

### Formal Disciplinary Stages

#### Verbal Warning

In the case of minor breaches of Company rules, or where performance is unsatisfactory, the Company may issue a verbal warning. This warning will be confirmed in writing, and will normally be disregarded after a period of six months.

#### Written Warning

Where there are repeated minor breaches following a verbal warning or in the case of more serious misconduct, the Company may issue a written warning. A written warning will normally be disregarded after a period of 12 months.

#### Final Written Warning

Where further breaches of discipline or performance standards occur after a written warning, or where the misconduct is viewed as serious, the Company may issue a final written warning. The final written warning will specify that any further breaches of discipline may result in an employee's dismissal. A final written warning will normally be disregarded after a period of 18 months.

#### Dismissal

Where further breaches of discipline or performance standards occur after a final written warning, or in the case of gross misconduct, the Company may dismiss the employee either with or without notice. In cases of gross misconduct, normally no notice will be given or paid by the Company. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, and at the sole discretion of the Company, the Company may start disciplinary proceedings at any stage of the procedure.

### **Right to be accompanied**

The Search Associate shall be entitled to be accompanied to any formal disciplinary hearing or appeal by a fellow Search Associate or an appropriate trade union official.

### **Appeal**

Search Associates shall have the right to appeal against any disciplinary sanction. Appeals will normally be made to the next line of management to that which imposed the original disciplinary measure, and should be made in writing within five days of receipt of the letter confirming the disciplinary measure to be applied. An appeal hearing will be set as soon as practical thereafter.

### **Employees with less than 2 year's service**

The Company reserves the right at its sole discretion not to follow this disciplinary procedure in the case of a Search Associate with less than two year's service with the Company.

### **Code of conduct**

The following list sets out the Company rules. Breach of any of these rules may result in disciplinary action being taken against the Search Associate. This list of rules is not exhaustive.

Search Associates are required to comply with the following obligations:

- To attend work at the appointed time and to maintain acceptable time-keeping
- To observe the company's absence reporting procedure
- To maintain an appropriate standard of dress and personal appearance in line with company requirements.
- To observe the company's health and safety policies and procedures, and to report any accidents or other instances that result in injury to themselves, fellow Search Associates or any other individual at work
- Not to smoke in areas that are not specifically designated for smoking
- Where company vehicles are provided, to comply with the company's policy on company car use. In particular, Search Associates must immediately report any accidents involving company vehicles or damages to those vehicles.
- To take care of all company equipment, including company cars
- To obey all reasonable management instructions
- To be polite to all customers, clients and suppliers of the company
- To observe the company's equal opportunities and harassment policies
- To observe the company's policies and procedures on data protection and use of email, internet and telephone facilities
- To keep confidential both during and after their employment with the company all information gained in the course of their employment relating to the company and/or its clients, customers or suppliers

### **Gross Misconduct**

The following list sets out the type of behaviour that the Company considers as gross misconduct. A breach of any of the following rules may result in the Search Associate's dismissal without notice. Note that this list is not exhaustive.

- Theft
- Fraud
- Falsification of time-sheets or expenses claims or other documentation relating to employment
- Violent conduct towards fellow Search Associates, customers, clients or suppliers
- Threatening conduct or swearing at fellow Search Associates, customer, clients or suppliers
- Gross insubordination, or a repeated refusal to obey a reasonable management instruction
- Gross negligence
- Instances of sexual (including sexual orientation), religious or racial harassment
- Serious breach of the Company's email or internet policy, including the downloading or sending of pornographic or sexually explicit material, and the sending of racially offensive jokes
- The introduction of viruses into the Company's computer system
- Attending work whilst unfit as a result of alcohol or illegal drugs, including any instances where alcohol is consumed or illegal drugs used during working hours
- Serious breach of the Company Health and Safety policy
- Serious breach of confidentiality