

# Respect at Work Corporate Policy

## Why this policy matters

Respect at work is fundamental to our values, culture, and success as an organisation. This policy sets out the BBC's core principles and requirements to ensure a respectful, inclusive, and professional work environment.

It helps us:

- Uphold our public service mission and values and raise concerns
- Prevent discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment and abuse of power
- Foster diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Comply with legal and regulatory obligations
- Protect our reputation and maintain audience trust
- Manage conflicts of interest
- Address alcohol and substance use

Promoting respect at work supports employee wellbeing, creativity, and productivity. It also helps us attract and retain diverse talent, reflecting our audience and enhancing our content.

## Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to you if you are:

- A BBC employee in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man
- On a standard contract, either continuing or fixed-term (full or part-time)

This policy forms part of your contract of employment. It is an agreed statement between the BBC and recognised joint unions for Bands A-Fp and can only be varied by joint negotiation at the National Joint Council.

## The essential things you must do or not do

These high-level core mandatory requirements are the most important for you to understand and follow to meet the policy objectives and mitigate risks.

In addition to these essential requirements, there are detailed requirements and best practices outlined in supporting procedures and guidance, linked below. Read this information when you need to understand the detail.

We rely on you to have open discussions with your line manager, or one of the people listed in the section under 'Where to go for help' for clarification on any grey areas or conflicting priorities that make it unclear how to follow the essential requirements. Breaches may

result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, or termination of our relationship with you.

## **Respect and inclusion**

We promote dignity and respect for all, recognising and valuing individual differences and contributions. We will take steps to support employees who identify as transgender, non-binary or gender-fluid.

1. You must treat all colleagues with respect and dignity, regardless of their background, identity, or position.

This includes fostering an inclusive environment free from discrimination, harassment, and bullying.

You can read more about [our diversity and inclusion principles and practices](#).

## **Bullying, harassment, including sexual harassment, and victimisation**

We do not tolerate bullying, harassment, including sexual harassment, or victimisation.

We expect everyone working at or with the BBC (including freelancers, sub-contractors and agency workers), as well as third parties such as visitors and guests, to behave respectfully towards others and never act in a way that could be regarded as bullying, harassment, including sexual harassment, or victimisation.

Serious cases of discrimination, victimisation or bullying and harassment, including sexual harassment, are examples of gross misconduct, which are acts so serious as to justify summary dismissal without notice.

2. You must NOT discriminate against, harass, or bully any individual based on protected characteristics or any other reason.

Protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Read more about [what constitutes discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment and bullying](#), and [how to report concerns](#) or raise a complaint or appeal using the bullying and harassment submission form

## **Accessibility**

3. As a creator or procurer of products and services, you must design them from the outset to be accessible to everyone.

You can read more about [accessibility](#).

## **Relationships at work**

Personal relationships between colleagues are not prohibited.

Where two staff members have a close or romantic relationship, they must conduct themselves professionally whilst at work or when representing the BBC and respect the

boundaries of personal and professional. Equally, personal conflict should not be brought into the workplace

4. You must declare any personal relationships that could create an actual or perceived conflict of interest via Declaration of Personal Interests

This is particularly important for relationships within the chain of line management or where one employee has significant influence over decisions affecting the other.

You can read more about [how to declare personal relationships](#) and [manage potential conflicts of interest](#).

### **Abuse of power**

Being associated with or working for the BBC may give you a public platform, followers on social media, a fan base, or influence in public life.

Our audience, colleagues and the general public expect high standards of conduct from all of us, making prevention of abuse of power a corporate imperative.

5. You must NOT abuse your position of power or influence gained through your association with the BBC.

This includes refraining from offering access to BBC careers or connections in exchange for personal favours, or using your position to instigate inappropriate personal relationships.

Read more about [what constitutes abuse of power](#) and [how to report concerns](#).

### **Raising grievances**

We have a formal process for addressing serious personal workplace concerns that cannot be resolved informally. If you need to raise a grievance, it's important to use the established channels.

6. If you are raising a complaint, you must raise this within 21 days of the action complained of. This may be extended at the discretion of the BBC.

You can read more about [how to raise a grievance](#), [the formal grievance process](#) and [how to raise an appeal](#).

### **Disciplinary**

The BBC Values provide a framework for the standards of behaviour expected of employees.

Where standards of behaviour fall below what is expected, this could constitute misconduct. The BBC takes all allegations of misconduct seriously and where necessary the disciplinary process will be followed. Where appropriate, employees and managers

should make every effort to resolve issues without recourse to the formal disciplinary procedure.

Matters which may be viewed as amounting to disciplinary offences include, but are not limited to:

- persistent bad timekeeping;
- unauthorised absence;
- poor attendance;
- failure to observe BBC policies and procedures;
- acting outside of the expectations of the BBC Code of Conduct;
- unauthorised use of BBC property;
- causing careless damage to BBC property;
- unreasonable refusal to follow an instruction issued by a manager.

The Formal Procedure will always be followed for allegations of gross misconduct which are acts so serious as to justify summary dismissal without notice. Examples of gross misconduct may include, but are not limited to:

- assault;
- abuses of power;
- sexual harassment;
- actions which could bring the BBC into serious disrepute (or have brought the BBC into disrepute);
- serious breach of the BBC's Editorial guidelines and/or Social Media;
- serious or repeated failure to follow a reasonable management instruction;
- theft, fraud and/or dishonesty;
- serious negligence;
- endangering life;
- serious breaches of the Alcohol and Drugs procedure;
- gross dereliction of duty;
- discrimination;
- victimisation;
- making serious or repeated vexatious complaints;
- corrupt practices and bribery;
- knowingly providing false information or unreasonably withholding information that should be disclosed to your employer (in line with BBC policies and procedures);
- safeguarding breaches;
- malicious damage to BBC property or the property of a BBC colleague in the workplace;
- serious breach of confidentiality or misuse of information systems and/or data In line with the Acceptable use of Information Systems
- serious or repeated misuse of BBC IT equipment, software applications (downloaded by the BBC or the user) or systems (including where using own devices on BBC WIFI) In line with the Acceptable use of Information Systems

- serious or repeated instances of bullying and/or harassment and/or inappropriate conduct;
- serious breach of health and safety;
- other actions that seriously undermine trust and confidence.

Read more about [what constitutes disciplinary offences, the disciplinary process and appeals](#)

## **Appeals**

An appeal is a formal complaint made by an employee under the following circumstances:

- If they are dissatisfied with the outcome of their grievance procedure due to procedural errors, a failure to consider relevant evidence and/or a failure to address all allegations;
- If they are dissatisfied with the penalty imposed on them as a result of a disciplinary procedure;
- If they are dissatisfied with their penalty and/or warning of termination on the grounds of capability;
- If they wish to appeal against their dismissal including the terms of the dismissal;
- If they wish to appeal the outcome of their request for a career break; or
- If they are dissatisfied with the application of the procedure followed for any of the above.

Employees appealing against dismissal, other than

- summary dismissal which takes effect immediately, or
- a fixed term contract expiring on its due date,

remain on the payroll until their contractual notice has expired or until the internal appeal has been completed or abandoned, which will be no longer than 90 days.

BBC management will provide a written outcome of an individual's appeal as soon as is practicable and within 90 days from the date of notification of the appeal unless there are exceptional circumstances.

You can read [more about appeals](#).

## **Alcohol and Drugs**

The BBC will address constructively and sympathetically employee problems related to alcohol and substance dependency. However, employees must be in a fit state to carry out their work and the BBC will take action if their performance is impaired by the use of alcohol, drugs or other substances.

Employees who, because of occasional excessive use of alcohol, drugs or other substances, behave in a manner contrary to normal standards of conduct will be dealt with under the Disciplinary procedure.

This will also apply to behaviour whilst the employee is off-duty where there is a concern or connection with the employee's job. The decision as to what course of action to follow is at the discretion of the BBC.

Read more about [Alcohol and Drugs procedure](#).