



# Employee Handbook



## INTRODUCTION

We have prepared this Employee Handbook in order to provide you with an introduction to the main information and details that you will need to be familiar with while working for the company. Should you require clarification on any of the topics covered in this handbook or any other aspects of your work, ask your manager.

All new employees will receive a soft copy of the Employee Handbook along with their Contract of Employment. The handbook will also be available at any time from the Employee web landing page should you ever need to refer to it. This Handbook may change on occasion in order to comply with changes in Employment Law, EU Directives or other any factors necessitating change.

We hope this Handbook will provide new and existing members of staff with clarity regarding their roles and responsibilities, along with providing essential information on policies and procedures.

Each employee should familiarise themselves with the contents of this Handbook and any relevant health and safety legislation, paying attention to all sections most relevant to their role. Further sources of information on policies, procedures and terms and conditions of employment are always available from the Management team. Any amendments to policies or procedures will be communicated to all employees prior to the changes. Safety Statements and HACCP documents are readily available on site. These should be read and followed consistently. For employees to whom English is not their first language, in certain circumstances, we may arrange a session with a suitable translator to ensure the contents of this document are understood equally by all.

When you have read the Handbook and understand the contents, please sign the declaration at the back and detach or photocopy the page and return it to your Manager.

Management welcome any comments and/or queries from staff members on the contents of their Contract of Employment and the Employee Handbook. We urge you to ask if at any time you are unsure about a clause contained in this document as we must ensure that procedures are followed consistently.

Our hope is that each employee enjoys working within the company for many years to come and we look forward to a mutually beneficial and rewarding partnership.

## **1. PROBATION**

All staff joining our company will be employed on a six (6) month probationary basis, excluding any period of absence, during which the Contract of Employment may be terminated by either party in accordance with the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts. If you have less than 13 weeks service, no notice is required by either party to terminate the Contract. During the probationary period you will be regularly assessed by Management and your progress will be stringently monitored. If feedback is given, it must be listened to. If you do not fit the Company's requirements, regrettably you will not pass the probationary period.

The Company reserves the right to extend an individual's probation period, by no more than 5 months, to a maximum of 11 months if the required performance/conduct/ standards have not been met or if there are any extended periods of absence during your probationary period. The standard disciplinary procedure will not be used during the probationary period.

All employees currently employed with us for more than six (6) months, will not now be subject to any further probation period.

## **2. STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME/TRAINING**

As an employee of the Company you accept and make yourself available for programmes of training as the Company sees fit for your continued professional development and progression within the organisation.

We use an online training forum to complement our on the job training systems. It is an express condition of your employment that you co-operate with the employer and access this site as required to complete training. If you are unable to access the site, the onus is on you to seek advice from Management. You will receive reminder emails from this site in relation to incomplete tasks.

## **3. CHANGE IN EMPLOYEE INFORMATION**

Accurate and complete personal information is essential when registering as an employee. Included in this information is your name, address, telephone number, details of your emergency contact, marital status, bank account information (IBAN & BIC) etc. Each employee is responsible for notifying their manager and Head Office of any changes to their personal information.

Our GDPR procedures in relation to personal information and data are detailed later in this document.

#### **4. HOURS OF WORK**

Your hours of work will, in the main, be agreed upon joining the Company and mentioned in your Contract of Employment. However, depending on your position within the Company, the expectations of the role and the requirements within the business, flexibility is expected to ensure that the position is fulfilled, and that all tasks are completed to the satisfaction of Management and our customers.

Your working hours may vary depending on the business' needs and therefore, shall be updated weekly and communicated to you. It is your own responsibility to be up to date with and to check your working hours.

Employees must realise that it is not always possible to finish work exactly on time and they will, therefore, be expected to complete, within reason, whatever essential duties are required at the discretion of the Manager on duty. You may, on occasion, be required to stay back after hours if/when the Company require it for example, stocktaking or busy periods. It is understood that you will agree to this where possible.

Your hours of work and rest breaks will be recorded to comply with the law.

#### **5. CLOCKING IN / OUT**

Staff may be required to clock in/out using the technology in use by the employer at the start and finish of every shift and for all breaks. Employees should only clock in once they are ready to start work and should clock out upon completion of their shift.

Staff should note that clocking in on behalf of other employees is against regulations and will be regarded as an act of gross misconduct, warranting dismissal.

#### **6. FLEXIBILITY**

All employees are required to be totally flexible in terms of job functions. While certain employees may have specific expertise in a particular area, each individual must be willing to relocate in order to assist whenever the demand or need arises. This flexibility may extend to working hours and rostering depending on future market conditions or other extraordinary circumstances. All employees must be aware that even if they are

employed in a certain position, we require indefinite flexibility in order to ensure that the Company remains competitive and functional.

Working in different departments of the store may include cleaning and tidying, counting money, opening and closing the store, goods in, window displays, merchandising, buying and selling, assisting at promotional events and any other duties that may occur over time.

As we operate in numerous locations, the Company must reserve the right to require our employees to work at any of our premises within a reasonable distance from that which they are employed. This may be on either a short-term or long-term basis, depending on the circumstances. All staff must be willing to move to another location as it is a condition of your employment and must be complied with. Please note that no length of service in any one location overrules this clause.

The Company will give you as much notice as possible in these circumstances and will not act in an unreasonable manner at any time. The Company may discuss with employees, positions that are available in other outlets within The Ralph Group, should they wish to transfer their position.

## **7. ATTENDANCE & TIMEKEEPING**

Employees will appreciate the importance to our business of good attendance and timekeeping and understand that they are expected to be at their place of employment and ready to start work at the correct time. This is a matter of self-discipline and a major yardstick in the assessment of each employee's personal performance.

Each employee must demonstrate that they are a reliable member of their team; reliability is reflected in areas or practices such as absence levels and prompt attendance to rostered positions and schedules.

While some allowance will be made for absences beyond the control of an employee, excessive absenteeism is viewed as unreliability and will be a cause for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees are expected to be at their scheduled location ready to begin work before the commencement of their shift. Tardiness is defined as any lateness for the start of a shift, or a rostered position. This includes going to and returning from meal or tea breaks. Should you arrive after the scheduled start time of your rostered shift, you must notify the duty manager of your arrival immediately.

When opening the shop employees must arrive early enough to ensure they complete all opening tasks such as unlocking fire exits, counting the float, preparing the till and cleaning duties. When closing the shop, the doors must not be closed earlier than advertised. Once the store is closed, staff are required to remain on site until the shop has been locked up and takings are stored safely. All employees must familiarise themselves with the opening and closing procedures on a regular basis.

In all circumstances, at least two staff members must close and lock up the shop together.

Any employees who do not follow these procedures when opening or closing the shop may, after a full investigation, face disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Persistent lateness or non-attendance is a serious offence due the disrupting effect on your colleagues and the bad impression it creates. This behaviour may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

#### **8. LAY OFF AND / OR SHORT TIME**

The Company reserves the right to lay you off from work or reduce your working hours if, for circumstances beyond control, it is unable to maintain you in employment. You will receive as much notice as reasonably possible prior to such lay-off or short-time. You will not be paid during the lay-off period. You will be paid only in respect of hours actually worked during a period of short-time.

#### **9. ABSENTEEISM / ILLNESS**

In the event of unforeseen absenteeism, the employee must notify their Manager at the earliest possible time. You must make contact no later than 1 hour before your rostered starting time on the first day of the absence. You must also maintain regular contact with your Manager to advise of a likely return date. **Contact must be made via the shop telephone.** A text message, email or contact through another member of staff is not acceptable.

A medical certificate is required if you are absent from work for a period surpassing 3 days. Therefore, an employee must produce a medical certificate on day 4 of any absence. The medical certificate must outline the nature of your medical condition. A new certificate will be required on a **weekly** basis thereafter.

**A medical certificate is required for any absence immediately prior to or after annual leave or a public holiday.**

All medical certificates must contain the following information:

1. Duration of the illness
2. Nature of the illness
3. Doctor's name, address and signature (Doctor's official stamp)
4. Date of Consultation

It is the employee's responsibility to ensure the medical certificate contains the above information. Certificates which do not contain this information will not be accepted.

If a staff member is absent on six (6) or more separate occasions in any one calendar year/rolling 12 months, the Company reserves the right to hold a Management Review meeting with the employee in question in order to discuss the level of absenteeism. A request may then follow that a medical certificate be presented for any future absence, regardless of its duration (e.g. one (1) day or eight (8) day absence will require a medical certificate).

The Company reserve the right to refer any employee who has been absent for a period of 10 days to their own nominated doctor for a second opinion. The Company will stand this cost.

In order to comply with insurance regulations, certain absences will require a final certificate stating that an employee is fit to resume their normal duties.

All illnesses deemed to be contagious must be reported to the Manager by an employee. This includes various forms of rashes and skin disorders which could be passed on to fellow employees or customers.

In the event of evidence coming to light indicating possible abuse of sick leave arrangements, the matter will be treated in accordance with disciplinary arrangements.

Appointments to see doctors, dentists etc. should be arranged to coincide with your days off except in the case of pregnancy or emergency.

The Company does not pay sick pay unless otherwise stated in your contract. Therefore, all employees should refer to Social Welfare directly to discuss their eligibility for illness benefit.

A Self Certification Form must be completed on the first day of your return to work and handed to your Manager.

Absent employees, regardless of the duration of the absence, will be required to attend a Return to Work Meeting with their Manager/Supervisor to discuss their return and to complete the relevant documentation.

## **10. HOLIDAYS / HOLIDAY PAY**

- i. All employees will be paid in accordance with the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997.
- ii. Employees who join or leave the Company during the leave year will have their annual leave entitlement calculated on a pro rata basis from the date of commencement.
- iii. The holiday year runs from 1st January to 31st December and all annual leave must be taken within this holiday year. You are not permitted to carry over any excess days nor will you receive payment for annual leave not taken during this period unless sanctioned by your Store Manager. We, therefore, strongly recommend that you use your annual leave during the year.
- iv. Public Holidays (9 in all) will be paid in accordance with the 1997 Act for full-time and part-time staff.

- v. All Holiday Leave requests must be submitted in writing on an Annual Leave Request Form and submitted to Management. Any verbal approval you think has been given is still subject to formal approval once you confirm the request in writing.
- vi. Holidays will be given on a 'first-come, first-served' basis. The Company must always retain an adequate number of experienced and skilled employees in each working location to ensure efficient running of the business.
- vii. A minimum of 2 weeks' notice is required to guarantee the availability of Annual Leave.
- viii. Except in exceptional circumstance no more than 10 working days can be taken together at any one time. If a longer period is required, this may be requested by a written application, stating the reason, through your Manager.
- ix. There are certain critically busy periods of the year where it may not be possible to grant all annual leave requests (e.g. Christmas, Easter, Stocktaking, Sales).
- x. Only one member of staff from each department may be on annual leave at any given time.
- xi. A certain number of your annual leave days may be designated dates when the employer is closed.
- xii. No employee is to make bookings (e.g. flights, hotel) before getting approval for annual leave dates from Management. The Company is not responsible for any money/deposits lost by employees in these circumstances.
- xiii. All employees must accrue a reasonable number of annual leave days before any requests for such leave will be considered.
- xiv. If you leave the Company and it is found that your holidays taken already exceed your entitlement, the Company will deduct the excess paid from your final salary. This is an express written term of your Contract with the Company.

## **11. MATERNITY / ADOPTIVE / PARENTAL LEAVE**

Regarding Maternity/Adoptive/Parental leave, the Company will comply with the latest legislation. Any employee with a query is urged to ask Management in good time before an anticipated date for leave.

Further information is available in the appendix of this handbook.



## **12. COMPASSIONATE LEAVE**

Compassionate leave must be authorised by your Manager.

Employees are entitled to be paid compassionate leave as follows:

- Death of immediate family member (i.e. mother, father, sister, brother, wife, husband, long term partner, son or daughter) up to 3 days compassionate leave paid.

The above will be paid in agreement with the Company.

We will allow up to three days' paid leave for the death of an immediate member of the family.

An immediate member of the family is defined as;

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Son
- Parent
- Brother
- Sister

In other circumstances, one day's leave without pay may be granted in the event of the death of a;

- Grandparent
- Grandchild
- Uncle
- Aunt
- Mother-in-law
- Father-in-law
- Son-in-law
- Daughter-in-law

Or time can be given just to attend the funeral and/or removal.

Management reserve the right to amend this policy at any time.

## **13. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

This procedure is designed to help and encourage all employees to achieve and maintain high standards of conduct, attendance and job performance. The company rules, contained in this handbook and the disciplinary procedure, apply to all employees. The aim is to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all.

While we always aim for a positive, trusting relationship with all employees, should certain situations occur, it is important for us to have a transparent way of dealing with these. All employers are required to have a clearly written disciplinary procedure in place in order to avoid any misunderstanding.

Issues will always be discussed before any decision concerning disciplinary action or dismissal is taken. The general principles of natural justice and fair procedures will be upheld.

Our Company policy is as follows:

If the standard of work or conduct of a staff member falls below an acceptable level, the following procedure will be adopted. Management has the express right to move immediately to the appropriate level of disciplinary action depending on the specifics of each case.

(a) Stage 1 – Warning (Verbal and Consultative)

An initial incident of shortcoming may result in a Stage 1 warning being issued by Supervisor/ Senior Management. This is advisory in nature and is designed to avoid an issue leading to more serious disciplinary action. The Manager will record the issue in their diary, but it will not be placed on the employee's file.

(b) Stage 2 – Warning (Verbal and Recorded in Writing)

If a substantial and sustained improvement has not been made, there is a re-occurrence of a similar incident or it is appropriate to move straight to it, a Stage 2 formal warning will be issued by Supervisor/ Senior Management. A formal disciplinary meeting will be held before this happens to give the employee the right to reply.

The warning will be noted in writing and placed in the employee file for 6 months. If there are no further issues during this time, it will be removed.

(c) Stage 3 – Warning (Written)

If a substantial and sustained improvement has not been made, there is a re-occurrence of a similar incident or it is appropriate to move straight to it, a Stage 3 formal written warning will be issued by Senior Management. A formal disciplinary meeting will be held before this happens to give the employee the right to reply. The written warning will be noted in writing and placed in the employee file for 12 months. If there are no further issues during this time, it will be removed.

(d) Stage 4 – Final Written Warning/Suspension

If a substantial and sustained improvement has not been made, there is a re-occurrence of a similar incident or it is appropriate to move straight to it, a Stage 4 final written warning will be issued by Senior Management. A formal disciplinary meeting will be held before this happens to give the employee the right to reply. The warning will be noted in writing and placed in the employee file for 12 months.

If there are no further issues during this time, it will be removed. It will be made clear to the employee that this level of action is very serious and that further breaches could lead to dismissal.

(e) Stage 5 - Dismissal

If an employee does not meet the required improvements after their stage 4 warning, the Company will have no choice but to terminate their employment in line with their contractual notice period after holding a disciplinary meeting with them.

Before the start of any stage in the above procedure, you will be told of the nature of the complaint against you and no decisions will be made without you having been given the opportunity to fully state your case

At each stage of the disciplinary procedure you, as an employee, have the following rights:

- To state your case.
- To be accompanied by a colleague of your choice.
- To appeal at each stage of the procedure.

If matters of seriousness come to light, the Company reserve the right to suspend you with pay or to re-assign or relocate you to a different location pending completion of the investigation or, if appropriate, the disciplinary process. If such action is taken there is no presumption that the individual is guilty of any offence, it merely provides management with the opportunity to fully investigate the facts.

You may appeal against any warning. An Appeal should be made in writing and addressed to the person whose decision you are appealing. The letter should set out the grounds for appeal. The review will be conducted, where possible, by someone of appropriate seniority who has not been involved in the matter under investigation. An appeal should arrive at the company no later than 5 working days after notification of the decision.

You will be informed of the findings of the appeal hearing, which will either, confirm the disciplinary action already advised, alter it to more appropriate action, or reverse it, thereby cancelling the disciplinary action.

The Company reserves the right to involve any appropriate third party at a suitable stage of any disciplinary process.

At any stage of the procedure you have the right to use the Grievance Procedure as outlined within this Handbook.

## **1. SERIOUS / GROSS MISCONDUCT**

In cases of alleged serious misconduct, it may be decided to suspend a member of staff with or without pay pending an investigation into the circumstances. After full investigation, cases of proven gross misconduct will not be subject to the warning procedure and will result in summary dismissal. Summary dismissal is dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice.

The following are some examples of the behaviours which are likely to result in summary dismissal – this is not an exhaustive list:

- Breach of Safety or Hygiene Regulations which contravene the law.
- Breach of Licensing laws e.g. Selling tobacco or alcohol to persons under 18 years of age.
- Assault or other improper physical or verbal behaviour towards any other person on the Company's premises.
- Disclosure of any client information, personal or otherwise, other than to an authorised person.
- Theft, dishonesty, fraud or the borrowing of Company money without authorisation.
- Unauthorised discounting of goods or services to others or giving goods without payment.
- Falsification of records or documents with intention to defraud.
- Refusal to carry out reasonable lawful instructions from Management.
- Wilful damage to Company property.
- The use of/ or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs during work.
- Unauthorised or inappropriate comments or opinions regarding the Company, our work or the wider industry we operate in, expressed to the press, or other media, or on any social media forum.

## **2. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

A grievance is any event, condition, or rule, which you believe violates your civil rights, treats you unfairly, or causes you any degree of unpleasantness or unhappiness on the job. A grievance may also deal with an attitude, statement, or an opinion held by a co-worker.

We have established this procedure in order to encourage an atmosphere of openness and transparency within the Company to allow our employees to communicate with higher level management on any issue arising.

- (a) If an employee has a problem or grievance relating to his/her employment it should be raised in the first instance with their immediate Supervisor/Manager. Every effort will be made at this stage to resolve the grievance or problem.
- (b) If the issue remains unresolved, or you are unhappy with the response, the employee should refer the matter to the Owners/ Senior Management, in writing, outlining both the grievance and how/when it has been raised at a local level first. The employee will receive a written response outlining the Company position.

- (c) If the grievance relates to your Manager, the employee should outline the details of the grievance directly to a Company Director in writing.
- (d) If there is no resolution internally, the Owners reserve the right, at their discretion, to involve a relevant professional to mediate on the issue. The Company will stand the cost should they decide to proceed in such a manner and the employee is obliged to partake in this step if chosen by the employer.

During the period when a grievance is being investigated, normal working practices must continue in all circumstances.

### **3. OPEN DOOR POLICY**

We operate an 'open door' policy regarding work related or personal problems. Such issues are always treated in the strictest confidence. If we as management can be of assistance in solving such problems or allaying your fears, we will make time for you and listen considerately. The BWG 'Be-Well' facility is also available to all employees for use at their discretion.

### **4. SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT**

Whilst employed with the Company, you are required to devote your entire professional attention to duties and responsibilities outlined in your Job Description and communicated by your management team. You are not be permitted to take on other work without written consent from Senior Management/ Director. Where you are in breach of this requirement, you may be subject to disciplinary procedures and potential dismissal.

If you are already in additional employment you should notify us so that we can discuss any implications arising from the current working time legislation. Where there may be a possibility of a breach of the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 (Section 33) we are your primary employer and therefore, you must commit to completing your work hours with us prior to taking on any hours that may bring you in excess of the maximum working week.

In order to comply with this legislation, it is your responsibility to make us aware of your hours of work elsewhere. Employees must not perform, arrange or carry out any work or activity which could be considered in competition with or affect in any way the Company's interests.

If you are involved in any other employment, it must not interfere with the efficient or satisfactory performance of your role with us.

## **5. RETIREMENT AGE**

The retirement age for all employees will be on your 66<sup>th</sup> birthday. Your date of retirement will be the last working day prior to your 65<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## **6. PENSION**

The Company does not operate a pension scheme. However, access is available to a Personal Retirement Savings Account (PRSA). The Company's PRSA providers are Zurich Insurance Ltd. You have access to this account, should you wish to make contributions. The Company will not make any contributions to the PRSA. Further details of the PRSA provider and contact numbers are available from your Manager/Employer if you wish to arrange a consultation.

## **7. DATA PROTECTION**

Our GDPR Policy is available, upon request, from your Store Manager.

## **8. DRESS CODE / PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

Your full and correct uniform must be worn throughout your shift. If you lose or forget a piece of your uniform, please report it to Management immediately so a replacement can be sourced. Failure to comply with this may result in disciplinary action. Uniform must be clean, neat and tidy.

Your personal appearance is of the utmost importance and you must look your best to meet our customers. Should you choose to wear Make-up, it must not be excessive. Jewellery is to be kept to a minimum and must be discreet. Hair and nails should be neat and tidy.

If your appearance, including footwear, does not meet the required standards your Manager will fully explain the changes necessary in order to comply. You may be sent home to make essential adjustments. Continued unacceptable standards will lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

As we work in close contact with other colleagues and clients, it is vital that a high standard of personal hygiene is maintained.

## **9. SMOKING & CONSUMPTION OF FOOD OR DRINK**

In line with legislation, employees are forbidden to smoke cigarettes or e-cigarettes within the premises, in front of the premises, behind the premises or on the grounds of the premises. Smoking is only permitted

away from the premises or in designated smoking areas and only on rostered breaks. Staff are not permitted unauthorised 'Smoke Breaks'.

Under both hygiene and customer care guidelines no food or drink may be consumed on the shop floor. The eating or chewing of gum is not permitted while working at any of our locations.

## **10. CANTEEN / REST AREAS**

Canteen and rest areas are now subject to inspection by the Health Inspectorate, Labour Inspectorate and the Health and Safety Authority so it is essential that they are kept clean and safe. Do not leave it up to somebody else to clean up after you. Beware of wet floors, damaged furniture and poor hygiene practices.

## **11. CUSTOMER CARE/HANDLING COMPLAINTS**

Good customer service is paramount in business. We expect high standards from our staff, both in terms of commitment to a positive customer experience and to a sales-focused approach to their work.

We are as good as our last sale and as strong as our weakest link in terms of Customer Care. Our customers are our lifeblood and must be treated as such. Our guidelines are simple:

- a) Show that you appreciate the customers' business by giving them your full attention.
- b) Smile and greet the customer always.
- c) Stop talking to each other and make sure you pay attention to, and be aware of the needs of, any customers that are in the shop.
- d) Find out the customer's name if possible, it works wonders.
- e) Never make a commitment to a customer which you cannot keep.
- f) Learn how to handle complaints from customers in terms of product, level of service, mistakes etc., even those who get irate and appear to be unreasonable.
- g) Put yourself in their position at times.
- h) Learn from your first mistake.
- i) Show that you really CARE.
- j) Make sure you have the professional expertise to deal with the enquiry
- k) Never discuss a client's personal information with any member of the general public - client confidentiality is key
- l) IF IN DOUBT ASK!!**

There are five simple steps which you should follow at the till when closing the sale that will ensure good customer services:

1. Greet the customer – make eye contact and smile.
2. 'Thank you for waiting' – if the customer has had to queue, always thank them for waiting. This will diffuse a potentially negative situation.

3. Positive comment – a simple positive comment reinforces the good feeling the customer has about their purchase.
4. Pack well – always treat the customer's new item with the care it deserves.
5. Thank you & Goodbye – every single customer deserves a 'Thank you' and 'Goodbye'

## **12. STAFF PURCHASES**

No staff member can check out his or her own purchases. No employees can serve themselves or any family or friends under any circumstances.

Where one employee serves Another, they must charge the approved price as specified and sign the relevant receipts which they must give to the purchaser who must then show it to the manager on duty.

All purchases must be paid for immediately. No goods are ever to be put aside to be paid for after a shift. All staff must note that no purchases may be collected and/or paid for during working time. Any purchases must be conducted either before or after shift or during official breaks.

We believe this policy is very clear and all staff must follow the procedures appropriately. Any breach of this policy will be treated very seriously and may, after a full investigation, result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

## **13. GIFTS/ PRESENTS OR GRATUITIES**

The company rule is that all gifts, and/or presents received by you in the course of your employment remain the property of the company. These gifts can only be taken off the premises with the permission of the owner. This arrangement helps avoid any embarrassment in terms of security and applies to all staff members without exception.

Any such gifts should not place you, the Company, or the client, under any obligation to do business.

## **14. PERSONAL PROPERTY**

The company does not accept any responsibility for loss or damage to personal belongings or property while on the Company's premises, whether for the purpose of your work or otherwise. Your personal property is your own responsibility.

For your personal benefit, you are advised to leave all valuables at home and not to leave any personal items overnight on the Company premises. We do not provide a secure location.

While you have been advised not to bring valuables to work, lockers will be provided for staff use. Employees will not own individual lockers or have the sole use of a specific locker unless otherwise stated by management. You will be allowed to store personal items in the space provided for the duration of a shift. A locker should not be considered a totally secure location. No employee is



permitted to store items in these lockers overnight and the locker key must be left in the door of the locker at the end of the shift. Locker keys must not be taken off the premises unless otherwise stated by management.

### **15. LOST PROPERTY**

If at any time members of staff find lost property it should be handed in to a Supervisor or Manager immediately. All lost property should be recorded in the lost property book by the Manager on duty. Managers must make every effort to identify the owner of the property and where possible contact the owner and encourage them to retrieve their property as soon as possible. If the property found is valuable e.g. cash or jewellery it must be placed in a secure location for safe keeping. If an individual arrives into a store to reclaim items of lost property, the Manager should make every effort to ensure the property does in fact belong to the person attempting to reclaim it by asking appropriate questions in order for them to identify their property correctly.

If after a period of 90 days, the property has not been reclaimed by the relevant owner, the company will dispose of the property in an appropriate manner. If the property has a potential monetary value, it will be donated to a local charity of the company's choice.

At no time should any staff member assume that property found anywhere within the store premises belongs to them.

### **16. RIGHT TO SEARCH**

The Management reserve the right to search an employee, their bags and/or vehicles on a random basis when staff leave work. Employees may also be asked to empty their pockets. Failure to permit a search may result in disciplinary action. We stress that there is no implication of suspicion but merely the implementation of the Company's security policy. Bags and coats must be left in designated areas and not taken onto the shop floor or working areas.

### **17. SAFETY STATEMENT**

All staff members must read and become familiar with our Safety Statement. The Company is committed to operating an accident-free environment for staff, customers and visitors alike. All employees have a responsibility under the Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, not only for their own safety but also for that of their fellow employees and our customers, and high safety standards must become a "way of life".

Safety in the broadest sense covers areas such as hygiene practices, protective clothing and footwear, use of equipment, manual handling, handling any chemicals etc.

We are committed to providing and maintaining a place of work which is safe and without risk to health. We will do all in our power to ensure your well-being and safety whilst at work. It is our policy to operate and maintain a safe and healthy working environment and to comply with the statutory requirements of the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and our own Safety Statement. All employees must read carefully and be familiar with the contents of this Safety Statement.

Where staff have a concern in relation to a health and safety matter or become aware of any potential hazard or unsafe working conditions they should bring it to the attention of their manager as soon as possible.

## **18. ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORTING**

We are obliged by law to keep a record showing details of all accidents that occur on our premises. Therefore, all accidents, however minor, to both employees and visitors, **must** be reported immediately to the Manager or the most senior member of staff available. The appropriate accident/incident report will then be completed. You must enter all accidents into the Accident Book, no matter how small.

If a visitor is involved liability must not in any way be admitted on behalf of an employee or the Company. All relevant health and safety legislation must be followed. ALL Safety regulations must be adhered to and employees must take great care that they, their colleagues, or members of the public are not exposed to accidents or danger.

This procedure is designed to enable all accidents to be properly investigated. By drafting your report, you will enable preventative measures to be taken that will avoid future injury to yourself or others.

## **19. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)**

Where required, the Company will provide you with PPE, which you must wear at all appropriate times whilst carrying out working duties. This equipment is issued for your own and your colleagues' protection.

You are responsible for the condition, safekeeping and proper use of the PPE.

If you become aware that the equipment may be faulty, it is your responsibility to immediately notify the Company in order that it may be replaced.

The Company will replace equipment damaged due to normal wear and tear free of charge and will ensure that it meets current safety standards. However, you will be responsible for the cost of replacement should replacement be necessary as a result of your own negligence.

You agree that on termination of your employment should you not return your PPE, or should your PPE be returned in an unsatisfactory condition, the cost of replacement will be deducted from any final monies owed to you, or you will otherwise reimburse the Company.

Failure to follow these procedures may also, after formal investigation, lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

## **20. BULLYING & HARASSMENT**

The Company recognises the right of all employees to work in an environment that is free from any form of bullying and/or harassment. Employees must always treat colleagues and customers with dignity and respect.

This policy aims to explain bullying and harassment and thereby reduce instances of same within the workplace. Furthermore, this policy outlines procedures that employees may take should they find themselves in a situation where they feel they are being bullied and/or harassed.

### **Definition of bullying as per the Task Force on the Prevention of Workplace Bullying**

*‘Workplace bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual’s right to dignity at work.*

*An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition may be an affront to dignity at work but as a once off incident is not considered to be bullying.’*

The bullying/harassment can include conduct offensive to a reasonable person, e.g. oral or written slurs, physical contact, gestures, jokes, displaying pictures, flags/emblems, graffiti or other material which state/imply prejudicial attitudes which are offensive to fellow employees.

Other examples of bullying behaviour may include:

- Personal insults and name calling
- Persistent unjustified criticism and sarcasm
- Public or private humiliation
- Shouting at staff in public and/or private
- Sneering
- Instantaneous rage, often over trivial issues
- Unfair delegation of duties and responsibilities
- Setting impossible deadlines
- Unnecessary work interference

- Making it difficult for staff to have access to necessary information
- Aggression
- Not giving credit for work contribution
- Continuously refusing reasonable requests without good reasons
- Intimidation and threats in general.

### **Definition of harassment as per the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2008**

Sexual harassment is defined as any form of verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. The unwanted conduct may consist of acts, requests, spoken words, gestures or the production, display, or circulation of written words, pictures or other material.

Harassment on the other eight grounds of marital status, family status, race, age, religious belief, sexual orientation, disability or membership of the travelling community is any unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. The unwanted conduct may consist of acts, requests, spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material.

### ***Procedure***

In the event any individual feels they are being bullied or harassed in the workplace, they may take recourse in either the informal or the formal procedure. We would urge all employees to ensure, where appropriate, they firstly utilise the informal procedure before activating the formal procedure.

### ***INFORMAL PROCEDURE***

All reasonable efforts should be made to rectify issues using the informal procedure. This will allow the individual to change inappropriate behaviours and reduce the level of conflict and stress in the workplace and amongst both parties. The informal procedure is where the victim approaches the perpetrator and informs him/her that their behaviour is not acceptable. They should also ensure they inform the perpetrator that further instances will result in a formal complaint being made to management.

All employees should feel free to approach any member of the Management team they feel comfortable with, including colleagues and managers, to seek support, advice and guidance when using the informal procedure. An individual who is approached in this regard must treat any conversations as confidential, listen, offer support and discuss with the complainant the various options available to them. Any approaches at this stage should be confidential and non-confrontational and should aim to resolve the issues in a low key and expedient manner.

### **FORMAL PROCEDURE**

If, following the informal procedure the alleged perpetrators behaviours have not changed, or in the event, of more serious actions of bullying and/or harassment, they may feel it necessary to utilise the formal procedure. On occasion, some employees may feel it necessary to bypass the informal procedure. In this event, this will not reflect negatively on that individual.

The formal procedure will take the following format:

- Formal complaints must be made in writing to your immediate supervisor or manager. If it is your supervisor or manager involved, the complaint should be made to the next manager in succession.
- Any complaints will be dealt with in a speedy manner and will be addressed sensitively and in confidence. It is important to note, however, while confidentiality will be maintained as much as possible, it will be necessary to discuss facts with any witnesses called upon to assist in the investigation. All witnesses have the responsibility to maintain this confidentiality.
- Formal complaints must outline exact behaviours giving, as far as possible dates of instances and any witnesses that may assist in the investigation.
- An impartial member of the management team will be assigned to investigate the incidents.
- The alleged perpetrator will be given a copy of the victim's statement and will be given the opportunity to respond.
- The alleged perpetrator, the complainant and any witnesses will be invited to a meeting to discuss the facts.
- Both the alleged perpetrator and the witness will be entitled to be accompanied by a colleague of their choice should they so wish.
- Records will be kept of all meetings held in relation to the incidents.
- Both parties will be entitled to review the facts of the case and be entitled to comment on the findings before final action is taken.

If following a full investigation of the facts, it is found that the alleged perpetrator has bullied or harassed the individual, the disciplinary procedure will be activated.

If following a full investigation, it is found that the allegation of bullying and/or harassment is malicious and/or vexatious, the complainant may be liable for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Either party has the right to appeal any decisions made in line with either the grievance procedure or the disciplinary appeal mechanisms as appropriate.

## **21. SECURITY POLICY**

All necessary steps will be taken to secure the Safety and Welfare of all employees. As with many businesses we store cash on site, therefore there is always a risk of a security incident which may threaten the safety of our employees. In any scenario your wellbeing and the wellbeing of your colleagues and customers must be priority.

To that effect the company has a Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) system in place. This is not in place to encroach on your privacy, rather to ensure the safety of employees and stock. However, should any issues or complaints come to light, we reserve the right to refer to this CCTV footage during an investigation.

Our GDPR policy contains more information with regard to CCTV should you wish to know more.

If at any stage you notice any suspicious activity, please report it to management **immediately**.

Criminals and petty thieves are always on the lookout for easy opportunities to steal cash and other re-saleable goods. Theft of this nature can seriously impact upon the profitability of our business. Therefore, consistent vigilance is required on the shop floor and forms part of your responsibilities under our Health, Safety and Welfare procedures.

#### **a. Suspected theft**

There are many kinds of thieves, from the opportunist to the professional, and unfortunately there is a possibility that theft may be carried out by recognised and regular customers, so it is important to be vigilant.

If you see suspicious activity in-store, often an acknowledgement that you are aware of the individual is enough to deter them. Please carry out the following procedure:

1. Keep the suspect in sight at all times.
2. Use your normal sales approach: work near the customer, make eye contact and offer help.
3. You must be certain that a theft has occurred and that the item is on the suspect's person before making an approach to detain. It may be necessary to allow the suspect to leave the shop to confirm that a theft has in fact taken place.
4. Do not approach any suspect on your own. Two staff members should be present at this stage.
5. At this point, discretely ask the customer if they have forgotten to pay for the item. Ask them to come into the back of the shop away from other customers or staff: otherwise you leave yourself open to libel action.
6. Two staff members should again be present at this stage. Allow the suspect to explain and produce the items. YOU HAVE NO RIGHT OF SEARCH.
7. Avoid making any accusations in front of other customers.
8. At this point call the Gardaí.
9. Record details of the incident including date, time and employees present.
10. Ensure that any CCTV footage of the incident is saved as evidence in the event of further action or criminal charges being taken.

#### **b. Robbery**

If your store is the subject of a robbery, Garda advice is as follows:

1. Cooperate with criminals and make no sudden movements that the criminal may construe as an alert signal. Raise the alarm only if it safe to do so.

2. Do not try to overpower a thief.
3. Observe closely for distinguishing marks and features that might later help with identification.
4. Preserve the scene once they have left: close the premises and/or cordon off the area.
5. Write a short memorandum: descriptions, car registrations, details of customers present.
6. Remain on the premises until the Gardaí arrive. Do not engage with the media should they arrive.

#### **c. Internal theft**

Unfortunately, there is always the possibility of fraudulent behaviour within the Company. If you have evidence or are suspicious that this may be occurring, please notify Management discreetly and in confidence. Under no circumstances should you address the issue directly without further investigation and support.

In any scenario your wellbeing and the wellbeing of your colleagues and customers must be the priority.

#### **d. Cash Security Procedures**

Doors with security locks must be kept closed.

##### **Safe keys**

All staff who possess a safe key must keep it about their person and abide by the rules and regulations for key holders. A key holder's statement must be signed by each member of staff who is in possession of safe or shop keys.

##### **Cash Tills**

Staff who are rostered for till duty have responsibility for keeping the cash desk secure. If it is necessary for you to leave the cash desk to look after a customer, you should call another member of staff to replace you. If this is not an option, you must keep a watchful eye on the cash desk while looking after the customer.

There should never be more than €200 in notes in the till. Once you have reached this limit, a drop should be processed. Call a supervisor or Manager where required. Credit card receipts should be kept securely in the till as directed.

## **22. CONFIDENTIALITY**

As part of your work with us, you will encounter sensitive information regarding client interactions and other business dealings. These must remain confidential. You will also be privy to certain relationships which the business has established, your discretion in relation to these is expected.

The confidential nature of your work requires that you never disclose any information you may acquire about the affairs of the Company or any of its customers.

The computer files, records and forms you work with are the property of the Company and must not be shown or given to outsiders without official approval. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in serious disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Client confidentiality is essential. No customer information is to be discussed at any time with persons other than the client or other authorised medical professional. No excuses will be accepted for any breach of this clause. Failure to comply with this rule will lead to severe disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

### **23. COMMENTS TO PRESS / MEDIA**

You shall not be permitted to discuss with the press or other media, issues concerning the Company and its activities unless you are appointed as an authorised spokesperson for the Company or you have been given specific permission to comment on any such matter pertaining to the work that the firm undertakes or any of its customers without the express permission, which should be writing, of the Owner/Director.

### **24. EQUALITY POLICY**

We offer equality of opportunity to all employees in every aspect of employment. Regardless of your race, religion, age, gender, ethnic origin, marital and civil status, disability, sexual orientation or membership to the travelling community, no employee will be discriminated against in terms of interview, recruitment, rostering, training and promotion. We consider only the individual's aptitude and ability and the requirements of the job in our company.

If any employee feels they have been discriminated against on any of the above grounds they should follow the Company grievance procedure laid out in this document.

Any proven allegation of discrimination is treated seriously; such behaviour is considered a disciplinary offence and all reasonable, practicable steps taken to prevent the behaviour continuing.

### **25. COMMUNICATION**

As an equal-opportunities employer we welcome all cultural diversity in employees, suppliers, customers and clients alike. In the interest of integration, equality and to prevent exclusion while taking into account the practical implications of such diversity, we must communicate in a way that can be understood. In the majority of cases that will mean communicating in English. This will enable employees to operate efficiently as a team and create a unified working environment for all. Failure to comply with this policy may result in necessary disciplinary steps being taken.



## **26. USE OF COMPANY PROPERTY / EQUIPMENT**

All Company property/equipment supplied or available for use remains the property of the Company. Such supplies are not for individual use and as such should only be used for company business. Please follow the instructions for the use of this equipment. Failure to do so may not only constitute disciplinary action, but it may also be unsafe to you, your fellow employees and customers. If you notice problems or damage to this equipment, please report it immediately.

Any documents or presentations written while employed by the Company remain the property of the Company. Failure to comply with this request will be deemed a serious breach of discipline and the necessary action will be taken.

As part of your role with the Company, you may have the use of a mobile phone or laptop. You must look after these products fully and report any damage or fault with them. Common sense must prevail. Remember, they remain the property of the company and to this end are for professional use only.

## **27. WASTE**

We operate a minimum waste policy which is essential to the cost effective and efficient running of the business. You must make every effort during your normal duties to avoid any unnecessary use of services or resources e.g. energy, time, paper etc. Employees should ask for other work if your job has come to a standstill or you are not as busy as anticipated.

All staff must turn off all unnecessary lighting or heating. All stock or products must be handled and displayed with the utmost care to avoid any unnecessary damages.

## **28. PHONE CALLS**

All employees must recognise that we operate within the service industry and customers' satisfaction is critical. To ensure that customers are our priority and that they receive the best service, telephone access to staff must be restricted except in the case of emergency. Where the use of the Company phone for personal use is necessary, employees must have the authorisation of the person in charge in advance of making the call.

**The use of mobile phones on the retail floor is strictly prohibited. Mobile phones are never to be used, checked or heard while the Company is open for business. Breach of this rule is a disciplinary offence.** We believe this clause is very clear and therefore excuses are not valid.

If you keep your mobile phone on your person during working hours, it must be switched off. You may not keep it on silent.

If you are on a personal call in the canteen during your rostered break, please be courteous of your colleagues and leave the room.

## **29. INTERNET & EMAIL POLICY**

Staff who are privileged to have access to the internet and e-mail at work must understand that misuse of the facilities will not be tolerated. **Personal use of these facilities is not allowed.**

No internet usage can be treated as confidential as we need to check usage regularly to ensure protection from viruses. Company facilities will not be used for e-mailing or downloading material of an offensive nature including pornography, racist or sexist material.

Any breach of the policy will be dealt with using the Company disciplinary procedure. The company strictly reserves the right to examine the content on its computers, laptops and mobile phones at any time and failure to co-operate with this request may constitute Gross Misconduct.

## **30. SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES**

This policy provides guidance for employee use of social media, which should be broadly understood for purposes of this policy to include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, wikis, microblogs, message boards, chat rooms, electronic newsletters, online forums, social networking sites, and other types of interactive online media and services that permit users to share information (words, images, photos, videos) with others in a public, or indeed a private manner.

Employee must be aware that there are many more examples of social media that can be listed here, as this is a constantly changing area. Employees should therefore follow this policy in relation to any social media that they use.

While we realise that many employees will have personal social networking site (SNS) profiles on the likes of Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, we have developed this policy to ensure that common sense and reasonable behaviour will ensure that the use of these sites never leads to an issue with us, or for us, as your employer. This policy applies to the use of social media for both business and personal purposes, whether during work hours or otherwise. This policy applies irrespective of whether social media is accessed using Company IT hardware or networks, or your own IT hardware or networks.

The Company recognizes that many employees will make use of social media in a personal capacity and respects the private life of individuals. Nevertheless, employees' use of social media can pose a risk to our confidentiality and our reputation. If you mention on your profile that you are employed in our business, or if there is a public awareness of where you work, any content you post online

about the Company or yourself (words, video, or photos) has the potential to cause damage to you and the Company. It is important that your individual views are not reflected as the views of your employer. With this in mind, given the nature of our business, we believe it is best that you do not communicate the name of your employer on any form of online media. If you have already completed your profile on a particular social media forum, we strongly suggest you amend your profile immediately so there are no links to your employer.

If you have access to Company computers and equipment, you should be aware not to use these for personal use. In addition, all staff should be aware that using or accessing the internet via their personal phone or tablet is not allowed during work time. Social media use should not interfere with employee responsibilities while at work.

Any Internet use on Company equipment is subject to inspection and monitoring. We must also take reasonable steps to ensure that any workplace issues are not inappropriately discussed or visible on social networking sites.

Employees should consider carefully any content you post on your SNS as if it is brought to our attention, even if you have not recorded our Company name in your profile or within the post and it in any way affects your work with us, we expressly reserve the right to raise it with you and if appropriate deem the particular post as unacceptable and warranting of investigatory and/or disciplinary action. While you may not deliberately intend to cause offence or upset, you must remember that comments may be perceived differently by others. Employees are not to publish, post or release any information that is considered confidential to the company or it's business.

Also, as we operate our own social media pages, it is advised that employees strongly consider the content of posts they make on our page. Remember this is the site of your employer and posts will be visible to Management so again, employees must show common sense and discretion, as inappropriate content will lead to action by your employer.

Examples of the type of content would include (but is not limited to);

- Comments of an inappropriate nature relating to a work colleague(s) or the working environment
- Comments relating to customers/ clients/ 3<sup>rd</sup> Parties known to your employer
- Comments relating to product, pricing or sensitive business information
- Comments that may raise questions regarding your absence from work
- Comments relating to grievances you have with your employer
- Comments which may damage the reputation or professional standing of your employer

If you have permission to operate the Company page and you encounter a situation that threatens to become antagonistic, employees should disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner and seek the advice of a supervisor immediately.

It will not be the case that we will be looking at your web content consistently. However, we reserve the right to raise certain issues with you if they are brought to our attention.

While enforcing this policy I would refer you appropriately to our existing policies on the use of mobile phones at work, use of Company equipment and internet, our bullying and harassment procedures and our disciplinary procedure.

Employees who are found in breach of this policy may face serious disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

If you have any questions in relation to this policy, please contact Management.

### **31. DRUG, ALCOHOL & INTOXICATION POLICY**

We aim to provide a safe work environment for our clients and our employees. With this goal in mind and because of the possibility of serious drug and alcohol abuse problems in today's workplace, we are establishing the following policy for existing and future employees.

The Company explicitly prohibits the use, possession, solicitation for, or sale of narcotics or other illegal drugs, alcohol, or prescription medication without a prescription on Company or customer premises or while performing an assignment on behalf of the Company. Similarly the Company prohibits impairment due to, or being under the influence of, legal or illegal drugs or alcohol away from the Company or on a client premises, if such impairment or influence adversely affects the employee's work performance, the safety of the employee, clients or others, or puts at risk the Company reputation.

The Company strictly prohibits possession, use, solicitation for or sale of legal or illegal drugs or alcohol away from the Company or on a customer's premises, if such activity or involvement adversely affects the employee's work performance, the safety of the employee or of others, or puts at risk the Company reputation.

The presence of any detectable amount of these prohibited substances in the employee's system while at work, while on the premises of the Company, or while on Company business will not be tolerated. "Prohibited substances" include illegal drugs, alcohol, or prescription drugs not taken in accordance with a prescription given to the employee.

The Company will conduct drug and/or alcohol testing under any of the following circumstances:

#### *For-cause testing:*

The Company may ask an employee to submit to a drug and/or alcohol test at any time it feels that the employee may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, including, but not limited to, the following circumstances: evidence of drugs or alcohol on or about the employee's person or in the employee's vicinity, unusual conduct on the employee's part that suggests impairment or influence of drugs or alcohol, negative performance patterns, or excessive and unexplained absenteeism or tardiness.

#### *Post-accident testing:*

Any employee involved in an on-the-job accident or injury under circumstances that suggest possible use or influence of drugs or alcohol in the accident or injury event may be asked to submit to a drug and/or alcohol test. "Involved in an on-the-job accident or injury" means not only the one who was or could have been injured, but also any employee who potentially contributed to the accident or injury event in any way.

*Random Testing:*

Any employee may be asked at any point to submit to a random alcohol or drug test. If an employee is found to be under the influence of drugs (illegal or in addition to a prescribed dose) or alcohol the employee will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary action.

A qualified Medical Practitioner will conduct any tests and testing will take place on the premises of a qualified Medical Practitioner or within the premises of the Company. The Company will stand this cost.

Please note that if we ask you to partake in a test under this policy, it is not any form of disciplinary action and if a negative result is returned, no further action will occur.

If an employee is tested for drugs or alcohol and the results indicate a violation of this policy, or if an employee refuses a request to submit to testing under this policy, the employee will be deemed guilty of intoxication by means of refusal to test and may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment. In such instances, the employee will be given an opportunity to explain the circumstances prior to any final decision being taken.

## **32. EXIT PROCEDURES**

To facilitate the employee's exit processing, the employee must complete a Termination Procedure Checklist. The checklist is completed by the Manager. This checklist ensures that the employee has completed the entire exit processing.

Once the Manager has confirmed that the employee has turned in all Company property, the Company will release the employee's final pay.

Staff are obliged to return all items of Company property that they are responsible for, or items in their possession or control. Items such as the following:

- Uniform / PPE
- Keys / Swipe Card
- Laptop / Mobile
- Written material / Manuals
- Other Equipment

All Company property must be returned by employees on or before their last day of work. The Company may withhold from the employee's final pay the cost of any items that are not returned when required. Company may also take all action deemed appropriate to recover or protect its property.

## **33. COVID-19**

### **EMPLOYEE INFORMATION & GUIDANCE**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to provide you with relevant information and guidance regarding **Coronavirus: COVID-19**. We have taken our guidance and best advice from the HSE, the World Health Organisation (WHO), Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) and the Department of Foreign Affairs. The current situation is fast moving and subject to change, we will keep you advised of changes as they occur. We have put the measures in place as set out by Government to help slow down the spread of Coronavirus, so as to protect you, the store team, customers and the Public. Each one of us has an essential part to play in slowing the spread of the Coronavirus and keeping our workplace COVID-19 free. By working together and applying the preventative measures consistently this can be achieved.

As a food business we are an essential service and the business continues to operate. The Health & Safety measures implemented in store protect you, your colleagues, customers and the Public. You are required to follow and assist with the implementation of Health & Safety measures at all times. This is of paramount importance. Mental health and wellbeing are also especially important during these unprecedented times **and information on supports is provided for you in this document (*may not be relevant*)**.

As well as direction from your manager, you are required to read this document to ensure you understand your responsibilities in our shared efforts to prevent the spread of Coronavirus: COVID-19. We are all required to follow Public Health advice and guidance. You must let your Manager know if there is any reason that places you in a 'Risk Group' of COVID-19

**If you are feeling sick you should stay at home and not go to work.**

#### **What is Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. This new virus and disease were unknown until the first outbreak in December 2019. COVID-19 is now a pandemic affecting many countries globally. (ref WHO)

#### **Symptoms of COVID-19**

- a cough – a dry cough
- shortness of breath
- breathing difficulties
- fever (high temperature)

Symptoms can take up to 14 days to appear. Some people infected with the virus, so called asymptomatic cases, have experienced no symptoms at all. For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to the HSE Website

#### **Returning To Work**

All employees, prior to returning to work, must complete a Pre-Return to Work C-19 form at least 3 days in advance of returning to work. You must contact your store manager, notify him/her of your expected return to work date and clarify medical certification of 'fit to return to work' where applicable. It is a requirement to disclose to your manager in advance of your return to work, any relevant information that is not covered on the Pre- Return to Work C-19 form related to COVID-19.

## **5 Practical Measures to be taken 'Control the Controllable'**

These 5 key preventative measures prevent the spread of the Coronavirus.

1. **Hand Washing:** The most effective thing that we can individually do to keep ourselves and others safe is to regularly wash our hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
2. **Sanitise:** Household disinfectants can kill it, therefore use the relevant cleaning products to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
3. **Respiratory Hygiene:** If we need to cough or sneeze, we should do so into a paper tissue and dispose of the tissue in a waste basket, and then wash our hands with soap and water or clean with alcohol-based hand rub. If that is not possible then we should cough or sneeze into a bended elbow and away from other colleagues.
4. **Touching our Face:** Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
5. **Social Distancing:** Maintain the social distancing requirements. Implement a no handshake policy.

## **Face Coverings**

The wearing of a face covering is an **additional Public Health recommendation** where it is difficult to practice social distancing and may help prevent people who do not know they have the virus from spreading it to others. There may be circumstances where the wearing of a face covering will not be feasible. As a society we are being asked not criticise or judge people who are not able to wear a face covering. There is excellent information on Gov.ie providing further details and videos, we encourage you to check this out here: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/>. Please follow link to a video 'How to safely wear a face covering' here so that you can wear your face covering correctly. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=38&v=OBR0udolaiY&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=38&v=OBR0udolaiY&feature=emb_title)

## **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

The Company will provide protective equipment (such as protective clothing, gloves) together with training on proper use where necessary and in line with Public Health advice. You are under a duty to take reasonable care for your own safety and to appropriately use protective equipment supplied. The protective equipment is intended for use at the workplace only.

## **If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 while at work**

In the event that you or any employee develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at work, you must follow the COVID-19 Response Plan. A COVID-19 Response Plan has been developed to protect all employees an

## **What to do if I have symptoms**

<b>Experiencing symptoms of COVID-19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay away from other people</li> <li>• seek medical advice immediately from your GP or HSE Live (1850 24 1850, <a href="https://www.hse.ie/eng/hselive/">https://www.hse.ie/eng/hselive/</a>)</li> <li>• follow the instructions of the medical professionals</li> <li>• Notify your manager</li> </ul>
<b>Have been in close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact your GP or HSE Live (1850 24 1850, <a href="https://www.hse.ie/eng/hselive/">https://www.hse.ie/eng/hselive/</a>) immediately seeking advice</li> <li>• Restrict your movements until you have received advice from your GP or HSE</li> <li>• Follow the instructions of the medical professionals</li> <li>• Notify your manager</li> </ul>
<b>Awaiting testing or have been confirmed COVID-19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully follow the instructions of their GP and/or HSE</li> <li>• Self-Isolate as directed</li> <li>• Notify your manager and keep in regular contact</li> <li>• Complete a Pre-Return to Work form 3 days in advance of your expected return which must be supported by a 'fit to return to work' medical certificate</li> </ul>
<b>Have returned from abroad</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow Public Health advice</li> <li>• Self-isolate as directed. Currently this is for 14 days</li> <li>• Notify your manager and keep in regular contact</li> <li>• You may need to complete a Pre Pre-Return to Work form</li> </ul>

### **Self-Isolation**

Self-isolation means **staying indoors and completely avoiding contact with other people.**

- Stay at home
- Keep away from other people in your household as much as you can
- Wash your hands often
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Avoid sharing things
- Monitor your symptoms
- Frequent household cleaning and sanitisation
- Wear gloves while handling laundry (wash over 60 degrees)
- Manage rubbish and waste

### **How COVID-19 Spreads**



- The virus that causes COVID-19 disease is spread from person to person or person to objects through touching surfaces, bodily fluid and in droplets scattered from the nose or mouth of an infected person.
- It is still not known how long the virus survives on surfaces in different conditions. The period of survival may vary under different conditions (e.g. type of surface, temperature or humidity of the environment).
- Thorough and regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces is essential. Disinfection is performed in addition to cleaning, never as a substitute for cleaning.
- It is also recommended that you reduce social interactions to help protect yourself from getting the virus.
- Avoid communal sleeping areas and crowded places

If you are concerned that you fall into a group which may be vulnerable you should not attend work. Inform your manager and immediately contact the HSE or GP for the appropriate advice.

### **Measures in store**

- Store Risk Assessment
- Development of a COVID-19 Response plan
- Appointment of COVID-19 Team (your manager and LWR)
- Created a queuing system with 2 metre spacing
- Social distancing zones
- Implemented Screen guards at tills & counters
- Implemented a cleaning rota to sanitise all frequently touched surfaces
- Card payment & contactless payment methods
- Where required, limited the number of customers in the store at any one time
- Use of all media platforms to ensure customers are aware of the Store COVID-19 Policy
- COVID-19 training provided for all employees
- Pre-Return to Work Protocol
- Supply of sanitisation products for staff and customers
- Supply of hand washing facilities and tissues and appropriate disposal
- Staggered lunch breaks
- 'No handshake' policy
- Provision of Personal Protective equipment (PPE) in line with Public Health requirements

If you have any concerns about the measures in store you must report them to the Lead person (your Manager) and Lead Worker Representative (LWR) immediately.

### **Employee responsibilities**

- Make yourself aware of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 as highlighted above and monitor your own wellbeing. [Further information can be found on HSE/ HSA websites](#)
- Participate in all relevant measures implemented in line with Public Health advice
- Wash your hands with soap and water or with an alcohol-based hand rub regularly and in particular:
- Adopt good respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.

## **34. CONCLUSIONS AND CHANGE**

We hope you enjoy your time working with the Company. If you have any questions or need clarification on any aspect of this Handbook, please ask your Manager. We want all our employees to feel secure and content but also to realise they are members of a team and as such must play their part in securing all our futures in an ever-changing environment.

Change is inevitable for our survival and adapting to such change has become a fact of life. In signing their Contract of Employment each employee is expressly aware that the terms and clauses of this handbook constitute part of your contractual relationship with the Company. This handbook will be updated regularly to ensure that it reflects accurately, the nature of our industry and requirements of the business.

At least one month's written notice will be given to you in relation to any such changes. You will be deemed to have accepted such a change unless you notify the employer of any valid objection in writing before the expiry of a period no longer than one month.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Maternity Leave**

The company complies with the Maternity Protection Act 1994 & 2004 and the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Regulations, 2007.

A pregnant employee is entitled to Maternity Leave with a right to return to work provided certain conditions are met.

Once pregnancy is confirmed, you must inform your Manager and a medical certificate must be provided confirming your pregnancy. Pregnant employees are entitled to paid time off to attend Ante Natal and Post Natal appointments. This provision does not entitle you to take an entire day off for doctor's appointment. Where possible, appointments should be made either at the beginning or the end of the day in order to keep disruption to work to a minimum. Two weeks written notice of all appointments must be given to your manager. Please note that payment is conditional on this notice being given.

In addition, there is an entitlement to paid time off to attend one course of Ante Natal classes. Again, advance notice of two weeks must be given to your manager.

Pregnant employees are entitled to 26 consecutive week's unpaid maternity leave, of which at least two weeks must be taken prior to the expected date of delivery and at least four weeks must be taken after delivery. There is also the option to take an additional 16 weeks leave at the end of the Maternity leave. It is not possible to claim Maternity Benefit for these additional weeks.

Written notification of the intention to take any period of additional maternity leave must be given to the Company not later than four weeks before the commencement date of this additional leave. Written notification of your return to work date may be included in your original letter, if it is not, it must be given to your manager four weeks before you intend to return to work.

For further information, contact your manager.

### **Adoptive Leave**

Under the Adoptive Leave Act 1995, adoptive mothers are entitled to avail of Adoptive Leave. In the case where a male is the sole adopter, they may also apply for this leave. The leave entitlement is for 24 weeks after the adoption takes place, with the option for a further 16 weeks of additional unpaid leave if the employee wishes.

Employees must follow the same notification requirements as mentioned above under maternity leave.

## **Parental Leave**

The Parental Leave Act, 1998, (and all relevant amendments) entitles an employee (male and female) to a maximum of 18 weeks' unpaid leave to take care of a child (natural or adopted).

Parental leave must be taken before the child is 8 years of age. The employee must normally have one year's continuous service to be eligible for parental leave. However, where the child is approaching the age of threshold and the staff member has more than three months but less than one years' service, he / she is entitled to one weeks' parental leave for every month of continuous service completed with the Company when the leave begins.

Each parent has a separate entitlement to leave. The leave may not be transferred between the parents – i.e. the mother cannot take the fathers leave and vice versa. Parental leave does not affect a mother's right to maternity leave.

Parental leave may be taken as a continuous block of 18 weeks, or, by agreement with the Company it may be broken up into 2 blocks.

Parental leave may be postponed for up to six months if the Company cannot facilitate such leave at this time. It may only be postponed twice and must be for objective reasons. The Company reserves the right to terminate the leave if the leave period is not used for the care of young children.

During Parental leave, the staff member will be regarded as being in the employment with the Company and will retain all employment rights.

For further information, contact your manager.

## Appendix 2

### **POLICY ON CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION SYSTEMS (CCTV):**

**Closed Circuit Television Systems (CCTVS) are installed in all stores.**

#### **PURPOSE:**

**The purpose of this policy is to regulate the use of CCTV and its associated technology in the monitoring of both the internal and external environs of our premises.**

CCTVS are installed both internally and externally throughout our premises for the purpose of enhancing security of the building and its associated equipment as well as creating a mindfulness among the occupants, at any one time, that a surveillance security system is in operation within and/or in the external environs of the premises during both the daylight and night hours each day.

#### **SCOPE:**

This policy applies to all personnel and relates directly to the location and use of CCTV, the monitoring, recording and subsequent use of such recorded material as well as access to this information.

#### **POLICY:**

We have a statutory responsibility for the protection of our property, equipment and other Company assets as well as providing a sense of security amongst our employees and customers. The primary aim of CCTV monitoring within these premises, is to deter crime and vandalism, to assist in the protection and safety of said property and its associated equipment and materials and ensure a sense of integrity, security and honesty amongst our employees and customers.

In addition to enhancing security, in certain circumstances the use of CCTV footage may be used to ensure health and safety compliance or as part of an investigation or to identify disciplinary (or other) issues relating to staff. CCTV monitoring will be used in order to assist in investigations into both stock and cash loss in the stores. It is not the case that such CCTV footage will be used to monitor employees on a daily basis for the purpose of evaluations or appraisals as this would not be considered as an acceptable use of the CCTV footage and would undermine our policy.

Our code of practice for video monitoring prohibits monitoring based on the characteristics and classifications contained in Equality and other related legislation e.g. race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability etc.

All monitoring for security purposes or otherwise will be conducted in a professional, ethical and legal manner. All information obtained through video monitoring will be stored in a secure environment. Only authorised personnel may review this CCTV footage. No third party will have access to this information however it may be released in exceptional circumstances, if authorised to an approved third party i.e. Gardaí Síochána

**Camera Locations:**

Cameras are located throughout the workplace to ensure both the safety of the employees and also protect the Company from criminal activity. Areas where both cash reserves are stored and cash is counted will be monitored by CCTV cameras. Camera locations are at the discretion of management but will be clearly visible.

Clear signage advising staff and customers that CCTV is in operation will be placed in a prominent position at all times.

**Access Requests:**

All access requests must be formally made through the company's GDPR Champion. The relevant forms are available from your Store Manager.

**Storage and Retention:**

All CCTV footage will be stored in a secure environment and **only authorised personnel may review these files**. Before reviewing any footage, permission must be sought from the GDPR Champion.

This data shall not be kept for longer than is necessary, in accordance GDPR.

**As always, we operate an 'open door' policy and should any employee ask questions relating to this policy, please do not hesitate to contact senior management.**

Ralph's Airside Ltd t/a Spar Holywell

Ralph's Clonee Ltd t/a Spar Clonee

Ralph's Donabate Ltd t/a Maxol / Mace Donabate

Upside Trading Ltd t/a EuroSpar Dunboyne

Ralph's Longwood Ltd t/a Spar Longwood

Ralph's RT2 Ltd t/a Spar Terminal 2

