



Employee Handbook 2013

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND VALUES

With more than 5,100 employees at over 300 SPAR stores located across England and Wales, Blakemore Retail is one of the UK's leading convenience store operators.

The company's success has been built upon a distinct culture focused on positive and friendly relations with staff, customers and the communities it serves.

This culture is defined in the company's behavioural statements, The Blakemore Way and The Way We Work, which set out in clear terms the longstanding values of the Blakemore family and the way in which the company interacts with its people.

Blakemore Retail is the convenience retail division of the A.F. Blakemore Group based in the West Midlands.

Founded by Arthur and Harriet Blakemore in 1917, A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd began life as a one-man counter service grocery store in Wolverhampton. Over the past century, under the stewardship of Arthur's son, Frank and grandson, Peter, the A.F. Blakemore Group has grown into one of the largest privately owned companies in the UK and now employs more than 7,600 people with a turnover of £1.1 billion.

A.F. Blakemore joined SPAR in 1975 and is the largest SPAR wholesaler.

Putting people first is the philosophy that has resulted in Blakemore Retail becoming the dynamic, forward-thinking success story that it is today, and it is this belief that will continue to drive the company's growth forward in the next century.

Blakemore Retail is recognised as an Investors in People employer at bronze level and is always looking for new ways to train, retain and reward colleague achievements.

As a progressive, modern company, we take our corporate responsibility to local communities seriously. All aspects of our business are reviewed to operate in a way to minimise our environmental impact, ranging from paperless tills to the introduction of energy metering across our estate.

Charitable giving is also high on the agenda. Over the past four years Blakemore Retail colleagues have raised more than £1.5m for the company's nominated charity, the NSPCC.

The Blakemore Way outlines the guiding principles that underpin A.F. Blakemore's approach to business.

Our Purpose:

- To grow a family business in ways that are profitable and sustainable for the benefit of our staff, customers and community.

Our Values:

- Maximise staff potential and their contribution to the company's success
- Give great service to all our customers and add value to our trade partners
- Make a significant, positive contribution to the community
- Attain excellence in everything we do
- Behave with honesty and integrity in all our relationships

The Way We Work is a statement that describes the standard of behaviour by which you will manage and can look forward to being managed. These principles are relevant to every colleague and every colleague is expected to demonstrate these behaviours while at work.

It is these behaviours that will bring our company values, The Blakemore Way, to life. Whatever job role you hold within the company either now or in the future you will be expected to play your part in making The Way We Work principles a reality by applying them to any of your business activities and during any interaction with colleagues, customers or visitors.

LEAD & INFLUENCE

Create a 'can-do' attitude by involving your team and your colleagues in what you are trying to achieve – empower them, support and encourage them. Take responsibility for your actions and those of your team but if mistakes are made, don't dwell on them – react appropriately and learn from them. Be your own role model and always lead by example. Develop a reputation for being firm, fair and approachable. Inspire and motivate your team with your passion and drive for excellence. Don't be afraid to introduce challenging objectives but do it thoughtfully and allow time and space for others to respond and ask questions. Take considered risks and don't avoid decisions in difficult situations.

RESPECT & VALUE

Make trust and loyalty a way of life. Be known for being truthful, reliable and consistent. Recognise and value people's differences and respect individuality. Look for the best in people, let them know that you value them and help them recognise their potential. Treat everyone as you would like to be treated yourself, and go out of your way to encourage good relationships with your colleagues and your team.

LISTEN & INFORM

Listen, ask questions and observe, don't jump to conclusions. Be aware that your first response may not always be the right one. Accept that listening is as valuable as telling. Encourage others to do the same. Always give feedback at the appropriate time and place and in such a way that people can improve and learn as a result. Make sure that you give people the information they need to understand what you are trying to achieve.

RECOGNISE & ACKNOWLEDGE

Treat all staff and customers in a courteous, friendly manner. Celebrate and reward success and express appreciation for what people are contributing. Be prepared to praise excellence and equally prepared to challenge under performance. Always take pride in your work and appreciate what others are doing. 'Thank you' is so easy and so powerful and can mean so much to people!

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Your 'Handbook' is intended to complement your Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment, which should be issued to you within 8 weeks of joining our employment.

This booklet aims to provide an explanation of the main sections of your employment contract and give additional background information about employment conditions.

As an organisation we endeavour to provide the best terms and conditions possible and try to ensure fair employment conditions.

For further information regarding this handbook please contact the Human Resources Shared Services Centre on 0121-568-2905.

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ABSENCE

If unable to attend work for any reason, colleagues are required to adhere to the following:

1. Report their absence as soon as is practicable, (but no later than one hour before the start of their shift if their shift starts before 12.00 midday) to their Manager, or if this is not possible to another member of management, or supervisor.
2. Report their absence as soon as practicable, (but no later than 12.00 midday if their shifts starts any time after 12.00 midday) to their Manager, or if this is not possible to another member of management, or supervisor.

You must keep your Store Manager fully informed of your progress during your absence; the requirement for notification will be set by your Manager.

The company reserves the right to ask you at any stage of your absence, to provide a Medical Certificate and/or undergo a medical examination; or authorise your medical practitioner to provide the company with details of any illness. The company cannot guarantee to keep your job open for prolonged periods owing to absence through sickness or injury.

The company operates a Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) Scheme and you are required to co-operate in the maintenance of all necessary records. When you are fit to return to work you must notify your Manager the day prior to the day you wish to return.

On returning to work from any absence, a Return to Work interview form must be completed immediately. Your Line Manager will discuss with you whether you are fit for work, before you are allowed to resume normal duties.

Failure to comply with any of the above may result in payments not being made or being withheld. You will be required to provide a sick note (fit note) from your doctor for any period of absence over 7 calendar days.

In the case of absences which occur as a result of industrial injury, where the individual, due to insufficient service, is not eligible for any payment from the company, the employee may be entitled to a maximum of 2 weeks' sickness pay, providing that:

- a) The accident happened whilst carrying out a recognised working practice.
- b) The accident is reported immediately or prior to the end of the period of work.
- c) Medical certificates of unfitness for work are supplied to the satisfaction of the company.

Urgent Doctors, Hospital and Dental appointments should, wherever possible be arranged outside of normal working hours. If this is not possible, the time will be paid at your basic pay rate on production of an appointment card.

In cases of persistent poor attendance, action may be taken based on the following set of trigger-points.

Days & Occasions	Time Period within	Actions
3 occasions or more than 5 days' absence in total	5 months	Verbal warning
2 occasions or more than 4 days' absence in total	3 months	First written warning
2 occasions or more than 5 days' absence in total	6 months	Final written warning
3 occasions or more than 6 days' absence in total	12 months	Dismissal or action short of dismissal

For further information please read our Sickness Absence Policy in the Appendices section.

ACCIDENTS AT WORK

All accidents to employees and customers, however minor, must be reported immediately to your Supervisor/Manager at the time and the accident reporting procedure must be followed.

Your Supervisor/Manager is responsible for investigating the accident, with the aim of trying to eliminate the cause to prevent a recurrence.

ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT

You may not, without the prior written consent of the company, engage in any form of business or employment other than your employment with the company, whether inside or outside of your normal working hours.

The company reserves the right to terminate your employment with notice should you not declare other employment or if it is affecting your job performance or breaching any legalities in relation to your hours of work.

ADOPTION LEAVE

Further information is available from the Human Resources Department.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

In the case of bereavement, you should immediately contact your Line Manager.

In the event of the death of an immediate family member (i.e. spouse, parent, child, or sibling) you will receive payment for five working days plus a day for the funeral and it will be classed as compassionate leave.

In the case of the death of a grandparent or other immediate family member, you will receive compassionate leave and pay for the day of the funeral only.

Requests for bereavement leave for non-immediate family will be considered. Any additional leave requirement will be considered dependent on circumstances. Payment is basic pay, for current contracted hours.

BREAKS

Please refer to your Contract of Employment for information.

YOUR CARE PROGRAMME

The company provides a comprehensive care programme which incorporates staff discount, service awards, attendance draws, annual fun days and much more. Details can be found in the **YOUR CARE PROGRAMME** booklet.

CHANGE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please inform your Line Manager if there are any changes to your personal circumstances, such as home address, marital status, next of kin, name or contact details etc.

COMMUNICATION

For further information please read our Communications Policy in the Appendices section.

CONDUCT AND APPEARANCE

At all times you must conduct yourself in the appropriate manner, which does not bring either yourself or the company into disrepute.

Your dress must be suitable for the work you do and you must observe the staff dress codes, which apply to your department.

You will be issued with suitable protective clothing for the job you are undertaking and you are responsible for keeping your uniform clean and tidy.

You are expected to wear your name badge during working hours.

Expectations:

- a) All staff must pay particular attention to personal hygiene
- b) Your hair must be neat at all times, long hair should be tied back to create a clean and hygienic image.
- c) Make-up should be used in moderation; nail varnish and false nails should not be worn whilst working on the Fresh Foods Department.
- d) One pair of sleeper/stud earrings can be worn and only discreet facial jewellery is permitted. The only other jewellery permitted is a wedding ring.
- e) Company uniform should be worn at all times:
 - Black skirt/trousers, shirt, polo shirt or traditional shirt with collar must be worn. Jeans, cords and casual trousers are not permitted.
 - Clean black, fully covering, traditional style shoes must be worn, accompanied by tights/dark socks. Trainer type shoes or any type of sandal or mule are not allowed under any circumstances.

- f) If you work on a Fresh Food Department you must wear company issued headwear.
- g) Company overalls and hygiene aprons/coats are not to be worn outside or whilst shopping in the store.
- h) Mobile phones are not allowed on the shop floor and can only be used during allocated break times.
- i) The company reserves the right to request that staff with visible tattoos cover them up if the management consider them to be excessive or of an offensive nature. If this request is made the company will provide an article of uniform to do this.

Any failure to comply with the above regulations may result in you being suspended without pay until the matter is resolved.

CONFIDENTIALITY

For further information please read our Confidentiality Policy in the Appendices section.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

For further information please read our Conflict of Interest Policy in the Appendices section.

COVERT MONITORING (CCTV)

The Company reserves the right to carry out covert monitoring where there are credible grounds for suspecting that criminal activity or equivalent malpractice is taking place and the Company concludes that notifying employees could prejudice the investigation.

The Company also reserves the right to carry out covert monitoring for the protection of staff and property. The monitoring must be strictly targeted, obtaining evidence within a set time frame, and must be authorised by Senior Management.

Any irrelevant information will be deleted unless it reveals something which no reasonable employer can be expected to ignore. Unless part of an ongoing investigation all images will be destroyed after 31 days.

Where private investigators are engaged, the Company will ensure that they are contracted to collect the information in a way which will satisfy our obligations as an employer under the Data Protection Act 1998.

DATA PROTECTION

For further information please read our Data Protection Policy in the Appendices section.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

For further information please read our Disciplinary Procedure in the Appendices section.

EMAIL, INTERNET & TELEPHONE

For further information please read our Email, Internet and Telephone Policy in the Appendices section.

EXPENSES

Any expenses you may incur on behalf of the Company may be reclaimed on an expenses form available from your Line Manager.

Claims may only be made in respect of expenses wholly necessary and exclusively incurred on behalf of the Company.

If you are required to travel away from your place of work, or to stay overnight on Company business, expenses must be in accordance with the guidelines available from your Line Manager.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

For further information please read our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy in the Appendices section.

FLEXIBLE WORKING

We are committed to developing flexible working practices that meet the needs of our employees and the demands of our business.

If you wish to apply for Flexible Working then you should contact the Human Resources Department at the earliest opportunity.

FOOD HYGIENE

You are not allowed to work in food preparation, on the hot food counter or in fresh meat areas, or to handle any open food unsupervised until you have received relevant training.

GAMBLING

Gambling is not permitted on or off the premises during working hours, with the exception of purchasing lottery tickets/scratch cards during an official unpaid allocated break. Any breach of this regulation will be viewed extremely seriously and may result in your summary dismissal for gross misconduct.

GRATUITIES

You must immediately report to your Line Manager, any offer of gifts or services by customers, suppliers, distributors and any other such persons having a similar connection with the company.

You must not accept or agree to accept such offers without the prior written consent of the company. This applies to any gifts or services, directly or indirectly, from any persons or company, with whom this company conducts business, or may conduct business. Gifts and samples remain the property of the company, any unauthorised removal from the company will be considered as misconduct.

For further information please read our Anti Bribery & Corruption Policy in the Appendices section

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

For further information please read our Grievance Procedure in the Appendices section

HEALTH AND SAFETY

For further information please read our Health and Safety Policy in the Appendices section

HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENT including PREMIUM DAYS

Please refer to your Contract of Employment for your entitlement.

HOURS OF WORK

Your contracted hours and/or days per week will be stated in your Contract of Employment

JURY SERVICE

A copy of the letter requesting you to attend jury service should be submitted to your Line Manager. You should claim any expenses from the court.

LAY OFF PROVISION

In the event of work shortage or other circumstance beyond the control of the employer which prevents normal working, the employer reserves the right to lay employees off or impose short time working to meet those circumstances.

Payment during such periods will be at the Company's discretion, but in any event will not be less than the amount provided by any laws in current force.

LONG SERVICE AWARD

In recognition of your contribution to the Company you will receive a cash award which will be paid within 3 months of you reaching a service milestone.

All previous service will be recognised, however these cash awards will not be paid retrospectively.

Service Year	Gift for employees who work 30+ hours per week	Gift for employees who work less than 30 hours per week
3	£50.00	£25.00
5	£100.00	£50.00
10	£150.00	£75.00
15	£250.00	£125.00
20	£400.00	£200.00
25	£500.00*	£250.00*
30	£600.00	£300.00

35	£700.00	£350.00
40	£800.00	£400.00
45	£900.00	£450.00
50	£1,000.00	£500.00

*Four weeks' sabbatical (additional holiday leave) to be taken within 2 subsequent holiday years and at times to be agreed with your line manager. This is in addition to your contractual benefits and can be changed at the Company's discretion without notice.

MATERNITY LEAVE

A copy of the Company's Maternity Policy is available from the Human Resources Department.

If you wish to take Maternity Leave then you should inform your line manager at the earliest opportunity.

PARENTAL LEAVE

A copy of the Company's Parental Policy is available from the Human Resources Department.

If you wish to take Parental Leave then you should contact the Human Resources Department at the earliest opportunity.

PATERNITY LEAVE

Eligible employees are entitled to two weeks' paid paternity leave (the rate of pay is calculated from the last 12 weeks' pay before the date you commence paternity leave) to be taken within 8 weeks of the birth in one block.

This is in addition to your annual holiday entitlement and must be requested in advance of the birth giving an indication of the expected date of confinement.

Further information is available from the Human Resources Department.

PENSION SCHEME

Details of the current A.F. Blakemore scheme are available from the Human Resources Department.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

The Company cannot accept any liability for loss or damage to any personal property on the store premises or to a vehicle, or vehicle contents. Where lockers are provided, all personal possessions must be placed in the locker, which must be secured at all times. Large amounts of money or valuables should not be brought into the store. The locker key should be kept in your possession until the end of your shift. Upon removal of your personal possessions, the key must be left in the locker door. Under no circumstances should handbags, mobile phones, money or other personal possessions be taken onto the shop floor or kept behind the till area. If no lockers are provided, items should be secured in the office. Any breach of this may result in disciplinary action being taken.

RETIREMENT GIFTS

Retirement gifts will be based on years of service for the following amounts:

Amount	Service
£10.00 per year	Up to 10 years' service
£20.00 per year	10 – 20 years' service
£30.00 per year	For all service over 20 years

Either a cash payment payable through wages, which is liable for Tax and NI, or a gift of your choice is available.

This is in addition to your contractual benefits and can be changed at the Company's discretion without notice.

SALE OF AGE RESTRICTED PRODUCTS

CHALLENGE 21 & CHALLENGE 25 POLICY - The Challenge 21 policy applies to all the age restricted products other than alcohol where a Challenge 25 policy applies. Both policies must be adhered to by all employees. The policy means that customers who appear to be under 21 (or 25 in the case of alcohol) and attempt to purchase an age-restricted product must be asked for identification. If no satisfactory identification can be produced the sale must be refused. No identification = no sale.

	Legal Age	Policy Age
Alcohol	18	25
Cigarettes, tobacco and smoking material (including E-Cigarettes)	18	21
Matches	N/a	21
Lottery	16	21
Medicines (i.e. Paracetamol)	16	21
Hire of 18 restricted video / DVD	18	21
Butane gas and lighter fuel	18	21
Other solvents (*shoe polish etc – cannot be sold to persons of any age even with identification if you suspect they are being purchased for the use of solvent abuse.)	*See note	21
Fireworks	18	21
Scissors	16	21
Petrol	16	21
Liquor chocolates	16	21
Party poppers	16	21
Fuel (*if the customer appears to be under 21 – the sale can only be made to the driver / rider of the vehicle)	16	*see note

SPECIAL NOTES: You as an individual are required to comply with the law and the Challenge 21 / Challenge 25 policy; failure to do this may result in disciplinary action being taken against you, which could include dismissal or a fine for which you are personally liable. **IF IN DOUBT – DO NOT SELL**

SMOKING POLICY

To ensure that Blakemore Retail premises and company vehicles comply with the Smoke Free (Premises and Enforcement) Regulations 2006, which came into force on 1st July 2007, the following will apply:

1. No smoking is to take place in or around the store, except in the area/s designated by the Area Manager.
2. Smoking will be allowed, only at official breaks (either paid or unpaid) and is not permitted at any other time, for example while taking a delivery in.
3. Staff who leave the store to smoke must only do so if staffing is adequate for security and health and safety issues.
4. Staff smoking within view of the public must ensure that all items of company issued uniform are covered up. NB: Food To Go uniform should be removed when smoking due to the food safety implications.
5. Field staff are obliged to abide by the smoke-free policy for smoking areas and breaks when visiting stores.

Failure to adhere to the above may result in disciplinary action being taken.

STAFF DECLARATION

On arrival you are required to sign/clock in and declare any personal goods in your possession not purchased at the store and any cash you may have on you and sign/clock out at the end of your shift. You must not sign/clock any other employee in or out.

STAFF SEARCH

The company reserves the right to stop and search you including checking coats, pockets, bags, containers, parcels etc., and private or company vehicles parked on /or within the vicinity of the Company premises at any time, where there is reasonable suspicion that you are wrongfully dealing with company property.

At no time are you permitted to remove any company goods or property without an official company document.

The company also reserves the right to search you and your property at any time whilst on the company premises and random searches will take place on a spot check basis. The fact that a search is carried out in no way implies that the person being searched is suspected of any misdemeanour. Searches may be necessary to protect both your property and that of the company. To avoid all misunderstanding it is essential that you retain your receipts for all goods purchased.

STAFF SHOPPING PROCEDURE

The staff shopping procedure is set out to safeguard management and staff from any misunderstanding regarding store stock.

Under no circumstances may any product be eaten or taken from the store without being paid for.

Under no circumstances may goods be put aside for any member of staff unless it is a fresh food item, in which case the person's name will be marked on the item(s). Failure to purchase these items will result in this facility being withdrawn.

Under no circumstances may any member of staff serve themselves.

Goods that are purchased for consumption in store must be paid for and the receipt signed by a member of management and attached to the product. These purchases can take place prior to commencement of an official allocated break.

Take home shopping is allowed at the end of a shift. If the end of a shift coincides with the store closing time, there will be 5 minutes of staff shopping allowed.

All items should be placed in a bag with the receipt attached signed by a member of store management.

This procedure also applies when purchasing lottery tickets, scratch cards or any pre-payment cards or vouchers.

STAFF DISCOUNT

Staff discount can be used for personal shopping only. Staff discount is a benefit extended to employees only and you may only make purchases for you and your own household. To qualify for discount the purchase MUST be made by the employee.

Further information can be obtained in the Your CARE Programme booklet.

SUBSTANCE AND ALCOHOL

The Company is required by Law to ensure that employees are provided with a safe working environment. The Company is therefore responsible for ensuring that all employees, when they are at work (particularly if they are driving vehicles of any kind or using equipment) are in a fit state to do so. In the context of this policy the performance of their job must not in any way be impaired by alcohol or drug abuse. Our approach to dealing with alcohol or drug abuse is aimed at prevention and the provision of support. If at any time you are experiencing problems with alcohol or drug abuse please let us know. We will try to provide appropriate advice, support or assistance, although this would depend on individual situations. Where the Company has a reasonable suspicion that you may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs the Company reserves the right to suspend you from work pending an investigation.

For further information please read our Drugs and Alcohol Policy in the Appendices section.

SUNDAY WORKING

You may be required under your terms and conditions of employment to work Sundays. However, if you wish, you may give three months' notice in writing to your Line Manager that you object to working on a Sunday.

During this three month notice period your Line Manager can still require you to work on a Sunday. On completion of the three month notice period you will then have the right not to work a Sunday.

The Company is under no obligation to allocate you with alternative hours.

Your weekly contracted hours will be reduced accordingly.

TIME KEEPING

You should allow adequate time to ensure you are ready for work at your allocated start time. If you have a problem with your start time, you should discuss it with your Manager or nominated deputy as soon as possible

Please note: If you are persistently late it may result in disciplinary action being taken.

TRADE UNION AGREEMENT

The company has a Partnership Agreement with the Union of Shop Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW). This agreement covers negotiation of substantive issues and procedures in relation to all discipline, grievance and appeals.

In the event of a conflict between a term of this contract and the terms of the USDAW agreement, the company's contract will be binding until negotiation has been completed and agreement reached to amend terms.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The company is committed to maintaining high quality standards in products, processes, safe working practices, environmental management, business systems and people development.

We recognise that we are dependent on our people to achieve these business objectives.

We are therefore committed to maintaining our recognition as an 'Investors in People' organisation, and to providing training and development for all employees to ensure that; -

- Individual employees have the skills, knowledge and positive attitudes needed to do their jobs effectively and to established quality standards.
- The business has the collective competencies it requires to continually develop its performance to achieve its business plans in a highly competitive market.
- Employees are encouraged to continually improve their job and personal performance and to have the opportunity to achieve their potential within the organisation.

For further information please refer to the Training and Development Policy found in the Appendices Section.

VIOLENCE & THEFT IN THE WORKPLACE

The Company recognises that the risk of violence to its staff is a serious matter and will take all steps, so far as is reasonably practicable, to avert the risk of violence through store design, physical security measures, safe working practices and staff training. The risk assessment process will determine appropriate local measures, which is a management function.

The Company acknowledges that staff, on occasion, have to deal with customer theft situations and will take whatever steps necessary to ensure that staff safety is the primary concern. The health and safety of staff and other law-abiding customers takes consideration over all other factors. The Company actively discourages any form of behaviour from staff that may compromise the safety of themselves, other members of staff and / or the customer.

VOIDS AND REFUNDS

All voids and refunds must be authorised by the Line Manager.

- Voids must be actioned before the transaction is completed.
- The reason for the Void or Refund must be written on the till receipt and signed by both the till operator and the Supervisor/Manager.
- Always keep the till receipt in the till. If the customer requires a receipt then print a second receipt before serving the next customer.
- Any unauthorised voids or refunds, or abuse of this process will be investigated and may result in dismissal.
- The reason for the void or refund and both signatures must be the same on both the till receipt and the void sheet.

Your CARE Programme

YOUR STAFF DISCOUNT

You can enjoy up to *10% off your personal shopping (*restrictions apply).

YOUR STAFF LOTTERY

You can be in with a chance of winning up to £1000 in the quarterly staff lottery draw.

YOUR STAFF SOCIAL FUND

Fancy a day (or night) out with your team? The Staff Social Fund may be able to make a contribution to your event.

HEALTH SHIELD

Affordable health cover for everyday health care costs. You can enjoy corporate rates from as little as £1.50 per week.

IT'S YOUR SHOUT

Good ideas to improve the company can get rewarded. Submit your good idea via share-point for a chance to win £500, £250, £100, £50.

RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE

Are you conscientious and hard working? Why not enter our Sales, FtG or Post Office Assistant of the Year competition? Look out for competition details in your staff area 2-3 months before the annual conference .

VOLUNTARY BENEFITS - DISCOUNT SCHEME

Save up to 15% off High St brands with exclusive on-line and in store savings and 50%-90% off restaurants, spas and weekend activities. Call 0844 414 6396 for more details.

YOUR LONG SERVICE AWARDS

We appreciate your contribution to the company and recognise your long service at 3 years, 5 years and every fifth year thereafter with a cash gift. In addition, when you achieve 25 years service you'll get an additional 4 weeks paid leave, a sabbatical, so you can take time out to do something you've always wanted to do.

We also recognise retirement with a gift based on you length of service.

THE BLAKEMORE FOUNDATION and EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING

Helping you to support your local good causes.

YOUR CUSTOMER CARE AWARD

If you go that extra mile for your customers, nominate yourself or get a colleague to nominate you for this award.

YOUR PAYSAVE MONTHLY SAVER ACCOUNT

Save from as little as £5 a week with this handy account (deducted from wages).

CHILDCARE VOUCHERS

A tax effective way to help you save money on your registered childcare costs for children up to 16 years of age. (18 if registered disabled).

YOUR ATTENDANCE DRAW

Good attendance can reap rewards. Colleagues with 100% attendance go into a quarterly draw. There are 80 awards each year of £125 to £500.

COUNSELLING SERVICES

Something getting you down in the work place? Talk it through free and confidentially with professional Retail Trust counsellors. Call them on 0808 8010808 OR just want to talk to a senior colleague in confidence? Call the confidential helpline on 07500 794348.

ANNUAL FUN DAY

Colleagues can enjoy a free day out at Alton Towers (up to 4 family members get a reduced rate). Free corporate hospitality and transport from most locations.

APPENDICES

The following policy statements and procedures are included for your general information:

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Visit the Your Care Programme folder on share-point for more information and application forms, alternatively, contact the HR Department on 0121 568 2902 or any member of the Blakemore Retail Training Department via 01902 364928



ANTI BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION POLICY

A prohibition on giving or accepting bribes

Under no circumstances must any employee give or accept a bribe.

Bribery and corruption is defined as any activity or transaction, not necessarily financial, that involves the offer, promise or acceptance of a financial gift or other advantage – whether between the Company and a customer, a supplier, their agent or employee, a public official or any other associated party – that is intended to encourage the recipient of the benefit to act improperly or unfairly in the award of business or in the execution of their duties.

Examples of corrupt activity include;

- Employees accepting inducements, e.g. to retain or obtain business, or otherwise act outside of compliance with their duties and against the best interests of the Company
- Employees paying or offering a bribe, or authorising such acts, to induce another to act outside of compliance with their duties and award business to the Company
- Offering expensive gifts or providing lavish entertainment to individuals with the intention of influencing the award of business to the Company
- Making political or charitable donations that are intended to influence unfairly the award of business to the Company
- Accepting payments or other inducements from third parties in order to award business to another third party
- Manipulating tendering processes to award or gain a contract to or from a third party in return for some form of payment benefit or other favour
- Offering payments to regulatory bodies (e.g. Inland Revenue or customs officials) to overlook statutory requirements.

Systems and Controls for Investigation (including Whistleblowing)

If you suspect an employee or a third party of offering or accepting a bribe, regardless of who is involved, you should raise your suspicions with your Line Manager in the first instance. Relevant information or any evidence in support of your claim should be provided to assist the investigative process, including all names of employees who you suspect of being involved or who may have knowledge of the suspected wrong-doing.

If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction or you prefer to report anonymously, you can report the matter in confidence to the HR Director, who will investigate any actual or suspected instances of bribery or corruption related to any transaction that involves the Company. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any individuals who are found to be involved in bribery or corruption in accordance with the Company's Disciplinary Procedure, up to and including dismissal. In extreme cases, the Company will report any wrong-doing to the relevant authorities.

A copy of the full Anti Bribery and Corruption Policy is available from the Human Resources Department.

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

It is recognised by the Managers within Blakemore Retail that one of the key elements of a healthy business is the involvement and motivation of staff.

Everyone in the Company must be kept informed of the opportunities open to them, the risks that the business faces and the limits within which the business is managed.

By providing this information, we will all be better able to understand the part we can play in helping Blakemore Retail be a successful and healthy company.

At present the following methods are used to support communications between management and staff.

Staff consultation groups

These consultation groups are primarily a consultative body and do not act as a collective negotiating committee.

However, recommendations are made by them regarding conditions of employment and staff activities for consideration by the Board of Directors.

These meetings are held regularly throughout the year and a summary of these discussions is available to all staff.

Team briefing

Team briefing is intended to keep staff up to date regarding changes, developments and the performance of the company. This is an opportunity to ask questions and to keep in touch with your colleagues within your department. At these meetings all staff have the right to and will be encouraged to ask questions and voice disagreements. It is the team briefer's responsibility to encourage this and to answer questions as soon as possible.

Staff newsletter/magazine/e-news

To keep you up to date regarding company developments, activities and staff achievements. We welcome articles of interest from any of our employees for these publications.

Staff notice boards

Each department has staff notice boards. These will be used to give information to staff regarding current activities and general information. You can, with management authorisation make use of this facility. The following statutory documents must be displayed and accessible to all staff:

- a) Current employers liability certificate
- b) Health and safety policy statement
- c) Health and safety law poster
- d) Current staff vacancies
- e) Qualified first aid staff
- f) Fire precaution instructions

CONFIDENTIALITY

You will not make use of, divulge or communicate to any person (save in the proper performance of your duties) any of the trade secrets or other confidential information of or relating to the Company, which you may have received or obtained while in the service of the Company.

This restriction will continue to apply after the termination of your employment without limit in time, but will cease to apply to information ordered to be disclosed by a Court of competent jurisdiction or otherwise required to be disclosed by law.

You will not at any time make any copy, abstract summary or précis of the whole or any part of any document relating to the business of the Company, except when required to do so for the purpose of

the business in which case the copy, abstract summary or précis will belong to the Company.

On termination of your employment (for whatever reason) you will deliver up to the Company all correspondence, documents, specifications, paper and property which are in the possession or under your control and which relate in any way to the Company's business.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

It is an obligation on all employees to exercise confidentiality at all times and not to reveal any information concerning the business except when authorised to do so. It is expected that this confidentiality will remain even when you have terminated your employment.

During working hours you are expected to devote all your time and use your best endeavours to serve and develop the business and to act honestly and loyally to the Company in all matters.

For these reasons, you should not be engaged or interested or concerned either directly or indirectly in any other business or trade (but this does not include any shareholding in a public or private Company of less than 10% of the issued share capital of that Company).

There is a risk that you will not be able to fulfil these obligations to the Company if a situation arises where your partner or a close relative works in or has a financial interest in a business which is a customer, supplier or competitor of the Company.

If such a situation may arise, you should inform your manager at the earliest opportunity. The Company will need to be assured that there is no possibility of your loyalties and energies being diverted from the Company's business, or that there could be any disclosure of confidential information to the detriment of the Company.

Should the Company decide that there is a potential conflict of interest between you and your partner or relative, or should a conflict of interest be discovered which has not been openly disclosed, it may be deemed necessary to terminate your contract of employment on the grounds of 'some other substantial reason'. Such a decision would only be taken after a full investigation and subsequent meeting has been convened.

DATA PROTECTION POLICY

Anyone who obtains data about other individuals is considered in law to be a 'data controller' and is thus regulated by the Data Protection Act 1998. Blakemore Retail is therefore subject to data protection legislation.

The Act controls what can lawfully be done with information and gives individuals a right to control how information about them is obtained, used, stored and distributed, including the right to find out what information is held about them.

It is a requirement under the Act that you consent to our processing data about you. Your contract of employment provides that consent. The principles for processing personal data are that data must be:

- Fairly and lawfully processed, and securely kept
- Processed for employment purposes
- Accurate, adequate, relevant and not excessive

- Not kept longer than necessary
- Not transferred without adequate protection
- Processed in accordance with your rights under the Act.

Data will be retained during the course of your employment and records retained for up to seven years after the date that you leave employment. Data will be retained for a period of longer than seven years if it is material to legal proceedings or should otherwise be retained in our interests after that period.

You have the right to request details about you that are held by Blakemore Retail. Where we request a reference from a referee who provides it on the terms that it is confidential and should not to be disclosed to you, we would normally honour this request unless consent is obtained.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

1. Purpose and Scope

This procedure is designed to help and encourage employees to achieve and maintain acceptable standards of conduct and performance whilst ensuring the fair and consistent treatment of all employees.

The procedure applies to all employees unless they are within their probationary period (including any extension to the probationary period) except in the case of Gross Misconduct when the disciplinary procedure will apply.

2. Key Principles

- a) Where possible, minor issues relating to conduct and / or performance will be dealt with informally.
- b) No disciplinary action will be taken against an employee until the case has been investigated fully.
- c) At every stage in the procedure the employee will be advised of the nature of the complaint against him or her, and will be given the opportunity to state his or her case before any decision is made.
- d) Employees will be advised in writing to attend a disciplinary hearing and given at least 24 hours' notice. Copies of all relevant documents will be supplied to the employee prior to any disciplinary hearing, wherever possible.
- e) At all stages of the procedure the employee will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.
- f) No employee will be dismissed for a first breach of discipline except in the case of Gross Misconduct when the penalty will be dismissal without notice, without payment in lieu of notice, and with the loss of any accrued holiday pay in excess of the statutory entitlement.
- g) Following a disciplinary hearing the employee will be informed of the outcome in writing.
- h) Employees will have the right of appeal against any disciplinary penalty imposed on them.

- i) The procedure may be implemented at any stage if the employee's conduct or performance warrants such action.
- j) Where a current warning exists on file any further incident of a similar nature (i.e. conduct or performance), whether related to the current warning or not, may lead to an escalation in the level of discipline applied.
- k) Whilst lapsed warnings will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes they will be kept on employee files. Where a pattern emerges that indicates that an employee is abusing the principles of the disciplinary procedure the employee's disciplinary record may be borne in mind when determining the appropriate level of penalty to be imposed in relation to a subsequent performance and/or conduct issue.
- l) For the purposes of this procedure and whilst not exhaustive, performance issues will include:
 - Poor levels of productivity
 - Poor quality of work
 - Unacceptable levels of absenteeism (not related to sickness absence)
 - Poor time keeping
- m) For the purposes of this procedure and whilst not exhaustive, misconduct issues will include:
 - Breaches of health and safety policies, rules and procedures
 - Breaches of general company policies, rules and procedures
 - Leaving site without authorisation
 - Minor damage to equipment, vehicles or property
 - Failure to comply with any aspect of the employee's job description
 - Rudeness to colleagues, clients or other business associates
- n) Sickness absence will be managed in accordance with the sickness absence procedure.
- o) An employee suspected of Gross Misconduct may be suspended whilst the Company investigates the alleged offence. If, on completion of the investigation and a full disciplinary hearing, the Company is satisfied that Gross Misconduct has occurred, the result will normally be summary dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice. Suspension will be on full pay and is not an assumption of guilt.
- p) As far as is practicable, all disciplinary actions will be treated as confidential between the employee and the persons directly involved in the process. Records, witness statements and decisions will, where possible, be kept confidential.

3. The Procedure

Stage 1 - Verbal Warning

If an employee's conduct, performance or attendance does not meet acceptable standards, they will normally be given a formal **VERBAL WARNING** by a designated person. The warning will remain on the employee's personal file, but will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after a period of **3 MONTHS**. The employee will be advised in writing of the reason for the warning, the improvement required, the timescale for improvement and the consequence of failing to make the required improvements, namely that further disciplinary action may be taken, which could result in a written warning under Stage 2 of the procedure. The employee will also be advised of their right of appeal.

Stage 2 - Written Warning

If there is a failure to improve following a verbal warning, or if a further or more serious offence occurs, the employee will normally be given a formal **WRITTEN WARNING** by a designated person.

The warning will remain on the employee's personal file, but will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after a period of **6 MONTHS**. The employee will be advised in writing of the reason for the warning, the improvement required, the timescale for improvement and the consequence of failing to make the required improvements, namely that further disciplinary action may be taken, which could result in a final written warning under Stage 3 of the procedure. The employee will also be advised of their right of appeal.

Stage 3 - Final Written Warning

If there is a failure to improve following a Written Warning, or if a serious / further offence occurs, the employee will normally be given a formal **FINAL WRITTEN WARNING** by a designated person. In some circumstances demotion and/or transfer of the employee may be considered to be a more appropriate sanction. The warning will remain on the employee's personal file, but will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes, after a period of **12 MONTHS**. The employee will be advised in writing of the reason for the warning, the improvement required, the timescale for improvement and the consequence of failing to make the required improvements, namely that further disciplinary action may be taken, which could result in dismissal under Stage 4 of the procedure. The employee will also be advised of their right of appeal.

Stage 4 - Dismissal

If conduct, performance or attendance is still unsatisfactory, and the employee fails to meet the required standards, **DISMISSAL** or 'some other action short of dismissal' such as demotion and/or transfer will normally result. Only the designated Manager or a Manager at the same or more senior level can take the decision to dismiss. The employee will be provided, as soon as is reasonably practicable, with a written reason for dismissal, the date on which employment will terminate and details of their right of appeal.

4. Gross Misconduct

The following list provides examples of offences which are normally regarded as Gross Misconduct. This list is not intended to be exclusive or exhaustive.

- Theft, fraud, deliberate falsification of records, or other acts of dishonesty.
- Offering/accepting bribes in an attempt to influence third party behaviour.
- Committing an illegal offence whilst carrying out your duties on behalf of the Company, with the exception of minor driving offences (e.g. speeding).
- Fighting or assault, including aggressive and/or intimidating conduct.
- Inappropriate use of IT equipment including the downloading of offensive, illegal and/or obscene material (e.g. pornographic images).
- Refusal to carry out work, or failure to carry out lawful or reasonable instructions.
- Serious, deliberate or negligent/reckless damage to Company property, equipment or vehicles.
- Harassment or bullying of a fellow employee, customer or member of the public, including through social media networks.
- Conviction of a 'relevant' criminal charge including a serious driving offence, which could be considered as a risk to the business.

- Being under the influence (or possession) of alcohol, illegal drugs or the abuse of solvents or similar substances whilst on company premises or whilst carrying out working duties.
- Serious negligence or a serious breach of rules which could cause unacceptable loss.
- Injury to employees, persons on Company premises or members of the public whilst carrying out work duties.
- Serious acts of insubordination, to include behaviour that causes serious conflict, or bad language used in a deliberate offensive manner to colleagues, management, customers, members of the public or business associates.
- Any acts, which could seriously damage the reputation of the Company including inappropriate comments on social media sites or serious misbehaviour at any business or social function.
- Unauthorised possession, use or consumption of Company Property, including damaged / out of date stock, or any property for which the Company has responsibility, or which is the property of other employees.
- The unauthorised consumption or removal from business premises of items of stock, including products that are samples, damaged or out of date.
- Unauthorised use of Company equipment including vehicles, telephones, hand held devices and computers.

5. Appeals

An employee who wishes to appeal against a disciplinary decision should do so in writing within 7 days of receipt of written confirmation of the disciplinary decision, setting out the grounds on which the appeal is being made.

The superior of the Manager or another senior manager will hear the appeal, and his/her decision is final. At the appeal, any disciplinary penalty imposed will be reviewed but it cannot be increased.

6. Designated Persons

The power to take disciplinary action to include warnings, demotion and dismissal, up to and including Assistant Manager level lies with Store Management, which can include the Store Manager, Support or Relief Manager.

The power to take disciplinary action to include warnings, demotion and dismissal, up to and including Support Manager, Store Manager, or Relief Manager, lies with the Area Manager.

The power to take disciplinary action to include warnings, demotion and dismissal, against field based employees lies with the next level of management.

7. Additional Procedure Notes

- Adjourning a hearing. If it is felt that further investigation is necessary before a decision can be made, then it may be necessary for an adjournment to be called. In such cases, all reasonable efforts will be made to meet the time-frames as set out within each stage of the procedure.
- Making adjustments for an employee who is disabled or who has special needs. In these circumstances, reasonable adjustments as appropriate may be made to ensure the

employee is not disadvantaged during the disciplinary process as a result of their disability or special needs.

- Postponing a meeting at any stage of the procedure. If the work colleague or employee representative (trade union official) cannot attend on the proposed date, an alternative date will be arranged, as long as it is not more than 7 days after the proposed date. This may be extended by mutual agreement.
- Right to be accompanied at meetings if under 18 years old. Employees under 18 years of age may be accompanied at disciplinary hearings by a work colleague, employee representative (trade union official), parent or guardian.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROCEDURE

1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that as far as is reasonably practicable, a safe working environment is provided for employees that is free from drug and alcohol misuse.

All employees are covered by this policy, although drivers/operators of workplace vehicles, mechanical handling equipment and machinery are specifically subject to the extended drug and alcohol testing regimes covered within this policy.

2. Key Principles

- a) The company's approach towards drug and alcohol management is aimed at prevention and the provision of employee support. Employees that are experiencing problems with drug or alcohol abuse are encouraged to seek professional advice and inform their line manager/human resources department as soon as possible. Wherever possible the company will endeavour to assist employees with accessing professional support and advice.
- b) Employees must ensure that they take responsibility for their own health. When attending work employees must ensure that they are fit to carry out their duties and that their performance is not impaired in any way by alcohol or drugs.
- c) The consumption of alcohol during working hours is forbidden, as is the taking of drugs, other than those prescribed or taken for a medical condition. Employees who are prescribed drugs that have the potential to impair job performance should discuss this with their line manager prior to commencing work activities.
- d) Employees that believe they may not be fit for work due to the influence of alcohol or drugs should inform their line manager prior to commencing work activities. Any employee attempting to work under the influence of alcohol, non-prescribed drugs or prescribed drugs that could knowingly impair their performance will be subject to the disciplinary procedure which may result in their dismissal.
- e) Drivers/operators of workplace vehicles, mechanical handling equipment or machinery may be requested to take a test for alcohol or drugs as part of the extended drug and alcohol testing regime.

3. Drug and Alcohol Testing Regime

- a) In the event of an accident, a complaint or any staff member being suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs they may be required to take a drug and alcohol test. All tests will be administered by a trained specialist and will be in private. All staff are covered by this level of drug and alcohol testing regardless of job role.
- b) Random drug and/or alcohol testing will be carried out on a periodic basis, specifically across all major distribution sites and incorporating areas of the business where company car drivers are employed. All drivers/operators of workplace vehicles, mechanical handling equipment or machinery are covered by this level of drug and alcohol testing. All tests will be administered by a trained specialist and will be in private.

The geographical location of random testing will be flexible in accordance with a planned annual programme of testing but will normally be limited to one location per random testing session. Employee selection for random drug and alcohol testing will be carried out by the trained specialist. Random testing will be planned to cover all shift patterns to ensure fair application of the process.
- c) An employee has the right to refuse a drug and alcohol test; however refusal to be tested will be treated seriously and will render the employee subject to the disciplinary procedure which may result in their dismissal.
- d) A zero tolerance approach will be taken with regard to drug testing, whilst alcohol testing will be aligned with the legal alcohol limit for road users, currently in force.
- e) In the event that a drug or alcohol test is administered and an unacceptable reading is recorded, the employee concerned will be suspended on full pay pending an investigation into the results and/or disciplinary proceedings, which may result in their dismissal.
- f) Drug and alcohol testing must be authorised by a senior manager or Director of the company prior to any testing taking place. The Human Resources department must be notified of all drug and alcohol testing that has taken place in order to ensure that appropriate records of testing are maintained.

4. Procedural Notes

- a) Employees seeking support with drug or alcohol related problems can contact the company's employee assistance programme provider, the Retail Trust, on the free helpline number 0808 801 0808.

E-MAIL, INTERNET AND TELEPHONE POLICY

It is a condition of your contract of employment that you comply with our rules and policy for the use of the Internet, e-mail, fax and telephone equipment as follows:

- Our computer and telephone systems are maintained solely for conducting business. The use of telephones, fax, internet and e-mail for any other purpose, without permission, will be treated as 'misconduct', depending on the severity of the offence.
- We reserve the right to access, monitor and disclose all messages created, sent, received or stored on our systems.

- All copies of messages created, sent, received or stored on our systems shall remain our property. If you use our email address for communication that is not business related you waive any privacy or any other rights that you have in relation to such.
- E-mail and Internet systems must not be used to create, send, receive or store material which is offensive, obscene, contains images depicting sexual activity or body parts in a lewd manner or which are pornographic, disruptive or infringe copyright, or images or media that contain pornography or other obscene or illegal contents. Any aspect of this kind of conduct shall constitute gross misconduct and can lead to your dismissal without notice.
- All e-mails and downloads can contain viruses: all downloads and e-mail messages must be virus-checked before opening. You are not allowed to load software on to your computer without our permission.
- You must not use a personal blog or website to criticize or embarrass the Company, its clients or staff. If you do so your actions will be treated as misconduct capable of summary dismissal.
- When you have left or resigned from the company we reserve the right to access your e-mail account and all other computer based files under your password.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

1. Underlying Principle

A. F. Blakemore appreciates that everyone is different and has something unique to offer and wants to respect and understand these differences and to make the most of everyone's talents. The company will actively promote equal opportunities throughout the business.

The company's commitment to ensure Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is:

- To promote an inclusive culture for all our staff, others who work with us, and the communities that we serve.
- To provide opportunities that are accessible and appropriate for everyone.
- To provide organisational capability for continuous improvement, learning and sharing good practice.
- To work towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination and harassment.
- To positively promote equality throughout all our activities and communications.
- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our employees and stakeholders are recognised and valued.
- To create a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- To ensure training, development and progression opportunities are available to all.
- To regularly review all employment practices and procedures to ensure that no job applicants, employees or stakeholders are treated less favourably than others.

- To treat breaches of the equality policy seriously and to take disciplinary action when required.
- To provide information and training to all employees so that they are fully aware of the issues relating to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, and their responsibilities relating to it.
- To ensure our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy is fully implemented.
- To monitor and review the policy annually.

The company will ensure that everyone is respected and can give of their best, irrespective of who they are or what job they do.

Staff with management, recruitment and selection and/or training responsibilities will be given guidance in the implementation of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy to ensure that they understand the company's objectives and commitments as well as their own position in law.

2. Definitions

Equality is about managing differences so that everyone has equality of opportunity through a fair and consistent approach to the application of rules, policies and procedures. The company recognises that sometimes this will mean treating people differently. This commitment is relevant to all we do, how we manage ourselves and how we deliver service to our customers.

Diversity is about understanding, recognising, respecting and valuing differences. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognising our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies.

It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual and how this can positively impact on our culture and values as well as our understanding of the communities we serve.

Inclusion is about attracting and developing talent wherever it exists and encouraging everyone in our business to reach their full potential in whatever they do. It is about ensuring our policies, procedures and processes are relevant to all.

It is about ensuring wider business communications are cascaded throughout all divisions to allow employees to engage with the company they work for. It is about valuing every individual contribution towards the company's objectives.

3. Leadership and management

The Board takes overall responsibility for the development of equality, diversity and inclusion through leading by example and ensuring that progress is reviewed and further actions instigated as necessary.

All A.F. Blakemore leaders and managers at all levels will demonstrate their commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, and take responsibility for progress, and all staff have personal responsibilities to treat everyone with respect, consideration and without prejudice and to promote the same levels of behaviour in colleagues.

Leaders and managers visibly:

- Challenge unacceptable behaviours and create a climate where complaints can be raised without the fear of reprisal
- Take firm action where unfairness or inconsistency exists
- Encourage and support diversity and inclusion within their teams
- Demonstrate and promote considerate and fair behaviour
- Treat staff with dignity and respect and recognise and value individual skills and contributions
- Demonstrate through words and actions that diversity is an integral part of meeting the business's priorities
- Create an environment in which staff are able to identify and share good practice, celebrate success and encourage positive attitudes towards diversity.

4. Communication

We will ensure that this policy is accessible and understood by everyone in A.F. Blakemore.

Getting our message across successfully means all staff will:

- Be aware of A.F. Blakemore policies on equality, diversity and inclusion
- Understand the benefit of valuing diversity and how this impacts on the company
- Have a greater awareness of the value of more inclusive communication
- Understand their own role in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion
- Be aware of their legal responsibilities under current equality legislation

5. Discrimination

It is against the law to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership.

These are known as "protected characteristics", within The Equality Act 2010.

We will also not discriminate because of working patterns or trade union membership nor will we tolerate harassment or bullying on these or any other grounds.

6. Discrimination Definitions:

Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. An obvious example of direct discrimination would be refusing to employ a woman because she is pregnant.

In limited circumstances, we can directly discriminate against an individual for a reason related to any of the protected characteristics where there is an occupational requirement. However the

occupational requirement must be crucial to the role and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Indirect discrimination is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is discriminatory in relation to those who have a relevant protected characteristic (although it does not explicitly include pregnancy and maternity, which is covered by indirect sex discrimination) so that its application would be detrimental to people who share that protected characteristic compared with people who do not, and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Associative discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic (although it does not cover harassment because of marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity).

Perceptive discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that he/she has a particular protected characteristic when he/she does not, in fact, have that protected characteristic (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity).

Victimisation occurs where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because he/she made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because he/she is suspected of doing so. For example, if a blind employee raises a grievance that the employer is not complying with its duty to make reasonable adjustments, and is then systematically excluded from all meetings, such behaviour could amount to victimisation. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if he/she acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where a physical feature or a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to help enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

7. Dignity at Work

Harassment at work

A.F. Blakemore is committed to ensuring that no harassment or victimisation at work, whatever the motivation, is overlooked or condoned. Such behaviour can range from extreme forms such as violence or bullying to less obvious actions like practical jokes and ridiculing managers, colleagues or subordinates.

The law defines harassment as unsolicited and unwelcome workplace behaviour that has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of the recipient or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the recipient. Where such behaviour is motivated by Age, Race, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief, Pregnancy or Maternity and Civil Partnership or Marriage it also amounts to an infringement of equal employment opportunity.

Conduct becomes harassment if it persists after the recipient has made clear that it is regarded as offensive, although a single offensive act can amount to harassment if it is so serious as to be obviously offensive towards the recipient. Any form of harassment is a potential disciplinary matter and may be regarded as gross misconduct.

The following examples illustrate the sort of conduct that may be treated as harassment: unwanted physical contact, or conduct that is intimidating, the display of inappropriate material, or physical or verbal abuse. Harassment can also be non-verbal, for example, staring, gestures, ignoring or isolating somebody in the workplace.

Bullying

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour which, through the abuse or misuse of power, makes the recipient feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated and threatened. Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. Physical conduct includes perceived horseplay, touching, pinching and pushing as well as grabbing, shoving, punching and other forms of physical assault.

Social Networking and Bullying

Cyber bullying: This is bullying, harassment and victimisation conducted via social networking channels - often using blogs or social networking sites to post photographs or offensive, upsetting or threatening comments about colleagues.

Social exclusion: This is usually through use of online 'friendship circles'. There is often peer group pressure to become someone's 'friend' online. Employees may feel uncomfortable accepting invitations, particularly from colleagues or senior members of staff.

All employees are responsible for treating their colleagues with dignity and respect and should consider whether their words or contact could be offensive to others. Harassment and bullying behaviour may not always be intentional but it is never acceptable.

8. Complaints

Employees should disclose any instances of harassment or bullying of which they become aware to the HR Department under the Special Complaints Procedure. If an employee wishes to make a complaint in relation to any bullying or harassment that they feel they have suffered or are suffering, they should make a complaint in writing to the HR Department under the Special Complaints Procedure. The complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the Company's Grievance Policy.

Any employee who feels unfairly treated or subjected to direct or indirect discrimination can raise the matter through the grievance or special complaints procedure when every effort will be made to secure a satisfactory resolution.

There will be no victimisation of any employee for making or supporting or assisting a complaint of harassment, bullying or discrimination – even if the complaint is not upheld. However, if a complaint is shown to be untrue and has been brought in bad faith (e.g. maliciously or as an act of spite) disciplinary action will be taken.

All complaints of bullying and harassment will be treated seriously. All complaints will be investigated and where appropriate, the Disciplinary Procedures will be followed.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this procedure is to resolve any complaints, concerns or problems that may arise during the course of employment, both quickly and to the satisfaction of all concerned.

All A.F. Blakemore employees have the opportunity to raise a complaint through the procedure i.e. full-time, part-time, casual employees and those on temporary or fixed term contracts.

2. Key Principles

- a) Complaints will be handled sensitively and everyone will be treated with dignity and respect.

- b) No employee will be disadvantaged in any way if they raise a complaint under this procedure.
- c) Both the manager and the employee should actively participate in finding a reasonable solution to any complaint raised.
- d) Complaints will be handled as speedily as possible, and normally within the time frame as set out below.
- e) Complaints will be dealt with in confidence. However, occasionally it may be necessary to share information with others as part of the investigative process. The employee will be kept informed of other persons involved in the investigation.
- f) At all stages of the procedure the employee will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.

3. The Procedure

Stage One - Raising a Grievance Informally

Any employee who has a grievance relating to their employment should initially try and resolve the grievance/complaint informally through discussion with their immediate line manager, in an attempt to resolve the issue at the earliest opportunity. If the grievance cannot be resolved informally, the employee should raise it formally with their immediate line manager as set out within stage two of the procedure.

Should the employee's grievance be in any way connected to their line manager, they should follow stage two of the procedure and put their grievance in writing to the next level of management.

Stage Two - Raising a Formal Grievance

The employee should write to their Line Manager, clearly stating the nature of their grievance. The employee must also send a copy of the formal grievance to the Human Resources department.

The Human Resources department will arrange a grievance hearing with the employee and the Manager, normally within 14 days of the formal grievance being raised.

The purpose of the grievance hearing is for the manager to understand the employee's complaint and for both parties to discuss possible solutions. Both the employee and manager should be open to and make constructive proposals towards reaching a solution.

The Human Resources Department will confirm the outcome of the grievance hearing to the employee in writing, normally within 7 days of the hearing.

Stage Three – Grievance Appeal Process

If the grievance is not resolved satisfactorily and the employee wishes to appeal, they must do so in writing within 7 days of receiving written confirmation of the outcome of the grievance hearing, setting out the grounds on which the appeal is being made.

The appeal letter should be sent to the next level of management within the division and a copy sent to the Human Resources Department.

The Human Resources Department will arrange an appeal hearing, normally within 14 days of receipt of the appeal letter, confirming the information in relation to the grievance appeal in writing, enclosing a copy of the hearing minutes and investigative notes (as appropriate) from the formal grievance hearing (stage two).

The Human Resources Department will confirm the outcome of the grievance appeal hearing to the employee in writing within 7 days of the hearing. The decision of the appeal hearing is final.

4. Special Complaints Procedure

In the event of a complaint falling within the broad category of harassment, bullying or discrimination the complaint will be dealt with by way of a special complaints procedure. The matter will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and investigated by the Human Resources Department.

Stage 1 – Informal Discussion

In the first instance, the special complaint should be raised with a Human Resources Business Partner either verbally or in writing, at which point the matter will be discussed with the employee in full.

Stage 2 – Formal Special Complaint

If the matter cannot be resolved at stage 1, a full investigation will be carried out by a Human Resources Officer/Manager who will recommend an appropriate course of action.

Stage 3 – Special Complaint Appeal Process

If the complaint is not resolved satisfactorily and the employee wishes to appeal, they must do so in writing within 7 days of receiving written confirmation of the outcome of their complaint, setting out the grounds on which the appeal is being made. The appeal letter should be sent to the Human Resources Director/Human Resources Business Partner who will review the circumstances of the case and recommend a course of action.

5. Additional Procedure Notes

- Seeking help in putting the complaint in writing. Help can be sought from the line manager (as appropriate), a work colleague, a trade union representative, or DIAL UK, a national organisation for a network of 120 local Disability Information and Advice Line services on 01302 310 123. The Retail Trust helpline can also be contacted for advice with regard to employment issues on 0808 801 0808.
- Adjourning a meeting. If it is felt that further investigation is necessary before a decision can be made or a solution can be proposed, then it may be necessary for an adjournment to be called. In such cases, all reasonable efforts will be made to meet the time-frames as set out within each stage of the procedure.
- Making adjustments for an employee who is disabled or who has special needs. In these circumstances, reasonable adjustments as appropriate will be made to ensure that the employee is not disadvantaged during the grievance process as a result of their disability or special needs.
- Postponing a meeting at any stage of the procedure. If the work colleague or employee representative (trade union official) cannot attend on the proposed date, an alternative date will be arranged, as long as it is not more than 7 days after the proposed date. This may be extended by mutual agreement.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

A full copy of the company's policy is contained within the Health and Safety manual. The following is a general overview of health and safety matters.

Blakemore Retail takes seriously its responsibilities under Health and Safety legislation. Our objective is to provide a safe working environment and safe systems of work. Health & Safety guidance is

given to all new employees and regular refresher updating sessions are held for existing employees.

We regularly review working practices including the general working environment and the safety of any equipment or machinery provided for use by employees to ensure that best practices are adhered to and that safety hazards are identified and accidents so far as reasonably practicable are avoided. Maintenance of equipment and vehicles is carried out and proper records are kept. All equipment and machinery provided complies with the appropriate UK standards.

All employees who use or supervise the use of such equipment or machinery are properly trained in its use including Health and Safety considerations.

You will be notified which members of staff have training in First Aid. If anyone becomes ill while at work and requires medical attention arrangements will be made to call a Doctor or emergency services or take the employee to Accident and Emergency at the nearest hospital.

Any breach or non-observance of Health and Safety policy constitutes a disciplinary offence in respect of which you may in an appropriate case may be dismissed.

Blakemore Retail will aim, so far as is reasonably practicable, to achieve the following: -

- Provide a safe working environment for all employees.
- Ensure the work place is safe regarding access and exits.
- Safe and well maintained vehicles.
- Safe equipment and systems.
- Safe methods of handling, storage and transport of articles or goods.
- Premises heated to minimum temperatures required by law.
- All storage areas are safely laid out with adequate room for access in safety.
- Where employees habitually use Display Screen Equipment (e.g. computers) workstations will be reviewed to ensure they comply with the law.
- Provide employees with information, instruction and training related to health and safety matters, on company premises and in company vehicles.
- We have a no smoking policy – this is not only a safety matter but also a food hygiene requirement.

Your responsibilities for Health and Safety - As a condition of your Contract of Employment you are required to take a reasonable care for your own safety and for others who may be affected by your acts or omissions and to co-operate fully with us in the arrangements made in relation to Health and Safety matters. For example:

- All employees must adhere to the prescribed safe system of working, report any faults or defects in machinery or equipment immediately and report any type of safety concerns immediately.
- Only those qualified to do so and employed for that purpose may carry out repairs or maintenance to machinery or equipment.
- All accidents and near misses irrespective of triviality must be reported to your Store Manager who will ensure that any necessary preventative measures are introduced.

- You should be familiar with evacuation procedures, details of which are displayed throughout the building where you are working. Should you discover a fire you should immediately notify the senior staff member present.
- Hazards and Safety Risks: you have a responsibility to report any potential Health or Safety hazard including infectious or other diseases, accidents or injuries associated with the workplace.

Improvements: you are encouraged to suggest improvements to the Health and Safety policy and suggestions should be made to a Store Manager.

SICKNESS ABSENCE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

1. Purpose and scope

The Company expects full attendance from all of its employees wherever possible. Excellent standards of attendance are critical in maintaining the high standards of service our customers expect, through an effective and efficient business operation. Excellent attendance is essential for the planning of quality services and driving employee engagement and morale towards maintaining a competitive and world class business.

The purpose of this policy is therefore to establish a system where standards of attendance can be monitored and any sickness absence dealt with in a fair and consistent manner. Its aim is to reduce absence levels to a minimum.

2. Responsibilities

The Employee is expected to:

- a) Make every effort to attend work regularly and to carry out their duties to an agreed standard
- b) Notify the Company at the earliest opportunity of any absence, complying with the absence notification procedure as set out within this procedure
- c) Remain in regular contact with their line manager (as appropriate) throughout the entire period of absence
- d) Provide the relevant certification where appropriate
- e) Seek appropriate medical treatment and advice to assist their recovery within an appropriate time-frame
- f) Comply with any referrals to Occupational Health, a Company Doctor or a medical practitioner, as deemed appropriate by the Company
- g) Make every effort to arrange doctors, hospital or dental appointments outside of normal working hours. Where this is not possible, payment will only be made on the production of an appointment card and employees may be required to make up any period of lost working time.

The Line Manager is expected to:

- a) Promote good attendance and provide a healthy and safe working environment for all employees

- b) Maintain contact with the employee throughout and on return from any period of absence as appropriate
- c) Maintain and monitor accurate records of attendance to ensure that any absence is dealt with in a fair and consistent manner, as well as ensuring accurate departmental / divisional absence reporting
- d) Complete 'Return to Work' interviews with employees following all periods of absence to ensure that they are fit to return to work, considering any medical or practical issues that are raised during the meeting that will need to be resolved to assist the return process
- e) Treat all employees fairly and consistently in accordance with the procedure, ensuring that any personal information given is dealt with in the strictest confidence, giving advice, support and guidance where appropriate
- f) Consult with the Human Resources Department as appropriate for advice and guidance in relation to the Sickness Absence Management procedure and employee wellbeing
- g) Keep written notes of all meetings and complete all Return to Work documentation
- h) When an absence is a consequence of an accident / incident in the workplace, ensure that the accident investigation form, together with any supporting material (e.g. statements and / or CCTV footage) are referred immediately to the Human Resources Department.

The Human Resources Department will:

- a) Provide advice and assistance to Managers and employees on sickness absence issues and advise on support services available
- b) Provide Managers with sickness absence data and advice as appropriate, including absence trigger points as set out within the procedure, to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently in accordance with the prescribed attendance standards
- c) In liaison with Management, refer employees to Occupational Health, a Company Doctor or a medical practitioner, as appropriate

3. The Procedure

Notification and Certification of Sickness Absence

Employees who are absent from work through sickness or injury must:

1. Report their absence as soon as is practicable, (but no later than one hour before the start of their shift if their shift starts before 12.00 midday) to their Manager, or if this is not possible to another member of management, or supervisor.
2. Report their absence as soon as practicable, (but no later than 12.00 midday if their shifts starts any time after 12.00 midday) to their Manager, or if this is not possible to another member of management, or supervisor.

When reporting an absence, the reason for the absence should be provided by the employee along with an estimate of the expected length of the absence, with updates provided as agreed with the employee's Supervisor or Line Manager.

All absences under seven days may be self-certified. A return to work / self certificate form is available from the Supervisor or Manager. A 'Fit Note' provided by the employee's GP must cover absences over 7 days.

The company reserves the right to ask an employee at any stage of their absence to provide a medical certificate (fit note) and / or to undergo a medical examination, or to authorise the employee's medical practitioner to provide the company with details of any illness in the form of a medical report.

Where a 'Fit Note' is produced for an absence in excess of 7 days, the employee's GP will advise that the employee is either 'Unfit for Work' or 'May be Fit for Work'. If the GP indicates that the employee 'May be Fit for Work', the Supervisor / Line Manager (in conjunction with Human Resources as appropriate) will be required to determine whether the employee can return to work in a limited capacity or having considered reasonable adjustments.

The final decision in relation to this consideration lies with the Company having considered the working environment, the needs of the employee and the business as well as its duty of care to the employee and others.

Failure to comply with the certification requirements will result in a loss of pay during sickness and may result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee.

When an employee is fit to return to work they must notify their Line Manager the day prior to return.

Employee Conduct Whilst on Sick Leave

In all cases of sickness or injury which necessitate absence from work, employees will be expected to do their utmost to facilitate a speedy return to fitness and to work.

In this regard the employee is required to act sensibly and honestly.

The Company will not expect any employee who is absent from work due to sickness or injury to:

- a) Participate in any sports, hobbies or social activities which are in any way inconsistent with their illness or injury or which may aggravate the illness or injury or which may delay recovery.
- b) Undertake any other employment whether paid or unpaid.
- c) Engage in any other activity which is inconsistent with the nature of the illness or injury.

Should the employee's period of absence be lengthened by involvement in any of the above activities, the Company may withhold sick pay and consider taking disciplinary action against the employee.

Return to Work Discussion

After any period of absence employees should immediately report to their Manager / Supervisor. A return to work discussion will be arranged with their Supervisor / Line Manager or another member of the management team as soon as possible.

The purpose of the discussion is to establish that the employee is fit to return to work. This is of particular importance if the employee has been absent due to stomach bugs, food poisoning or skin diseases. In the event of this occurring, the Supervisor / Line Manager will need to establish that the employee presents no risk to fellow employees or customers, by either consulting the employee's doctor, or referring the matter to the Human Resources Department, who will seek advice from a medical practitioner.

A Return to Work Interview Form / Self Certification Form will be completed during the return to work discussion.

If an employee provides false information on the Return to Work Interview Form / Self Certification

Form, this may lead to sickness payments being withheld, and / or disciplinary action being taken against the employee.

4. Handling long term absence and persistent poor attendance

Long term absence

After a period of continuous absence (normally 4 weeks), where appropriate the Company will seek the consent of the employee to obtain a medical report, or require the employee to be examined by a medical practitioner. The purpose of this action is to establish the state of the employee's health, the likelihood of them returning to work and to identify how best the company can support the employee in returning to work.

Should the employee refuse to provide consent or refuse to be examined by a medical practitioner nominated by the Company, a decision on continuing employment will be made based on the information available at the time.

Where it becomes established that the employee has developed a health problem (i.e. it is long term or recurrent certified occasions), consideration will be given to the nature and length of the employee's ill health; the employee's previous and likely future with the Company; the importance of the job and the need for a permanent replacement; the provisions within The Equality Act 2010.

In all cases of long term absence the company will endeavour to support employees in making a speedy return to normal work duties.

Should, after the above considerations have been made, the Company decide to terminate employment due to medical capability, the employee will receive payment in lieu of notice in accordance with the employee's continuous employment.

Persistent poor employee attendance

In cases of persistent poor attendance the following procedure will be implemented:

a) Consultation

Prior to any disciplinary action being taken, where an employee's absence is giving cause for concern, they will be informed by their Supervisor or Line Manager. At this discussion the reason for the absence should be discussed, and if necessary, the employee should be advised, that if symptoms persist, they should seek medical advice, i.e. an appointment with their GP. A note that such a discussion has taken place should be included on the appropriate return to work form.

b) Stage 1 - Verbal Warning

If 3 separate occasions of sickness absence occur, or if sickness absence exceeds 5 days within any 5 month period, then the employee may receive a verbal warning. Such a warning will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after a period of 3 months providing there are not 2 further occasions of sickness or sickness absence does not exceed 4 days within the period following the last day of sickness absence which resulted in this warning and the expiry of the verbal warning.

c) Stage 2 – First Written Warning

If following a formal verbal warning there are 2 further occasions of sickness absence or sickness absence exceeds 4 days within the period following the last day of sickness absence which resulted in a verbal warning and the expiry of the warning, the employee may receive a first written warning. Such a warning will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after a period of 6 months providing there are not 2 further occasions of sickness or sickness absence does not exceed 5 days within the period following the last day of sickness absence which resulted in this warning and the expiry of the first written warning.

d) Stage 3 - Final Written Warning

If following a first written warning there are 2 further occasions of sickness absence or sickness absence exceeds 5 days within the period following the last day of sickness absence which resulted in a first written warning and the expiry of the warning, the employee may receive a final written warning and/or demotion and/or transfer.

Such a warning will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after a period of 12 months providing there are not 3 further occasions of sickness or sickness absence does not exceed 6 days within the period following the last day of sickness absence which resulted in this warning and the expiry of the final written warning.

e) Stage 4 – Dismissal

If following a final written warning there are 3 further occasions of sickness absence or absence exceeds 6 days within the 12 month period, the employee may be dismissed or receive 'some other action short of dismissal' such as demotion and/or transfer.

5. Absences disregarded for disciplinary purposes

Category 1 - Exemplary Record

When attendance records show that an employee has not been absent on more than 2 occasions or for MORE THAN FOUR DAYS in a period of 12 months prior to the first day of the current sickness absence, the absence will be registered but no action taken.

Category 2 - Accident at Work

As a result of a recorded industrial accident occurring during working hours, whilst undertaking recognised work practices.

Category 3 – Pregnancy related

Due to pregnancy and certified by a medical practitioner.

Category 4 - Hospitalisation

Due to unavoidable hospitalisation / convalescence following hospitalisation, certified by a hospital or a medical practitioner.

Category 5 - Contagious/Chronic Diseases/Life Threatening Illness

As a result of serious contagious / chronic diseases / life threatening illness which is certified by a medical practitioner (e.g. shingles, mumps, chicken pox, angina). This is not an exhaustive list.

6. Procedure Notes

At all stages of the disciplinary procedure a note of any warning will be entered on the employee's personnel record, and confirmed in writing to the employee. At all stages except consultation, an employee will have the right of appeal against any warning issued as a result of the procedure. The appeal should be registered within 7 days.

Regular and repeated health checks on absentees by the Employee's Doctor / Company Doctor and home visits will form the basis of a Company health monitoring programme.

After the fourth week of continuous absence, the Company will seek the consent of the employee to obtain a medical report in accordance with the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988, or require the employee to be examined by a doctor nominated by the Company.

The purpose of this action is to establish the state of the employee's health, and the likelihood of them returning to work.

Should the employee refuse consent or refuse to be examined by a doctor nominated by the Company, a decision on continuing employment will be made based on information available at the time.

Where it becomes established that the employee has developed a health problem (i.e. it is long term or recurrent certified occasions), consideration will be given to:

- The nature and length of the employee's ill health; the employee's previous and likely future with the Company; the importance of the job and the need for a permanent replacement; whether it is against the employee's, Company's or public interest to continue employment of the individual; the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1996.

Should after the above considerations have been made, the Company decides to terminate employment due to medical capability, the employee will receive payment in lieu of notice in accordance with the employee's continuous employment, subject to the statutory maximum of twelve weeks.

An employee will have the right of appeal against the decision.

Where any pattern of absence is identified (e.g. always a Monday, on or following a customary holiday which under the terms and conditions of employment there is a requirement to work, during school holidays, following a period of annual leave, or where periods of absence occur shortly after a warning has expired), it will be investigated by the Company, and disciplinary action taken where an unsatisfactory explanation is given.

In such circumstances disciplinary action may be initiated at the Written Warning or Final Written Warning stage.

Where the start of a period of absence commences within the period of the warning, the 'total' number of days absent will be counted towards the improvement criteria for the warning.

Where a disciplinary interview has been commenced but not concluded within 5 working days, the date of any warning issued and therefore the improvement timescale shall start from the date of commencement of the disciplinary interview.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Training and development needs will be determined by: -

- The specific job requirements of an employee, or the company's personal development plans for an employee.
- Changes in, for example, the company's business systems or the technology used within the company, or changes in its organisational structures, particularly where these changes have an impact on the skills and knowledge employees need to do their job.
- The need for employees to be 'multi skilled' so that Blakemore Retail can develop a flexible workforce.
- The need to meet government or other legislative standards, such as Health and Safety, Environmental requirements and Food Hygiene legislation.

Responsibilities for training and development are: -

- Store Managers and Supervisors are accountable for ensuring that those reporting to them

have the skills and knowledge required to do their jobs.

- Employees are themselves encouraged to keep their skills and knowledge up to date and to respond positively to training being provided.
- Senior Managers are responsible for ensuring that the resources required for training and developing employees are made available and that there are appropriate systems in place to support employee development.

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