# Employee Handbook

**Employee Handbook Potential Contents**

**Introduction**

This works well as a ‘welcome’ message signed by the chief executive or General Manager. The introduction should outline what the handbook is intended to do and the organisation reserves the right to make changes using established procedures.

**Mission statement**

(Insert organisation's mission statement)

**Information about the organisation**

Consider the following:

* Company philosophy, objectives and operating style.
* Brief history, and basic information about the field in which the organisation operates and how it is structured, e.g. different departments
* Organisation chart.
* Names of directors and senior management, General managers

**Probationary periods**

It is good practice to make it clear that new employees are subject to a probationary period. It is also possible to specify that during the first month of the probationary period the employer may terminate the employment without formal notice or with notice of less than one week.

Details of probationary periods are usually included in the contract or letter of appointment.

**Notice periods**

Notice periods are usually specified in the offer letter.

**Conditions of service, including hours**

This clause covers hours of work (including, where appropriate, lunch hours and breaks) and annual leave entitlement. It could also include flexi-hours, working from home, job-sharing, etc.

**Induction**

If you have an induction policy give employee a copy. Cover timescales and responsibilities.

**Leave**

**Annual leave**

State the number of working days’ holiday per full calendar year, and when the “leave year” begins and ends.

Set out the system for booking leave. It is wise to state that all leave is subject to operational requirements and the need to maintain reasonable staffing levels.

**Sick leave**

Most organisations require an employee to notify his or her manager on the first day of absence and as soon as possible, usually by noon at the latest. Absence for more than a certain number of days usually requires a doctor's certificate, which should specify a date for return to work if it is likely to be within 14 days. This is also the place to include the policy on medical and dental appointments, if there is one.

**Special leave**

This includes compassionate leave (e.g. on the death of a close relative) or domestic leave (e.g. for those with caring responsibilities). It can also cover public duties such as jury service, standing for Parliament or sitting as a Justice of the Peace.

**Maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave**

A concise way of dealing with this subject within the handbook, however, is to state that once the pregnancy is confirmed, the HR department (or whoever is responsible for the payroll) should be informed in order to provide details of the procedure.

**Employment outside the organisation**

If appropriate, set out the policy in relation to employees who work part-time for other employers.

**Leaving the organisation**

On leaving, for whatever reason, employees should return all of the organisation's property, e.g. mobile phones, documentation, computer equipment. The handbook may state that a failure to do so may incur a deduction from any final payment due.

**Exit interviews**

State why these interviews are held, what is done with the information, and when and by whom (HR department, manager, etc.) these interviews are conducted.

**Retirement**

State clearly the normal retirement age and what provisions there are for early or late retirement. Identify any pre-retirement guidance given by the organisation.

**Disciplinary, capability and grievance procedures**

The non-contractual nature of disciplinary, capability and grievance procedures may be made clear in this section.

**Discipline**

Introduce and outline the disciplinary procedure. Explain that the emphasis is on correcting unsatisfactory conduct before it becomes too serious.

Some employers list examples of behaviour that will be construed as “acts of gross misconduct” and result in instant dismissal. State clearly that such a list is not exclusive.

**Remuneration and benefits**

**Salary reviews**

State how often salaries are reviewed (usually annually) and when the review is effective from.

**Payment of salaries**

State what information the payslip contains, and what deductions may have been made. Describe when (e.g. the last Thursday of every month) and how (e.g. “directly into your bank or building society account”) salaries are paid.

**Pensions**

This subject may be linked to the retirement section, if preferred. Wherever it appears, it should state details on the pension scheme, what type it is and who is entitled to join. The handbook should explain how employees can get a copy, and who they should speak to if they need further information or if they need to give information concerning a change in dependants.

**Expenses**

State that employees are entitled to be reimbursed for all necessary expenditure incurred in the course of their employment. Outline the procedures for claiming expenses.

**Sick pay**

Describe the organisation’s sick pay eligibility and entitlement arrangements.

**Maternity pay**

Most organisations' provisions are based on statutory requirements and are described in a separate document that also includes information about maternity leave.

**Career development**

State the commitment to the development of staff. If you have a written staff development policy give a copy.

**Performance appraisal**

Explain the purpose of the appraisal system and how often appraisals take place.

**Training & Development**

Describe the internal training resources that are available, and also the policy in relation to external training and development and further education

**Internet and email use**

This is an increasingly important issue in many organisations and, depending on circumstances, may require a separate document. As a minimum, the handbook should make clear:

* limitations on internet and email use, including details of illegal activities which would be regarded as gross misconduct
* whether internet and email use is monitored.

**Equal opportunities**

An equal opportunities policy should determine that no one will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of, for example, sex, marital status, religious creed, colour, race, ethnic origin or disability.

**Harassment**

It is against the law to harass another person. This section may include a statement that the organisation is opposed to harassment in any form. Outline the procedures here or in a separate document.

**Personal property**

Include a statement to the effect that “employees are responsible for their own personal property and the organisation does not accept any liability or responsibility for damage to or loss of individual employees' property”.

**Health and safety at work**

A written health and safety policy is a legal requirement for organisations with five or more employees and should comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Include a general statement that health and safety is the responsibility of everyone within an organisation.

**Safety**

Quote all relevant safety regulations.

**In the event of a fire**

Give details of the procedures in the event of a fire.

**Accidents and first-aid treatment**

By law, accidents, injuries and “dangerous occurrences” at work must be officially recorded. Clearly state where the Accident Book – the government-required document for the purpose – is to be found. Details of trained first-aiders should be easily available on notice boards.

**Employee involvement**

Outline the approach to consultation mechanisms such as staff meetings or the team briefing system.

**Personal records**

The organisation must have an up-to-date contact name and emergency contact details for every employee. Employees should be told that they need to supply information about changes of address, etc.

**Suggestion scheme(s)**

Describe any suggestion scheme(s), including details of recognition and rewards.

**Sample forms**

Insert copies of form referred to in the handbook

**Index**

Create index