

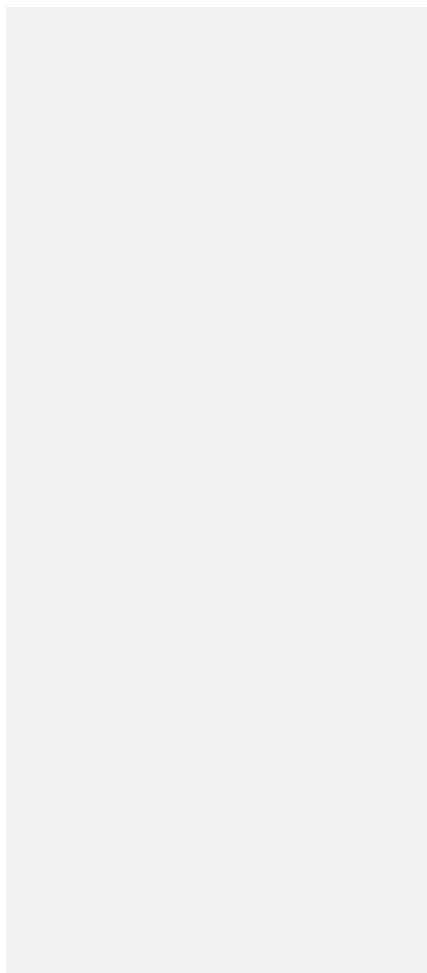


Employee Handbook

Contents

Welcome
What we believe

2



Welcome

We are very pleased to have you join the Buckingham Parish Church (BPC) staff team and hope you will enjoy your time with us. BPC is committed as an employer to strive towards an excellent rating in these critical criteria:

- Being an employer who nurtures and cares for our people
- Treating people with the love which God shares with us
- Caring about our environment and upholding the highest moral ethics

The information contained in this Employee Handbook is to familiarise you with our Church and the way it operates, including some of our policies and procedures you may require during the course of your employment. This Handbook forms part of your terms and conditions. Therefore, please ensure that you read and understand the contents and ask your manager if you have any queries.

“Making the difference between success and blessing”

About BPC

What we believe

We stand in the tradition of the Anglican Reformers of the 16th Century, affirming with them the great truths which were rediscovered at the time of the Reformation, such as the sovereignty of God in salvation, justification by faith alone, and salvation in Christ alone.

BPC is a church that adheres to mainstream biblical values shared by the overwhelming majority of evangelical Christian churches around the world. Believing the teachings of the Bible and loving all people—including those who have different perspectives—are not mutually exclusive. In fact, this is the very definition of tolerance and inclusiveness.

We are committed to uphold a biblical understanding and teaching on marriage that is a life-long monogamous union between one man and one woman. In order to exercise ministry leadership at BPC all leaders are expected to abide by the Lambeth 1998 resolution on issues of human sexuality.

Our Vision

As a church family, we want to honour God and build His Kingdom here in Buckingham. We believe that God has given us a vision for 2020 and beyond where the church will be a thriving, relevant and caring Christian community serving the town.

It will be a place where all can grow, seek God and a place where lives will be transformed and changed forever. Our vision is encapsulated in three foundational activities as listed below.

BPC is a community that:

- **Worships God**

Through excellent, inspiring and engaging worship we want to draw more people into a deeper on-going relationship with God, where worship truly becomes everything in our lives.
- **Makes Friends**

We will be a loving and accepting community where people are welcomed, and deep/genuine relationships are grown to help us be the best we can be and grow more like Jesus.
- **Changes the world**

We want to equip and encourage people to recognise and use their God-given gifts to make a difference in Buckingham and the World.

Our Core Values

Induction

Your line manager or another appointed person will conduct your induction to BPC starting on your first day. It will include the following information: -

- Welcome to BPC and your place of work
- Tour of place of work including fire exits, first aid and emergency procedures
- Instruction on any equipment to be used
- Health and Safety guidance
- Appropriate lines of communication within BPC
- Setting of individual performance expectations and how this will be monitored
- Explanation of the Equality Act 2010 - its impact on you as an employee and on the Church
- Employee paperwork (P45, driving licence, right to work in the UK, personal details etc)
- Buckingham Parish Church administration: holiday request, expense forms etc

The induction is designed to ensure you understand what is expected of you, what support or training you may need to fulfil your role, how to ensure we meet the parishioners' needs and how to action any issues or problems. A copy of the Induction Checklist will be signed by you and your manager and retained in your personal file.

About your employment

Place of Work

Your normal place of work will be at Buckingham Parish Church, Castle Hill, Buckingham, MK18 1HA or elsewhere by mutual agreement. Please see your Terms and Conditions of Employment for details. Some members of staff may be home based but will be expected to be available for meetings etc at BPC or other venues.

There may be some occasions when you will be required to work elsewhere. This will be on a business needs basis and the Church will pay any reasonable and pre-authorised expenses. The Church will endeavour to give you reasonable notice if there is a need to stay away.

Hours of Work

Full-time hours are 40 per week, however, your specific working hours are itemised in your Terms and Conditions of Employment, along with your working pattern.

Roles within the ministry team hold a requirement to work Good Friday, Christmas Day and most Sundays. If this applies to you, you will receive alternative days off as rest days, as stated in your Terms and Conditions of Employment.

Informal breaks may be taken as appropriate throughout the working day. Fulltime staff are entitled to a half-hour unpaid lunch

break. Whenever you work a block of 6 hours or more in one day you are required by law to take at least a 20-minute unpaid break.

There may be circumstances outside our control which require us to introduce reduced working hours. This measure is a last resort and will only be used when conditions are such that redundancies would be the only viable alternative. Should these conditions arise, we retain the right to introduce reduced working and cut salaries or wages on a pro rata basis for a limited period of time that is subject to review.

Overtime

Overtime is payable at standard hourly rate for all agreed hours worked. Authorisation to work any overtime must first be agreed by the Rector or your line manager, prior to working the overtime, and they will consider whether to pay overtime or agree Time Off In Lieu.

Time Off in Lieu (TOIL)

TOIL may only be accumulated within a plan agreed with the line manager. Any additional hours worked must be agreed in advance. If this agreement is not in place, then the additional hours will not qualify for the accrual of TOIL and will be lost.

When an employee identifies additional hours which might justify TOIL, he/she should raise this with his/her Line Manager with a written breakdown of the hours in advance of the requirement to work them. TOIL will normally only be granted if agreed in advance with the relevant manager. Written authorisation will be given by the relevant manager.

TOIL should be taken as soon as practicably possible after it has been accrued. If this is not possible it must be taken within 3 months of accrual.

TOIL accrued and not redeemed as outlined will be considered lost and no monetary compensation will be offered. TOIL not taken within 3 months of accrual will be lost.

Managers should ensure that employees are given reasonable opportunities to take any accrued TOIL within the approved period and must keep a proper account of additional hours worked.

The operation of TOIL depends on mutual trust. Any suspected abuse of TOIL will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

If an employee leaves BPC, no monetary compensation will be paid for any outstanding TOIL that has not been taken. They should make sure they redeem the TOIL prior to their leaving date or it will be lost.

Payments and deductions

Your salary will be paid monthly in arrears, usually on ** day of each month, directly into your bank account.

In your Terms and Conditions of Employment you authorise the Church, in accordance with Part II of the Employment Rights Act 1996, to deduct from your salary or any other sums due to you from the Church, any amount that you owe the Church, including any overpayment of salary. This includes deductions for PAYE, National Insurance and any other deduction an employer is legally required to make.

In the event of any of the following or similar circumstances arising, relevant restitution costs will be debited from your pay over a reasonable period or in a lump sum if you are leaving the Church:

- Leaving within 6 months of attending a training course for which the Church has paid the fees.
- Leaving the Church without returning Church property, which had been property in your possession for the accomplishment of your tasks.

- Holiday taken in excess of the pro-rata annual entitlement at the time of leaving.

Pension Scheme

Buckingham's Parish Church operates a statutory auto enrolment pension scheme as required by the Government. Employers automatically enrol all eligible employees into a qualifying workplace pension scheme or the new National Employment Savings Trust (NEST). Full details are available via your line manager.

Holidays

The holiday year runs from 1st January to 31st December each year and your entitlement is 26 days per annum plus the eight statutory bank holidays (New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Friday, May Day, Spring Bank Holiday, Late Summer Bank Holiday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day), plus any additional public holidays. For part time staff holiday will be calculated on a pro rata basis. If you are required to work on a Bank Holiday, you will be entitled to another day's holiday in lieu.

BPC staff will not be expected to work in the period between Christmas and New Year each year and will be given at least two months' notice of the days which are to be taken as part of your holiday entitlement. Please keep sufficient enough holiday to cover this period.

Holiday entitlement can be taken only following agreement with the Rector or your immediate manager in writing.

The notice you are asked to provide for holiday must be at least one month for holidays of two weeks duration and one week for holiday requests for less than two weeks duration. You should not make travel bookings until approval has been given. Holidays will be allocated on a first come first served basis. No more than two of all Church staff will be allowed to take holiday at any one time and no

more than one person per department. The maximum time an employee may take off in one block is 2 working weeks.

Holiday entitlement will only be paid in lieu upon leaving the Church, and only for the days accrued and not taken during the current year. Any holiday taken but not accrued at the time of leaving the Church will be deducted from your final payment.

You are required to take your holiday before 31st December each year. In accordance with the Working Time Directive Regulations, statutory holiday may not be carried over to the following year nor paid in lieu.

Commented [HR1]: Do we have an induction checklist?

Commented [HR2]: This is quite restrictive. Is it possible to change it?

Management discretion may be applied to holiday entitlement.

Commented [HR3]: Could we allow up to 5 days carry over, which then must be taken by end March the following year, or is lost?

Absence

All unplanned absence must be reported by you personally, if possible, as soon as you know that you will not be attending work - this should be at the latest 30 minutes before your start time and should be by phone. **Email and/or text or messaging are not acceptable.** Failure to contact the Church without reasonable explanation could result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised, which may lead to disciplinary action being taken. In addition, staff are requested to use the staff WhatsApp group to notify colleagues of their absence so that cover may be arranged.

Sick pay

Sick pay will be paid as follows:

*Service	*Full Pay	*Half Pay
First 3 months	2 weeks	2 weeks
Remaining 9 months of 1 year	4 weeks	4 weeks
Year 2	2 months	2 months
Year 3 and onward	3 months	3 months

*inclusive of any sick pay given in the 12 months preceding the latest period of such leave.

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) will be paid in accordance with current legislation. This states that all employees are liable to receive SSP if they are sick for four or more consecutive days. There are, however, certain circumstances when the employer has no liability in which case you will be issued with the correct form to claim State Sickness Benefit.

A self-certification form must be completed by you for all sickness absences within 7 days of the commencement of the period of absence. If the absence is longer than 7 days (including weekends) a doctor's fit note is required for that and any subsequent weeks.

Medical Examination

During your employment you may be asked for a report from your doctor or be required to undergo a medical examination which would be carried out by a doctor designated by the Church. Your permission will be requested to allow a medical report to be sent to the Church from your doctor or following the medical examination.

Other Absence

Unpaid leave and compassionate leave may be granted at the discretion of the Rector. Time off for jury service or as a witness in a court case must be discussed with the Rector as soon as you are notified. All expenses should be claimed from the court including those allowed for loss of earnings.

Return to work

A return to work interview may be carried out by the Rector or your line manager when you come back to work after an absence.

Termination

Should the Church have reason to terminate this contract or should you leave the Church's employ voluntarily you will return all Church documentation, equipment and any other property or information that is the sole property of Buckingham Parish Church, including databases and contact information.

The Church reserves the right to give pay in lieu of notice if this is considered appropriate.

Leaving (Exit) Interviews

When you leave the Church a leaving interview may be conducted. The interview can be carried out by the Rector, your manager or by our external HR advisor. The information received is Church confidential and will be used in general terms only to improve our current policies and procedures.

Training costs

From time to time the Church may pay to send you on training courses. Should you fail to attend or fail to complete the course the Church will expect you to pay 100% of their costs except in cases of unforeseen emergencies which will be given reasonable consideration by your line manager. If your employment is terminated within 6 months of the training you will be liable to reimburse Buckingham Parish Church the total costs less 1/6 for every month worked after completion of the course.

Driving Licence

If you drive during Church time whether your own vehicle or a Church vehicle you will be asked from time to time to produce a valid driving licence. Failure to do so could mean that the Church will be unable to continue employing you in that role.

Own vehicles

If you are required to use your own car on Church business you will need to ensure that it is insured for business purposes, kept regularly maintained, clean and tidy inside and out and have a current MOT and Road Fund Licence for the vehicle. You should only drive if you hold a full current driving licence and you may be asked to produce your driving licence and vehicle maintenance documentation at your induction and at regular intervals thereafter.

Church vehicles

Subject to holding a current, full driving licence, some employees may be asked to use a Church vehicle for the performance of their duties. Only people authorised by the Church may drive a Church vehicle.

Personal items are left in the vehicle entirely at your own risk and the Church does not accept any liability for loss, theft or damage of personal items. Any traffic fines you incur as a result of negligence will be your liability and will not be paid by the Church. You should pay any such fines promptly and failure to do so will result in the fines and the consequential penalties being deducted from your salary.

Whenever you drive the vehicle you will be responsible for ensuring the vehicle is properly looked after, for its maintenance in a roadworthy condition and for ensuring that it is clean both inside and out. The Church may seek to recoup any losses in the event of damage caused to the vehicle by your negligence or default. In addition, you will be responsible for the excess which is required to be paid which is not recoverable from the Church insurance should the vehicle be involved in an accident and if the responsibility is clearly shown to be yours.

The following must be reported to the Church:

- vehicle defects
- any road traffic accident in which you may be involved whilst driving the car, whether or not that occurred on the Church's business
- any fixed penalty notice or any order of any court to endorse your driving licence or to disqualify you from holding a driving licence, whether or not that consequence occurred whilst driving on the Church's business
- any other event which results in you being ineligible to drive a Church vehicle

Failure to observe these rules or failure to use the vehicle in a

reasonable and responsible manner may result in disciplinary action and will be dealt with in accordance with the Church's disciplinary procedure. Depending on the seriousness of the breach, it may constitute potential gross misconduct rendering you liable to summary dismissal.

Driving and mobile phones

You are completely prohibited from using a mobile phone or similar electronic device whilst driving as part of your job duties. If you are discovered contravening this rule, you will face serious action under the Church's disciplinary procedure. In view of the potential health and safety implications, it may also constitute gross misconduct and could render you liable to summary dismissal.

If you do wish to use a mobile phone when driving, you must stop the car and completely turn off the vehicle's engine and remove the key before using the mobile phone. A person is regarded as "driving" for the purposes of the law if the key is in the ignition, even if their vehicle is stationary.

Expenses

Most employees will be allocated a budget and are responsible to their line managers for how it is spent. Re-imbusement of expenses is achieved through completing an expenses claim form, substantiated by receipts, each calendar month and having it authorised by their line manager by the 7th of the following month. Any expenses over £50 must be approved by line managers before the expenditure is incurred. All expenses will be reimbursed by BACS. Staff members who do not have a budget should clear any expenses with their line manager before incurring them and claim as above.

Church Credit Card

Those possessing a Church credit card must submit the monthly statement sheet marked up with relevant budget codes within 2 weeks of receipt, passing it to their line manager for approval. BPC can ask for the return of a church credit card at any time and for any reason and without notice. The cards are only to be used for purchases and expenditure directly related to BPC.

Performance Reviews

Appraisals and informal personal development reviews may be conducted on a regular basis to recognise strengths and identify specific needs. These reviews will be carried out by the Rector or your manager in addition to all performance being constantly monitored by means of quality and quantity of work completed.

Access to Personal Information

Buckingham Parish Church aims to fulfil its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 to the fullest extent and therefore provides access on request to personal data held about you by the Church.

Data Protection

As part of your terms and conditions of employment, you give the Church permission to collect, retain and process information about you, such as age, sex and ethnic origin. This information will only be used so that we can monitor our compliance with the law and best practice in terms of equal opportunity and non-discrimination.

You have the right to prevent processing likely to cause damage or distress to you or anyone else and to ask the Information Commission to assess whether the Act has been contravened.

Each individual is responsible for ensuring that they communicate to the Church any changes to their personal information in writing to make sure that items such as emergency contact details are current and accurate at all times. The information which we hold will be checked with you from time to time to ensure that it remains up to date.

You are also advised in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 that your personal details will be retained on computer and on your personal file for the purposes of processing pay, monitoring of policies and statutory requirements. This data is confidential and will not be disclosed to a third party unless required by law to do so. No information given will be used without your consent.

Health, Safety and Welfare

All employees are expected to comply with a safe method of working and best practice as they carry out all their duties and comply with all health and safety provisions. Please see the Health and Safety Policy

First Aid

Details on availability of First Aiders will be discussed as part of your initial induction. Any accident, however slight, should be reported to your manager who will record the details in the Accident Book which is located in the main office.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the building or in Church vehicles at any time. If you choose to smoke outside the building you must ensure that the area is kept free from all types of litter.

Alcohol, drugs and illegal Substances:

No drugs nor illegal substances may be brought onto or consumed on the Church's premises nor consumed in Church vehicles at any time. A moderate amount of alcohol may be consumed if appropriate but you will not be permitted to remain at work if you appear to be incapable of carrying out your job role or under the influence of alcohol, drugs or illegal substances, as determined by the Rector or your manager and you may be asked to undergo appropriate testing. A breach of these provisions is a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with in accordance with the Church's disciplinary procedure.

Right to Search

Whilst most employees are loyal and trustworthy, it is an unfortunate fact that some employees may occasionally be dishonest or they may try to bring drugs or alcohol onto the Church's premises in contravention of the Church's terms and conditions of employment.

In order to counter these potential problems, the Church reserves the right to carry out personal searches of employees in the workplace. Searches will be conducted having regard to the section on Equal Opportunities and dignity at work and entirely on a random basis. They may be carried out at any time whilst an employee is in the workplace.

If you refuse to submit to a personal search without good reason, this is a serious matter and will be dealt with in accordance with the Church's disciplinary procedure.

Church Property and Equipment

You are responsible for ensuring that all Church equipment is properly taken care of. As an employee of Buckingham Parish Church you could be held responsible for wilful damage, neglect or loss, which would be dealt with via the Church disciplinary procedure should the need arise. All items of Church equipment issued to you must be returned upon leaving the Church.

Monitoring

Buckingham Parish Church reserves the right to monitor your use of email, the internet, any access control and security systems, telephone, postal and other facilities in the workplace. The Church expects you to be reasonable in your use of these facilities and not to abuse this trust.

Use of Telephones

Phones should be used primarily for Church business purposes, except for occasional private use, as even incoming personal calls can be disruptive and you are expected not to abuse this facility. All incoming calls should be kept to a minimum.

Wherever possible personal calls, in and out, should be restricted to your breaks. Non-compliance with any of the above may result in disciplinary measures being taken.

Internet, Email and Social Media

You may have access to email and the internet for exclusive use in connection with Church business and as part of the normal execution of your duties. You are not permitted to surf the internet or spend time 'chatting' by email or social networking sites during your working hours. You are also not allowed to circulate any non-church material by email, as there is a risk of sexist, ageist, racist or other offensive or discriminatory remarks or jokes being sent which amount to unlawful harassment.

Logging on to sexually explicit websites or the downloading and/or circulating of pornography or obscene material or using the internet for gambling or illegal activities constitutes gross misconduct and could result in summary dismissal under the Church's disciplinary procedure.

Posting information or comments on social networking sites which either brings BPC into disrepute or are about the Church, the clergy, its employees or its parishioners will be regarded as gross misconduct and appropriate action will be taken.

Conflict of Interests

It is expected that the working efforts and activities of all employees will be devoted solely to the interests of the Church. Your employment is subject to your not being or becoming engaged in any business venture or employment with parishioners or suppliers without the prior consent of the Church.

Statement to the media

No statements may be made to the media regarding Buckingham Parish Church, its parishioners, the clergy, its employees or its ex-employees without the express permission of the Rector. Similarly no statements may be made regarding the wider Anglican Church. To ensure that the Church is not misrepresented no discussions with the press, regarding any issue, should be carried out without authority from the Rector.

Confidential information

You agree that you will not use, divulge or communicate to any person, organisation or firm any confidential information relating to the affairs, organisation, membership or accounts of the Church which you may have received or obtained while working for the Church. This includes any information relating to the financial position of the Church including in particular names of parishioners as well as any document or item marked as confidential.

This restriction will continue to apply after the termination of your employment but will cease to apply to any information which may come into the public domain through disclosure by the Church.

Anti-bribery Clause

In your employment with the Church you should not accept any gifts or hospitality from any supplier or other person without first seeking permission from the Rector. The Rector may grant permission for you to accept a small gift. However, gifts of a value of £25 or more may not be accepted.

If you are found to have accepted, offered or given any bribes you will face disciplinary action which could result in dismissal for gross misconduct.

Other employment

Whilst Buckingham Parish Church does not intend to restrict the opportunity of its staff to have other employment the Church has obligations under the Working Time Directive regulations. You are therefore required to apply for permission from the Church before you take on other employment. Such permission will not be unreasonably withheld.



Employment Policies

Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure

Whilst Buckingham Parish Church does not intend to impose unreasonable rules of conduct on its employees, certain standards of behaviour are necessary to maintain good employment relations and discipline in the interest of all employees. The Church prefers that discipline be voluntary and self-imposed and in the great majority of cases this is how it works. However, from time to time, it may be necessary for the Church to take action towards individuals whose level of behaviour or performance is unacceptable.

Minor faults will be dealt with informally through counselling and training. However, in cases where informal discussion with the employee does not lead to an improvement in conduct or performance or where the matter is considered to be too serious to be classed as minor, for example, unauthorised absences, persistent poor timekeeping, sub-standard work performance, etc the following disciplinary procedure will be used. At all stages of the procedure, an initial investigation will be carried out.

The Church will notify the employee in writing of the allegations against him or her and will invite the employee to a disciplinary hearing to discuss the matter. The Church will provide sufficient information about the alleged misconduct or poor performance and its possible consequences to enable the employee to answer the case. This will include the provision of copies of written evidence, including witness statements, where appropriate.

Having given the employee reasonable time to prepare their case, a formal disciplinary hearing will then take place, conducted by a manager, at which the employee will be given the chance to state his or her case, accompanied if requested by a trade union official or a fellow employee of his or her choice. The employee must make every effort to attend the hearing. At the hearing, the employee

will be allowed to set out their case and answer any allegations and will also be given a reasonable opportunity to ask questions, present evidence, call relevant witnesses and raise points about any information provided by witnesses.

Following the hearing, the Church will decide whether or not disciplinary action is justified and, if so, the employee will be informed in writing of the Church's decision in accordance with the stages set out below and notified of his or her right to appeal against that decision. It should be noted that an employee's behaviour is not looked at in isolation but each incident of misconduct is regarded cumulatively with any previous occurrences.

Stage 1: Written warning

The employee will be given a formal WRITTEN WARNING. He or she will be advised of the reason for the warning, how he or she needs to improve their conduct or performance, the timescale over which the improvement is to be achieved, that the warning is the first stage of the formal disciplinary procedure and the likely consequences if the terms of the warning are not complied with. The written warning will be recorded but nullified after six months, subject to satisfactory conduct and performance.

Stage 2: Final written warning

Failure to improve performance in response to the procedure so far, a repeat of misconduct for which a warning has previously been issued, or a first instance of serious misconduct or serious poor performance, will result in a FINAL WRITTEN WARNING being issued. This will set out the nature of the misconduct or poor performance, how he or she needs to improve their conduct or performance, the timescale over which the improvement is to be achieved and warn that dismissal will probably result if the terms of the warning are not complied with. This final written warning will be recorded but nullified after twelve months, subject to satisfactory conduct and

performance. However, the Church reserves the right to extend the validity of the final written warning to a maximum of three years in cases of very serious misconduct or where the employee has a history of misconduct issues.

Stage 3: Dismissal

Failure to meet the requirements set out in the final written warning will normally lead to DISMISSAL with appropriate notice. A decision of this kind will only be made after the fullest possible investigation. Dismissal can be authorised only by a senior member of the Church. The employee will be informed of the reasons for dismissal, the appropriate period of notice, the date on which his or her employment will terminate and how the employee can appeal against the dismissal decision.

Gross misconduct

Offences under this heading are so serious that an employee who commits them will normally be summarily dismissed. In such cases, the Church reserves the right to dismiss without notice of termination or payment in lieu of notice. Examples of gross misconduct include:

- any breach of the criminal law, such as theft and unauthorised possession of Church property, fraud, deliberate falsification of records or any other form of dishonesty
- wilfully causing harm or injury to another employee, physical violence, bullying or grossly offensive behaviour
- deliberately causing damage to the Church's property
- causing loss, damage or injury through serious carelessness or gross negligence
- wilful refusal to obey a reasonable management instruction or serious insubordination
- incapacity at work through an excess of alcohol or drugs
- a serious breach of health and safety rules

- harassing, bullying or victimising another employee on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, national origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, age and/or disability.
- bringing the reputation of the Church into disrepute

The above is intended as a guide and is not an exhaustive list.

Suspension

In the event of serious or gross misconduct, if considered appropriate an employee may be suspended on full basic pay while a full investigation is carried out. Such suspension does not imply guilt or blame and will be for as short a period as possible. Suspension is not considered a disciplinary action.

Appeals

An employee may appeal against any disciplinary decision, including dismissal, to a senior member of the Church within five working days of the decision. Appeals should be made in writing and state the grounds for appeal. The employee will be invited to attend an appeal hearing chaired by a more senior manager or an external HR adviser or consultant.

At the appeal hearing, the employee will again be given the chance to state his or her case and will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union official or a fellow employee of his or her choice.

Following the appeal hearing, the employee will be informed in writing of the appeal decision. The Church's decision on an appeal will be final.

Employees who have been employed for less than two years

Any employee who has been employed by the Church for less than two years may be dismissed from their position without the Church following the full disciplinary procedure. Before any dismissal is taken the Church will investigate performance and conduct fully and will undertake to act fairly and reasonably in each case





Grievance Procedure

Dealing with grievances informally

If you have a grievance or complaint to do with your work or the people you work with you should, wherever possible, start by talking it over with your manager. You may be able to agree a solution informally between you.

Formal grievance

If the matter is serious and/or you wish to raise the matter formally you should set out the grievance in writing to your manager. You should stick to the facts and avoid language that is insulting or abusive.

Where your grievance is against your manager and you feel unable to approach him or her you should talk to another manager or senior person.

Grievance hearing

Your manager will call you to a meeting, normally within 5 days, to discuss your grievance. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at this meeting if you make a reasonable request.

After the meeting the manager will give you a decision in writing, normally within 24 hours.

Appeal

If you are unhappy with your manager's decision and you wish to appeal you should let your manager know.

You will be invited to an appeal meeting, normally within 5 days, and your appeal will be heard by the Rector or an external HR adviser or consultant. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at this meeting if you make a reasonable request.

After the meeting the Rector or external HR adviser or consultant will give you a decision, normally within 24 hours. The Rector's or external HR adviser's or consultant's decision is final.



Equal Opportunities Policy

Buckingham Parish Church is an equal opportunity employer committed to ensuring that all employees are treated fairly and equally. No employee will be treated less favourably or discriminated against in any way regardless of colour, race, age, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, marital or civil partnership status, sexual orientation, disability, or if they are intending to undergo, undergoing, or have undergone gender reassignment.

The Church's long term aim is that the composition of its workforce should reflect that of the community.

The objective is to ensure that no applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment, and that, wherever possible, they are given the help they need to attain their full potential to the benefit of the Church and themselves.

The cooperation of all employees is essential for the success of this policy. However, ultimate responsibility for achieving the policy's objectives, and for ensuring compliance with the relevant Acts of Parliament as well as the various Codes of Practice, lies with the Church. Behaviour or actions against the spirit and/or the letter of the laws on which this policy is based will be considered serious disciplinary matters, and may, in some cases, lead to dismissal.

Buckingham Parish Church acknowledges that men and women are entitled to be paid equally when performing similar roles, without any bias on the grounds of sex.

With regard to disability, assuming that the role can be satisfactorily fulfilled by the disabled person, the Church will make all reasonable adjustments in accordance with the provisions of and amendments to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Selection and recruitment

Selection criteria (job description and employee specification) will be kept under constant review to ensure that they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds as being essential for the effective performance of the job.

It is an occupational requirement that the post-holder is a practising Christian and as such worships at BPC on a regular basis.

Reasons for selection and rejection of applicants for vacancies will be recorded.



Family Friendly Rights

Maternity Leave/Pay

Buckingham Parish Church does not discriminate against women who are pregnant and as such abides by the statutory law regarding pregnant employees.

All women irrespective of service who are entitled to ordinary maternity leave automatically have the right to additional maternity leave as well as reasonable time off for ante-natal care. During the period of ordinary maternity leave all normal terms and conditions remain except wages, eg holiday accrual, continuous service, annual salary reviews, pension contributions (if applicable) while she is on maternity leave, provided she has given the Church proper notification of her pregnancy via the MATB1 Certificate completed by her doctor or midwife. (Proper notification must include the following, in writing; the fact that she is pregnant, her expected week of childbirth and the date she wishes the period of leave to commence).

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) is payable to the employee by the Church if she has 26 weeks' service or more by the end of the 15th week before the week that the baby is due, and is paid at 90% of salary for the first 6 weeks then 33 weeks at the SMP current weekly

rate or 90% of average weekly earnings if this is less, for the current SMP payment period.

The Rector or senior member of the Church of Buckingham Parish Church may make contact with the employee (and vice versa) while she's on maternity leave, as long as the amount and type of contact is not unreasonable, to discuss a range of issues - eg her

plans for returning to work, or to keep her informed of important developments in the workplace. The employee should be informed of any relevant promotion opportunities or job vacancies that arise during maternity leave.

During her maternity leave period the employee may work for up to 10 "keeping in touch days" as long as both she and the Rector have agreed for this to happen, and agree on what work is to be done and how much she will be paid for it.

If the employee wants to change the date she is returning to work then the Church is entitled to 8 weeks' notice of such change.

Paternity Leave/Pay

If eligible the employee may be entitled to choose to take either one week or two consecutive weeks' paternity leave (not odd days) within six months of the birth of the child if he:

1. has been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks by the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC)
2. has given notice of his intention to take the leave in or before the 15th week before the EWC specifying the EWC, the length of leave he has chosen to take and the date he has chosen the leave to begin.

The employee will be paid for the period of leave at the standard Statutory Paternity Pay rate or 90% of average weekly earnings if this is less.

Shared Parental Leave

Fathers, if they qualify, may be able to take up to 6 months of their partner's maternity leave in the second 6 months of the child's life. Leave is paid at the same rate as the mother's SMP and is in addition to the 2 weeks to which the father is already entitled.

Qualifying mothers and adopters continue to be entitled to Maternity and Adoption rights but they may also be able to choose to end this early and exchange it for Shared Parental Leave and Pay. They and their named partner will then need to decide how they want to share this entitlement.

Adoption Leave/Pay

If an employee is adopting a child and has 26 weeks' continuous service ending with notice of matching, the employee has the right to take the current period of ordinary adoption leave (OAL) and the right to additional adoption leave (AAL) for the current period. Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) is payable for the current payment period at the standard rate or 90% of average weekly earnings if this is less.

The employee is required to give eight weeks' notice of intention to return to work before the end of the additional adoption leave, the employer is entitled to make "reasonable contact" with an employee while he or she is on adoption leave and all adopters have a right to return to work after adoption leave regardless of the size of their employer.

Paid adoption leave is available to employed people who are adopting a child on their own, or for one member of a couple who are adopting together. The couple can decide who'll take the paid leave. The other member of the couple, or the partner of the adopter, may be able to take paid paternity leave.

Parental Leave

This applies to employees who have completed one year's service, and allows parents to take 18 weeks' leave without pay, for each child. The employee can choose to take the leave anytime up to the child's eighteenth birthday, though must give reasonable notice to the Church of 4 - 6 weeks. Assuming that the leave, which should be taken in blocks or multiples of one week, does not exceed four weeks in any one year, employees are entitled to return to the same role.

Leave can be postponed by the Church for up to 6 months where the organisation would not be able to cope, though not when the employee gives notice to take the leave immediately after the time the child is born or placed with the family.

In both Maternity and Parental leave the employee has the right to return to the same job as before or a similar role if the needs of the organisation have changed.

Time off for Dependants

This gives the employee reasonable time off to deal with an unexpected problem relating to a dependant. It is not paid time and **MUST** be discussed with the Rector as soon as the problem occurs. The time off would not normally exceed one or two days; however, each case will be reviewed on its own merits.

Flexible working

All employees have the right to request flexible working from their employer. To qualify the employee must have at least 26 weeks' continuous service.

Application must be made in writing and include specific details of the request. Employers can only refuse if there is a visible business reason. Acceptance of a flexible working arrangement is a permanent change to the contract.

Harassment, Victimisation and Bullying at work

The Church will not tolerate any form of harassment, victimisation or bullying at work. Any behaviour which is perceived as intimidating, upsetting, embarrassing, humiliating, offensive or malicious and is directed against an individual by an employee of Buckingham Parish Church will be investigated swiftly and confidentially and may be treated as a disciplinary offence.

Training and Development

Buckingham Parish Church strives to ensure that all of its employees are developed throughout their employment with the Church both in terms of technical knowledge and individual progression.

Employees will be given training on relevant equipment as part of the induction process. As other needs arise training will be discussed and implemented with the individuals concerned.

Stress Management at work

Buckingham Parish Church encourages the creation of a working environment in which opportunities can be identified to enhance the well-being of its staff and it promotes a healthy and safe workplace which fosters a culture of trust, co-operation, support and mutual respect, where all staff treat each other with dignity and strive to be non-judgmental.

The Church seeks to maximise the physical and psychological health of all staff by offering timely, effective and appropriate assistance to staff in managing stress and where possible reducing any causes of stress in the workplace.

Health and Safety

Our policy is to provide and maintain working conditions, equipment and systems of work, which are safe and healthy for all our employees, and to provide information, training and supervision sufficient to maintain safety. We want to ensure safe storage/use of substances. We wish to prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health and provide adequate control of health and safety risks arising from work activities.

We also accept our responsibility for health and safety of persons other than employees who may be affected by our activities. We will engage and consult with employees on day-to-day health and safety conditions and provide advice and supervision on occupational health. As employees you are responsible for maintaining a safe working environment for yourself and your colleagues and adhering to safe working practices at all times. Should you have any concerns you must raise them with your manager.

The Rector takes overall responsibility for implementing this policy.

Our policy will be revised in the light of changes in circumstances or amendments in the law. The effectiveness of this policy will be periodically reviewed and updated.

Working Practices and Performance Standards

Statement of Faith

Because all employees are likely to come into contact with Christians and non-Christians visiting BPC it is a requirement that employees are practising Christians consistently worshipping at BPC on a regular basis.

Personal Appearance

You should attend work appearing clean and tidy ensuring that the Church portrays the correct image and message. You are expected to dress appropriately for the role for which you are employed and for meetings you attend.

Personal Protective Equipment

Should your role within the Church require it the Church will issue you with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment. The cost of replacement items lost or damaged may be deducted from your wages.

Trade Unions

Employees have the right to belong or not to belong to a Union, and the right to not be refused employment on the grounds of trade union membership or non-membership. Buckingham Parish Church is committed to communicating and dealing with its employees on a one-to-one basis as required by the circumstances and would always strive to ensure that you are fairly and justly treated.

Behaviour

The correct behaviour of employees of Buckingham Parish Church whilst dealing with colleagues, parishioners, visitors and suppliers is essential. Your behaviour is a reflection of the Church's ethos.

Your conduct as you interact and communicate with each other whilst at work must also be non-offensive. Complaints regarding your conduct and behaviour will be treated as serious misconduct if proven when investigated, and will be dealt with via the Church disciplinary procedure.

Communication

Buckingham Parish Church will endeavour to ensure that all its employees receive communication regarding their performance and any other feedback as soon as is practical. Communication is always a two-way exchange of information and the Church expects employees to raise issues and discuss any concerns as they arise so that every effort can be made to rectify them.

As people's requirements change and progress the facilities which Buckingham Parish Church offer employees will be updated to ensure the needs can be met in the most effective way. This may be communicated verbally or may take the form of a notice which is circulated to each employee. Where needs change the Church will communicate the situation as soon as is possible to its employees.

Buckingham Parish Church will hold a bi-monthly communication meeting.

The BPC People Charter

The following principles may help us to feel empowered and accountable for our actions ...

1. We are ambassadors for BPC - act accordingly
2. It's God's money - use it wisely
3. Listen, learn and share your thoughts - in that order
4. Respect and value your colleagues, encourage and affirm often, challenge when necessary, supporting always
5. Time is precious and a finite commodity - make it count
6. When it goes wrong ... don't seek to blame - admit it, put it right and learn the lesson
7. Let technology be your servant, not your master
8. Dress appropriately for the occasion
9. Travel safely, sensibly and economically
10. Seek to succeed and bless, acting with capability, credibility, integrity and humility
11. Work hard and be prepared to go the extra mile.

