

Code of Conduct: Policy

ELT / SLT responsibility:	Executive Director of Human Resources, Organisation Development & Marketing		
Applies to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All RNN Group Employees • National Fluid Power Centre Employees • RES Employees / Workers • External Agency Staff • Work Experience • Volunteers 		
Approved by:	• Equality Impact Assessment	Approval date:	20/6/24
Approved by:	• Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee	Approval date:	03/7/24
Approved by:	• Executive Leadership Team	Approval date:	N/A
Approved by:	• RNN Group Board	Approval date:	08/7/24
Related documents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplinary Policy & Procedure • Grievance Policy & Procedure • Suspension Policy • Appeals Policy • Data Protection Policy • Acceptable Use Policy • Mobile Phone Policy • Social Media Acceptable Use Policy • Hybrid Working Policy and Procedure • Harassment Policy and Procedure 		
Implementation date:	1 st August 2024	Review date:	August 2027

DOCUMENT CONTROL			
Date	Version	Action	Summary of changes
1 st May 2019	1.0	Policy first implemented	N/A
1 st May 2022	1.1	Policy reviewed	Minor changes to wording.
1 st August 2024	2.0	Policy amended	Changes made to: Sections 2, regarding values. Section 3, gross misconduct reasons updated. Sections added: Section 4.4, section 6, Section 8, Section 10.2 and Section 11.

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1 Scope and purpose

- 1.1 This policy and procedure shall apply to all RNN Group (hereinafter referred to as the 'Group') employees, workers, work experience and volunteers including "designated senior post holders" as defined in the Corporation's Articles of Governance.
- 1.2 The policy and procedure will be applied in accordance with relevant UK legislation, specifically in accordance with the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Services (ACAS) Code of Practice, 'Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures', last updated April 2015 and the Union Recognition Agreement.
- 1.3 The policy aims to inform and support managers and employees on the standards of behaviour and conduct expected at work. Its purpose is to maintain the highest standards of behaviour, promote consistency and make all workers aware of their responsibilities whilst engaged in employment or service with RNN Group.
- 1.4 This policy does not form part of the employee's contract of employment and so the right is reserved to depart from it where appropriate.

2 General Principles

- 2.1 It is the individual's personal responsibility to apply the principles of this code on every relevant occasion. Failure to comply with the code may result in disciplinary and/or whatever action the Group considers appropriate.
- 2.2 Employees/Workers are expected to adhere to the Groups policies and procedures, including professional conduct, the safeguarding of all learners, encouraging diversity and inclusion and upholding the vision and values of the Group.
- 2.3 The public are entitled to expect that an individual associated with Group conduct themselves of the highest standard, and public confidence in their integrity. This code will provide workers with guidance on how they should conduct themselves when carrying out duties and responsibilities associated with their employment or service, including when attending external events on behalf of the Group.

3 Personal Conduct

- 3.1 Individuals are expected to conduct themselves in a reasonable and professional manner when undertaking their duties and fulfilling their responsibilities, including when representing the Group at external events, and to comply with lawful and reasonable instructions from line managers and members of the Senior Leadership Team. Each person is therefore expected to have a duty of care to learners and abide by the terms and conditions of his/her employment or service and to fulfil the requirements of his/her current role description of duties.
- 3.2 Certain types of conduct are deemed to be unacceptable and could result in disciplinary action being taken. It is not possible to categorise definitively all the conduct that could result in disciplinary action being instituted, as each case would need to be judged within the context of the particular circumstances. Certain conduct, usually termed 'gross misconduct', may be so serious an offence as to result in summary dismissal.

Misconduct is identified as unacceptable, wrongful, improper or unlawful conduct / behaviour motivated by premeditated or intentional purpose or by indifference to the consequences of the act / acts. **Gross misconduct** is behaviour, on the part of an employee, which is so bad that it destroys the employer/employee relationship.

Examples of misconduct and gross misconduct which could justify disciplinary action are indicated below. The below lists are indicative, and are neither exhaustive nor exclusive and could be interchangeable.

Misconduct examples could be:

- Repeated lateness and poor timekeeping including taking excessive breaks which are unauthorised.
- Unauthorised absence from work, or abuse of the policies related to absence from work.
- Misuse of RNN Group property.
- Failure to maintain acceptable standards of interpersonal behaviour i.e. rudeness, swearing or being verbally abusive.
- Failure to follow reasonable manager instructions
- Failure to meet agreed reasonable deadlines
- Failure to take reasonable care of RNN Group property, goods or vehicles.
- Use of RNN Group facilities / equipment for personal reason without seeking manager's permission
- Inappropriate / unprofessional behaviour (verbal or written)
- Breach of trust or confidence
- Recording of meetings with RNN Group staff without their express permission
- Breach of or failure to follow RNN Group policies or procedures.

Gross Misconduct examples could be:

- Theft or unauthorised removal or possession of any property or facilities belonging to the RNN Group, or to any employee or student.
- Serious damage deliberately sustained to RNN Group property, goods or vehicles.
- Serious misuse of the RNN Group's property, goods vehicles or name.
- Reckless handling of personal data
- Dishonesty, fraud including deliberate falsification of registers, reports, salary, accounts, timesheets, expense claims, absence forms, or other RNN Group documents.
- Bribery or corruption.
- Refusal to carry out duties or reasonable instructions or to comply with RNN Group rules.
- Serious acts of insubordination.
- Serious negligence/incompetence which causes unacceptable loss, damage or injury.
- Incapability as a result of being intoxicated by reason of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Physical violence or bullying, dangerous or threatening / intimidatory conduct.
- Violation of the RNN Group's rules and procedures concerning health and safety at work.
- Violation of the RNN Group's rules and procedures concerning safeguarding.
- Sexual, racial or other harassment of another employee, worker, a student, a visitor, contractor or volunteer carrying out work on behalf of RNN Group (including harassment via social media / social networking sites or outside of working hours which would bring into question an employee's suitability for a role within the RNN Group).
- A criminal offence, (whether it is committed during or outside the employee's hours of work for the Group) which may adversely affect the Group's reputation, affect the ability of the employee to continue to work in their role, or the employee's suitability for the type of work they are employed by RNN Group to perform.
- Conduct, whether inside or outside of the employee's work which is likely to bring the RNN Group into disrepute.
- Deliberate access to internet sites containing pornographic, offensive or obscene material, including the circulation of such materials.
- Serious breach of trust or confidence.

Levels of disciplinary action that may be taken as a result of misconduct or gross misconduct are outlined in the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

- 3.3 RNN Group recognises and appreciates that workers have the right within the law to question decisions made by the Corporation and to put forward opinions and ideas in a reasonable manner without jeopardising their position. However, there are certain expectations that the Group has of its workers. All workers are expected to:

- a) Support and promote the strategic aims of RNN Group through work performance, professional and personal conduct and not bring RNN Group into disrepute by their conduct both in and out of work.
- b) Not make any statements to the media (other than regular items issued by Marketing) about their work within RNN Group or the affairs of RNN Group unless they have been authorised in advance by the Principal / Chief Executive or in their absence a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- c) Raise any concerns over ethical issues or malpractice, without reprisals within RNN Group, in strict adherence with RNN Group's Public Interest Disclosure Policy ('Whistleblowing').
- d) Raise any concerns over sexual harassment or other harassment without the fear of reprisals.
- e) Respect all personal information concerning workers, students, clients, agencies or sponsors and treat such information with the highest confidentiality, abiding by the relative UK Acts of Parliament relating to privacy and processing of personal data at all times.
- f) Work cooperatively with other workers respecting their dignity and personal rights, sexual orientation, religion, religious beliefs and opinions, Trade Union responsibilities, gender identity, marital status, age, family responsibilities, race, national or ethnic origins, disabilities and being aware of and adhering to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

3.4 A workers off duty hours are their personal concern but conduct at all times must not in any way bring RNN Group into disrepute, this includes appropriate use of personal social media. Workers should not subordinate their duty to private interests or put themselves in a position where their duty and private interests' conflict.

3.5 Senior staff are normally expected to work exclusively for the Group. Other staff may, subject to the prior approval of the Principal / Chief Executive, undertake additional employment provided it does not conflict with the Group's interest, weaken public confidence in the Group or breach employment legislation relating to working time. Other employment must be notified to the HR Department for approval to be sought.

4 Personal Relationships

4.1 The Group recognises that close personal relationships may exist or develop between employees. These then may have the potential to impact on the working life of those individuals within the relationship, and in addition the working relationships with immediate colleagues. Such relationships must be declared to the Executive Director of HR, OD and Marketing.

Workers should not be involved in work-related decisions for example discipline, grievance, recruitment and selection, capability, promotion or pay adjustments for any worker or employee who is a relative, partner or close personal friend. It is expected that any relationships will be conducted in a positive and professional manner.

4.2 RNN Group's employment application form requires applicants to disclose whether they are related to any worker of the Group or of the Corporation. Canvassing of any such person, directly or indirectly will disqualify applications.

Any omission of such disclosure, which is deemed to be deliberate, will disqualify the candidate and if the omission is discovered after appointment, they will be liable for dismissal. Every worker will similarly disclose to the Director of HR, OD and Marketing / Human Resource Business Partner responsible for Recruitment, any relationship known to them to exist between themselves and a candidate for appointment.

4.3 In line with the Nolan Committee, RNN Group views any consensual relationship between an employee / worker and a student under the age of 18 / vulnerable adult as

unacceptable and this will invoke disciplinary action. Relevant external agencies may also be informed.

Relationships between an employee / worker and any student over the age of 18 are discouraged.

Workers are strongly advised not to enter into a sexual/romantic relationship with any student they are responsible for teaching, supervising or assessing as this could compromise the professional relationship between workers and students. If the professional relationship is affected, this may result in disciplinary action.

Where a worker embarks upon a relationship with a student over the age of 18 or a member of the Senior Leadership Team enters into a relationship with a governor, the individual must inform the Principal / Chief Executive immediately. If they fail to do so, this may result in disciplinary action being taken against the worker.

- 4.4 If a personal relationship of a non-sexual/romantic nature exists or develops (i.e. family or through external friendship groups) between a staff member and a learner who is 18 years old or under, this must be declared to the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- 4.5 A risk assessment may be undertaken to ensure standards of teaching and assessment and access to student records are not compromised (if applicable) and that the relationship remains within professional boundaries and is not in any way inappropriate.

5 Business Conduct

- 5.1 All workers must wear name badges / lanyards at all times so all the Group users can easily identify them.
- 5.2 Workers must not, whether during their employment or service (except in the proper performance of their duties) or at any time after its termination:
- use for their own purposes (or for any purpose other than those of the Group) confidential information belonging to the Group or any subsidiary,
 - divulge to any person, corporation, company or other organisation whatsoever any confidential information belonging to the Group or any subsidiary,
 - relate anything concerning their affairs or dealings on behalf of or in relation to the Group or any subsidiary.

This restriction will cease to apply to any information or knowledge, which may come into the public domain other than as a result of unauthorised disclosure after the worker has left the Group.

Confidential information shall include (but shall not be limited to) the following:

- a) Information concerning the services offered or provided by the Group or any subsidiary including the names of any persons, companies or other organisations to whom such services are provided (save that such information shall not be regarded as confidential once it has been published in any prospectus or other documents which are readily available to members of the public);
- b) RNN Group's marketing strategies and business plans or those of any subsidiary;
- c) Any information relating to a proposed reorganisation, expansion or contraction of the Group's activities (or those of any subsidiary) including any such proposal which also involves the activities of any other corporation or organisation;
- d) Financial information relating to the Group or any subsidiary (save to the extent that such information is included in published audited accounts);
- e) Details of workers of the Group or any subsidiary, the remuneration or other benefits paid to them and their experience, skills and aptitudes;
- f) Any information which workers have been told is confidential or which they might reasonably expect to be confidential;

- g) Any information that has been given to the Group or any subsidiary in confidence by students or other persons, companies or organisations.
- h) Details of students of the Group or any subsidiary.

Notwithstanding the above, the Group affirms that teaching staff have freedom within the law to question and test wisdom relating to academic matters without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing the jobs and privileges they have at the Group, providing always that this freedom is exercised with the Group's best interests in mind.

- 5.3 In no circumstances shall outside work be undertaken during work time on the Group premises or using the Group facilities and equipment e.g. telephones, printers, computers without the permission of the worker's line manager or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Employees / Workers must devote their full attention and abilities to their duties during their working hours and act in the best interests of the Group at all times. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

6. Dress Code

- 6.1 Employees/Workers are required to dress appropriately based on their role and responsibilities, whilst working within the workplace or outside the Group premises, when representing the Group. Some areas/departments may require specific corporate branded workwear and/or PPE which the Group will provide. Staff should avoid inappropriate work attire that may cause offence (e.g. inappropriate slogans or symbols, excessively tight or revealing clothing).
- 6.2 The Group recognises the diversity of cultures and religions of its employees and will take a sensitive approach when this affects workwear requirements. However, priority will be given to any Health & Safety, or security requirements.

7 Disclosure of Interest, Gifts and Hospitality

- 7.1 The Group's Bribery Policy ensures that workers are protected and are aware of their duties required where any fee, reward, inducement or incentive are offered or received by any RNN Group employee / worker. The acceptance of gifts, hospitality or sponsorship may be construed as a reward or an inducement for the Group's business and can be regarded as an offence under the Bribery Act. See the Group Financial Regulations for further details.
- 7.2 Employees/workers who are associated with business / interests with whom the Group may contract for services or goods must disclose these interests to the Executive Director of Finance and/or Executive Director of HR, OD and Marketing. This would also apply if the business relates to a spouse/partner (current or ex) or a close relative.

8. Safeguarding

- 8.1 Individuals must ensure that they are familiar with the Group's Safeguarding for All policy, processes, procedures and guidance, ensuring statutory and legal obligations are met, alongside the professional standards applicable to their role.
- 8.2 Individuals are required to access and complete appropriate training required for their role and be aware of the support, advice and guidance provided by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other dedicated Safeguarding professionals.
- 8.3 Individuals must maintain appropriate professional boundaries consistently with all learners, avoiding any behaviour that may be misinterpreted, and avoiding the disclosure of personal information relating to themselves or other colleagues to learners. Individuals have a duty of care to report any incidents that breach Safeguarding policies, cause concern or if there is no specific guidance available, under the Groups' Safeguarding Team.

9 Intellectual Property Rights

- 9.1 The intellectual property rights in any work produced by a worker in the course of their employment or service with the Group or using equipment, materials, services and facilities including time, are vested in the Group. These include books, articles, pamphlets or other publications, designs, models, computer programs, schemes of work, learning materials etc.

Any worker who undertakes work of this kind or uses the Groups resources for these purposes in a private company must obtain the written consent of the Principal / Chief Executive before doing so.

10 Use of IT Facilities / Social Networking

- 10.1 Use of IT facilities / social networking is permitted for bona fide purposes only. Use of such facilities / social networking without explicit or implicit authorisation, or for non-bona fide purposes may lead to the withdrawal of access to the facilities and to proceedings under the Group's disciplinary policy and procedure. A common-sense approach to IT usage / social networking is accepted during break times or before or after working hours. Clarification of acceptable use can be found in the Group's Staff Acceptable Use Policy.
- 10.2 In order to maintain Cyber Security protocols, the Groups' systems should only be accessed through Group issued/authorised equipment and not through personal devices.
- 10.3 Whilst some staff may choose to send communication via electronic means outside of core business hours, there should be no expectation for a response to be received, respecting the work-life balance of colleagues. Contact/communication with learners should only be made within working hours and through official established and authorised Group mechanisms.

11 Homeworking

Employees/Workers are required to adhere to the Hybrid working policy and whilst working from home subject to the same policies / procedures and expected standards of professional conduct, behaviour and performance as if working on the Group premises. All contractual obligations, duties, responsibilities and policies remain in place.