



DISABLED AFLOAT RIVERBOATS TRUST

POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND OTHER GUIDANCE FOR VOLUNTEERS

The policies, procedures and guidance notes contained in this booklet have been approved by the Trustees of DART and should be carefully read and understood by all volunteers and employees.

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All DART policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and re-adopted by the Trustees

INTRODUCTION – THE MAKINGS OF A DART HOLIDAY

The DART project was founded in 1990 with the idea of providing a river boat for use by people with disabilities for recreation and education. The original boat, called 'DART', ran successfully until 2004 when problems with dry rot in the interior woodwork resulted in a rethink about the way our services were provided. The result was our current way of working where DART hires suitable boats and other facilities from other charities. This enables us to operate in locations across the UK giving much greater choice and relieving us of the worries of operating a boat. It has also resulted in a sustainable project that can be expanded (or contracted) to meet market needs.

Over the years we have talked with our users and crews about their experiences with us and developed a varied mix of activities that results in customer satisfaction and a high level of repeat bookings. It is part of the job of the trip manager to ensure a good balance is offered while being clear that participation by individuals is largely optional. The main elements are:

- **Boating activities.** We reckon that up to 5 hours per day of boating is enough for most people. Trip managers must appreciate that many of our users are new to boating and that other activities are just as important in creating a satisfying holiday.
- **Domestic activities.** Many people living in homes are denied the opportunity to help in the kitchen. Some of the activities that passengers can help with are washing up, preparing vegetables, laying the table and shopping. The only job that must be done by the crew is the cleaning in the toilet and shower areas.
- **Playing games.** Trip managers always have a selection of games available. It is up to them what they provide but favourites include dominos, Scrabble, cards and board games like Ludo and Snakes and Ladders.
- **Celebrations.** Over the years we have celebrated many birthdays and examination successes.
- **Off boat activities.** These depend on where the boat or land base is situated but may include shopping, going for walks, sight seeing, visiting a pub, theatre, bowling or swimming. When off boat activities are arranged the trip manager will do their best to ensure that people who do not wish to participate are able to remain on the boat or land base. When a boat is tied up for a while people should also be encouraged to make their own entertainment or explore the locality on their own.

For more detail on how trips are organised and managed see the DART trip management manual which is available on the trip managers area of the web site. Ask the DART administrator for details of how to access it if you do not already know.

IN LOCO PARENTIS?

To what extent are DART volunteers in loco parentis in relation to those who come on our trips? The question has been raised many times. Now that the number of volunteers is rising the time has come to put the answer in writing both as guidance for those who are new to DART and as a reminder to those of us who have been before.

The basic answer is not at all. Under 18's will come with a carer who will be in loco parentis. Over 18's who come with a carer are by definition being cared for. That leaves over 18's who come without carers. Such people are adults and should be treated in the same way as other adults are treated. They are expected to be able to keep track of their belongings, wash and dress themselves, change their clothes and to participate in activities on board. That said we know from experience that some people fall short in some departments and need a little encouragement. The key is to do as little as possible and to enquire if you think help may be needed. On some occasions it may be appropriate to volunteer help in the same way that one would, say, help an elderly person across the road. DART has always been willing to do this but our terms and conditions and other documentation does make it clear that they should be able to do these things and if not a carer may be required. Sometimes we come across people who live in homes where a lot is done for them and they expect the same on DART. In such cases it may be appropriate to be firm in your encouragement and not be tempted to do the job for them. Judgement and a willingness to wait are key attributes needed in such situations. It can be slow but that is one reason why DART trips are taken at a pace dictated by passengers rather than by the crew.

The above does not address the situation when the boat is moored and people are free to explore. Do not be afraid to find out what the passenger may need in the way of help. Some people with learning difficulties can find their own way around while others cannot. Most people with physical disabilities welcome the chance to explore on their own though they may appreciate being offered help with a wheelchair.

As guidance here are one or two stories about how things have worked in the past.

Passenger with physical disability in a wheelchair. Able to leave the wheelchair to sit in the cabin and can also walk very slowly for short distances. She accepts help with transferring bedding from the storage area to her bed. Needs no help when in a town like Devizes or Newbury where the accessibility of the moorings is good.

Passenger with learning disability and little use of right arm. When he first came he asked who was going to make his bedtime drink. It was suggested that he might make it and by the end of the trip he was doing the job for everyone. On another occasion we were moored up at lunchtime and he went off and took a job pea picking with a group of labourers close by. The boat departure was somewhat delayed while he was located. On yet another occasion he stayed in the local pub after the rest of the crew had returned to the boat. While keeping a discrete eye on the situation he was allowed to get 'drunk'.

Passenger with a physical disability who when he first came was able to look after himself but needed pushing in a wheelchair off the boat. Unfortunately he has deteriorated over the years. The help needed became too much for the crew to deal with and now he has to come with a carer.

The key is NEVER ASSUME – ASK! (As you would with any other adult)

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY STATEMENT

1. DART recognises the need for equality within its own organisation so that everyone who wishes to has the opportunity to take part in its work and to use its service.
2. DART has adopted an Equal Opportunities Policy to make sure that its employment, which includes volunteering opportunities, and its services are open and accessible to all individuals and organisations and that DART does not discriminate against anyone on the grounds of:
 - Race, colour, religion, nationality or ethnic origin.
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Sexual orientation
 - Physical, sensory or mental disability, or mental health
 - Employment status
 - Spent criminal convictions
3. DART is committed to developing:
 - Codes of practice to implement this policy
 - Monitoring and evaluating procedures to review progress

POLICY ON WORKING WITH VULNERABLE PEOPLE AND CHILDREN

The Trustees and Operating Committee of Gloucestershire Disabled Afloat Riverboats Trust (DART) are committed to taking all reasonable steps to safeguard the welfare of vulnerable people and children from physical, sexual and emotional harm while they are involved in activities organised by the Trust. The Trustees and Operating Committee are equally committed to ensuring that the staff and volunteers operating their facilities and activities are protected if and when charges of abuse are made. This policy document provides guidelines which, if followed, will reduce the risk of abuse occurring and, if it does; provide a means of investigating and dealing with any incidents. The Trustees will appoint a person (the appointed person) to supervise the completion and submission of the forms required for Disclosure and Barring Service DBS checking. Currently this is done using facilities provided by the Diocese of Gloucester. This appointment will be made each time this policy is reviewed.

Reducing the risk of abuse occurring.

Vetting of volunteers and staff

Prior to working on the boat or in any other capacity involving contact with vulnerable people or children all volunteers and staff must undergo appropriate training and be certificated by at least three members of Staff, Trustees or Operating Committee.

DBS checks

Prior to working on the boat or in any other capacity involving contact with vulnerable people or children all volunteers and staff will be asked to obtain an enhanced disclosure through DART from the Disclosure and Barring Service. People who are already undergone a check and are recorded on the DBS database may submit their reference number to the appointed person to enable them to look at the record. Everyone else will be asked to complete a form for a new DBS check. The appointed person will keep a record of the name of the person, the date of the application, the date on which the disclosure was made and the result.

Code of conduct and guidelines.

Attached to this policy is a code of conduct for skippers and helpers on DART and some guidelines on the subject of abuse and how to respond to allegations of abuse. All skippers and helpers will read and be assessed on their knowledge of the current code of conduct as part of their training.

Procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of alleged abuse.

Suspicion of abuse may vary from a vague disquiet about inappropriate behaviour to clear evidence of serious abuse with many intermediate levels. If you suspect abuse or inappropriate behaviour inform the appointed person or the Chairman of the Trustees of your concerns. They will consider the matter carefully and, if necessary, take action to forestall any further abuse. If there is clear *prima facie* evidence of abuse their first action will be to consult Social Services. If, following such consultation, the case is thought to be serious the Police will be called and it will be treated as a criminal matter.

You should also report any instances where, in the course of conversation, allegations of abuse have been made. For example if a child should talk about domestic violence at home this should be reported.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SKIPPERS AND HELPERS

The current DART 'Policy on working with vulnerable people and children' is referred to throughout this code of conduct as 'The Policy'. The items below have been taken from a booklet entitled "Working with Children and Young People" produced by the Diocese of Gloucester. They have been slightly modified in places to suit DART.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

- Do treat everyone with respect
- Do provide an example you wish others to follow
- Do plan activities that involve more than one other person being present or, at least, which are within sight or hearing of others
- Do respect a person's right to personal privacy
- Do take care when allocating sleeping accommodation.
- Do work in pairs when in situations where you may be vulnerable to accusations of abuse. For example if it is necessary to give someone a shower.
- Do provide access for people to talk to others about any concerns they may have
- Do encourage people to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like

- Do maintain a healthy adult lifestyle
- Do remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned
- Do recognise that caution is required even in sensitive moments of counselling, such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement
- Do NOT permit abusive youth peer activities (e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying)
- Do NOT play physical contact games.
- Do NOT jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- Do NOT exaggerate or trivialise abuse issues
- Do NOT show favouritism to any individual
- Do NOT make suggestive remarks or gestures
- Do NOT rely on just your good name to protect you
- Do NOT believe “it could never happen to me”

GUIDELINES ON TOUCHING

- Keep everything in public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the person’s needs, not the worker’s.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the person rather than the worker.
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be construed as, sexually stimulating to either adults or children.
- People are entitled to determine the degree of physical contact with others except in exceptional circumstances, i.e. when they need medical attention or their own safety.
- Crew members should take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact and should follow the ‘Procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of alleged abuse’ laid down in the Policy if they have any concerns.
- Touch should not be prolonged.
- Corporal punishment in any form should not be used.

ABUSE – SOME GUIDELINES ON WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO RESPOND TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

The following notes have been taken from a booklet entitled “Working with Children and Young People” produced by the Diocese of Gloucester. They have been slightly modified in places to suit DART.

Kinds of Abuse The following definitions are quoted verbatim but can be taken to apply to vulnerable people as well as children.

Definitions of Abuse (England & Wales)

The definitions of child abuse recommended as criteria throughout England and Wales by the Department of Health, Department for Education and Employment and the Home Office in their joint document, *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (1999) are as follows:

Abuse and Neglect

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child whom they are looking after. Proxy or Munchausen Syndrome commonly describes this situation using terms such as factitious illness by Proxy.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Organised Abuse

Organised or multiple abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of related or non-related abused children and young people. The abusers concerned may be acting in concert to abuse children, acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse. Organised and multiple abuse occur both as part of a network of abuse across a family or community, and within institutions such as residential homes or schools.

Signs of abuse Those who work with children or vulnerable people have a responsibility to be aware and alert to signs that all is not well with a child or vulnerable person. It is important to keep an open mind and consider carefully what is causing you concern.

- Physical abuse: unexplained injuries or those that have received no medical attention, hidden injuries, signs of neglect;
- Sexual abuse: allegations made by the child or person, preoccupation with sexual matters, sexual activity through words, play or drawings, severe sleep disturbances with fears and phobias or being sexually provocative;
- Emotional abuse: regression of behaviour, nervousness, sudden under-achievement, inappropriate relationships with peers/adults, attention seeking, running away/stealing/lying,
- Looking uncared for.
- Other: unexplained reluctance of children or vulnerable people to be left in the care of an individual – unexplained mood changes.

NB: Physical abuse and neglect are difficult to hide. Sexual abuse can be almost impossible to identify and prove. Many symptoms of distress can point to abuse but there may be other explanations. It is important therefore, that the above signs are not taken as indications that abuse has taken place. They should make us stop and think, but not necessarily jump to conclusions.

Talking about abuse

It is usually very difficult for a child or vulnerable person to tell someone that they are being abused. So

- Let them know that you will listen to anything they have to tell you, but that there are some things so serious that you have to tell someone else. Do not promise confidentiality;
- Accept what the child or person says, keeping calm and looking at them directly;
- Listen carefully and do not stop a person who is revealing painful events;
- Never push for information or ask leading questions. A leading question is one that prompts a yes or no answer rather eliciting further information. E.g. a leading question might be 'Did he/she do this?' while an equivalent non-leading question might be 'Tell me what happened'.
- Be aware that the child or person may have been threatened;
- Reassure the child or person they were right to tell you;
- Let the child or person know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens

- Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what was said and when he/she said it. Record the date, time and location and whether other people were present. Keep the hand-written record.

What to do if you suspect abuse

The person who first suspects or is told of alleged abuse is responsible for ensuring that his/her concern is taken seriously.

Suspicion may vary from a vague disquiet about possibly inappropriate behaviour to clear evidence of serious abuse with many intermediate levels.

Information may reach you from a variety of sources

- a child or person claiming that he/she has been abused
- another child or person who is concerned
- a member of the person's family
- a fellow worker of the suspect
- someone who believes he/she is the object of malicious or unfounded rumour
- your own concerns

If you suspect abuse or feel that inappropriate behaviour is taking place but the way forward is unclear, inform the DART Administrator, Chairman of the Trustees or any other Trustee of your concerns.

It is important to be aware of the far-reaching consequences of making a referral and naming names. the DART Administrator is available to help if you have any doubt.

If there is clear evidence of abuse, while no one will want to react without careful consideration, it is important to avoid delay in order to forestall further abuse.

Clear evidence is

- where a child or vulnerable person is making a clear allegation of abuse
- where non-accidental or unexplained injuries to the person are raising strong suspicions

If there is clear *prima facie* evidence of abuse Social Services or the Police may be called by the DART administrator or a trustee.

Gloucestershire Social Services Customer Service Office. 01452 426565

GUIDELINES ON PUB VISITS AND DRINKING

Pub visits

When vulnerable people join a visit to the pub the following dangers could exist:

- They may be on medication that is incompatible with alcohol and not declare it.
- They may not have the financial resources to buy complete rounds for a large party.
- There may be people in the group with an alcohol problem.

With these dangers in mind it is recommended that:

- As a basic principle people should buy their own drinks.
- Only when a crew member has good knowledge of a passengers drinking preferences may they offer to buy them a drink or accept an offer from the passenger to buy them a drink.
- The buying of complete rounds should be discouraged.
- One crew person per boat should abstain in case of accident.

Drinking on the boat. In general there is no problem with groups having a glass of wine or beer with their meal. However, there may be occasions when the trip manager needs to declare the boat an alcohol free zone. If this is the case then all crew members will be expected to support the trip managers' decision.

Drinking by members of the crew. Crew members who consume alcohol to the extent that it impacts on their ability to ensure the safety of passengers will be subject to disciplinary action.

VISITORS ON TRIPS

Occasionally passengers on DART trips ask if they may entertain visitors while they are on their trip. This is usually acceptable. However, the following guidelines should be observed.

- The trip manager must be consulted, preferably before the trip starts, and has the right to refuse.
 - No overnight stays are permitted as this has implications for our insurance cover.
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POLICY ON SKIPPER TRAINING AND LICENCE RENEWAL

DART recruits and trains volunteer skippers to take charge of the operation of the boat. Skippers work with a crewman who is either a member of the group who is not directly involved with caring or someone recruited specifically for the task. The skipper is thus in overall charge and must be properly trained and qualified as well as being able to accept responsibility for the safety of the boat and its passengers and crew. It has been agreed by the Trustees that the training and qualification requirements shall be as detailed below. It should be noted that since the boats used by DART carry 12 or fewer passengers there is no legal or insurance requirement for qualified skippers but the Trustees are of the opinion that it demonstrates a responsible attitude to our passengers and their safety.

The basic qualification required is a Certificate in Community Boat Management (CCBM) issued by the National Community Boats Association (NCBA). This covers boat handling, basic boat maintenance, safety procedures, life saving and fire fighting appliances, basic first aid and

handling of groups. Other equivalent or higher qualifications may be accepted (for example Boatmaster's Tier 2 licence is also acceptable. Potential skippers must be at least 18 years old and physically fit.

All potential skippers, whether or not they already hold a licence, are required to undergo training with DART. This consists of the following parts

- A two day, residential, boat familiarisation course on a DART boat. Inability to cope with the physical demands of boat handling may result in a potential skipper being advised that they are not suitable for the work.
- A trip with a group being skippered by an existing qualified skipper. The purpose of this is to ensure that potential skippers are able to get on well with groups. An adverse report on this trip may lead to a potential skipper being advised that he or she is not suitable for the type of work the trust does.

Provided that suitable candidates demonstrate their commitment in a convincing fashion the trust will fund the acquisition of the CCBM.

Licences are subject to revalidation by the NCBA every five years. Revalidation requires the skipper to demonstrate that he or she has had at least 50 days service in the five year period. The trust also require an expression of the skippers continuing commitment to the project. Provided these conditions are met the trust is prepared to fund the licence renewal. If the required days of service are not all with DART then the Trustees will review the case and reserve the right not to fund the renewal.

FOOD HYGIENE, HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

This policy provides guidelines on matters of food hygiene, health and safety which, if followed, will minimise the risks to users of DART and individuals travelling on DART organised trips. The points listed below are those that are specific to DART and provide information that is additional to that provided by a Basic Food Hygiene Course.

Food Hygiene

- It is the responsibility of catering organisers to cater for themselves and for the passengers, skipper and crew. When doing so you are asked to observe the recommended practices taught on a Basic Food Hygiene Certificate course. A copy of the course book is available from the DART office. If in doubt please read it.
- Catering organisers should ensure that food brought on to the boat at the start of each trip is used before its "use by" date or within its "best before" date.
- On leaving the boat the catering organiser should ensure that they remove **ALL** foodstuffs. See the trip management manual for procedures aimed at minimising waste at the end of a trip.
- Deep fat frying is prohibited on boats used by DART Please use oven chips.
- Before preparing food please ensure you wash your hands.
- Check the refrigerator daily to ensure that it is at 5 degrees Centigrade or below and that the pilot light has not gone out.
- Ensure that the table tops and sink are kept clean.
- Ensure that waste is disposed of regularly. Ask the skipper for the location of disposal points along your route. If you are at a disposal point and the bin looks as though it will not make it to the next one then get rid of it. Do not overfill bin liners. you should be able to

close them by knotting the open end. If you should miss a disposal point then close the bin liner and store it in a suitable location..

- Use a blue waterproof dressing to cover any cuts or grazes before preparing food.

Health and Safety

- The skipper should fill the water tank on a daily basis. This keeps the water fresh. If any members of the group are unable to drink tap water it is recommended that they supply their own bottled water.
 - A First Aid kit is carried on board. If you cut or injure yourself in the kitchen you should use the first aid kit and report the incident in the accident book. The skipper or trip manager can advise on this.
 - Bed sides to prevent people falling out of bed are available on request and will fit any bunk. The skipper can advise on fitting.
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WEARING OF LIFE JACKETS

When should lifejackets and buoyancy aids be worn? The Inland Waterways Small Passenger Boat Code does not insist on lifejackets and buoyancy aids being carried or worn on narrow rivers and canals where the depth of water is generally less than 1.5 metres or on deeper and wider water where wave heights are not expected to exceed 0.6 metres. However for community boat operators (such as DART) this is an overly simple approach as it ignores other risk factors associated with community boating such as the abilities of people on board and activities that may be undertaken involving passengers rather than crew. Thus it is ultimately up to individual boat operators and crew to assess the risks and make up their own minds. The chart below gives a risk based procedure for determining when a life jacket or buoyancy aid should be worn Note that in some cases wearing a lifejacket can in itself be a risk factor particularly when working in the confined space of a boat cabin.

The chart on the next page shows the DART policy. Each area is coloured as follows:

High risk Lifejacket mandatory
 Medium risk Lifejacket recommended
 Low risk Lifejacket not needed or a positive risk



Activity	Able bodied young people	Able bodied adults	People with mild learning difficulties	People with severe learning difficulties	Wheel chair users	People with difficulty balancing / Blind
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Activities inside boat	Yellow					
Boarding/leaving boat using a plank	Blue	Blue	Blue	Red	Not applicable	Red
Boarding/leaving boat using a ramp	Yellow					
Travelling on front/rear deck with good protection against falling overboard	Yellow					
Travelling on front/rear deck with no protection against falling overboard	Red	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Red
Operating locks and bridges	Red	Blue	Blue	Red	Yellow	Red

EXPENSES

All volunteers helping on trips are entitled to out of pocket transport costs for travelling between the trip base and home and for any items of expenditure that they may fund during a trip. If, as a volunteer, you would like to assist the Trust financially you are welcome to either not claim or claim and gift aid the money to DART.

Transport costs: Travel by public transport will be re-imbursed against a receipt or ticket. Travel by car will be re-imbursed at 40p per mile up to a maximum of £40.00 per one way journey. If a cost of more that £40.00 is likely to be incurred it must be agreed with the Trust Chairperson in advance.

Other costs: These will be re-imbursed against receipts.

How to make a claim: Use the expenses claim form (available on the web site) and send it to the treasurer whose address is on the form.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Introduction

One of the main purposes of DART is to use canal and river boating as a means of educating people in life skills. We foster the concept amongst volunteers and users that the boats we use are a microcosm of the planet and carry all that is needed for human habitation – shelter, food, light, heat and water and that these resources, that are taken for granted ashore, are finite and need to be managed and conserved.

Energy conservation

- Energy in the form of gas, diesel and electricity is only to be used when necessary.
- The boats will be operated at reasonable speeds and speed limits observed.

Minimising pollution

- When organizing boating trips we actively encourage the shared use of private transport and use mini-buses where there is a concentration of users in a small geographical area.
- DART crews should purchase cleaning products that minimize harm to the environment. For example avoiding aerosols.

Reducing waste and the impact of waste

- All the boats used by DART are fitted with sewage holding tanks so that raw sewage must always be pumped ashore and not into the canal or river. Users and volunteers are asked to bag and bin all sanitary waste.

- Paper, bottles and jars are reused where possible. The use of paper/plastic plates, cups and cutlery are avoided.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

Note that although this procedure refers to employees throughout, the same procedure will be applied to volunteers as appropriate.

Purpose and scope

This procedure is designed to help and encourage all employees to achieve and maintain standards of conduct, attendance and job performance. It is not intended to be a substitute for the normal day to day management of staff. The aim is to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all. This procedure applies to all employees.

Your line manager may give informal verbal warnings when conduct, time keeping or job performance is observed to be unsatisfactory. Where the facts appear to call for disciplinary action the formal procedure set out below will be followed.

Principles

No disciplinary action will be taken against an employee until the case has been fully investigated.

At every stage of the procedure the employee will be advised of the nature of the complaint against him or her and will be given the opportunity to state his or her case before any decision is made.

At all stages the employee will have the right to be accompanied by a friend or other person of their choice during the disciplinary interview. The friend or other person will not be acting in a legal capacity.

An employee will have the right to appeal against any disciplinary action taken.

The procedure may be implemented at any stage if the employee's alleged misconduct warrants such action.

Nothing in the procedure is intended to diminish an employee's rights under employment law.

The procedure

Stage 1 – verbal warning

If an employee's conduct or performance does not meet acceptable standards he or she will be given a formal verbal warning by the line manager. He or she will be advised of the reason for the warning, that it is the first stage of the disciplinary procedure and of his or her right to appeal. A brief note of the verbal warning will be kept but it will be spent after 6 months, subject to satisfactory conduct and performance.

Stage 2 – written warning

If the offence is a serious one, or if a further offence occurs, a written warning will be given to the employee by the line manager. This will give details of the complaint, the improvement required and the time scale. It will warn that action under Stage 3 will be considered if there is no satisfactory improvement and will advise of the right of appeal. A copy of this written warning will be kept by the line manager but will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 12 months subject to satisfactory conduct and performance.

Stage 3 – final written warning or suspension

If there is still a failure to improve and conduct or performance remain unsatisfactory or if the misconduct is sufficient to warrant only one written warning but insufficiently serious to justify dismissal (in effect both first and final warning) a final written warning will be given to the employee by the Chair of the Trustees or other nominated member of the Trust. This will give details of the complaint and will warn that dismissal will result if there is no satisfactory improvement and will advise of the right to appeal. A copy of this final warning will be kept on the employee's personnel file but will be spent after 12 months subject to satisfactory conduct and performance.

Alternatively, consideration may be given to imposing a penalty of suspension without pay for up to 5 working days.

Stage 4 - dismissal

If conduct or performance is still unsatisfactory and the employee still fails to reach the prescribed standards dismissal will normally result. Only the Trustees can take the decision to dismiss. The employee will be provided, as soon as reasonably practicable, with written reasons for dismissal, the date on which employment will terminate and the right of appeal.

Gross Misconduct

The following are examples of offences that will normally be regarded as gross misconduct: - theft, fraud, deliberate falsification of records, fighting, physical assault, severe verbal assault, serious insubordination, deliberate damage to property, serious incapability due to being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, serious negligence causing unacceptable loss, damage or injury.

If gross misconduct is alleged the employee may be suspended from work on full pay, normally for no more than 5 days, while the Trust investigates the alleged offence. Following investigation a full disciplinary hearing will be convened to consider the complaint. The panel will consist of at least 3 members of the Trustees, excluding the line manager, and be chaired by a nominated member of the Trustees.

If gross misconduct is deemed to have been committed summary dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice will result. The employee will be provided, as soon as reasonably practicable, with written reasons for dismissal, the date on which employment will terminate and the right of appeal.

Appeals

An employee who wishes to appeal against a disciplinary decision should inform the Chair of the Trustees within 10 working days of receipt of written notification of the disciplinary penalty. An appeals panel will then be convened consisting of at least 3 members of the Trustees who

did not sit on the original disciplinary panel to consider the appeal. At an appeal hearing any disciplinary penalty imposed will be reviewed but it cannot be increased.

The employee will be informed in writing of the result of the appeal within 14 working days. Where a dismissed employee is re-instated on appeal consideration will be given to payment of some or all of the pay that would have been received had the employee not been dismissed.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Note that although this procedure refers to employees throughout, the same procedure will be applied to volunteers as appropriate.

Purpose and scope

This procedure is available to ensure that all employees have a formal means of raising a grievance related to their employment.

Nothing in the procedure is intended to diminish an employee's rights under employment law.

It is the Trust's intention that no employee should suffer detriment as a result of raising a grievance in the proper manner.

All grievances raised will be regarded as confidential and details will only be disclosed to, and discussed with members of staff and Trustees involved in the procedure. Discussion with any other persons will only take place with the consent of the employee.

At any stage of the procedure you may ask to be accompanied by a friend or other person of your choice.

Procedure – Stage 1

An employee who has a grievance relating to his or her employment should discuss the matter informally with his or her line manager or, in the event of the behaviour of the line manager being relevant to the grievance, the chairperson of the Trustees. In the event of the line manager being the chairperson of the Trustees the grievance may be addressed to the vice-chairperson. The line manager may, if he or she feels it appropriate, discuss the matter with the chair (or, if the line manager is the chair, the vice-chair). Your grievance will be replied to as soon as possible and in any event within 7 days.

Procedure – Stage 2

If you continue to be aggrieved you should submit your grievance in writing to the chairperson of the Trustees (or, in the event of the line manager being the chairperson of the Trustees, the vice –chair) who will reply to your grievance as soon as possible and in any event within 14 days.

Procedure – Stage 3

If you still continue to be aggrieved you may ask to appear before a panel of members of the Trustees and put your grievance to them. You will be asked to produce a written statement for

the panel members which may be the same as, or different from, that produced in stage 2. The panel will hear your grievance within 29 working days.

The matter will normally end at this level unless it is agreed that an important issue of principle arises which should be considered through a conciliation process.