

DATA PROTECTION POLICY

In the course of your work you may come into contact with or use confidential information about employees, clients and customers, for example their names and home addresses. The Data Protection Act 1998 contains principles affecting employees and other personal records information protected by the act includes not only personal data, for example employee personnel files. The purpose of these rules is to ensure you do not breach the Act. You should be aware that you can be criminally liable if you knowingly or recklessly disclose personal data in breach of the Act. A serious breach of the Data Protection is also a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with under the Company's disciplinary procedures. If you access another employee's personnel record without authority, this constitutes a gross misconduct offence and could lead to your summary dismissal.

The Data Protection Principles

There are eight data protection principles that are central to the Act. The Company and all its employees must comply with these principles at all times in its information handling practices. Essentially, the principles say that personnel data must be:-

- 1) Processed fairly and lawfully.
- 2) Processed for specific and lawful purposes and may not be used for any other purpose.
- 3) Adequate, relevant and not excessive.
- 4) Accurate and up to date.
- 5) Not to be kept for longer than is necessary.
- 6) Processed in accordance with the rights of employees under the Act.
- 7) Kept secure and protected against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage.
- 8) Not to be transferred to a country outside the European Economic Area unless the country provides an adequate level of protection for the processing of personal data.

Right to Access Personal Information

An employee has the right, on request, to receive a copy of the personal information that the Company holds on them, and to demand that any inaccurate data be corrected.

If an employee wishes to access a copy of their file, they must make a written request for which the Company may charge a fee of up to £10.

Obligations in Relation to Personal Information

Employees must ensure they comply with the following guidelines at all times:-

- do not give out confidential personal information except to the data subject.
- Always verify the identity of the data subject or the legitimacy of the request and seek the data subject's explicit consent.
- only transmit personal information between locations by fax or e-mail if a secure network is in place.
- if you receive a request for personal information about another employee, it should be forwarded to the Personnel Department who will be responsible for dealing with such requests.
- ensure any personal data is kept securely, either in a locked filing cabinet or if computerised, it is password protected.

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