

Electronic and Telephonic Communications Policy

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Relevant Policies:

'Driving and Mobile Phones Policy'

'Staff Code of Conduct Policy'

'Privacy Policy'

Contents:

1. Computer Misuse
2. Computer Software, Games and Viruses
3. Telephone Misuse

1. Computer Misuse:

Some employees now have access to computers at work for use in connection with HND Children's Care Ltd business. Employees who are discovered unreasonably using HND Children's Care Ltd computers for personal and private purposes will be dealt with under HND Children's Care Ltd '[Disciplinary Policy](#)'.

Vandalism of, or otherwise intentionally interfering with, HND Children's Care Ltd computer network constitutes a gross misconduct offence and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal under HND Children's Care Ltd '[Disciplinary Policy](#)'.

Some employees also have access to e-mail and the Internet for exclusive use in connection with HND Children's Care Ltd business and as part of the normal execution of the employee's job duties. If given access to the e-mail system or to the internet, employees are responsible for the security of their terminals. If leaving a terminal unattended or on leaving



the computer, they should ensure that they lock their terminal or log off to prevent unauthorised users accessing the system in their absence. Employees without authorisation should only be allowed to use terminals under supervision.

The purpose of these rules is to protect HND Children's Care Ltd legal interests. Unregulated access increases the risk of employees inadvertently forming contracts through e-mail and increases the opportunity for wrongful disclosure of confidential information. E-mail should not be used for unsolicited correspondence or marketing campaigns.

Employees who are authorised users are not permitted to surf the Internet or to spend excessive time "chatting" by e-mail for personal and private purposes during their normal working hours. Employees are also prohibited from using e-mail to circulate any non-business material. Not only does excessive time spent online lead to loss of productivity and constitute an unauthorised use of HND Children's Care Ltd time, sexist, racist or other offensive remarks or jokes sent by e-mail are capable of amounting to unlawful harassment.

Employees should not download or install software from external sources without authorisation from Senior Management. This includes software programs, instant messaging programs, screensavers, photos, video clips and music files. Incoming files and data should always be virus-checked by the Homes Manager before they are downloaded. If in doubt, employees should seek advice from Senior Management.

The following must never be accessed from the network:

- audio and video streaming,
- instant messaging and webmail (such as Hotmail or Yahoo) and.
- social networking sites (such as Facebook, Bebo, You Tube or Twitter).

This list is non-exhaustive and may be modified from time to time.

Employees should not under any circumstances use our systems to participate in any internet chat room, post messages on any internet message board or set up or log text or information on a blog or wiki, even in their own time. Employees who are discovered contravening these rules may face serious disciplinary action under HND Children's Care Ltd 'Disciplinary Procedure'. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, it may amount to gross misconduct and could result in the employee's summary dismissal.

Logging on to sexually explicit websites or the downloading and / or circulation of pornography or obscene material or using the Internet for gambling or illegal activities constitutes gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal under HND Children's Care Ltd 'Disciplinary Procedure'.

HND Children's Care Ltd reserves the right to monitor employees' e-mails and use of the Internet, both during routine audits of the computer system and in specific cases where a problem relating to excessive or unauthorised use is suspected. The purposes for such



monitoring are:

- To promote productivity and efficiency
- For security reasons, and confidentiality
- To ensure there is no unauthorised use of HND Children's Care Ltd time e.g. that an employee has not been using e-mail to send or receive an excessive number of personal communications.
- To ensure the smooth running of the business if the employee is absent for any reason and communications need to be checked.
- To ensure that all employees are treated with respect, by discovering and eliminating any material that is capable of amounting to unlawful harassment.

Communications of a sensitive or confidential nature should not be sent by e-mail because it is not guaranteed to be private. When monitoring e-mails, HND Children's Care Ltd will, save in exceptional circumstances; confine itself to looking at the address and heading of the emails. However, where circumstances warrant it, HND Children's Care Ltd may open e-mails and access the content. In this case, HND Children's Care Ltd will avoid, if possible, opening e-mails clearly marked as private or personal.

HND Children's Care Ltd reserves the right to deny or remove e-mail or Internet access to or from any employee.

2. Computer Software, Games and Viruses:

HND Children's Care Ltd licences the use of computer software from a variety of outside companies. HND Children's Care Ltd does not own this software and, unless authorised by the software developer, neither HND Children's Care Ltd nor any of its employees have the right to reproduce it. To do so constitutes an infringement of copyright. Contravention is a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with in accordance with HND Children's Care Ltd 'Disciplinary Policy'.

HND Children's Care Ltd computer network makes it vulnerable to viruses. Therefore, only duly authorised personnel have the authority to load new software onto the network system. Even then, software may be loaded only after having been checked for viruses by authorised personnel. Any employee found to be contravening this may face disciplinary action under HND Children's Care Ltd 'Disciplinary Policy'.

3. Telephone Misuse:

(See also 'Driving and Mobile Phones Policy')

HND Children's Care Ltd telephone lines are for the exclusive use by employees in connection with HND Children's Care Ltd business. Whilst HND Children's Care Ltd will tolerate essential personal telephone calls concerning an employee's domestic arrangements, excessive use of the telephone for personal calls is prohibited. This includes



lengthy, casual chats and calls at premium rates. Not only does excessive time engaged on personal telephone calls lead to loss of efficiency, but it also constitutes an unauthorised use of HND Children's Care Ltd time. If HND Children's Care Ltd discovers that the telephone has been used excessively for personal calls, this will be dealt with under HND Children's Care Ltd 'Disciplinary Policy' and the employee will be required to pay to HND Children's Care Ltd the cost of personal calls made.

Acceptable telephone use should be no more than 5 minutes of personal calls in each working day. Personal telephone calls should cause minimum disruption to the employee's work and should, as a general rule, only be made during breaks except in the case of a genuine emergency.

Employees should be aware that telephone calls made and received on HND Children's Care Ltd telephone network will routinely be monitored to check that the use of the telephone system is not being abused. If employees wish to make or take a particularly sensitive, private, or confidential personal telephone call, they are advised that they can use their own mobile telephone.

End.