

Colleges Scotland
Team Handbook
December 2025

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Welcome to Colleges Scotland

A Welcome from our Chief Executive Officer

Welcome to the Team Handbook for Colleges Scotland.

I'm delighted to introduce this handbook which includes links to our current policies and procedures. The policies and procedures apply to all staff as part of a small and vibrant team delivering strong results and impact for our members.

I am very proud to be working to further the ambitions of Scotland's colleges and to support them in delivering education and training to hundreds of thousands of students each year. I hope you will find the Team Handbook helpful to support you in your role.



Everyone is Welcome

Colleges Scotland is an equal opportunities employer and actively supports human rights, diversity and inclusion as well as complying with all equality legislation. Our ethos is guided by our organisational values:

- **Respect**
- **Trust**
- **Wellbeing**
- **Support**

The Handbook

The Team Handbook contains an overview of our current policies and procedures and has been designed to help you understand how Colleges Scotland is organised, what standards and procedures you are expected to follow, and what you can expect from us in return.

It should be noted that, unless included in your Contract of Employment, policies and procedures contained in this handbook are non-contractual. A link to each of the policies in full can be found at the end of each overview.

I hope the handbook will help all our employees to feel part of a strong and motivated team.

Gavin

From the Start

References

Your employment with us is subject to the receipt of two satisfactory references. One of these should be from your most recent employer or head teacher if you have just left school.

If we receive unsatisfactory references, we may end your employment or withdraw an offer of employment.

Induction

To welcome you to our team and ensure you settle in as quickly as possible, we will always take the time to introduce you to your colleagues and explain how the business operates day to day. On your first day of work, you will receive information on your terms and conditions of work, which include pay, hours of work and how they vary, benefits, leave, training, and other key information.

As part of your induction, you will receive health and safety training and an overview of all our organisation's policies. Colleges Scotland's **Health and Safety Policy Statement** can be found [here](#).

Everyone here is happy to help and answer any questions you may have relating to any aspect of your work, so please ask.

New Employee Relocation

If you are a new member of staff and live more than 60 miles from the organisation, appointed on a permanent contract or a temporary or fixed term contract which is expected to last for two years or more, you may be entitled to apply for new employee relocation support, if relocation is:

- considered by the organisation to be a necessary requirement
- otherwise considered to be in the best interests of the organisation.

The **New Employee Relocation Policy** can be found [here](#).

Code of Conduct

As the organisation is largely publicly funded, the Employee Code of Conduct is based on the public service model. Colleges Scotland takes pride in fostering good relationships with members and associated businesses. It is essential that we always act in a professional manner and in line with our culture and values. We will never tolerate rudeness, disrespectful or off-hand behaviour to our members or our fellow colleagues. You will find the full text of the **Employee Code of Conduct** [here](#).

Dealing with the Media

No member of staff should speak to the media on or off the record without the prior consent and guidance from the Colleges Scotland Chair, Chief Executive or the Head of Communications and Public Affairs.

Should a journalist contact any member of staff directly, the following details should be taken:

- their full name
- the organisation they work for
- a telephone number and email address
- details of what they require more information on/their deadline.

The enquiry should then be relayed to the Head of Communications and Public Affairs immediately. In such situations, it would be helpful if members of staff could inform the Head of Communications and Public Affairs of any other relevant background information/sensitivities/potential controversies.

You will find the full text of the **Media Policy** [here](#).

Flexibility

Your Job Description provides details of your day-to-day duties. However, as a small team we need to work well together and be flexible about our work. We will, from time to time, issue reasonable instructions which you will be expected to follow. This may be asking you to do different tasks to your normal work, to enable us to meet our members' expectations or to support the team. We will not ask you to do anything that you are not capable of doing, or to undertake anything that could be considered a health and safety risk.

Staff Benefits

At Colleges Scotland we aim to provide a range of benefits which are attractive and beneficial to staff.

The organisation reviews the benefits it provides on a regular basis and will work with staff representatives to ensure the benefits remain attractive and beneficial. Certain benefits may have qualifying conditions attached to them relating to business needs rather than a staff member's status. Therefore, part-time staff and staff on fixed term contracts will be entitled to the same benefits as comparable full-time/permanent staff unless there is an objective reason for not providing the benefit.

Colleges Scotland's **Staff Benefits Policy** can be found [here](#).

Staff Development

We know that our most valuable resource is our employees. Our continued success depends upon having highly motivated people with proper skills in the right job, at the right time. We recognise the need to, where possible, offer all employees a clear path of progression within Colleges Scotland. Therefore, job descriptions and personal objectives will be reviewed on a regular basis.

When you start with us you will be given full induction into your role and the business. Once your induction training has been finished and you have settled into your new role, you will be given opportunities to learn and develop existing and new skills.

It is recognised that some training needs cannot be addressed in a timely or effective way internally. In these cases, training delivered by external providers may be the only choice. Advice on the most suitable training solution to address any identified need and recommended training will be sought by your Manager.

Colleges Scotland's **Staff Development Policy** can be found [here](#).

Breaks

Full-time staff are required to take a lunch break of up to one hour but no less than 20 minutes. Part-time staff must take a break of 20 minutes for every block of six hours worked.

Smoking

Smoking is strictly prohibited within the organisation's buildings and at the entrance to the premises. Those wishing to smoke during their allocated break may do so at the rear of the building. We have provided a bin for cigarette butts and other waste. Please make sure the area is left tidy.

Personal Mobile Phones

Please leave these on silent during working hours and ensure that any communication is limited to your break times, where possible.

Severe Weather and Disruptions to Travel

The organisation acknowledges that you may occasionally have problems travelling to and from work due to either severe weather conditions or major disruptions to public transport (for example, train strikes or accidents on the roads). Whilst we understand and are committed to protecting the health and safety of all our employees, we must also ensure that the business and our members are not unduly disrupted by external factors.

We expect you to report for work if there is disruption due to weather and discuss how to fulfil your responsibilities. If there is disruption due to weather on days when you are expected to be at work, please discuss this directly with your Manager. Where it becomes apparent that weather will disrupt transport or impede safe travel, contingency arrangements will be put in place.

The **Inclement Weather Policy** can be viewed [here](#).

Arriving Late for Work or Leaving Early

Where the organisation accepts that you have used your best endeavours to attend work, but you are unable to do so, we will assess your individual circumstances, and the following will be considered:

- Make up the time at a later date.
- Take any absence from work as part of your annual leave entitlement.
- Take any absence from work as special unpaid leave (in this case, your pay will reduce accordingly to take account of the hours/days you have not worked).
- Be paid as if you had attended work on the day(s) of absence.
- Work from home or otherwise work remotely.

Should the organisation decide to close your place of work, and it deems that you are unable to carry out work at alternative places or from home, it will pay you your normal working hours.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

CSR is the organisation's recognition of the impact its activities may have on society and the environment. The organisation is fully committed to the principle of CSR and intends that CSR should become embedded, where appropriate, into its policies and practices, to the benefit of staff, people we support, as well as the wider community.

This is supported by a number of internal policies, for example, the Equality and Diversity Policy and Health and Safety Policy.

The organisation aims to be transparent and ethical in all its business as well as ensuring it is making a positive contribution to the community in which it operates. It is committed to the following core values in all aspects of its work, including the fulfilment of its social responsibility:

- Clear direction and strong leadership
- Respect for people
- Working to deliver best value
- Openness and transparency
- Equality
- Probity
- Development of positive working relationships with others
- Commitment to the highest ethical standards of service
- Valuing and harnessing the diversity of the organisations staff.

Staff involvement is key to the success of this policy and the organisation encourages staff to support CSR related activity on an ongoing basis.

The organisation is committed to supporting a range of CSR activity such as, volunteering, community working, fund raising, learner work placements as well as recycling and CO2 reduction action.

The **CSR Policy** can be found [here](#).

Remuneration – Pay, Pensions and Expenses

Pay

This is one of the most important sections. If you have any questions about your pay, please ask your Manager in the first instance. Your salary is outlined in your employment contract, but if it changes, we will write to you to confirm the change. Your contract states when and how you will be paid. If you have any queries about income tax, the best thing to do is speak to your Manager in the first instance and request contact details for Colleges Scotland's finance provider – Dickson Middleton – as they provide us with our payroll services.

Remember to let us know your bank details when you start. If these change, let us know as soon as possible so your payments go through smoothly.

General Policy

The organisation recognises the importance of having a clear written policy on pay for its employees. When we create new roles and carry out salary reviews, we aim for levels which:

- continue to attract talented employees.
- retain, motivate, and effectively reward current employees.
- operate competitively.
- be best placed to achieve current and future strategic aims.

Colleges Scotland operates a pay scale which places all roles against a fixed grade within the pay scale. The pay scale is reviewed annually by the Board of Directors and currently consists of 18 pay points. The pay scale is available on request.

The full **Pay Policy** can be accessed [here](#).

Pensions

If you are eligible, you will be automatically enrolled into the scheme detailed in your contract. Full details will have been provided in your offer letter including the right to opt out.

If you have been automatically enrolled into the workplace pension scheme, you will receive a letter telling you:

- The date you were added to the pension scheme.
- The type of pension scheme and who runs it.
- How much we will contribute and how much you will have to pay in.
- How to leave the scheme, should you want to.
- How tax relief applies to you.

If you have any questions about pensions, please speak to the scheme provider who will help you.

A copy of the **Pensions Policy** can be found [here](#).

Hours of Work and Time Keeping

Your hours of work are set out in your employment contract. It is your responsibility to attend work punctually. Being respectful to each other is an important value to us so please be ready to commence work at your start time. If you need to leave before your usual finish time, ask your Manager's permission first.

Expenses

Depending on your job, you may need to claim expenses. Your Manager will discuss this with you when you start. An Expenses Claim form will be provided at your induction, please check that your car insurance allows for business use.

A copy of the **Travel and Subsistence Policy** can be found [here](#). A copy of the **Expense Claim form** can be found [here](#).

Flexible Working

Flexible Working

You are entitled to make a statutory request for flexible working from the first day of your employment. You can make a maximum of two statutory flexible working requests during any 12-month period to:

- job-share
- part-time working
- annualised hours
- compressed hours
- flexitime
- term-time working
- swapping hours
- working from home
- career breaks
- flexible shift working.

An application for flexible working must be made to your Manager. For clarity, the application you submit must:

- be made in writing and state that it is such an application
- state whether you have made a previous application under this procedure and, if so, when
- specify the change applied for and the date on which it is proposed the change should take effect
- be dated.

The organisation will consult with you as part of a discussion following receipt of the application, unless we notify you in writing of agreement to the variation. The time and place of the discussion will be convenient to the employee and the Manager. The consultation will include exploration of alternative arrangements that may be acceptable to you if we are unable to agree to the exact variation requested.

Once a decision has been made by the organisation, a Manager will notify you of the outcome. Where the decision is to agree to the application, the notice will specify the contract variation agreed to and state the date on which the variation is to take effect.

Where the decision is to refuse the application, the notice will state which of the specified grounds for refusal are considered to apply, with an explanation of why those grounds apply in relation to the application and set out the appeal procedure.

You may appeal against the organisation's decision to refuse an application. The notice of appeal must be in writing within seven days of receiving the decision setting out the grounds for appeal and be dated.

Once grounds for appeal are received, the organisation will endeavour to ensure that the person hearing the appeal was not party to the original flexible working request decision, unless you are given written notification that the original decision has been overturned and specify the variation which has now been agreed and the date on which it will take effect.

If an appeal meeting is held, the time and place will be convenient to both.

After the appeal meeting has been held, the organisation will give you written, dated notice of the decision on the appeal. Where the organisation upholds the appeal, the notice will specify the contract variation agreed to and state the date on which it is to take effect.

Where the organisation's decision to reject the application remains, the notice will state the grounds for the decision and contain a sufficient explanation as to why those grounds apply.

We will deal with and conclude your application for flexible working within two months of the date of the application, unless we both agree on an extension in which case, we will confirm this in writing.

At any meetings held to discuss the application, including any appeal meetings, you can be accompanied by a colleague of your choice.

Each request for flexible working will be dealt with individually, taking into account the likely effects the changes will have on the organisation, the work of the department in which the employee making the request is employed, and the employee's colleagues. This means that if the organisation agrees to one employee's request, this does not set a precedent or create a right for another employee to be granted the same or a similar change to their work pattern.

Repeated Requests

Further requests will count towards the maximum amount permitted in any 12-month period.

You can find the full **Flexible Working Policy** [here](#), along with the [application form](#).

Carer's Leave

Carer's Leave

Employees with caring responsibilities have a statutory right to take unpaid statutory carer's leave from day one of their employment. This policy sets out the organisation's stance on employees taking time off for this purpose while ensuring the organisation's operations are not unduly affected. The term "dependent" for these purposes is prescribed in law and replicated in this policy. Employees will not be subject to detriment for taking carer's leave.

Entitlement

Employees are entitled to take one working week of unpaid carer's leave per rolling 12-month period to provide or arrange care for a dependent with a long-term care need. They can request to take their entitlement in a continuous block or separate occurrences, but each occurrence must be at least one-half of their working day. For these purposes, a week is based on the number of days they normally work in a week.

A dependent is defined as:

- Spouse or civil partner
- Child
- Parent
- Person who lives in the same household but is not a tenant, lodger, boarder, or employee
- Person who reasonably relies on the employee to provide or arrange care. This could be, e.g., an elderly neighbour.

A dependent has a long-term care need if:

- They have an illness or injury (whether physical or mental) that requires, or is likely to require, care for more than three months.
- They have a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010.
- They require care for a reason connected with old age.
- Employees are not required to provide evidence of their eligibility in relation to a request for carer's leave.

Employees who request or take time off under this policy for reasons other than those for which the statutory right to carer's leave is intended may be subject to investigation and subsequent disciplinary proceedings.

Pay for Time Off

Time off for carer's leave is unpaid.

Requests for Carer's Leave

Employees must notify their immediate Manager as soon as reasonably practicable if they need to take carer's leave. The notification should include the reason for the leave and the expected duration, if known. The length of notice to be given is double the amount of time that the employee wants to take off as carer's leave in that instance or three days, whichever is longer.

Postponing Carer's Leave

The organisation may decide to postpone an employee's request for carer's leave for up to one month if it reasonably considers that the operation of the business would be unduly disrupted if the employee took carer's leave at the time they have asked for. The organisation will try to avoid postponement wherever possible. The organisation will consult with the employee before determining a new date for them to take the carer's leave requested. The new period of carer's leave will be for the same length of time as the original request. The organisation will confirm to the employee in writing the reason for the postponement and the new agreed date of leave, no later than whichever is earlier out of: seven days after the employee gave the request to the organisation and the earliest day or part-day of the leave originally requested.

You can find the full **Carer's Leave Policy** [here](#).

Hybrid Working

Hybrid Working

Hybrid working is voluntary, and the default place of work remains at Colleges Scotland's offices at Argyll Court, Castle Business Park, Stirling.

Hybrid working is a model of working which provides flexibility in relation to working location. There is no 'one set way'. In hybrid working models, you are enabled to work more flexibly between office and any other agreed location, such as home. Additionally, working patterns can be adapted to meet both your needs and the needs of Colleges Scotland.

Please note that not every role will be suitable for hybrid working and any approval will be subject to the fulfilment of operational requirements. Additionally, hybrid working is not for everyone, and no member of staff will be forced to adopt a hybrid working model, providing restrictions caused by events such as a pandemic, allows them to work from the office.

When considering putting in a request for hybrid working, you should initially think about the impact on colleagues and any functions that could not be undertaken out with the office premises. Staff should also consider whether their skills and attributes include:

- the ability to manage work and family demands
- the ability to remain motivated and work consistently without supervision
- good IT skills
- good time management and organisational skills.

If your role can be performed from a home environment or location outwith the Colleges Scotland office premises, and this is something you would like to be considered, you should put your request in writing to your Manager stating how you believe this can work satisfactorily for both yourself and the organisation.

You can find the full **Hybrid Working Policy** [here](#), along with an application [form](#).

Absence from Work

Holidays

The organisation's holiday year runs from 1st September to 31st August. All full-time employees are entitled to 33 days flexible leave and 13 public holiday and closure days per annum. The dates of public and closure days will be confirmed annually and will be as determined by the Chief Executive. You should request your leave as far in advance as possible. All leave will be requested through the Holiday Request online system. Managers are responsible for approving staff leave and ensuring appropriate team cover.

Part-time employees are entitled to a pro rata equivalent, as are employees with flexible hours. Any public/closure days 'owing' due to the pattern of work will be added/subtracted from the flexible entitlement. If you work flexible hours, your holiday pay will be pro-rated based on your last 52 weeks worked. Annual Leave for full-time staff shall be taken in full or half days and shall be expressed in full or half days. Part-time staff who work non-standard or varying days shall have their leave expressed in hours.

All staff should aim to use their leave entitlement in the relevant period. Managers are responsible for ensuring that staff take their annual leave proportionately throughout the year. Carry over between leave years will be limited to a maximum of five days unless there are exceptional circumstances which must be approved by the Chief Executive. This principle does not apply to staff on maternity or long-term sickness absence. Any carry over should be used by 31st August the following leave year.

The **Annual Leave Policy** can be found [here](#).

Please contact your Manager if you are incapacitated for work during any period of pre-booked holiday (whether in whole or in part). You must follow the absence reporting procedure and provide the organisation with a relevant medical certificate covering the period of incapacity.

Holiday Pay on Termination

On termination of employment, you will receive a payment representing holiday accrued but as yet untaken. If you have taken more than your holiday entitlement when you leave, a sum representing the amount of additional holiday will be deducted from your final salary.

Bank and Public Holidays

Employees will be advised of the organisation's closure days which include some bank holidays and will be paid their normal salary as part of their holiday entitlement (with a pro-rata share for part-time employees).

Sickness Absence

As an organisation we need to measure and record sickness absence, and to know when and why we need to do something about it. This is why we record and keep all records relating to absence, in line with our Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice. As an employee, you need to know that you work for an organisation that cares about your health and welfare and, as such, we need you to follow the Absence Management Policy.

The **Data Protection Policy** can be found [here](#). Colleges Scotland's **Privacy Notices** can be found [here](#).

Your Responsibilities

You must take responsibility for your own attendance at work and, if you are ill, your recovery and return to work. If you are taken ill or injured while at work, you should report this to your Manager and request permission to leave work.

If you cannot attend work because you are ill or injured you must call your Manager before your normal start time – or as close to it as possible – on the first day of your sickness absence, stating:

- why you are absent
- when you expect to return
- contact details
- where possible, any outstanding or urgent work that you believe requires attention.

If you cannot contact your Manager due to, for example, being in hospital you should contact the organisation at the earliest possible opportunity. In such circumstances a family member or friend should communicate your absence to the organisation.

You should note your Manager's mobile phone number to ensure you can communicate absences from work. If you have difficulty contacting your Manager a voicemail message may be left which should include the duration of the absence where possible, however, your Manager may contact you to confirm details. Notification by text message, email or any other means is not acceptable unless it is an emergency.

Your Manager will be responsible for ensuring the absence is recorded using the Online Absence Reporting System (OAR). This will ensure records are up-to-date and relevant support is being considered/offered, where practicable.

Any employee who fails to notify the organisation of their absence from work using the procedure outlined above may be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy.

If the absence continues, you must contact your Manager regularly to provide an update on your continuing absence. Throughout any period of sickness absence, the organisation must have regard to appropriate duty of care and will maintain reasonable contact with you.

You must ensure that appropriate certificates are provided for the whole of your absence, as outlined below:

Where your absence is up to, and including, seven calendar days (including weekends), a **self-certificate** is adequate to cover this absence. Your return to work will be recorded by your manager on the OAR system, this will ensure that your absence record is accurate. An email will be sent to you asking you to complete a Self-Certification form. Once this has been completed, it will be automatically forwarded to your Manager to confirm the details and request that a 'Return to Work' interview is arranged.

A certificate from a medical practitioner ('**Statement of Fitness for Work**') covering the period of absence and stating the reason for the absence and that you are not fit for work will be required:

- for absence of more than seven calendar days
- for any period of sickness occurring during absence on annual leave
- as may reasonably be requested by the organisation at any other time, for example, where there is concern about the reason for absence, or in respect of frequent short-term absence (where such a request relates to absence of fewer than seven calendar days, the organisation will cover any costs incurred in obtaining such medical certificates on production of a doctor's invoice).

If your doctor provides a certificate stating that you 'may be fit for work' you should inform your Manager immediately. We will then discuss with you any measures that may be needed to facilitate the return to work, taking account of the doctor's advice/guidance. If appropriate measures cannot be taken, you will remain on sick leave and the organisation will set a date to review the situation.

Following any sickness absence, your Manager must conduct a Return to Work Interview with you. This will allow them to welcome you back and ensure you are fit to return to work. In cases of more prolonged or frequent sickness absence, the meeting may require further detail, particularly if further formal procedures are required.

Elective Surgery

If you require emergency surgery as a result of a health condition, your period of time for recovery will be granted and the Organisation Sick Pay policy applies. Elective surgery is a non-essential surgical procedure that the employee has chosen to undergo for personal reasons, such as cosmetic surgery.

Whether or not a procedure is deemed elective or essential will need to be discussed with your Manager to determine the reason for the leave and whether or not the absence policy applies, in reference to pay and time off. When this has been determined, you and your Manager should agree an appropriate explanation for the reason for absence to their own team. Each case will be dealt with based on the individual circumstances.

If you are uncomfortable discussing a potential procedure with your Manager, please contact the servicing HR department.

Sick Pay

The organisation will pay employees the equivalent of their basic salary for the following period based on length of service.

Length of Service	Full Pay	Half Pay
Less than one year	5 weeks	5 weeks
1 year but less than 2 years	9 weeks	9 weeks
2 years but less than 3 years	18 weeks	18 weeks
3 years but less than 5 years	22 weeks	22 weeks
5 years or more	26 weeks	26 weeks

Sick pay allowance is based on a rolling year i.e. the previous 52 weeks. The organisation has no obligation to make any further payments in addition to these periods and any such payment it may choose to make will be entirely discretionary.

Employees should note that:

- payments of occupational sick pay are inclusive of any SSP or social security benefits which employees receive.
- any entitlement to, or expectation of, sick pay does not affect or restrict the organisations right to terminate an employee's employment.

In order to be entitled to sick pay, employees must comply with the notification procedure and the provisions on certification set out above and any requests made under this Policy.

Where an employee is absent from work and has not reported they are sick, the organisation will attempt to contact the employee to establish the reason for the absence and why they have not informed the organisation of their absence.

Unless a satisfactory explanation is provided, the Disciplinary Policy may be invoked. For the avoidance of doubt, an absence may be deemed as unauthorised if an employee has not contacted their Manager on the day in question.

In certain circumstances, pay may be deducted or stopped if an employee is not authorised to be absent from work.

Full details of the **Absence Management Policy** can be found [here](#).

Medical/Dental Appointments

Appointments should be made where possible outside working hours, or at the start or end of the day where this is not possible. You must inform your Manager in advance of any appointments and may be asked to make the time up.

Compassionate Leave

An appropriate period of paid leave will be granted at the discretion of management in cases of bereavement involving immediate defendant or someone close to you. Apart from this, days off for attending funerals or religious services, etc. will be treated as being part of holiday entitlement unless otherwise agreed.

Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay

If, sadly, you lose a child under 18 and were the legal parents or had primary caring responsibilities, you are entitled to two weeks bereavement leave. This also applies if you are a parent who has suffered a still birth after 24 weeks. You will be paid Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay if you have been continuously employed for 26 weeks up until the week preceding the death and meet the qualifying criteria for National Insurance limits.

Leave must be taken in a block of two weeks, or two single weeks, and must be taken within 56 weeks from the date of the child's death. Notice in the first seven weeks after the death can be given before you are due to start on the first day. From the eighth week up until 56 weeks, the notice required is one week. You can cancel or change leave using the notice periods above.

Jury Service

If you must attend court for Jury Service or as a witness, please let us know as soon as possible and provide a copy of the court summons to support your request for time off work. If you attend court and are told your services are not required that day, you must telephone us immediately and then return to work.

Time Off for Dependant Emergencies

We recognise the right of all employees to reasonable amounts of unpaid leave to deal with incidents involving a dependent: 'any person who reasonably relies on you to make provision of care'. You may use this leave:

- When a dependent is ill, injured, gives birth or is assaulted.
- When care arrangements unexpectedly break down.
- When a dependent dies.
- To deal with an unexpected incident involving a child at school.

You should contact your Manager personally prior to the start of their working day and give the reason for and expected duration of the absence.

Falsifying Claims

In the event of an employee taking time off fraudulently under any of the above sickness and absence policies, we will investigate, and disciplinary action may be taken.

Family-Friendly

Maternity and Paternity, Surrogacy and Adoption Leave

If you are pregnant or using a surrogate, by the 15th week before the baby is due, you need to provide the following information to us (preferably in writing):

- Your expected week of childbirth.
- The date on which you intend to start your maternity leave. You can start your maternity leave anytime from 11 weeks before the baby is due. You can change this date, but you must give us 28 days' notice of the change.

If you are adopting, you need to provide the following information to us (in writing):

- Notification of the match with the child, which is provided by the adoption agency. This must be provided no later than seven days after the date you received notification.
- The date you were notified of having been matched with the child, the date the child is expected to be placed with you for adoption, and when you want your adoption leave to start. Adoption leave can start on the day the child is placed with you for adoption or on a date that is up to 14 days before the expected date of placement. You can change this date, but you must give us 28 days' notice of the change.

If you are adopting, to qualify for the right to take adoption leave, you must be adopting a child through an approved UK adoption agency. Surrogacy parents may be entitled to adoption leave if they fulfil eligibility requirements. If you are jointly adopting a child with your spouse, partner or civil partner, only one of you will be entitled to take adoption leave.

All employees are entitled to 52 weeks maternity leave and this is made up of 26 weeks ordinary leave and 26 weeks additional leave. The first two weeks after the birth are compulsory. Or for adoption leave, assuming you are eligible, you may take up to 26 weeks ordinary adoption leave and up to 26 weeks additional adoption leave, making a total of 52 weeks.

Throughout the maternity and adoption leave, you are entitled to all your non-pay related contractual benefits.

If you are not planning to take all your maternity or adoption leave, you must let us know when you will return. You can change your mind but must give us eight weeks' notice of a change.

If you decide not to return to work, you are required by law to give the correct notice if you are resigning. However, giving longer is helpful. You are still entitled to statutory maternity pay or adoption pay even if you are not returning to work.

We reserve the right in any event to maintain reasonable contact with you from time to time during your leave. This may be to discuss your plans for return to work, to discuss any special arrangements to be made or training to be given to ease your return to work, or simply to update you on developments at work during your absence.

You are encouraged to take any outstanding annual leave due to you before the commencement of your leave.

If you are pregnant, we need you to provide us with your MATB1 Maternity Certificate which your midwife will give you when you are about 25 weeks pregnant.

Adoptive parents must give us the matching certificate or notification that one is being issued within seven days of having been matched with a child or as soon as is practicable.

For any other further information about maternity or adoption leave, including Pay and Benefits, please speak to your Manager in the first instance. You will find the **Maternity Policy** [here](#), and the **Adoption Policy** [here](#). The **Maternity Leave Plan** can be found [here](#).

Health and Safety

We have a duty to assess any risks that may affect you at work during your pregnancy. We will provide you with information as to any risks identified in any risk assessment and look at ways in which we can minimise the risk.

IVF

You will be entitled to paid time off for antenatal care only after the fertilised embryo has been implanted. From that point onwards, all entitlements are the same.

Antenatal Care

All pregnant employees are entitled to paid time off to receive antenatal care, provided such care is on the advice of a doctor, midwife or health visitor. Where such appointments can be arranged to take place outside working hours, you should do so. Copies of all appointment times should be given to your Manager. If you are adopting, then the main adopter is allowed up to five paid adoption appointments.

Prospective fathers to be and partners of pregnant women, as well as surrogacy parents and the secondary adopter, are allowed unpaid time off to attend two antenatal appointments.

Pension

Pension contributions will continue to be made during the period when you are receiving Statutory Maternity Pay and Statutory Adoption Pay, but not during any period of unpaid additional maternity or adoption leave. Your contributions will be based on your actual pay, whilst the organisation's contributions will be based on the salary you would have received had you not gone on maternity leave.

Keeping in Touch Days

Whilst you are on leave, we will try to keep you up to date with all that is happening here. This may be to let you know about any changes, to invite you to attend a particular event or to offer a training opportunity. You have the right to refuse to attend.

If we offer and you wish to accept, you can work up to 10 days during your leave without this affecting your statutory pay.

Returning to Work

Whilst you are under no obligation to do so, it would assist us if you could confirm as soon as convenient during your leave that you will be returning to work as expected.

If you plan to return to work before the end of your additional leave, you must give us eight weeks' notice. If you come back to work after the ordinary leave, you may return to the same job with the same terms and conditions as you had before your leave. If you return after additional leave, you are entitled to return to the same job on the same terms and conditions. However, if for a good reason we cannot provide this, we will find a position which is at the same level and with terms and conditions at least as good as your previous role.

If you are planning to breastfeed when you return to work, please let us know so that we can carry out a risk assessment and provide suitable rest facilities for you.

Paternity Leave

To qualify for the right to take paternity leave, you must meet each of the following eligibility criteria:

- You have, or expect to have, responsibility for the upbringing of the child.
- You are either the biological father of the child; or you are married to, are the civil partner or the cohabiting partner of the child's mother; or you are married to, are the civil partner or the cohabiting partner of the child's adopter; or you are one of a couple jointly adopting a child.
- You are taking the leave to care for the child or to support the child's mother or adopter.
- You have worked continuously for the organisation for 26 weeks calculated as at the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth, or, in respect of an adopted child, calculated as at the week in which the child's adopter is notified of having been matched with the child.

A cohabiting partner is a person, whether of a different sex or the same sex, who lives with the mother or adopter and the child in an enduring family relationship but is not an immediate relative of the mother or adopter.

- If you wish to take paternity leave and are eligible, you are entitled to two weeks from the birth or adoption of a child. You are entitled to take either one week of leave, two consecutive weeks of leave or two non-consecutive single weeks of leave.

You are required to inform the organisation of your intention to take paternity leave giving at least 28 days before the expected week of childbirth; or in the case of an adopted child, no later than seven days after the date on which notification of the match with the child was given by the adoption agency, unless this is not reasonably practicable. You are required to provide the following information in writing to the organisation:

- The date the child is expected to be born or adopted.
- Whether you wish to take either one week of leave, two consecutive weeks of leave or two non-consecutive single weeks of leave.
- When you want your paternity leave to start.

In the case of an adopted child, your notice should also specify the date on which the adopter was notified of having been matched with the child.

Leave may only be taken during the period beginning with the date of the child's birth or placement and ending 52 weeks after that date or, in a case where the child is born before the first day of the expected week of birth, 52 weeks after that day.

In the case of multiple births from the same pregnancy, only one period of paternity leave is available.

On resuming work after paternity leave, you are entitled to return to the same job on the same terms and conditions of employment as if you had not been absent.

The **Paternity Policy** can be found [here](#).

Shared Parental Leave (SPL)

If you are eligible, you will be entitled to request and take SPL. Surrogacy parents may be able to take SPL if they fulfil the eligibility requirements. To start any period of SPL the parent or partner must end their maternity, paternity or adoption leave and pay. The remaining leave agreed will then be taken as SPL and pay at shared parental pay if eligible.

You can request to take SPL in discontinuous blocks which should be discussed with your Manager and may be refused, or an alternative agreement reached. Alternatively, you can give notice to take one period of continuous SPL. You can also share the leave with your partner if they are also eligible. Parents can choose how much of the SPL each of them will take.

SPL must be taken between the baby's birth and first birthday (or within one year of adoption). The rules surrounding this are complex and advice should always be sought.

The **SPL Policy** can be found [here](#).

Parental Leave

Unpaid parental leave may be taken to look after a child or make arrangements for the good of the child.

Eligible Employees:

- All employees employed by the organisation for a minimum of one year.
- Employees who have a child or children under the age of 18.
- Employees who have become the adoptive parents of a child under the age of 18.

A maximum of 18 weeks per child (pro rata for part-time employees) may be taken in total.

If you wish to take parental leave, you should submit an application to your Manager. Leave should normally be taken in one-week blocks (unless your child is disabled), up to a maximum of four weeks in a year. Requests for longer periods will be dealt with on an individual basis.

You should submit an application to take the time off 21 days prior to leave being taken. The organisation must respond in two weeks. We will respond sympathetically to all requests but on occasion may ask you to postpone the leave for business reasons. However, this cannot be for more than six months. Any leave at the time of childbirth or adoption cannot be postponed.

We will keep a record of parental leave taken.

Neonatal Leave

Employees have a statutory right to neonatal care leave from day one of employment where they are responsible for a baby receiving neonatal care. We recognise that this can be a difficult and worrying time, both physically and mentally.

You may take neonatal care leave if you have parental or other prescribed responsibility for a baby who is receiving, or who has received, neonatal care. This will apply if you are:

- the child's parent, intended parent, or partner of the child's mother at the date of birth
- in cases of adoption, the child's adopter, prospective adopter, or the partner of either, at the date the child is placed.

You must give us notice in writing if you want to take neonatal care leave.

You are entitled to Statutory Neonatal Care Pay during neonatal care leave if you:

- are eligible for statutory neonatal care leave
- have 26 weeks' continuous service by the week immediately preceding the one in which neonatal care starts
- earn at least the lower earnings limit on average calculated over the period of eight weeks ending with the week before neonatal care starts
- are still in employment in the week before neonatal care starts.

If you are eligible, you are entitled to a maximum of 12 weeks' Statutory Neonatal Care Pay, paid at one week per every seven uninterrupted days of care the child receives.

The **Neonatal Leave Policy** can be found [here](#).

Equality & Diversity

Everyone is Welcome

We are an equal opportunities employer and actively support human rights and all equality legislation and promote diversity and inclusion throughout the organisation. Our ethos is to respect and value people's differences, and to help everyone achieve more at work as well as in their personal lives so that they feel proud of who they are and of the part they play in our success.

We believe that all decisions about people at work should be based on the individual's abilities, skills, performance and behaviour and our business requirements. We accept our legal obligations under the Equalities Act 2010, which makes it generally unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment, employment or after employment on the grounds of:

- age or perceived age
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- religion or beliefs
- sexual orientation
- disability
- marriage and civil partnership
- race
- sex

Upon joining, you will be informed of our Equality and Diversity Policy and that you are obligated to comply with its requirements and promote fairness in the workplace. We expect everyone in our team to adhere to our policy. Any form of discrimination, abuse or harassment will result in disciplinary action being taken, including dismissal for serious cases. The policy will also be drawn to the attention of members/subcontractors/visitors.

There should be no discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics set out in above, in the following areas:

- recruitment and selection
- training and development
- promotion, appraisals, and career progression
- remuneration and benefits decisions
- terms and conditions of employment
- disciplinary and grievance issues
- transfer decisions and in any decision relating to dismissal or redundancy.

Colleges Scotland will appoint, train, develop, reward, and promote based on merit and ability.

All employees will receive equal pay for the same work, work rated as equivalent and work of equal value.

The requirements of job applicants and existing workers who have or have had a disability will be reviewed to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to enable them to enter into or remain in employment with the organisation.

Monitoring

All employees, secondees and job applicants will be asked to complete a form denoting their sex, race, ethnic origin, age, and any disabilities that they have. Colleges Scotland assures that the information provided will be used solely for the purpose of monitoring the effectiveness of its Equality and Diversity Policy.

Monitoring forms will be held by the servicing HR department to ensure confidentiality and the Executive will receive reports on the effectiveness of this policy as required. Where appropriate equality impact assessments will be carried out on the results of monitoring to ascertain the effect of the policy.

Additionally, discrimination, in all its forms, will be monitored under grievances raised, discipline investigations undertaken and exit interview data collected. See para 5.3 of the Equality and Diversity Policy.

All employees are encouraged to raise any concerns with the servicing HR department

Complaints

If you feel that you have been subjected to any form of harassment or discrimination, please raise this with your Manager immediately. Should you require it, our formal grievance procedures ensure sympathetic handling, and hopefully satisfactory resolution, for all aspects of employee concerns or dissatisfaction.

The **Equality and Diversity Policy** can be found [here](#).

Menopause

Colleges Scotland recognises that menopause is a natural life stage that may affect staff in different ways. We are committed to providing a supportive workplace, ensuring staff are not discriminated against, and offering reasonable adjustments where needed. Managers are available to discuss any concerns, and guidance is provided to support staff wellbeing during menopause.

For full details on symptoms, reasonable adjustments, and support available, please see the [Menopause Policy](#).

Controlling Risks

General

It is everyone's responsibility to prevent the theft or damage of goods, organisation property or resources from the business and protect their own and others health and safety.

The security rules are designed to minimise the risks of loss and your fullest co-operation in implementing, maintaining, and improving our procedures is required. These rules and procedures are also designed to protect you. Failure to follow the rules may, on its own, lead to the inference that you have acted dishonestly.

If you notice anything suspicious, report it to your Manager or another available member of management as soon as possible. Any suggestions for improvements in the security procedures are always most welcome – these should be taken up with your Manager in the first instance.

Security Codes

Please do not share or write down the Colleges Scotland security code. If you forget the security code, please contact your Manager.

Visitors

All visitors must ring the bell at the main door. If you are expecting a visitor, please let them know. A visitor book is located in the main reception which must be filled in. It is your responsibility to ensure that your visitor is looked after during the time they are in our premises, and they should be made aware of our fire procedure and escape routes.

Personal Property

Please do not bring valuables or large sums of money to work with you as we cannot accept responsibility for your money, clothing, or other property on our premises.

Building Security

Generally, employees should report any security-related incidents to a member of the Executive in the first instance.

Please be aware of anyone trying to gain access to areas they shouldn't, and ensure that windows, doors, cabinets, and cupboards are locked at the end of the working day.

Resolving Problems

We believe that by having clear, open and fair procedures for the resolution of problems, we create a basis for the fair treatment of all our team. The Disciplinary Policy is guided by the ACAS Code of Practice (ACAS CoP).

Disciplinary

We expect our employees to meet high standards of conduct. Minor departures from our standards may be dealt with informally to avoid the need to engage this procedure. Nevertheless, we recognise that there will be occasions when informal action is not appropriate, and in such cases this policy will be implemented.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment and may be altered or amended at the absolute discretion of the organisation. We may start this procedure at any stage.

Disciplinary Procedure

Investigation

- An investigatory meeting will be undertaken with you prior to any disciplinary action.
- You must fully co-operate with any investigation.
- If you are invited to an investigation meeting, there is no right to be accompanied.
- The investigation may include taking statements from other individuals or collating written evidence from emails and electronic recording systems.

Suspension

If appropriate, we may suspend you on contractual pay or amend your duties during an investigation process. If you are suspended, your contract of employment will remain in force, but you will not be entitled to access any of our premises except at our prior request, or with our prior consent, and subject to such conditions that we may impose.

Disciplinary Hearing

If it is decided that there is a disciplinary case to answer, you will be informed of this and invited to attend a disciplinary hearing.

- You are entitled to be accompanied to a disciplinary hearing by a workplace colleague or a trade union representative.
- You will be given the opportunity to state your case before any decision is made.
- The chair of the hearing may decide the outcome at the hearing or adjourn the hearing to consider their findings.
- You will be informed of the decision. This will normally be in writing.

Appeals

- If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the disciplinary hearing, you may appeal. If you wish to appeal you must do so within five days of the date of the outcome letter (or where no letter is issued, the date you are informed of the decision).
- An appeal should be in writing and must set out the grounds for your appeal along with any new evidence/documentation.

- At an appeal hearing, you are entitled to be accompanied by either a workplace colleague or a trade union representative.
- The outcome of the appeal will be conveyed to you, normally in writing no later than seven calendar days after the appeal hearing. The appeal decision will be final.

Misconduct

Examples of misconduct are:

- Occasional and minor poor timekeeping.
- Minor breaches of our rules.
- Minor failure to observe our procedures.

These examples are not exhaustive or exclusive. Offences of a similar nature will also be dealt with under this procedure.

Misconduct, short of gross misconduct, will, depending on severity, normally result in a written warning. This would normally last for six months. If it is a final written warning, this would normally last for 12 months.

Gross Misconduct

Examples of gross misconduct are:

- Serious breaches of health and safety rules.
- Bribery and corruption (see the Staff Code of Conduct for further guidance).
- Theft.
- Fraud and deliberate falsification of records.
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs during normal working hours (see the Staff Code of Conduct Policy for further guidance).
- Serious negligence (even a single error where the actual or potential consequences are extremely serious), which causes, or is likely to cause, unacceptable loss, damage or injury.
- Deliberate failure to follow the organisation's documentary procedures and regulations.
- Breach of duty regarding non-disclosure of confidential information.
- Deliberate or negligent damage to the organisation's property.
- Disorderly or indecent conduct.
- Fighting on the organisation's premises or threatening physical violence.
- Acts of incitement or actual acts of discrimination or harassment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- Misuse of the organisations IT system, including misuse of email and internet access.

These examples are not exhaustive or exclusive and offences of a similar nature may be dealt with as gross misconduct. Gross misconduct will normally result in dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice.

Where an employee is persistently unable or unwilling to attend a disciplinary meeting without good cause, the organisation shall make a decision using the evidence available.

You can find the full **Disciplinary Policy** [here](#).

Grievance

The organisation recognises that from time-to-time employees may wish to seek redress for grievances relating to their employment. The Grievance Policy is guided by the ACAS Code of Practice (ACAS CoP).

Grievances can be complaints or concerns about a range of issues, such as:

- application of the organisation's policies (e.g. provision of sick pay)
- new working practices
- implications of organisational change
- health, safety and welfare
- equal opportunities and discrimination
- workplace relationships (including harassment and bullying).

Where you have a grievance relating to any aspect of your employment, you should have no hesitation in raising the matter informally with your Manager during normal work; this is not part of the formal grievance procedure. Only if the matter is not resolved between you should the formal grievance procedure be considered.

Mediation

If mediation is agreed as a way forward, an HR representative will engage a mediator to work with parties to try to find a resolution to their issue(s). Should this not be possible, the grievance will move to a formal process.

Formal Grievance Procedure

- If the grievance cannot be resolved informally and you wish to make a formal grievance, you should put your grievance in writing to your Director/Head of Department clearly stating the nature of the grievance and the proposed resolution or the desired outcome. If the grievance is about that individual, the grievance should be addressed to the Chief Executive. Grievances in respect of the Chief Executive should be submitted to the Chair of the Board.
- The Director/Head should arrange a formal meeting with you to discuss the issues further. You have the right to be accompanied at such meetings by a work colleague, a trade union representative or an official employed by a trade union. The Director/Head will be responsible for investigating the issue/s by, for example, talking to witnesses and looking for available evidence.
- Following the meeting, the Director/Head should make a decision and put this in writing to you within seven calendar working days. Where you feel that the grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved, you have the right to appeal this decision and the letter will remind you of the right of appeal and the procedure you should follow.
- If you wish to appeal, you must do so in writing within seven calendar days of the date of the outcome letter. The appeal letter should clearly set out the grounds on which the appeal is being made and should be sent to the Chief Executive. You will then be invited to attend another meeting. You have the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a work colleague, a trade union representative or an official employed by a trade union.
- Following the meeting, the person hearing the appeal will write to you with the decision within seven calendar days of the meeting. This decision will be final and there is no further right of appeal.

You can find the full **Grievance Policy** [here](#).

For disciplinary and grievance issues we may, at our absolute discretion, use an external third party to carry out any part or parts of this procedure.

Dealing with Poor Performance (Capability)

Your Manager will schedule regular one-to-one meetings with you which will include discussions on performance. Any concerns relating to performance will initially be addressed informally, however, if concerns continue then a Performance Improvement Plan will be developed.

Organisational Change

Organisational Change

Colleges Scotland is committed to managing organisational change in a fair, transparent, and supportive manner. From time to time, changes to our structure, roles, or ways of working may be required to meet operational needs. When this happens, we will consult with affected employees, communicate clearly throughout the process, and provide appropriate support.

A full overview of our approach—including consultation, roles and responsibilities, support for employees, and how structural change is managed—is available in the [Organisational Change Guidance](#) document.

Dignity and Respect

Colleges Scotland aims to maintain a working environment that ensures individual staff members and visitors are treated with dignity and respect. To achieve this, members of staff and visitors are expected to treat each other fairly and with respect; any behaviour which seeks to undermine this is deemed unacceptable. It is hoped that the implementation of this policy will ensure that all our employees work in an atmosphere of mutual trust, dignity and respect.

Bullying

Bullying can take many forms; however, it is often described as a sustained form of psychological abuse that aims to make victims feel demeaned and inadequate. Bullying; therefore, can be defined as: *‘Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or an abuse or misuse of power, which has the purpose, or effect of, intimidating, belittling and humiliating the recipient, leading to loss of self-esteem for the victim and ultimately the self-questioning of their worth, both in the workplace and society as a whole.’*

Harassment

Harassment at work is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010, which defines harassment as:

‘Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.’ Such conduct will constitute harassment and should cease immediately. Harassment is normally characterised by more than one incident of unacceptable behaviour, particularly if it recurs after it has been made clear that it is regarded by the victim as offensive. However, one incident alone may constitute harassment if it is sufficiently serious.

Our Position

We will not condone bullying, harassment or sexual harassment at Colleges Scotland. All staff have the right to decide whether behaviour is acceptable or unacceptable. If a member of staff finds certain behaviour unacceptable and feels damaged by it, they have a right to say so.

Please note, the policy applies to employees’ conduct in or out of office hours when working on behalf of Colleges Scotland for example entertaining clients or at work events.

We also operate a zero-tolerance policy regarding harassment by third parties (e.g., clients, customers, visitors) and will address such complaints with measures such as warnings, barring individuals from premises, or reporting incidents to the police.

All employees have a responsibility to comply with this policy and treat all colleagues with dignity and respect. If you believe that you have been subject to, or have witnessed harassment, victimisation, or bullying, you should, in the first instance have an informal conversation with your Manager. However, if this is not appropriate under the particular circumstances, members of staff should discuss the situation with the next again level of management or with the servicing HR department.

Details of the **Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy** can be found [here](#). It is hoped that the implementation of this policy will ensure that all our employees work in an atmosphere of mutual trust, dignity and respect.

Anti-Fraud

The key elements of the organisation's approach to combat fraud and corruption are:

- An open and honest culture.
- Adequate preventative measures.
- Systems for detection and investigation.
- Understanding and awareness within the organisation.
- Whistleblowing Policy.
- Anti-Bribery Policy.

Reporting and Investigation

Colleges Scotland expects staff to report any concerns about fraud, corruption, or misconduct to Directors or Managers, in line with the **Whistleblowing Policy**.

Investigations will be conducted fairly and may involve the Disciplinary Policy, police, or other relevant parties as appropriate.

Staff may encounter situations involving gifts or hospitality. It is never acceptable to offer or accept these to gain or reward a business advantage. Guidance is provided in the **Gifts and Hospitality Policy** and **Anti-Bribery Policy**.

For full details, see:

- [Whistleblowing Policy](#)
- [Gifts and Hospitality Policy](#)
- [Anti-Fraud Policy](#)
- [Anti-Bribery Policy](#)

If staff are unable to raise concerns internally, external support is available via **Public Concern at Work** (Tel: 020 7404 6609, email: whistle@pcaw.co.uk).

IT Security

IT Security

Technology is an integral part of our business. However, it also poses risks in terms of data breaches, reputational damage, and financial impacts.

Any breach of the IT Security policy will be managed in line with the Disciplinary procedure, with a sanction up to and including gross misconduct (or termination of engagement). We may withdraw your internet and/or email access. Examples of gross misconduct are included within the Disciplinary procedure.

General

Measures are in place to ensure the security of the network. Anti-virus software is used on emails and staff are required to action the emails in the daily Spam Report by either releasing or blacklisting the emails. All laptops are Windows devices and staff must allow all updates from Microsoft to be applied including restarting the laptop when requested.

To help staff protect the organisation's data they are advised not to access any files or emails they do not know the origins of, they also need to screen lock or switch off any device they are not using and report any issues they have doubts about to the Digital, ICT and Communications Officer.

Authorised users are solely responsible for all actions taken, including electronic messages, while logged in. Authorised users are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of their passwords and the security of their accounts.

As a matter of good practice, staff must:

- Use encrypted USBs/pen drives.
- Shutdown and restart PCs each working day.
- Ensure ICT equipment remains secure throughout the working day (this includes on and off site working) e.g. using the lock screen, not leaving devices open when not in use.
- Not to allow family or friends to use the organisation's equipment.

Using the Organisation's Email Service

The use of the organisation's email facilities for personal use is permitted provided this use does not conflict with work routines or this policy. All personal email must be marked PERSONAL in the subject heading, and all personal email sent or received must be filed in a folder marked: 'Personal' in the mailbox. All email contained within a staff member's inbox, sent items, and any other folders, are deemed to be business communications for the purposes of monitoring. Where possible, the organisation will try to avoid opening emails which are clearly marked as personal. Nonetheless, such emails will be opened and reviewed where malpractice or inappropriate conduct within the terms of this policy is suspected. Excessive personal use of email in core business hours is forbidden and will lead to disciplinary action.

It may be required that certain staff need access to another person's email, for example, an Administrator/Officer. In such cases, approval for access must be obtained from the Chief Executive.

Emails, Messages and Instant Messaging Access

The organisation provides a range of Information and Communications Technologies in order to carry out your role.

Staff members are expected to be responsible in their use of email, text messages and instant messaging.

Under no circumstances may any posting, text messages, instant messaging or email originating at the organisation be in violation of this policy or the Equality and Diversity Policy, amongst others.

Any such use will be regarded as a serious abuse subject to withdrawal of the staff member's privileges and appropriate disciplinary action may follow.

Monitoring of Email

Our IT company is required to monitor certain activity on a regular basis to ensure systems, such as the firewall, are running effectively. As part of the monitoring processes the IT company has a duty to report any violation of the ICT Policy.

Internet Access

The organisation provides an internet service for access by all members of staff when in the office. The ICT Policy expresses the view on access rights, use and conduct of all users of the internet services. For any enquiries, please speak to the Digital, ICT and Communications Officer

The **ICT Policy** can be found [here](#).

Default Settings of Email Service

The organisation reserves the right to scan electronically all incoming and outgoing email traffic for viruses and spam. Any email which is found to contain a virus or is recognised as confirmed spam will be blocked and rejected by the firewall.

Passwords and Security

You must use passwords on all IT equipment allocated to you. You must keep them confidential and change them regularly. You must not use another person's username and/or password to access our systems or network, nor allow any other person to use your password(s) unless required for business reasons.

Bring Your Own Device

Before using your device at work to connect to the organisation's IT systems and/or to access Organisation information, you must ensure that you follow organisation guidelines by discussing this with your Manager. We accept no liability for use of your own devices at work. All confidential information must be transferred to the organisation on leaving employment with us.

Off-site Work

Remember that when working off-site, others may be able to view or attempt to access your device. Lock your device when appropriate and do not leave it unattended. Be aware of who can see your screen and avoid using confidential information. You must ensure any internet connection that you use is secure. Your device must be transported securely whilst travelling and should not be left on display in an unoccupied vehicle.

Social Media

Social media is part of day-to-day life for most staff. It is essential that the organisation and its members are not brought into disrepute by social media posts by staff.

Remember that even when you are using social media in a personal capacity, be aware that other users who are aware of your association with the organisation may reasonably think that you also represent or reflect our views/behaviours. Members of staff must therefore make it clear when posting information or comments on social media channels that any personal views which are expressed do not represent those of the organisation.

While the organisation encourages open communication and the use of social media, it is essential to for all members of staff to ensure:

- The brand, values and reputation of the organisation is protected.
- Social media is used appropriately and effectively.
- Adherence to appropriate laws e.g. copyright etc.

Organisational Approach/Presence

The organisation's approach to social media is to utilise corporate profiles rather than to create new accounts for specific pieces of work/projects. This will enable the organisation to achieve audience critical mass (the key objectives for using social media are to engage with key target audiences and drive traffic to the website).

The Communications and Public Affairs team will support this approach by ensuring:

- Messages are consistent and in tone.
- Comments and enquiries are responded to in a timely manner.
- Posts are prioritised.

Please contact them with any questions/concerns.

The **Social Media Policy** can be found [here](#).

Data Protection

Data Protection

The information that the organisation collects, will always be used lawfully in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (“GDPR”) and once in force, the Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (collectively the “Data Protection Legislation”).

The security and privacy of your data is taken seriously by Colleges Scotland but we need to gather and use information, or ‘data’, about you as part of our business and to manage our relationship with you. The organisation is a ‘data controller’ for the purposes of your personal data. We are committed to complying with all our data protection legal obligations regarding how we obtain, handle, process or store personal data.

Colleges Scotland has [Privacy Notices](#) in place for processes where personal data is collected which explain the data we collect, store and manage as well as how we protect the data. These Privacy Notices listed below can be viewed on the Colleges Scotland website.

- Privacy Notice – Colleges Scotland Website and Cookies.
- Privacy Notice – Communications.
- Privacy Notice – Visitors.
- Privacy Notice – College Sector Employment Data.
- Privacy Notice – National Job Evaluation Process.

Our [Data Protection Policy](#) applies to current and former employees, workers, volunteers, interns, apprentices, and consultants. If you fall into one of these categories, you are a ‘data subject’ for the purposes of this policy. You should read this policy alongside your contract of employment (or contract for services), our Privacy Notice, IT policy, and any other notice we issue to you from time to time in relation to your data. Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken up to and including dismissal.

We have taken steps to protect the security of your data in accordance with our Data Protection policy. We train staff about their data protection responsibilities as part of the induction process. We will only hold data for as long as necessary for the purposes for which we collected it.

Data Protection Principles

Personal data must be processed in accordance with six ‘Data Protection principles’. It must be:

- Processed fairly, lawfully and transparently.
- Collected and processed only for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes.
- Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary for the purposes for which it is processed.
- Accurate and kept up to date. Any inaccurate data must be deleted or rectified without delay.
- Not kept for longer than is necessary for the purposes for which it is processed.
- Processed securely.

How we Define Personal Data

'Personal data' means information which relates to a living person who can be identified from that data (a 'data subject') on its own, or when taken together with other information which is likely to come into our possession. Personal data includes any expression of opinion about the person and an indication of the intentions of us or others in respect of that person. It applies to data stored electronically, on paper or other materials, but does not include anonymised data.

Policy Breaches

If you think there may have been a breach of this policy, you should inform the Data Protection Officer and the Digital, ICT and Communications Officer immediately.

Quick action can be crucial in mitigating the negative effects of a breach, in particular where data security is concerned; it is therefore vital that members of staff raise the issue immediately.

Review

You will find a copy of the **Data Protection Policy** [here](#).

The organisation's Data Protection Officer is responsible for reviewing this policy. You should direct any questions in relation to this policy or data protection to this person and address any written requests to them.

Leaving Colleges Scotland

Notice Period

Sadly, you may choose to leave us, and if/when you do, it would be appreciated if you could give as much notice as possible in writing to your Manager. The least amount of notice you are required to give is detailed in your contract of employment.

References

If you have left to join a new organisation, the prospective employer will usually request a reference. We will check that you consent to us providing a reference. All references will be true, accurate, fair, and non-discriminatory.

We operate a strict policy of only providing information relating to employment dates for current or former employees. Requests should go to the employee's Manager who will provide the information and explain this policy.

Where Managers are asked to provide a reference in a personal capacity (e.g. as a friend) for past or present employees, they must make this clear and not under any circumstances use our headed paper or use the organisation's email.

Reference requests from banks, building societies, other lenders or landlords should be directed to your Manager in the first instance

Retirement

For employees who have reached or are approaching retirement, we will support this major change in your life and will develop an individual plan to meet each person's needs as required.

The **Retirement Policy** can be found [here](#).

Redundancy

We are committed to providing a stable working environment for employees, consistent with the need to manage the business effectively and economically. When redundancies need to be considered, we will manage the process sympathetically and support employees during the consultation process. We will comply with all statutory obligations.

The **Redundancy Policy** can be found [here](#).

Final Salary P45

Your final salary will be paid at the usual time and will take into account any adjustments in respect of overpayment to you, monies owed by you or by us, or outstanding holiday pay. Your P45 will be prepared at the same time and can be accessed through the *myePay* system.

Fire Evacuation

What to do

Alarm Testing

A full evacuation drill will take place approximately every six months. If the alarm sounds for **more than thirty seconds** you should assume that the fire is real and follow the evacuation procedure.

When the alarm sounds you should use the emergency exit nearest to you. When exiting the building you should:

- Walk.
- Not stop to collect belongings.
- Not carry liquids (e.g. cups of tea/coffee).
- Provide assistance to colleagues, visitors and delegates as required.
- Follow the stated procedure, as detailed below.

You should assemble at the far corner of the car park, which diagonally faces the entrance to Argyll Court (car park spaces 1 to 15), where there are four separate assembly points. Each point is marked by a signpost with '**Assembly Point**'. Staff and visitors should gather as follows:

Assembly Points 1 & 2	Colleges Scotland Staff and Visitors
Assembly Points 3 & 4	ESP/WorldSkills Staff and Visitors

Please be aware that Assembly Points are in numerical order with 'Assembly Point 1 & 2' located nearest to the car park entrance/exit. At the Assembly Points staff, visitors and delegates should ensure they stand on the grass next to the evacuation posts as opposed to the road in front of the evacuation posts (the Fire Marshals and ESP Representative will normally co-ordinate movements at the evacuation point).

Those responsible for each area should report that their area is clear and that all staff, visitors/delegates are present to the Fire Services Officer.

Do not re-enter the building until it has been declared safe to do so by a designated responsible person or Fire Services Officer. The alarm should not be silenced until authorised by the Fire Services.

Discovering a Fire

If you discover a fire, you should activate the alarm at the nearest call point (red wall boxes) before taking any other action. Fire extinguishers should only be used if:

- You have been trained in their use.
- It does not place you or anyone else in immediate danger.

Please note that European Union (EU) Regulations require all fire extinguishers to be red, regardless of the type of fire they are designed to extinguish (i.e. the previous colour coding no longer applies). However, all extinguishers have been clearly labelled using signs so users can easily identify what they should be used for.

If you or any other member of staff or visitor notes that someone who was in the building before the alarm went off is missing, they should inform a responsible person **immediately**.

Fire Action notices are located throughout the building, and you should familiarise yourself with the procedures outlined above. The health and safety induction will cover this policy and all staff will be given a tour of the building so that they are aware of the location of fire exits and extinguishers.

The **Fire Evacuation Policy** can be found [here](#).