



Staff Handbook

1. General

This document outlines the rules of conduct which apply to every employee at MetaLair Ltd.

1.1. Conduct at Work

During work times our organisational needs are paramount. You should make sure your efforts and energies are concentrated on achieving work objectives.

We expect you to conduct yourself in a reasonable manner towards any person with whom you come into contact on our behalf.

We expect you to observe reasonable instructions or requests issued by those authorised to act on our behalf.

1.2. Conduct outside Working Hours

We have no wish to intrude upon your activities or interests outside work. However, we expect you not to engage in any activity outside working hours which:

- Could result in adverse publicity to our organisation
- May cause us to question your integrity
- Prevents you from performing your duties/responsibilities to our satisfaction
- Prevents us meeting our legal obligations

Infringements may lead us to investigate further. Disciplinary action, including dismissal in the most serious circumstances, may follow.

1.3. Dress Code

Your appearance, personal hygiene and what you wear to work is important. We must always portray a professional image. We expect smart casual for work and smart dress or suit when on client sites. We expect you to wear neat, clean and tidy clothing which is appropriate to your job.

2. General Attendance and Sick Leave

Please arrive ready to start work at your official starting time. You must observe any time recording procedures relating to your job. Lateness and absence will be recorded. Unacceptable levels of timekeeping and attendance will result in disciplinary action.

If you need to leave work during the working day you must obtain permission from your line manager and also inform any clients if you are due to work with them during your period of absence.

2.1. Absence - Notification

You must notify your line manager by telephone at the earliest opportunity on the first day of sickness absence. Please do this before your normal starting time if possible. In any event, you must always contact us by 10.00am. Please contact us personally. If your illness prevents this, please ask a relative, friend or neighbour to contact us.

It is essential we know you are ill so we can cover your duties and responsibilities. This minimises disruption and helps us maintain a reasonable workload for your colleagues and prevent work flow issues with clients.

Please tell us the reason for your absence and how long you expect to be off work. You must keep us regularly informed of progress, especially if your absence continues longer than expected.

2.2. Following our Procedures

We expect you to follow our sickness procedures. If you do not observe them we may regard your absence as unauthorised. We may withhold sickness payments and take appropriate disciplinary action.

3. Confidentiality

During your employment you will inevitably see and use sensitive confidential data about people's relationship with this organisation. This may relate to clients, other employees, suppliers etc. It is important to recognise that this is privileged information.

You must not, except in the proper performance of your job or as required by law, disclose confidential information relating to our organisation or client organisations. This also applies where we must respect an obligation of confidence to anyone else. This is both a legal and contractual obligation. You must respect it even after you leave our employment. Confidential information/data includes but is not limited to:

- Information/data about other employees, customers, clients, suppliers etc
- Unpublished financial accounts or statistical data

- Trading or operational procedures, methodology or analyses
- Computer code or software
- Processes, designs and products in development or subject to modification

This applies where you acquire the information/data through your employment. And where it would not be publicly available other than by your disclosure.

You must not disclose such information to any other person or organisation. This applies irrespective of whether you are doing so for your own purpose or benefit or for any other reason.

You must not remove or transmit any documents, material or data physically or electronically belonging to us or clients. You must not send/store our information/data onto your own or any external storage device or medium. We must specifically authorise any deviation from this policy in advance. The only exceptions are where you do so in the proper performance of your job or as required by law.

You must use your best efforts to prevent disclosure, publication or misuse of confidential material by anyone else. Please report any suspected breach to us immediately.

You must return when we request, and in any event when your employment ends, all documents and equipment belonging to us or to our clients. This includes information belonging to us or clients which you may have stored on portable or external electronic media locations. Where we or a client request, you must delete, destroy, remove or erase confidential information contained in documents, electronic storage media/devices, disks etc. This applies to all material in your possession or under your control, irrespective of its location.

4. Gifts, Hospitality and Bribery

The Bribery Act 2010 makes it an offence to offer, promise or give a bribe. It is also an offence to request, agree to receive or accept a bribe.

A bribe is “a financial or other advantage offered or requested with the intention of inducing or rewarding improper performance of a relevant function or activity”. It also applies where you “know or believe that acceptance would constitute improper performance of a function or activity”.

It is our policy to conduct our business in an open, honest and transparent way. We do not condone the use of corrupt practices or acts of bribery to obtain an unfair advantage. We adhere to the highest ethical standards and this is reflected in every aspect of the way in which we operate.

You must be alert to attempts to influence you inappropriately or to engage in/facilitate bribery. This is especially relevant to those procuring goods or services or dealing with third parties on our behalf. For instance, you may be offered excessive hospitality or gifts to facilitate business dealings. You must not accept any inducement designed to influence you inappropriately in the performance of your job.

Do not accept gifts from customers, suppliers, any other person or organisation with whom we do (or might develop) business. This avoids any misunderstandings or allegations of impropriety. It is important you do not act inconsistently with our standards or, however inadvertently, impugn our integrity. Accepting a gift which influences or seems to influence your actions or decisions on our behalf may do this.

You must not accept money, gifts or other rewards from clients, suppliers etc contrary to our normal practices. Do not accept inappropriate levels of hospitality. Accepting lunch may be acceptable. Accepting a free holiday will not. If unsure, check first with your line manager.

You may accept small, genuine tokens of appreciation or gratitude which are commensurate with common practice in our organisation. They must be proportionate and reasonable and you must declare them to your line manager. You must not treat the person/organisation that provides such gift more favourably than other clients/suppliers, etc. If unsure, check first with your line manager.

Where you are unsure, or feel refusal of a gift or hospitality might cause difficulty, consult your line manager first.

This policy does not apply to promotional items such as stationery or pens with a logo or company name. This is always provided the items have no significant value.

We are committed to this policy and take a "zero tolerance" approach to any act of bribery or corruption by a member of staff. We view breaches as serious misconduct which, following investigation, may lead to disciplinary action. The penalty may include summary dismissal where we believe gross misconduct has taken place.

We will review this policy from time to time in the light of experience.

5. Disciplinary Procedure

Reasons which may give rise to the need for disciplinary measures include the following either at our offices or client sites:

- Fighting, physical assault or dangerous horseplay
- Failure to carry out a reasonable instruction during working hours
- Gross insubordination or the use of aggressive behaviour or excessive bad language on Company premises, or towards customers/colleagues, or on any occasion whilst performing job duties
- Theft, wilful damage or negligence that leads to damage to property belonging to the Company, its clients or suppliers or other employees
- Fraud or any other offence committed against the Company or customers, which could be a breach of the law of the land
- Drunkenness or drug abuse
- Gross immorality or sexual harassment

- Breach of safety rules and/or actions that seriously endanger the health or safety of another person whilst at work
- Divulging to any persons any confidential information relating to the Company or client's business processes or clients
- Wilful or reckless overcharging and undercharging of customers
- Deliberate falsification of records
- Serious breach of payment procedures or purchase rules
- Unauthorised access to or use of Company correspondence, computer data or manual files
- Unlawful race, sex or disability discrimination against fellow employees or customers

The normal policy of the Company if the need for disciplinary action arises is:

Firstly:	verbal warning
Secondly:	written warning
Lastly:	dismissal

Reasons which may give rise for instant dismissal without notice include the following:

- Criminal offences including theft or fraud committed within or outside business hours
- Reduced capacity to carry out duties due to the influence of alcohol, drugs or unreasonable financial commitments
- An act of physical violence

6. Grievance Procedure

Where possible, you should try to settle minor, day to day, work-related issues informally. Please do this via your line manager. If the issue concerns your line manager, you can raise it with their manager. We recommend discussing any concern promptly. This is often the best way to resolve matters speedily, effectively and without need for formality.

6.1. Our Procedure

Our formal grievance procedure allows you to express a complaint or identify a matter of concern still remaining unresolved. It provides an opportunity for us to consider issues you can't resolve informally. You can also use it where you believe an informal approach would be inappropriate. The procedure is open to you at any time and we always try to deal with issues fairly and consistently.

If you wish to have a grievance formally investigated, please submit it to us in writing. Please provide full details of the matter and tell us about the solution you are seeking. This should normally be addressed to your line manager. They will arrange a meeting to discuss and consider it. If the grievance is about your manager, address it to their manager. Following the meeting we will confirm the outcome in writing.

6.2. Appeal

If you feel a matter has still not been satisfactorily resolved, you may appeal in writing. This must be done within five days of receiving the written outcome from the meeting. Appeals will be heard, wherever possible, by a more senior manager without any prior involvement in the matter. The outcome of the appeal is final.

6.3. Representation

A work colleague of your choice or trade union representative may accompany you at grievance hearings or appeals. Union representatives must be certificated by that union to act as a worker's companion. We give suitable notice of meetings and will consider one adjournment if date or time is inconvenient to your representative.

7. Non-Harassment Policy

We support your right and opportunity to seek, obtain and hold employment without discrimination and with respect for your dignity.

Harassment in the workplace is a discriminatory act which in any form is unacceptable and in most cases unlawful. We are committed to providing a working environment which is harmonious and acceptable to all. We extend this principle to the people our organisation deals with.

7.1. What Is Harassment?

Harassment is "unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which violates an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual".

Harassment is not only unacceptable language or behaviour which causes the recipient to be embarrassed, offended or threatened. Someone may complain about particular behaviour that they find offensive even though it was not directed at them. Neither does the person complaining need to possess the protected characteristic. It may also be behaviour directed at someone who associates with a person who has a protected characteristic or because they are believed to possess a protected characteristic (even if they don't).

7.2. Your Responsibilities

It is your duty to treat people with respect; appreciating their feelings and considering their well-being in what you say or do. What may be acceptable to one person may upset and/or intimidate another. Harassment takes many forms and can range from relatively mild banter to actual physical

violence. It can be delivered in many ways and this policy applies to all forms of communication including text messages, email and comments posted on social networking sites.

The following are examples of behaviour which we consider constitutes harassment, this list is not considered exhaustive:

- Coarse or insensitive jokes and pranks
- Coarse or insensitive comments about appearance or character
- Display or distribution of offensive material whether written or pictorial
- Deliberate exclusion or isolation from conversation or activities
- Unwelcome familiarity or body contact
- Abusive, insulting, or threatening language
- Demands or threats to intimidate or obtain favours
- Threatened or actual violence

We will investigate all allegations of such behaviour. Offenders are liable to disciplinary action and, in serious cases, dismissal.

7.3. Third Party Harassment

Harassment may also take place through someone who is not our employee. This is known as third party harassment. If someone using our services or who has a business relationship harasses you, tell your line manager immediately. We can then take reasonable steps to prevent it from recurring.

7.4. Where You Encounter Harassment

If you feel you are being harassed, the first step is to make clear you want it to stop. Tell the person harassing you that you find such behaviour unacceptable. Person-to-person discussion at an early stage is often enough to stop harassment. Alternately, you could seek the help of a trusted colleague and ask them to approach the person causing offence on your behalf.

If the behaviour continues, or you consider an instance to be particularly serious, please implement the grievance procedure. We assure you that grievances will be dealt with promptly and in a discrete and caring manner.

Where you make or support a complaint in good faith, you will not be victimised for doing so whatever transpires.

We are unable, however, to protect anyone who maliciously makes or supports an untrue complaint. We investigate such occurrences utilising our disciplinary procedure.

8. Social Networking

You should not make contributions relating to this organisation on social networking sites unless it is part of your job role. You should not comment about any other employee, client, supplier etc. This applies whether you use our equipment or your own and whether in work time or your own. Such contributions may impact detrimentally upon our interests, whether inadvertently or otherwise. We will view infringements as a serious breach of our rules. This may result in disciplinary action and, potentially, dismissal.

We hold you accountable for all contributions that you make. Anything you post can impact upon us even if you did not intend this. It does not matter whether your post was made personally or on our behalf. Consider carefully whether what you intend to say could be detrimental to our interests. You should take great care not to post anything that could be considered inflammatory. You must ensure you do not publish inaccurate, inappropriate or defamatory content. We will view infringements as a serious breach of our rules. This may result in disciplinary action and, potentially, dismissal.

We appreciate that many people use social networking sites such as LinkedIn or Twitter. You may do this personally or even in your professional capacity on our behalf. If you identify details of your role within our organisation, we can clearly be associated with what you say. Therefore, anything you post on such sites must not infringe the provisions above.

You may also develop a database of contacts on such sites. It will inevitably contain a mixture of connections. You may obtain some from our contact database. You may create some with our clients, other employees etc. during your employment. Some may be contacts from former roles or your personal acquaintances. Where you develop contacts through your work on our behalf, our confidentiality provisions apply. You must respect them even after you leave our employment. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, information and data about other employees, customers, clients, suppliers etc. We may require you to supply details of contacts established as part of your employment before you leave. We may require you to delete such contacts from your account(s) at our entire discretion.

Where you have a grievance or concern about something associated with work, do not use social networking to air it. You should normally discuss it with your line manager at an early opportunity. We also have a confidential reporting system which is available to all employees. This provides you with an appropriate means of raising matters of concern about any aspect of our organisation.