# Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and Code of Conduct

*Aligned with ACAS Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievance Procedures and suitable for a small UK educational charity.*

### *Policy Approval and Review Record*

| | *Date* |
|---|---|
| *Policy approved by trustees* | *January 2026* |
| *Policy reviewed by trustees* | |
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*Throughout this document the **Centre for Chaplaincy in Education**, being a Charitably Incorporated Organisation, is represented by the annotation "CIO".*

# Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

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## Policy Status, Approval and Review

## 1. Introduction and Application

This Disciplinary Policy and Procedure sets out how the Centre for Chaplaincy in Education (the **CIO**) will manage issues of employee conduct and behaviour in a fair, reasonable and consistent manner. Its purpose is to help employees maintain appropriate standards of conduct and to ensure that any concerns are addressed promptly and proportionately.

This procedure takes account of: - UK employment legislation - Best practice in employee relations - The **ACAS Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievance Procedures**

Failure to follow this procedure may result in disciplinary sanctions being found to be unfair.

This policy applies to all employees of the CIO. It does not apply to agency workers, casual workers or staff under probation, who are subject to separate arrangements. Redundancy situations are excluded from this policy.

The **Code of Conduct**, which forms part of this document, sets out examples of behaviour that may constitute misconduct or gross misconduct.

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## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

**Employees** are expected to: - Cooperate fully with investigations and attend meetings as required - Act reasonably and not cause unnecessary delay - Comply with any conditions of suspension - Attend disciplinary and appeal hearings

**Managers** are responsible for: - Addressing minor issues informally where appropriate - Ensuring that investigations are fair, thorough and timely - Deciding, following investigation, whether disciplinary action is required - Presenting management cases at disciplinary hearings - Seeking HR advice where appropriate

**Chair of Disciplinary Hearing** (normally the Chair of Trustees or a delegated trustee) is responsible for: - Ensuring hearings are conducted fairly and in line with this procedure - Ensuring the employee has a full opportunity to respond - Deciding on appropriate outcomes - Confirming decisions and appeal rights in writing

**Trustee Appeal Panel** is responsible for: - Hearing appeals impartially - Reviewing decisions in line with the stated grounds of appeal - Issuing a final written decision.

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## 3. Key Principles

The CIO is committed to the following principles:

- No disciplinary action will be taken without a reasonable investigation
- Employees will be informed of the allegations against them and the evidence relied upon
- Employees will be given the opportunity to state their case before decisions are made
- Disciplinary action will be proportionate, consistent and based on a reasonable belief formed on the balance of probabilities
- Employees have the right to be accompanied at formal disciplinary and appeal hearings by a trade union representative or workplace colleague
- Employees have the right of appeal against any formal disciplinary sanction

Informal action should be used where appropriate. Formal action should normally follow a graduated approach, except in cases of gross misconduct.

Confidentiality will be maintained so far as reasonably practicable by all parties.

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## 4. Informal Action

Informal action is an important first step in addressing minor lapses in conduct or behaviour and should be used wherever appropriate.

Minor lapses in conduct or behaviour should normally be dealt with informally through discussion, guidance, coaching or training.

The manager should: - Explain the concern clearly - Set out the expected standards of behaviour - Agree any support or improvement required - Make clear the consequences of repetition

Brief notes may be kept for management purposes but informal action does not form part of the formal disciplinary process. If there is no recurrence within 12 months, any notes should be destroyed.

If the matter appears more serious than initially thought, the manager may adjourn the discussion and consider formal action.

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## 5. Formal Action – Investigation

Formal disciplinary action will normally follow the staged process set out in the flowcharts at the end of this document.

Where more serious misconduct is alleged, or informal action has not resolved the issue, a formal investigation will be carried out.

Investigations will: - Be conducted by an investigator with no prior involvement - Establish the relevant facts and gather evidence - Include meetings with the employee and relevant witnesses

The purpose of the investigation is to determine whether there is a case to answer, not to reach a disciplinary decision.

Employees will normally be informed of the allegation and provided with relevant information unless there is a justified reason for delay (for example safeguarding or criminal investigations).

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## 6. Suspension

Where allegations potentially constitute gross misconduct, the Chair may suspend the employee on full contractual pay.

Suspension is a neutral act and is not a disciplinary sanction.

Suspensions will be: - Kept under regular review (normally every 20 working days) - Lifted as soon as it is appropriate to do so

Employees who are suspended must remain available during normal working hours and comply with reasonable conditions of suspension.

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## 7. Disciplinary Hearing

Disciplinary hearings will be conducted in accordance with the procedure and flowchart set out at the end of this document.

If, following investigation, there is a case to answer, the employee will be invited in writing to a disciplinary hearing.

The invitation will: - Set out the allegations - Enclose relevant evidence - Provide at least 10 calendar days' notice - Confirm the right to be accompanied

At the hearing: - Management will present the case - The employee (or companion) may respond and present mitigation - The Chair may ask questions

Following adjournment, the Chair will decide the outcome and confirm it in writing, normally within 7 calendar days.

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## 8. Disciplinary Outcomes

Possible outcomes include:

- No action
- First written warning (normally live for 12 months)

- Final written warning (normally live for 24 months)
- Demotion (where appropriate and with suitable vacancy)
- Dismissal with notice
- Summary dismissal (gross misconduct only)

No employee will be dismissed for a first offence except in cases of gross misconduct.

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### 9. Right of Appeal

The appeal process will be conducted in accordance with the procedure and flowchart set out at the end of this document.

Employees have the right to appeal against any formal disciplinary sanction.

Appeals must: - Be submitted in writing within 7 calendar days - State the grounds of appeal (procedural flaw, new evidence, or disproportionate sanction)

Appeals will be heard by a panel of at least two trustees not previously involved.

The appeal decision will be confirmed in writing and will be final.

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## Flowcharts

The following flowcharts form an integral part of this policy and must be followed unless there are clear and justifiable reasons to depart from them, which should be documented.

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### Flowchart 1: Overview – Managing Misconduct

1. **Issue identified**
    - Concern about conduct or behaviour is raised.
2. **Initial assessment by manager**
    - Is the issue minor and suitable for informal action?
        - **Yes** → Proceed to Informal Action.
        - **No** → Proceed to Formal Investigation.
3. **Informal Action**
    - Manager discusses concern with employee.
    - Standards and expectations clarified.
    - Support or training provided if appropriate.
    - Review conduct over agreed period.
    - If improvement is sustained → **No further action**.
    - If issue recurs or escalates → **Formal Investigation**.
4. **Formal Investigation**
    - Investigator appointed with no prior involvement.

- Evidence gathered and employee interviewed.
- Investigation report completed.

5. **Decision following investigation**
   - Case to answer?
     - **No** → No action; records retained appropriately.
     - **Yes** → Disciplinary Hearing.

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## Flowchart 2: Disciplinary Hearing Process

1. **Invite to hearing**
   - Written invitation issued.
   - Allegations and evidence provided.
   - At least 10 calendar days' notice.
   - Right to be accompanied confirmed.
2. **Disciplinary hearing**
   - Chair explains process.
   - Management presents case and evidence.
   - Employee (or companion) responds and presents mitigation.
   - Questions from Chair and panel.
3. **Adjournment**
   - Chair and panel consider evidence privately.
4. **Decision**
   - Outcome determined on balance of probabilities.
   - Outcome confirmed verbally where possible.
   - Written outcome issued normally within 7 calendar days.
5. **Possible outcomes**
   - No action
   - First written warning
   - Final written warning
   - Demotion (where appropriate)
   - Dismissal with notice
   - Summary dismissal (gross misconduct only)
6. **Right of appeal confirmed**

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## Flowchart 3: Appeal Process

1. **Appeal submitted**
   - Employee submits written appeal within 7 calendar days.
   - Grounds stated (procedure, evidence, or sanction).
2. **Appeal panel appointed**
   - Minimum of two trustees not previously involved.
   - HR advice available if required.

3. **Appeal hearing**
    - Chair explains scope of appeal.
    - Employee presents appeal.
    - Management responds.
    - Questions from panel.
4. **Adjournment and decision**
    - Panel considers evidence.
    - Decision made.
5. **Appeal outcome**
    - Appeal upheld (decision revoked or reduced), or
    - Appeal dismissed (original decision confirmed).
6. **Outcome confirmed in writing**
    - Decision is final.

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# Code of Conduct

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## 1. Purpose and Scope

The Centre for Chaplaincy in Education (the **CIO**) is committed to maintaining the highest standards of professional conduct. As an educational charity working with children, young people, adults and partner organisations, the CIO depends on the trust and confidence of those it serves.

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour expected of all employees. It applies at all times when employees are: - Carrying out their duties for the CIO - Representing the CIO - Engaging in activities that may impact on the CIO's reputation or their suitability for employment

Breaches of this Code may result in action being taken under the CIO's **Disciplinary Policy and Procedure**.

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## 2. General Standards of Conduct

Employees are expected to: - Act honestly, professionally and with integrity at all times - Treat members, students, colleagues, trustees and the public with dignity and respect - Comply with reasonable management instructions and all CIO policies and procedures - Maintain appropriate professional boundaries - Safeguard confidential information - Uphold the CIO's reputation and values

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## 3. Safeguarding and Professional Boundaries

The CIO has a duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Employees must: - Comply fully with the CIO's Safeguarding Policies and Procedures - Follow *Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings* (Safer Recruitment Consortium) - Never use physical punishment or engage in behaviour that could be interpreted as abusive or inappropriate - Never engage in sexual, romantic or inappropriate personal relationships with children or young people - Maintain clear professional boundaries at all times

Any safeguarding concern must be reported immediately in line with CIO safeguarding procedures.

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## 4. Equality, Dignity and Respect

The CIO is committed to equality and inclusion.

Employees must not: - Discriminate unlawfully - Harass, bully or victimise others - Engage in behaviour that could reasonably be perceived as offensive, intimidating or degrading

All employees are expected to comply with the CIO's Equality and Diversity Policy.

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## 5. Use of CIO Property, Systems and Resources

Employees must: - Use CIO property and resources responsibly and for legitimate purposes - Not misuse, damage or remove CIO property without authority - Comply with ICT, data protection and information security policies - Not access or distribute inappropriate or illegal material

Private use of CIO resources must be minimal and authorised where required.

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## 6. Confidentiality and Information Handling

Employees must: - Protect confidential information relating to the CIO, its employees, members and service users - Not disclose information to the media or third parties without authorisation - Not make covert recordings of meetings or conversations

Nothing in this Code prevents lawful whistleblowing in accordance with the CIO's Whistleblowing Policy.

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## 7. Gifts, Hospitality and Conflicts of Interest

Employees must: - Not solicit or accept bribes - Declare gifts or hospitality in line with CIO procedures - Avoid situations where personal interests conflict with CIO duties - Declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest.

## 8. Attendance, Timekeeping and Conduct at Work

Employees are expected to: - Attend work as required and follow absence reporting procedures - Maintain acceptable standards of timekeeping - Perform their duties to the required professional standards - Follow health and safety rules at all times

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## 9. Conduct Outside Work

Employees' private lives are their own. However, conduct outside work may be considered where it: - Brings the CIO into disrepute - Undermines trust and confidence - Makes the employee unsuitable for their role

Criminal offences must be disclosed where required by law or role.

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## 10. Misconduct and Gross Misconduct

Breaches of this Code may constitute misconduct or gross misconduct.

**Examples of gross misconduct may include (but are not limited to):** - Safeguarding breaches or abuse - Fraud, theft or dishonesty - Serious breach of confidentiality - Unlawful discrimination or harassment - Serious misuse of CIO systems - Conduct bringing the CIO into serious disrepute

**Examples of misconduct may include:** - Poor attendance or timekeeping - Failure to follow reasonable instructions - Inappropriate behaviour - Breaches of CIO policies or procedures

The seriousness of any breach will be assessed in line with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

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## 11. Policy Status and Review

This Code of Conduct is approved by the Board of Trustees of the Centre for Chaplaincy in Education.

It will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if required by changes in legislation, guidance or organisational need.

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*This Code of Conduct should be read alongside the CIO's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and related policies.*

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## *Policy Approval and Review Record*

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