

Code of Conduct

Policy · UK · Updated 2026-07-23 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

A code of conduct is the single document that tells everyone in a business how to behave — towards each other, towards customers and suppliers, and with the company's money, property, and information. It gathers the behavioural ground rules scattered across your other policies into one readable standard a new starter can absorb in ten minutes.

Its value shows up in hard moments: when you need to challenge a popular high performer, when a supplier offers hospitality, or when a manager wants to call something misconduct that was never written down anywhere. Fair discipline starts with rules people actually knew about.

This template covers behaviour standards, conflicts of interest, gifts and hospitality, company property and information, and how to raise concerns.

Purpose and scope

This code sets the standards of behaviour expected of everyone working for or representing [Your company] — employees, contractors, and agency staff — at our premises, at client and supplier sites, at work events, and online wherever you are identifiable with the company.

It does not replace our detailed policies. Where a policy such as [disciplinary, equal opportunities, anti-bribery] covers a topic in depth, that policy governs — the code is the map.

Our commitment

[Your company] commits to the standards it asks of its people: fair treatment, honest dealing, safe working conditions, and managers who act on concerns rather than burying them. Leaders are held to this code first — seniority raises the standard, it does not relax it.

How we treat each other

- Treat colleagues with respect. Bullying, harassment, and victimisation are never acceptable — including banter that a reasonable person would find degrading.
- Never let a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 influence a decision about a colleague, candidate, or customer.
- Challenge or report poor behaviour when you see it; silence protects the wrong person.
- Follow health and safety rules and instructions — cutting corners endangers colleagues, not just yourself.

How we deal with customers, suppliers and the public

- Be honest in every representation: never overpromise, misdescribe, or hide a problem from a customer.
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Handle complaints through [complaint procedure], not defensively — a complaint handled well is a customer kept.

- Select and treat suppliers on merit, and pay them to agreed terms.
- Speak to the media or post publicly on behalf of [Your company] only if authorised — the social media policy covers personal accounts.

Conflicts of interest, gifts and hospitality

Tell [senior role] about anything that could conflict — or appear to conflict — with [Your company]'s interests: a second job, a family connection to a supplier or candidate, a personal stake in a decision you influence. Most conflicts are manageable once declared; concealed ones are misconduct.

Gifts and hospitality above [amount] must be declared in the [gifts and hospitality register] before acceptance, and anything intended to influence a decision must be refused whatever its value. Cash or cash equivalents are never accepted. The full rules are in the anti-bribery policy.

Company property, information and systems

- Use company money, stock, equipment, and time for company purposes, and claim only expenses genuinely incurred under the expenses policy.
- Protect confidential information about the business, colleagues, and customers — during your employment and after it.
- Follow the IT and acceptable use policy on all company systems, and the data protection policy whenever you handle personal data.
- Keep records honest — timesheets, safety checks, financial entries. Falsifying a record is treated as gross misconduct.

Raising concerns

If you see behaviour that breaches this code, raise it: with your manager, with [named role], or through the whistleblowing policy where it concerns wrongdoing such as fraud, danger, or a cover-up. Concerns are taken seriously and investigated proportionately, and victimising anyone for raising a genuine concern is itself a breach of this code.

Breaches, acknowledgment and review

Breaches are dealt with under the disciplinary policy, with the response reflecting the seriousness — from informal correction to dismissal for gross misconduct. For contractors and agency staff, a breach may end the engagement.

Everyone receives this code at induction and confirms in writing that they have read it; acknowledgments are kept in [system/location]. The code is reviewed [frequency, e.g. every two years] and after any incident that exposes a gap. Owner: [name/role]. Next review: [date].

How to use this template

1. Read your disciplinary, anti-bribery, and equal opportunities policies first — the code should summarise and point to them, never contradict them.
2. Set the gifts threshold at a level you will actually police; a limit nobody registers against is worse than none.
3. Cut anything your business does not genuinely face — a lean code people read beats an exhaustive one they skim.
4. Have your most senior person put their name to the commitment section; a code without visible leadership endorsement reads as wallpaper.
5. Collect a written or digital acknowledgment from every current staff member, not just new starters.
6. Revisit the code after any serious conduct case — every real incident is a free audit of what it missed.

Official guidance

- › [ACAS — Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures](#)
- › [ACAS — Disciplinary procedure step by step](#)

This template is provided in good faith and for general information — it is not legal advice. Adapt it to your organisation and, where your sector carries specific legal requirements, have the finished document reviewed by a qualified adviser. The live version at <https://trainedteam.com/templates/code-of-conduct> is kept current; this file is a snapshot.