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#### **LOGO**

#### **[COMPANY NAME]**

**Employee Handbook**

Issue Date: [date of issuance]

(modified as of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, if applicable)

#### **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

Welcome to <COMPANY NAME>!

Founded in <YEAR>, <COMPANY NAME> is <INSERT Company’s mission statement, why and how the company was founded, and insight into the company’s workplace culture>.

At <COMPANY NAME>, we believe in:

●  **Continuous Improvement**: Both for our own professional development and for the services we provide our clients, becoming an even better version of ourselves and for our clients is important to the very core of <COMPANY NAME>. We want to improve and innovate constantly and consistently, this is a core value that is important to the organization and our success.

● **Rolling Up Sleeves**: No matter your level in the organization, you’re willing to dive in head first to get work done and support the team. No one is above lending a hand and ensuring what needs to get done to achieve success is done.

● **Transparency**: We believe in being honest with our clients and with ourselves in order to become the best people, co-workers, and advisors to our clients that we can be.

● **Creativity**: Our clients rely on our ability to be creative—to think “outside of the box” and deliver winning solutions. Being creative at <COMPANY NAME> is a core value and should be fostered on a personal and professional level.

● **Craftsmanship**: Our work is our art, and we want to apply attention to detail, pride, and the highest quality behind every client account and company project we work on.

● **Experiences**: Learning by experience is the way we grow. We shouldn’t be afraid of failure if we’re trying, learning, and moving forward. We should push ourselves to try new things both personally and professionally.

<COMPANY NAME>’s (“The Company”) policies may change at any time, and staff employees are expected to comply with the most current versions. To the extent this Handbook conflicts with any applicable company policy, the policy will govern. If you have questions concerning this Handbook or a policy, consult your supervisor or human resources for clarification.

**ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK**

This Handbook contains important information about the policies, procedures, and benefits that apply to employees of [Company Name]. (hereafter referred to as “[Company Short Name]” or the “Company”). For more information about specific employee benefits, please refer to the plan documents which are controlling and which may be obtained from the <Manager of Operations or the equivalent>.

The Handbook contains general guidelines and statements of policy. It cannot address every and all situations that may arise. If you have questions about any policy or procedure, you should ask your manager. The Company reserves the right to add to, modify, or discontinue any policy or benefit set out in this Handbook. The Company will endeavor to provide employees with notice of such changes as soon as possible, however, there may be times when policy will change, and the Handbook is amended or reissued.

This Handbook is the property of [Company Name]. You are responsible for knowing its contents and updates and for safeguarding it. The Handbook may not be duplicated and must be returned when you leave the Company.

This Handbook is effective as of [Date of Issuance]. This Handbook supersedes all prior handbooks, policies, procedures, or benefits inconsistent with the contents of this Handbook.

This Handbook is neither an expressed nor implied contract. Further, this Handbook is not an agreement of employment for a specific or definite period of time. Although [Company Short Name] hopes your employment relationship with the Company will be long-term, all employment is at-will. This means that either you or the Company may terminate this relationship at any time, for any reason, or no reason at all, with or without cause or notice. This can only be changed in writing signed by the CEO.

#### **Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) and Conflict of Interest Statements, <if applicable>**

**Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs)**

Purpose:

To identify information that is considered confidential and to establish guidelines for the use of confidential information for the Company’s employees & contractors.

Policy:

Employees & contractors must not misuse confidential information, including internal and client information and communications. It is a condition of employment that the employee signs the Company’s Confidentiality and Intellectual Property Assignment Agreement, which will be provided under separate cover.

Definitions:

Confidential information generally consists of non-public information about a person or an entity that, if disclosed, could reasonably be expected to place either the person or the entity at risk of criminal or civil liability or damage the person or entity's financial standing, employability, privacy, or reputation. The Company is bound by law or contract to protect some types of confidential information, and in other instances, the Company requires protection of confidential information beyond legal or contractual requirements as an additional safeguard. Confidential information includes but is not limited to:

● Payroll records, salary, and non-public benefits information

● Social Security numbers, driver's license numbers, state identification card numbers

● Credit and debit card information, and financial account information

● Personnel records, including but not limited to information regarding an employee's work history, credentials, salary and salary grade, benefits, length of service, performance, and discipline

● Individual conflict of interest information

● Computer system passwords and security codes

● Information regarding client accounts, including client information

● The Company’s internal business plans, tools, products, and digital strategy methods

**Conflicts of Interest**

The Company understands that its staff employees may have or be involved in outside financial, business, professional, academic, public service, or other activities. However, outside activities or commitments, familial or other relationships, private financial or other interests, and benefits or gifts received from third parties may create an actual or perceived conflict of interest between the staff employee and the Company.

A conflict of interest is a situation, arrangement, or circumstance where the staff employee’s outside or private interests or relationships interfere or appear to interfere with those of the Company or cast doubt on the fairness or integrity of the Company’s business dealings. Every staff employee is responsible for disclosing to his or her supervisor any financial or personal interests, activities, or personal or familial relationships that create an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for conflicts of interest or commitment that might arise in the course of staff employees’ duties and external activities. This policy does not seek to unreasonably limit external activities but instead seeks to emphasize the need to disclose conflicts and potential conflicts of interest and commitment, manage such conflicts, and ensure that the Company’s interests are not compromised.

As a basic condition of employment, all Company staff employees have a duty to act in the Company’s best interest in connection with matters arising from or related to their employment and other Company activities. In essence, this duty means that staff employees must not engage in external activities that interfere with their obligations to the Company, damage the Company’s reputation, compete with the Company’s interests, or compromise the independence of the Company’s research and business activities, or can reasonably be seen as doing so. Staff employees likewise must not profit or otherwise gain advantage from any external activity at the Company’s expense or engage in external activities under circumstances that appear to be at the Company’s expense.

Policy:

Staff employees must disclose and avoid actual and perceived conflicts of interest or commitment between their Company responsibilities and their external activities. Depending on the circumstances, employee participation in activities in which a conflict or perceived conflict of interest exists may be prohibited or may be permitted but affirmatively managed.

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#### **General Policies**

*\*\*Nondiscrimination Policies\*\**

[Company Name] is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all employees, applicants, and job seekers. Employment decisions are made based on objective standards and an individual’s qualifications as they relate to specific job requirements (e.g., hiring, training, promotions). No individual will be discriminated against or harassed based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, military status, citizenship, genetic information, marital status, parental status, ancestry, source of income, housing status, order of protection status, association with a protected class, or any other characteristic protected by law. We are committed to maintaining a workplace free of unlawful harassment.

Under this policy, no employee or applicant will be subject to retaliation (including harassment, intimidation, threats, or discrimination) for engaging in the following activities in good faith:

(i) filing a complaint under this policy with [Company Name] or with federal, state, or local equal employment opportunity agencies;

(ii) assisting or participating in an investigation related to any equal employment opportunity law;

(iii) opposing any act or practice prohibited by this policy or applicable laws; or

(iv) exercising any other right protected by law. Any complaints regarding retaliation should be immediately reported to company leadership.

[Company Name] strictly prohibits retaliation against anyone who reports or participates in investigations regarding harassment, discrimination, failure to accommodate, or any other protected activity. Retaliation may include actions like discipline, demotion, termination, transfer, or denial of benefits. Any incidents of retaliation should be promptly reported following the company’s EEO complaint procedures.

[Company Name] complies with all relevant federal and state laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and provides reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities as required by law. Employees with questions or requests related to these accommodations should contact company leadership.

*\*\*Anti-Harassment Policy\*\**

[Company Name] is dedicated to maintaining a workplace free of unlawful harassment. Harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, family responsibility, citizenship, genetic information, military status, or any other characteristic protected by law is strictly prohibited, including same-sex harassment.

Examples of harassment include but are not limited to:

- Verbal or written remarks that degrade or denigrate an individual based on a protected characteristic, including racial, religious, or sexual comments, slurs, jokes, or threats.

- Unwelcome sexually-oriented conduct, including advances, comments, offensive jokes, or materials such as suggestive emails, images, or gestures.

- Physical actions like unwanted touching, blocking someone’s path, or other non-consensual physical contact.

- Behavior that interferes with an employee’s work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile work environment.

If you believe you have been harassed or have witnessed harassment, you must immediately report the incident according to the company’s EEO complaint procedures. This policy applies both on company premises and at off-site work-related events.

All employees are required to attend training sessions on harassment prevention as directed by the company. Any form of retaliation against an employee for reporting harassment or participating in an investigation is strictly prohibited.

*\*\*Reasonable Accommodation of Disabilities\*\**

[Company Name] is committed to non-discriminatory employment practices for individuals with disabilities and provides reasonable accommodations to qualified employees. Accommodations are provided unless they would impose an undue hardship on the company, as defined by applicable law. A reasonable accommodation is any modification or adjustment that enables an individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of their job.

Employees who require accommodations should contact the company’s leadership to discuss potential solutions. The company may request medical documentation to support accommodation requests, which will be kept confidential as required by law.

*\*\*Accommodation of Pregnancy-Related Disabilities\*\**

[Company Name] will provide reasonable accommodations to employees affected by pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, or related medical conditions unless doing so would cause undue hardship to the company. Reasonable accommodations may include adjusting job duties, modifying work hours, relocating work areas, or providing leave.

Employees requesting accommodations should discuss their needs with company leadership. The company may request documentation to support accommodation requests, and all medical documentation will be kept confidential.

These rights are in addition to those provided by relevant federal, state, or local laws, including sick and safe leave acts.

*\*\*Religious Accommodations\*\**

[Company Name] is committed to providing equal employment opportunities regardless of religious beliefs or practices. Reasonable accommodations will be made for sincerely held religious beliefs unless doing so would cause undue hardship to the company.

Employees requesting religious accommodations should contact company leadership. The company may request additional information to understand the basis of the request. Failure to provide requested information may result in denial of the accommodation.

*\*\*EEO Complaint Procedure\*\**

Employees who experience or witness job-related harassment, discrimination, failure to accommodate, retaliation, or any other violation of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policies are required to report the incident promptly. Reports should be made to the Controller, regardless of the identity or position of the offender. Incidents must be reported immediately, either orally or in writing. It is essential that employees do not ignore such situations, as [Company Short Name] is committed to addressing and resolving issues swiftly. Prompt reporting allows the company to respond more effectively.

The company will conduct a thorough and impartial investigation of all complaints. The response to each complaint will be based on the specific facts of the situation. While [Company Short Name] strives to maintain confidentiality during the investigation process, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in order to carry out a thorough investigation. If the investigation determines that inappropriate conduct has occurred, the company will take necessary corrective action. Employees found to have engaged in misconduct may face disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

*\*\*Immigration Law Compliance\*\**

In compliance with immigration law, all new employees must complete and sign the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 as a condition of employment and provide documentation establishing identity and eligibility to work in the United States. Employees hired under a U.S. visa must promptly notify the company of any prior sponsorships, visa status issues, and the expiration date of their visa.

*\*\*Open Door Policy\*\**

[Company Short Name] values open communication and encourages employees to seek assistance when needed. If an employee encounters a problem that cannot be resolved by speaking with their immediate supervisor, they are encouraged to approach any member of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) for support. It is important to note that any EEO-related concerns or complaints, as outlined earlier in this handbook, must be reported following the EEO Complaint Procedure.

*\*\*Personnel Records\*\**

Employees are responsible for ensuring that their personnel records are accurate and up to date. Any changes in personal information, such as name, address, phone number, marital status (for benefits or tax purposes), dependent changes, beneficiary designations, or emergency contact details, should be promptly reported to the Manager of Operations (or equivalent). An employee's application for employment, along with related documents, will be maintained in their personnel file. Providing false information on an application, during interviews, or in any related materials, as well as attempts to conceal or falsify information, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

**Compensation Policies**

*\*\*Mandatory Deductions for Federal and State Taxes\*\**

As required by federal and state regulations, the Company deducts the following from employee paychecks:

- Social Security

- Medicare

- Federal withholding taxes

- State withholding taxes

- Garnishments and child support, as mandated by law

*\*\*Voluntary Deductions\*\**

Employees may opt for voluntary deductions from their paychecks to participate in various benefits programs. These deductions are elective and based on the employee's preferences.

*\*\*Other Deductions\*\**

In certain situations, the Company may make deductions from an employee’s paycheck, including but not limited to:

- Full-day absences for personal reasons or illness when vacation/sick leave has been exhausted

- Partial workweeks during the initial and final weeks of employment

- Hours taken as unpaid leave

*\*\*Employment Classifications\*\**

Employees of the Company are classified according to the nature of their position and the hours worked:

- Full-Time Employees: Employees regularly scheduled to work at least 30 hours per week.

- Part-Time Employees: Employees regularly scheduled to work fewer than 30 hours per week. Occasional increases in hours beyond 30 in any given week will not alter this classification.

- Interns: Temporary employees hired for a set period and compensated on an hourly basis. Work hours are determined in consultation with the intern's manager.

Employees are further classified based on their eligibility for overtime pay:

- Non-Exempt Employees: Employees entitled to overtime pay at one and one-half times their regular rate for hours worked beyond 40 hours in a workweek.

- Exempt Employees: Employees exempt from overtime pay requirements. Typically, this includes executives, professionals, managers, and certain administrative staff.

*\*\*Pay Schedules\*\**

Employees are paid on a bi-monthly schedule, on the 15th and 30th of each month. If a payday falls on a weekend or bank holiday, employees will receive their pay on the preceding business day.

*\*\*Introductory Period and Performance Evaluations\*\**

New employees, as well as employees transferred or promoted into new roles, will undergo an introductory period of three months. During this time, performance will be monitored and reviewed at the three-month mark and again at six months. While this period includes formal evaluations, it does not alter the at-will nature of employment.

After six months of employment, employees will be evaluated biannually. Performance evaluations may be considered for salary adjustments and promotions but do not automatically result in pay increases.

*\*\*Outside Employment\*\**

The Company recognizes that employees may pursue outside employment, such as second jobs, consulting roles, self-employment, or volunteer work. To safeguard the Company’s interests and confidential information, the following guidelines apply:

- Employees must provide written notice of outside employment to their manager and the CEO prior to accepting such roles.

- Outside employment must not interfere with the employee's performance or schedule at the Company. Approval is required for any work conducted during Company business hours.

- Employees may not use Company resources—including property, facilities, equipment, IT systems (such as computers, networks, e-mail, or phones), time, or branding—in connection with outside employment.

- Employees must comply with all Company policies related to the protection of confidential information while engaged in outside employment.

- Engaging in outside employment with a competitor of the Company is strictly prohibited.

Employees unsure about the compliance of their outside employment with these guidelines should consult the CEO for clarification.

*\*\*Unemployment Compensation\*\**

The Company contributes a portion of its payroll to the unemployment compensation fund based on its employment history. In the event of unemployment, employees may be eligible for compensation under certain conditions. Eligibility is determined by the local state unemployment office, not by the Company.

#### **Benefits**

*\*\*Benefits Program and Plan Modifications\*\**

[Company Short Name] offers a comprehensive benefits package to eligible employees, which currently includes medical, vision, and dental insurance, as well as a 401(k) retirement plan. The Company regularly evaluates its benefit offerings and reserves the right to modify, amend, or discontinue any of these benefits at its discretion, with or without prior notice. Eligibility for benefits is determined by the plan administrator based on the provisions of each plan, and the plan administrator has the authority to interpret the plan’s terms. For more detailed information about specific benefits and eligibility requirements, please refer to the relevant plan documents.

*\*\*Group Insurance\*\**

Full-time employees and their eligible dependents are entitled to enroll in group medical, vision, and dental insurance plans. Coverage begins on the first full calendar month following the employee's start date. [Company Short Name] covers the full cost of health insurance premiums for employees, and for dental and vision, the Company covers both the employee and their dependents. Any additional costs for family coverage are deducted from the employee’s paycheck. Upon eligibility, the Company will provide employees with a benefits plan description and enrollment materials. For more details, please contact the <Manager of Operations or equivalent>.

*\*\*Continuing Group Health Insurance Coverage (COBRA)\*\**

In the event of an employee’s resignation, termination, or a reduction in work hours that results in the employee or their dependents losing eligibility for group health insurance, they may have the right to continue their coverage under COBRA for up to 18 months, at their own expense. If an employee qualifies as disabled under the Social Security Act at the time of termination or reduction in hours, or within 60 days of these events, they may be entitled to extend coverage up to 29 months.

Dependents may also extend coverage for up to 18 months, and in cases of death, divorce, legal separation, Medicare enrollment, or loss of dependent child status, the coverage period may be extended up to 36 months. The Company’s plan administrator will provide details on continuation coverage at the time of the qualifying event.

Employees and their dependents are responsible for notifying the plan administrator of any qualifying events such as divorce, legal separation, or loss of dependent status within 60 days. If an employee or their dependents choose to continue coverage, they will be responsible for paying the full premium, plus an additional 2%. Disabled employees may be subject to a 50% increase in premiums during the 19th to 29th months of coverage.

Continuation coverage will end if any of the following occurs:

1. Failure to make timely premium payments;

2. Coverage under another group health plan that does not exclude pre-existing conditions;

3. Termination of the Company’s group health plans; or

4. Enrollment in Medicare (for employees, though spouses and dependents may still qualify).

For further details about continuing or converting group health insurance, please contact the <Manager of Operations or equivalent>.

*\*\*401(k) Retirement Plan\*\**

The Company provides a 401(k) retirement plan ("Plan") for eligible employees. Participation in the Plan allows employees to contribute a portion of their pre-tax salary through payroll deductions, with no minimum contribution required. Contributions earn tax-deferred interest annually. Additionally, the Company contributes 3% of the employee’s compensation regardless of the employee’s own contributions.

Employees are eligible to participate in the Plan upon reaching the age of 21 and completing 90 consecutive days of full-time employment with the Company. Detailed information regarding the Plan will be provided to employees when they become eligible.

*\*\*Workers' Compensation\*\**

The Company provides workers' compensation insurance for all employees at no cost. This insurance covers lost wages, medical expenses, and compensation for loss of life or dismemberment resulting from injuries sustained in the course of employment. Employees must report any accidents or injuries to the Controller immediately to ensure appropriate actions are taken. Failure to report an injury promptly may affect an employee’s eligibility for workers' compensation benefits.

If an employee is unable to work due to a job-related injury, they may be eligible for coverage of medical expenses. Before returning to work, the employee must present a doctor’s clearance and report to their manager to confirm fitness for duty.

**Standards of Conduct**

[Company Short Name] upholds high standards of professional conduct. As representatives of the Company, employees' personal and professional behavior reflects both on the organization and on them individually, particularly when interacting with clients, prospective clients, and legislators.

Employees are expected to:

- Report to work regularly and punctually, adhering to the attendance policy.

- Present a professional appearance, including appropriate attire and personal hygiene.

- Maintain disciplined work habits.

- Respect Company property and facilities, including communication systems and equipment.

- Interact courteously and professionally with colleagues and visitors.

The following actions are prohibited and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. This list is illustrative, not exhaustive:

- Violation of the Drug and Alcohol Policy.

- Possession of weapons or violation of the Workplace Violence Policy.

- Insubordination, refusal to follow job-related instructions, or neglect of duties.

- Fighting or assaulting co-workers, clients, or business associates.

- Theft, destruction, or misuse of Company or employee property.

- Conduct endangering others, including failure to follow safety rules or unauthorized use of equipment.

- Criminal activity on Company premises, including drug-related offenses or theft.

- Gambling on Company property.

- Falsifying or altering Company records.

- Threatening or intimidating colleagues, clients, or others.

- Harassment or discrimination (see Anti-Harassment Policy).

- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information.

- Abuse of leave or dishonesty in handling Company matters.

Any violation of Company policies or conduct deemed inappropriate may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

#### **General Employment Information**

*\*\*At-Will Employment\*\**

All employees at [Company Short Name] are employed on an at-will basis, meaning employment is for an indefinite duration and may be terminated by either the employee or the Company, with or without cause or notice, at any time. This policy does not alter or modify the at-will employment status, and any modification must be made through a written agreement signed by CEO.

*\*\*Resignation Procedures\*\**

Employees are encouraged to provide at least two weeks' written notice of resignation to their supervisor. Resignations must be submitted in writing (via email) to the CEO.

*\*\*Non-Infringement Policy\*\**

Policies regarding confidentiality are not intended to prevent employees from discussing wages, hours, compensation, or other employment terms.

*\*\*Nepotism/Interoffice Relations\*\**

While [Company Short Name] does not prohibit the employment of individuals who are related or romantically involved, any such relationship must be promptly disclosed to the CEO to prevent conflicts of interest. Relationships that develop during employment, especially between supervisors and subordinates, must also be disclosed. All employees must conduct themselves professionally and avoid any appearance of favoritism or impropriety. The Company reserves the right to reassign, transfer, or terminate employees to avoid conflicts.

*\*\*Separation from Employment\*\**

Termination of employment may occur through resignation, discharge, retirement, or workforce reduction. Both employees and the Company retain the right to terminate employment at any time, with or without cause or notice. Employees are requested to provide two weeks’ notice when resigning, though the Company may choose to accept resignations immediately.

Employees who fail to report to work for three consecutive days without notifying their manager or the CEO will be considered to have voluntarily resigned.

*\*\*Return of Company Property\*\**

Upon separation, employees must return all Company and client property to Accounting. A Checklist of items to be returned may be provided for both the employee and Accounting to sign. Employees who fail to return Company property may be held financially responsible.

*\*\*Final Paycheck\*\**

Final paychecks will be issued in accordance with the regular payroll schedule unless otherwise required by state law. Any money owed to the Company may be deducted from the final paycheck, subject to legal limits, and the employee may be required to sign a deduction authorization. If the amount owed exceeds the paycheck, the employee must reimburse the Company within 30 days of their last day of work.

*\*\*Exit Interview\*\**

Exit interviews are typically scheduled for departing employees to discuss benefits continuation, return of Company property, confidentiality obligations, and to provide feedback on their employment experience.

*\*\*References\*\**

Requests for employment references must be submitted in writing to the CEO, accompanied by employee authorization for the release of information. The Company generally provides only verification of position and dates of employment. Employees should not respond to reference requests directly and must forward such requests to the CEO.

#### **Computers and Technology**

*\*\*Information Systems Security Policy\*\**

The Company’s Information Technology (IT) systems and the data they manage are critical assets. This policy covers all computer hardware and software, communication networks, and information in any format, including documents, data, and multimedia.

The Company’s IT systems and the data contained within them are the property of the Company and must be used in accordance with applicable laws, Company policies, and departmental guidelines. As a user of these resources, you are responsible for understanding and adhering to ethical standards for information usage, protecting data from unauthorized access or corruption, respecting the rights of others, and following Company guidelines for password and access control.

The Company reserves the right to monitor all IT systems, including accessing, reviewing, and intercepting any communications, data, or information created, received, stored, or transmitted via these systems. Employees should have no expectation of privacy when using the Company’s IT resources.

*\*\*Personal Use of Company Property, Equipment, and Facilities\*\**

The use of Company equipment, facilities, or office supplies for personal purposes is strictly prohibited. Personal local phone calls should be kept to a minimum in both frequency and duration. Personal long-distance calls are not permitted except in exceptional circumstances.

*\*\*Electronic Equipment Usage\*\**

The Company discourages the use of personal devices to conduct Company business. However, if personal equipment such as laptops, smartphones, or tablets is used for business purposes, these devices may be subject to monitoring and inspection to ensure the proper use and safeguarding of Company data.

*\*\*Social Media Use Policy\*\**

The Company values its reputation and has a vested interest in preventing the dissemination of content that could harm its image or violate policies related to harassment and discrimination.

While social media can play a role in promoting the Company’s business, work priorities must take precedence during business hours, except in emergencies. Employees are expected to exercise professional judgment and common sense when accessing social media. Factors to consider include the appropriateness of the site, the potential impact on job performance, and the suitability of the content shared publicly.

Employees are strictly prohibited from using social media to damage the Company’s reputation or its products and services. All social media activity must comply with Company policies, including those relating to confidentiality, harassment, and discrimination. Employees found to be in violation of these policies may be asked to remove the offending content and may face disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

However, employees retain the right to discuss wages, working conditions, or other employment terms, and this policy will not interfere with those rights.

**Leave Policies**

*\*\*Overview\*\**

[Company Short Name] is dedicated to providing a range of leave options to employees who have successfully completed their 90-day probationary period. Any leave requests made prior to this period will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of management.

Please note that all leave entitlements operate on a "use-it-or-lose-it" basis, resetting annually on January 1st.

*\*\*Vacation Leave\*\**

Vacation leave is intended for personal activities such as vacations, birthdays, and weddings. Employees are entitled to the following vacation time, unless otherwise specified in their employment agreements:

- \*\*0-3 years of tenure\*\*: 10 days (80 hours)

- \*\*4-5 years of tenure\*\*: 15 days (120 hours)

- \*\*6+ years of tenure\*\*: 20 days (160 hours)

Requests for vacation leave should be submitted in advance through the payroll system via your employee account.

*\*\*Sick Leave\*\**

In accordance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, [Company Short Name] offers 5 days of paid sick leave annually. This leave may be used for personal illness or to care for a family member who is ill.

Employees are required to notify their supervisor by 8 AM on the day of absence via email or phone call (text messages are not acceptable). The company reserves the right to request documentation after 3 consecutive days of sick leave.

Although [Company Short Name] is not mandated to comply with the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) due to our size, we prioritize the well-being of our employees. In cases where up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave may be necessary for personal or family medical issues, we will consider requests for unpaid leave or flexible work arrangements on a case-by-case basis for employees in good standing.

*\*\*Bereavement Leave\*\**

Employees are entitled to up to 3 days (72 hours) of bereavement leave, with an additional 1 day (8 hours) provided for funerals that require travel over 100 miles. The company reserves the right to request documentation as proof of the need for bereavement leave.

*\*\*Paid Holidays\*\**

[Company Short Name] observes the following paid holidays:

- New Year’s Day

- President’s Day

- Memorial Day

- Independence Day

- Labor Day

- Thanksgiving Day & the following Friday

- Christmas Day

Management may designate spontaneous half days (e.g., the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Good Friday) with two weeks' notice. If a holiday falls on a weekend, the preceding Friday or following Monday will be observed as a day off.

*\*\*Parental Leave\*\**

[Company Short Name] provides eligible employees with Childbirth Recovery Leave and Bonding Leave, collectively referred to as "Parental Leave." This benefit is designed to support employees during childbirth, adoption, or foster placements.

Eligibility

To qualify for Parental Leave, an employee must have completed at least twelve (12) consecutive months of service with [Company Short Name].

Leave Details

- Childbirth Recovery Leave: Eligible employees may take four (4) weeks of paid leave for recovery from childbirth. This leave must be taken in one continuous period.

- Bonding Leave: Eligible employees may take up to twelve (12) weeks (84 total days) to bond with their new child. The first eight (8) weeks are paid, while the remaining four (4) weeks will be unpaid. Bonding Leave can be taken in one continuous period or intermittently, subject to prior arrangement.

Unused parental leave expires one (1) year after the child’s birth or adoption and has no cash value. During paid parental leave, employees' insurance benefits will continue, and short-term disability benefits will run concurrently with parental leave.

Advance notice of at least sixty (60) days is encouraged when requesting parental leave. If this notice is not feasible, employees should inform their manager as soon as possible.

*\*\*Victims and Witness Leave\*\**

[Company Short Name] recognizes that employees may need to participate in civil or criminal proceedings as witnesses or victims. Employees are permitted to take the necessary time off for such legal obligations. Victims and witness leave is unpaid; however, employees may opt to use available vacation or sick leave to receive pay during this time. Employees must notify the [Manager of Operations or equivalent] upon receiving a summons or notice of the proceedings.

Employees are expected to return to work if excused from the proceedings during regular working hours.

*\*\*Military Leave\*\**

Employees serving in the United States Armed Forces, National Guard, or similar entities are entitled to unpaid leave to fulfill their military obligations. Employees should notify the [Manager of Operations or equivalent] as soon as they are aware of their duty dates to arrange for coverage during their absence.

*\*\*School Activities Leave\*\**

Employees in the District of Columbia who are parents or guardians of school-aged children may take up to 24 hours of unpaid leave annually to attend school-related events. A written request for leave must be submitted at least ten (10) calendar days prior to the event, unless unforeseen circumstances arise.

*\*\*Voting Leave\*\**

Employees who do not have two consecutive hours off on Election Day will be granted up to two hours of paid leave to vote. Employees should notify the [Manager of Operations or equivalent] of their need for leave at least 14 days prior to Election Day.

*\*\*Additional Leave\*\**

This handbook addresses common types of leave. For additional leave options not specified herein, employees should consult their state addenda or contact the [Manager of Operations or equivalent] for further assistance.

*\*\*Flexible Time Policy\*\**

[Company Short Name] recognizes the importance of balancing work and personal commitments. Employees are encouraged to inform their managers of any time away from work and ensure that client services remain uninterrupted.

*\*\*Inclement Weather\*\**

In the event of severe weather, employees may take leave as vacation, personal holiday, or unpaid leave if they cannot work. Employees should prioritize their safety and assess their ability to commute during adverse conditions.

For any questions regarding the leave policies, please contact the [Manager of Operations or equivalent].

**Progressive Disciplinary Policy**

Purpose:

The Progressive Disciplinary Policy is designed to address and rectify performance issues impacting an employee’s work and the overall effectiveness of the department. This process is intended to be implemented consistently across all units and for all concerns.

Guidelines:

The Progressive Disciplinary Process encompasses the following actions:

1. Counseling or verbal warning

2. Written reprimand and warning

3. Suspension

4. Suspension pending investigation and final determination

5. Specific warning of discharge

6. Discharge

Each situation will be evaluated individually, and the Company retains the discretion to bypass any step in the process, including immediate termination, if warranted by the circumstances.

Typically, an initial meeting will be conducted with the employee to discuss the nature of the concern and to provide the employee an opportunity to present their perspective. Following this meeting, corrective action documentation may be prepared to summarize the issue and incorporate any relevant information shared by the employee.

Clear and direct communication is essential during the corrective action process. A meeting should be held between the employee and their immediate supervisor to discuss the situation.

In instances of serious misconduct, an employee may face suspension or discharge for a first offense. Serious misconduct may include, but is not limited to:

- Theft

- Fighting

- Threatening, abusive, or inappropriate behavior or language

- Misuse, damage to, or loss of Company property

- Falsification, alteration, or improper handling of Company records

- Unsatisfactory customer service

- Disclosure or misuse of confidential information

- Unauthorized possession or concealment of weapons

- Insubordination (e.g., refusal to comply with a direct assignment)

- Misuse of the Company's electronic information systems

- Possession, use, sale, manufacture, purchase, or being under the influence of illegal drugs, alcohol, or other intoxicants

**Statements and Representations on Behalf of the Company**

Employees of [Company Short Name] are not authorized to represent the Company in any official capacity, including communications with the media or any external entities. This restriction applies to making statements, representations, or endorsements without the explicit written permission of the President of the Company. All media inquiries should be directed to the CEO.

When engaging in social media or networking, if an employee identifies as a representative of the Company (through self-identification, wearing Company-branded attire, etc.), they must clarify that the opinions expressed are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Company.

#### **Signature Page**

The Employee Handbook contains important information about the Company, and I understand that I should consult the Company Owner, or my supervisor, regarding any questions not answered in the handbook. I have entered into my employment relationship with the Company voluntarily and understand that there is no specified length of employment. Accordingly, either the Company or I can terminate the relationship at will, at any time, with or without cause, and with or without advance notice.

Since the information, policies, and benefits described herein are subject to change at any time, I acknowledge that revisions to the handbook may occur, except to the Company's policy of employment-at-will. All such changes will generally be communicated through official notices, and I understand that revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies. Only the President of the Company has the ability to adopt any revisions to the policies in this handbook.

Furthermore, I understand that this handbook is neither a contract of employment nor a legally-binding agreement. I have had an opportunity to read the handbook, and I understand that I may ask my supervisor any questions I might have concerning the handbook. I accept the terms of the handbook. I also understand that it is my responsibility to comply with the policies contained in this handbook, and any revisions made to it. I further agree that if I remain with the Company following any modifications to the handbook, I hereby accept and agree to such changes.

I have received a copy of the Company's Employee Handbook on the date listed below. I understand that I am expected to read the entire handbook. Additionally, I will sign the two copies of this Acknowledgment of Receipt, retain one copy for myself, and return one copy to the Company's representative listed below on the date specified. I understand that this form will be retained in my personnel file.

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Signature of Employee Date

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Printed Name of Employee

I have received a copy of the Company's Employee Handbook on the date listed below. I understand that I am expected to read the entire handbook. Additionally, I will sign the two copies of this Acknowledgment of Receipt, retain one copy for myself, and return one copy to the Company's representative listed below on the date specified. I understand that this form will be retained in my personnel file.

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Signature of Employee Date

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Printed Name of Employee