



# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

POLICES & PROCEDURES

Employee Handbook

Policies and Procedures

Version 1 February 2022

# Welcome

Welcome to the Heart Teaching Policy and Procedures Handbook. This handbook has been produced to help you navigate your way through all our policies and procedures.

The purpose of this handbook is to give you as much information as possible about your terms of employment, what our expectations around your behaviours are and the policies you will need to understand and adhere to.

This handbook does not form part of your Contract of Employment, however it should be read in conjunction with your Contract of Employment.

This handbook is by no means an exhaustive guide to your employment with us; however, it has been developed to act as a resource and reference for you.

This handbook will be updated as required and you will be notified of any changes as they occur.

If you have any questions about the content, please do not hesitate to contact **Justin Brown or Faith Ashby**



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# 1. Probationary Policy

*This policy is not contractual and is not intended to be incorporated into individual terms and conditions of employment. It may be subject to review, amendment or withdrawn.*

## **Introduction**

The probationary period is a trial period during which the performance, conduct and attendance of an employee new to Heart Teaching, or new to a different role, is assessed by their Manager.

This policy outlines the structure in place to ensure a robust and fair probationary review process operates in Heart Teaching.

## **Probationary Periods**



The minimum probationary period is normally **3 months**, however certain roles may require a longer probationary period which could initially be **6 months**.

Employees should refer to their offer letter or terms of employment to understand the length of their probationary period.

Probationary periods normally apply to new employees joining Heart Teaching, however, an employee who changes to a different role, is promoted and/or moves department may also be subject to a probationary review period.

Where a new role is substantially different normally a probationary period will apply.

This policy applies to employees who:

- New employees

- Employees taking on a new or substantially different role within Heart Teaching, which may include promotion or secondment

- Employees who are in their probationary period

- Employees who have had their probationary period extended, including where there is a change in organisational structure

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### **Our Commitment**

Heart Teaching is committed to providing coaching, support, training and resources to ensure all employees are supported to achieve successful performance during their probationary period.

### **Procedure**

During the probation period, employees will be monitored against employment practices, policies and standards of Heart Teaching. This includes (but is not limited to) management of attendance, performance and disciplinary.

For disciplinary concerns, Heart Teaching may choose to use the disciplinary procedure if felt appropriate and the probationary period will not usually be confirmed until the disciplinary matter is resolved.

Managers will normally meet with their employees on a regular basis to discuss their progress during the course of their probationary period. This is an opportunity for both the employee and the Manager to express views on progress (both acceptable and in need of improvement), seek support, guidance or clarification and work towards set goals and objectives.

Meetings may take place in ways which permit flexibility and informality, for example by telephone or via Microsoft Teams/Zoom.

### Completing of the Probationary Period

Where an employee has successfully completed the probationary period, they will be informed by their manager and the employee will receive confirmation in writing that their probation has been successfully passed.

A copy of this letter will be recorded on their personnel file

Where an employee does not successfully complete the probationary period and has therefore been unsuccessful in their appointment, their manager will arrange a meeting to explain the reasons why.

This meeting will normally take place on or around the end of the probationary period.

### Extending a Probationary Period

If there are concerns related to the employee's performance, attendance or conduct during their probationary period then it may be extended. The employees' manager may consider extensions to the probationary period in blocks of 1/2/3 months. Heart Teaching may consider extensions up to a total of 12 month's employment.

A letter confirming the probation outcome will be provided to the employee and recorded on their personnel file, this along with the areas of improvement that are expected to be achieved and maintained to successfully pass probation.

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## 2. Internet, E-Mail And Social Media Policy

*This policy is not contractual and is not intended to be incorporated into individual terms and conditions of employment. It may be subject to review, amendment or withdrawn.*

### Introduction

This policy includes access to, and use of, the Internet and sending and receiving e-mail or text/twitter messages. Employees should read the policy carefully and make sure that they comply with the rules and guidance. A breach of the rules may result in legal claims against the employee and Heart Teaching, and will be regarded as a disciplinary matter and dealt with in line with the Company disciplinary procedure. Serious breaches will be treated as gross misconduct and could lead to summary dismissal.

### Scope

This policy applies to all employees working on any computer equipment (desktop, laptop, handheld computers, workstations) belonging to Heart Teaching, either in its offices or elsewhere. It also applies if employees bring their own laptop, palmtop or electronic diary to work.

### General Rules

The systems are for business purposes.

Ownership, storage and disclosure – Heart Teaching own all electronic documents and files that employees

create. Remember that e-mails:

- Are stored and may be inspected at any time;
- Are recorded and a hard copy can be made of them;
- Can be read by people other than the addressee; and
- May need to be disclosed in litigation.



A high degree of caution must be exercised when issuing information to outside individuals or companies. Sensitive confidential information should never be transmitted to outside individuals or companies via the

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facilities without the authorisation of their Manager. Care must be used in addressing data or messages to make sure that they are not sent to the wrong individual or company. In particular, exercise care in using e-mail distribution lists to make sure that all addressees are appropriate recipients of the information.

It is unlawful to send unsolicited emails or mobile telephone text messages to individuals with whom there is no existing customer relationship unless those individuals have given their consent. Any unsolicited communications sent must include wording in the title or in the text enabling the receiver to opt-out of further contact in the future. If an employee is informed that an individual with whom Heart Teaching has an existing relationship or who has previously consented to receiving information wishes to opt-out of receiving such communications in the future, they must update the data relating to that individual immediately or inform their team leader/ Manager immediately and on no account must they continue to communicate with that individual by such means.

Employees should take care to ensure that all messages sent via email are courteous, professional and business-like and do not contain any material, which would reflect badly on Heart Teaching's reputation or standing. Email messages must not contain derogatory remarks about another person, as this may constitute libel. If an employee receives mail containing material that is offensive or inappropriate to the office environment then they must delete it immediately. Under no circumstances should such mail be forwarded internally or externally.

Provided that it does not interfere with their performance or that of the Company's systems the facilities *may* be used, *within reason*, for personal communications or to send and retrieve personal messages and to browse external web-sites for personal use although this should be done outside office hours or during their lunch break and be kept to a reasonable limit. If there is any evidence that this privilege is being abused then the privilege may be withdrawn. The content of personal e-mails must also comply with the restrictions set out in this policy.

The following uses of the facilities are expressly prohibited:

- Viewing internet sites which contain pornographic, obscene, abusive, slanderous or otherwise offensive material or downloading/forwarding such material.
- Communications that are in violation of company policy including, but not limited to, the transmission

of defamatory, obscene, offensive or harassing messages, or messages that disclose information without appropriate authorisation.

- Duplicating copyrighted or licensed software or other information without the appropriate authorisation.
- Forwarding or otherwise perpetuating “chain-letter” type e-mail within or outside the organisation.
- Removal of any hardware or software from the premises without prior approval.

Employees should also not store large quantities of e-mail or downloaded files or attachments. The retention of such data utilises large amounts of storage space on both network servers and PCs, and adversely affects system performance. Employees should delete any e-mail messages sent or received that no longer require action or are no longer relevant. Employees should make hard copies of any information that they need to retain for record-keeping purposes. Employees are expected to take responsibility for their own housekeeping by keeping email boxes to a manageable size. Email box sizes may be limited by IT to maintain the efficiency of the system.

Employees should contact Heart Teaching immediately if they receive any suspect documents, e-mail messages

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or computer virus alerts. They must not open attachments to any email message whose address they do not recognise. They should not forward them to any other internal or external user without the approval of a Director. Any files or software downloaded from the Internet or brought from an employee's home must be virus-checked before use.

Passwords should be kept secure and are required to be changed regularly. To protect passwords, employees should not access the facilities in the presence of others and confidential information should never be left open on the screen when equipment is unattended.

Employees should only be accessing internet information that is appropriate to their job and must not:

- Access or download screen-savers, games or other 'recreational' software;
- Commit to expenditure or action that which has not been authorised;
- Provide any details about Heart Teaching, including Company e-mail address, to any third party on the internet unless they have authorisation to do so and it is in the normal course of business;
- Register with any specialist internet site unless they have a business reason;
- Set any automatic redirect of e-mail from other accounts to their Heart Teaching account without authorisation;
- Breach any applicable legislation.

Sites visited via the Internet are traceable, if they receive unauthorised material or gain accidental access immediately exit the site.

### **Protection of the System**

Employees will be held responsible for all actions committed under their username and password.

Network connections – employees must not connect a modem to any of Heart Teaching computers or plug unauthorised hardware into the Company network without permission.

Unauthorised software may only be installed by Heart Teaching.

Heart Teaching uses anti-virus software, which will be updated regularly.

Malicious Codes (including viruses) – remember that:

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- Employees should be aware of the potential dangers of accepting programs from other sources or unsolicited software;
- Employees must not execute a program or open a document if they are uncertain of the expected results or do not know the source; and
- If employees detect a malicious code, they must notify the management immediately.

## Legal and Reputational Risks

All employees must comply with the relevant laws and regulations for the use of Company systems. If they are

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in any doubt as to whether an e-mail might infringe any of the below, they should speak to their Manager before sending it:

- Defamation – its global nature and the ease with which e-mail can be circulated increases the risk of libel action.
- Entering into contracts – a legally binding contract can be entered into by e-mail. Employees should include appropriate disclaimers to avoid entering into unintended contractual commitments.
- Discrimination/harassment – all employees must behave in line with the law on discrimination and harassment.
- Offensive material – all computer material is subject to the Obscene Publications Act 1959. Creating, sending, storing, displaying, posting e-mail messages or material which is obscene, abusive, insulting, violent, sexual or in any way offensive is not allowed.
- Copyright – it is an offence to copy any item of software without the appropriate permission.
- Disclosure – unless material is protected by privilege, Heart Teaching are required to disclose the existence of any material, including e-mails that may help or harm a party's case in the context of court litigation.
- Computer misuse – offences such as hacking, electronic eavesdropping and virus infection are prohibited by law. The maximum penalty is five years' imprisonment, an unlimited fine, or both.

## Monitoring and Interception

Heart Teaching respect employees right to privacy but have to balance this with its business requirements and the need to protect the company from harm. For this reason the Company may monitor and audit the use of its own systems.

Automatic virus scanning – Heart Teaching use anti-virus software to scan all incoming and outgoing e-mail and attachments to detect and block malicious codes which could cause serious damage or loss.

Complaints – if Heart Teaching are made aware of possible misuse of its systems, or receive a complaint, they will normally review the content of the relevant material or messages.

Absence – to ensure that Heart Teaching can deal with issues arising whilst a member of staff is out of the office, it may occasionally be necessary to monitor and review the content of an individual's e-mails.

Postmaster – e-mails sent to the Company Postmaster address, or misaddressed will be opened and read by designated members of staff.

## Etiquette

Below are some general dos and don'ts for the responsible and effective use of e-mail by employees:

- Check e-mails each working day, or arrange for another member of staff to do so for them.

- Take care when drafting and checking e-mails.
- Avoid using capitals as this is regarded as the equivalent of shouting.
- Keep messages polite in tone and sign off with the appropriate signature file.
- Avoid exchanges which are abusive or critical of others.
- Consider whether e-mail is the best form of communication in the circumstances. A phone call, face to

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face discussion or a letter may be more appropriate.

- Make it clear when an e-mail communicates a formal decision.
- If they have authority to send a message on behalf of someone else, make it clear that they are acting with their authority.

### The Use of Social Media and Networking Sites

This policy outlines Heart Teaching's position on the use of social media and networking sites whilst at work and in the course of company business. This policy has been created to outline and protect the commercial aspects of the business, Heart Teaching's reputation and the reputation of its employees.

This policy must be read in conjunction with an employee's contract of employment and they should pay particular attention to the following:

- Intellectual Property Rights.
- Confidential Information.
- Data Protection.
- Heart Teaching's Information Technology and Telecommunications Policy.

Breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action including, in appropriate cases, dismissal. For the avoidance of doubt, this policy is intended to survive termination of the employment relationship.



#### Personal Use

Heart Teaching allows access within reason to networking sites and other social media at work for personal use, and all employees are expected to use their lunch break for such activity.

#### Business Use

As a company, Heart Teaching recognise the benefit of using business social media and networking sites to assist employees in the course of their role.

All employees must use the contact details, including but not limited to e-mail address, telephone number, or other appropriate Heart Teaching related information at all times. They must also ensure that any reference to Heart Teaching describes Heart Teaching accurately and that any text is a true reflection of the Company business and meets the Company standards of professionalism.