



A Partner in Education

Human Resources Manual for APIE Representatives

April 2020



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Terms of Reference and Links

Term	Description
APIE	A Partner in Education
APIE Representative	Refers to all individuals who represent APIE in a professional capacity, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employee / Paid APIE staff member• Volunteer• Trustee• Contractor
L&D	Learning and Development
Equality Act 2010	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/part/2/chapter/1
Protection from Harassment Act 1997	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/40/contents
UK Government Website	https://www.gov.uk/
Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/53
Charity Commission	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees



Introduction

A Partner in Education (APIE) is committed to providing a welcoming, supportive, emotionally and physically secure working environment for every employee, volunteer and Trustee. APIE recognises and promotes human rights, and values the diversity of culture, beliefs, practices, customs, physical and intellectual abilities, and life experience of everyone we work with, inside and outside the organisation. We are committed to encouraging equality and diversity among our community and eliminating unlawful discrimination. APIE's aim is for staff to be truly representative of all sections of society, and for each employee to feel respected, comfortable, safe and able to give their best.

This manual is a summary of guidance related to human resource management at APIE. Please note that this manual is to be used in conjunction with your contract of employment, which will contain the details of the terms and conditions of your service. This handbook is to be used as a point of reference for all members of staff and volunteers, to ensure everyone is equipped to navigate the working environment in a way that will enable both them and the organisation to succeed.

All policies contained herein will be reviewed annually, after a significant change in operations, or following a significant incident, whichever is sooner.

1. Equal Opportunities

The purpose of the Equal Opportunities Policy is to:

Provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether voluntary, temporary, part-time or full-time;

Ensure APIE does not discriminate on grounds of the [Equality Act 2010](#)'s protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation; and

State APIE's opposition to all forms of unlawful discrimination, including pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

APIE's Commitments and Responsibilities

- To encourage equality and diversity in the workplace;
- To create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued;
- To ensure all staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the equality policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and preventing bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination. All staff should understand they, as well as APIE, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, partners, suppliers and the public;
- To take seriously any and all complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, partners, suppliers, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities. Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under APIE's [Grievance & Disciplinary Policies](#) and procedures, and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice. Please see the [APIE Disciplinary Policy](#) for more information. Sexual harassment allegations may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter. In addition, harassment under the [Protection from Harassment Act 1997](#) – not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence;
- To making opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation;
- To ensuring that decisions concerning staff are always based on merit, apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the [Equality Act](#); and
- To review employment practices and procedures on at least an annual basis, and whenever else necessary to ensure fairness and equity across all practices.

End of Equal Opportunities Policy.

2. Code of Conduct

Statement on the Code of Conduct

This *Code of Conduct* outlines our expectations regarding the behaviour of all individuals who represent APIE towards their colleagues, partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries.

APIE promotes freedom of expression and open communication, and we also expect all individuals associated with APIE to operate with respect to all others and acceptance of our ethos. They should avoid disrupting the workplace and commit to following the guidelines contained herein. We also expect everyone within the organisation to foster a well-organised, respectful and collaborative environment.

1. Definitions

Within this policy, the term '[APIE Representative](#)' refers to all individuals who represent APIE in a professional capacity, including paid staff, volunteers, trustees and contractors.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all APIE Representatives regardless of professional relationship, length of service or rank.

3. Responsibilities

All APIE Representatives must protect APIE's legality, complying with all laws both personally and in their professional capacity. We expect all APIE Representatives to act ethically and responsibly when dealing with APIE's finances, programmes, partners, beneficiaries and public image. It is the APIE Representative's duty to be familiar with and conform to the responsibilities as documented in the [APIE Safeguarding Policy](#).

4. Respect in the workplace

All APIE Representatives should respect their colleagues. Any kind of discriminatory harassing or victimising behaviour will not be tolerated (for more on this, see the [APIE Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy](#)). Representatives should conform with the *APIE Equal Opportunities Policy* in all aspects of their work, including (but not limited to) recruitment, performance evaluation and interpersonal relations.

5. Protection of Company Property

All APIE Representatives should treat APIE property, whether material or intangible, with respect and care. All APIE Representatives should:

- Not misuse company equipment or use it irresponsibly;
- Respect all kinds of intellectual property, including trademarks, copyright and other property (information, reports etc.) Representatives should use these only to complete their duties;
- Protect company facilities and other material property from damage and vandalism whenever possible.

6. Professionalism

Employees must show integrity and professionalism at all times, both in the workplace and outside it, when representing APIE. APIE Representatives must bear in mind that even when not operating in a professional capacity (out of working hours etc.) they may still be recognised as representing APIE.

APIE Representatives are discouraged from accepting gifts from beneficiaries or partners, in line with the *APIE Anti-Bribery & Corruption Policy*.

APIE Representatives should fulfil their duties with integrity and respect toward all stakeholders and the wider communities in which we operate. Senior staff must not abuse their authority; we expect them to delegate duties to their team members while considering their competence and workload. Likewise, we expect team members to follow managers' instructions and complete their duties to the best of their ability in a timely manner.

7. Absence and timekeeping

APIE Representatives must follow the broad work schedules agreed with their line managers. Exceptions can be made for occasions that prevent APIE Representatives from following standard working hours or days, but we expect all to endeavour to be punctual when coming to and leaving work, and communicating clearly and in good time if and when this is not possible.

8. Conflict of interest

We expect employees to avoid any personal, financial or other interests that might hinder their capability or willingness to perform their job duties. Where conflicts arise we expect employees to inform APIE in order that they can be considered with the employee. For more, see the [APIE Conflict of Interest Policy](#).

9. Collaboration

APIE Representatives should be friendly and collaborative, willing to support their colleagues in order to achieve their objectives.

10. Communication

All APIE Representatives must be willing to engage in regular and open communication in order to foster a conducive and transparent professional environment.

11. Benefits

APIE expects employees to act responsibly in the claiming and use of their employment benefits, including, but not limited to, leave, health insurance, hardware, subscriptions, expenses or any other workplace benefits.

12. Policies

All employees should read and follow our company policies. If they have any questions, they should refer them to their Manager.

13. Disciplinary actions

Our company may have to take disciplinary action against employees who repeatedly or intentionally fail to follow our code of conduct. For more information, see the *APIE Disciplinary Policy and Procedure* document. We may take legal action in cases of corruption, theft, embezzlement or other unlawful behaviour.

End of Code of Conduct.

3. Safeguarding

- 1. APIE Safeguarding Officer – Staff:** Amy Barnecutt, Chief Executive Officer
Contact: amy@apartnerineducation.org

APIE Safeguarding Officer – Board: Brooks Newmark, Founder and Trustee
Contact via: hannah@apartnerineducation.org

2. Statement on Safeguarding

A Partner in Education has a commitment to support, protect and lift up the rights of every person, regardless of background or circumstance. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the rights of all people, and are aware of the particular need to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults. We recognise that the safe recruitment of staff, trustees and volunteers is central to this commitment, so we will always ensure that our recruitment policies and practices are robust, that our selection processes prevent unsuitable people from gaining access to children, young people and vulnerable adults, and that all staff are equipped to mitigate risk, recognise signs of abuse and work together to form a safe environment for all. In addition, APIE commits to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the work of our partners – in particular Umubano Academy – is in line with the standards of safeguarding we expect within our own organisation.

We do this by:

- a. Recognising that all people have the right to freedom from abuse and harm;
- b. Promoting joint working with parents, carers and communities in the interest of children's welfare;
- c. Following safe and thorough recruitment procedures, ensuring that all staff, Trustees and volunteers are carefully selected, vetted and have the relevant qualifications and experience;
- d. Ensuring that all staff are aware of and accept responsibility for helping to prevent the abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- e. Designating a Safeguarding Officer who, with regard to our work at Umubano Academy, takes specific responsibility for children's protection, safety and well-being;
- f. Supporting all staff in bringing concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, or raise their concern with another senior member of staff or another member of the Board if they wish;
- g. Responding quickly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse;
- h. Providing parents, caretakers and children with the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have, including having knowledge of, and ensuring children have access to their preferred methods of communication;
- i. Ensuring that staff are trained in a variety of communication tools by undertaking the APIE Safeguarding training course;
- j. Adopting positive behaviour management strategies which are non-violent and do not impose humiliation; and
- k. Reviewing the effectiveness of the organisation's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures on an annual basis as well as in the case of any breach of conduct.

3. Categories of Abuse

The main categories of abuse are physical, emotional, sexual, neglect and bullying, though many types of abuse are a combination of these. APIE has a zero tolerance policy for all kinds of abuse, regardless of the identities of the perpetrator and victim in any given situation.

a. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child, young person or vulnerable adult. It may take a variety of different forms, including but not limited to hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing deliberate physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or caretaker fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a vulnerable person. Physical abuse can occur within or outside of the family environment.

b. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the emotional maltreatment of a child, young person or vulnerable adult, and can cause severe and persistent adverse effects on emotional development. It may involve conveying that individuals are worthless, unloved or inadequate; may feature the imposition of age or developmentally inappropriate expectations; and might involve over-protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child, young person or vulnerable adult from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another, or might involve serious bullying. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of abuse, though it may also occur alone.

c. Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

Sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a vulnerable person, including children or young people. It involves forcing or enticing a vulnerable person to take part in sexual activities whether or not the vulnerable person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration or non-penetrative acts. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving vulnerable people in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, encouraging vulnerable people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a vulnerable person in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by any person in a position of power, regardless of age, gender or sexuality.

Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where someone is sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. **Consent cannot be given by a child or young person**, even where they may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online.

d. Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's, young person's or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter; protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

e. Bullying

Bullying is the abuse and/or intimidation by a person, people or an organisation against another or others. Bullying may include: verbal abuse; acts of intimidation; behaviour that offends, degrades or humiliates; acts of physical or sexual abuse; coercion; and e-bullying. Bullies can be supervisors, subordinates, co-workers, colleagues, or peers. Children can bully other children. It may be a specific, personal act or it may be institutional. While actions are not necessarily illegal and may not even be against the policies, the damage that such actions cause – both to the targeted employee and to workplace morale – is significant.

APIE Safeguarding Procedures

A Partner in Education operates both in the UK and Rwanda, though it is in Rwanda that APIE works directly with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Where APIE works with children or young people in the UK, this would always be in a UK school setting, where required school policies would also be in place. It is the role of the designated Safeguarding Officers in the UK (Board level) and Rwanda (staff level) to act as a source of support and guidance on all matters of child protection and safeguarding, as well as liaising with the CEO and the Board of Trustees in the UK if issues arise.

The Safeguarding Officer (Staff) is responsible for:

- Understanding and identifying abuse and/or neglect;
- Implementing required processes if issues arise;
- Recording all incidents accurately, appropriately and in a timely manner;
- Liaising with the Safeguarding Officer (Board) as required;
- Liaising with relevant authorities as required;
- Ensuring that staff are aware of the safeguarding policy and procedures and are able to adequately respond to concerns;
- All reasonable endeavours to ensure that partners (specifically Umubano Academy) subscribe to the same standards of safeguarding; and
- Ensuring that staff are able to respond sensitively and appropriately to any child protection concerns.

The Safeguarding Officer (Board) is responsible for:

- Understanding and identifying abuse and/or neglect;
- Supporting the Safeguarding Officer (Staff) to carry out their duties;
- Managing the regular review of the Risk Register and Safeguarding Register;
- Ensuring that the Board of Trustees and Executive staff are aware of the safeguarding policy and procedures and are able to adequately respond to concerns; and
- Ensuring the organisation has appropriate policies and procedures in place.

It is not the role of any staff member – be that the designated Safeguarding Officers or not – to decide whether a child, young person or vulnerable adult has been abused. It is their responsibility to ensure that concerns are heard, recorded, shared with relevant stakeholders (the Safeguarding Officer; UA Child Protection Officer [Head teacher] or Deputy; parents, carers or next of kin; Social Services or Rwandan equivalent authority [e.g. Village Head]; the Board of Governors; and/or the Board of Trustees as appropriate) and appropriate action taken.

4. Managing a Disclosure

All staff working for and with APIE must understand that when they have concerns about a child, young person or vulnerable adult's welfare they must report the issue immediately, recording it in the

Safeguarding Register. APIE staff are responsible for managing incidents they have seen or been involved with themselves. Whilst support may be provided to Umubano Academy as requested or required, school incidents remain the responsibility of the school, and will be managed by the School's Child Protection Officer and recorded separately through the School's Safeguarding mechanisms.

Recording is a tool of professional accountability and is central to safeguarding and protecting children. It is not always possible to know whether a small or vague concern held today may increase as the days or weeks pass, and later form the substance of a child protection referral. For this reason it is vital that concerns are recorded accurately so that they can be monitored and any emerging patterns noticed.

In the case of an incident or disclosure of an incident, staff should:

- Stay calm and listen to the child, young person or vulnerable adult, controlling expressions or reactions of panic or shock;
- Ask questions for clarification only and avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer;
- Consider how to explain APIE's policy and procedures to the child, young person or vulnerable adult, so that they know what is going to happen;
- Tell them who you are going to tell so that they can be made safe;
- Use the child, young person or vulnerable adult's language and vocabulary. If required, ensure there is a responsible person available to speak to the child in their preferred language;
- Offer comfort, bearing in mind the age and needs of the child;
- If the child has disclosed sexual abuse, ask them when it happened but nothing more;
- Do not give false reassurances, but tell them that you will do your best to protect or help them and that they were right to tell you;
- Record in writing what was said using the person's own words. Record the date, time, setting, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and other people present. Sign and date the record and share with the Safeguarding Officer (see contact details above) and record any subsequent events and actions in the same manner;
- Record the incident in the Safeguarding Register, including all details and updating as required.

Staff may also have concerns about a child, young person or vulnerable adult's welfare where there has not been any disclosure or allegation. In the best interests of the child, young person or vulnerable adult, these concerns should be raised with the Safeguarding Officer and followed through appropriately.

5. Inappropriate behaviour by staff

All staff must be vigilant in relation to inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff or any other person working with children, young people or vulnerable adults. Examples include inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual roles and responsibilities or inappropriate sharing of images.

Any allegation made against a professional must be shared with the designated Safeguarding Officer immediately. Staff members and the Safeguarding Officer will follow procedures within APIE's [Whistleblowing Policy](#). The designated Safeguarding Officer (unless, of course, the allegation has been made against them, in which case the most senior member of in-country staff will be responsible) will liaise directly with relevant stakeholders, including the CEO, Safeguarding Officer (Board) and the rest of the Board of Trustees in order to follow through on the issue appropriately.

6. Children harming other children

It is part of APIE's duty of care to ensure that children are protected from harm from other children. At APIE, we understand that there is the potential for children to come to harm as a result of the actions of other children, and that this potential is greater when working with children under the age of five or with those who have complex needs. Any concerns should be raised and recorded with the Safeguarding Officer immediately.

7. Internet Safety

APIE's aim is to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who receive APIE's services and who make use of information technology (such as mobile phones, games consoles and the internet) as part of their involvement with us. This requires that we ensure staff, volunteers and delivery partners understand the principles that guide our approach to e-safety, and ensure that as an organisation we operate in line with our values in terms of how we use information technology.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the children/young people who come into contact with our services is paramount and governs our approach to the use and management of information and communications technologies;
- Mobile phones and digital devices can present a number of problems when not used appropriately; and
- Mobile phones with integrated cameras could lead to child protection, bullying and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use, or distribution of images of children or staff.

In order to avoid issues raised by the ever increasing access to information and communications technologies, APIE adheres to the following guidelines:

- The school has an ICT Policy which was developed in partnership with APIE to ensure internet safety for students;
- The internet is not to be made available to children on APIE premises except on specific occasions for research and at all times only with supervision by a member of APIE or Umubano Academy staff;
- Parents are requested not to allow their children access to the internet on any personal devices while at Umubano Academy;
- Children/young people can only be photographed if the permission (individual and guardian) is given;
- Images of children, young people, vulnerable adults, staff and visitors to the site will not be used for promotional or press releases unless the individual, their parents or caregivers have consented;
- Unsupervised access to children/young people or one-to-one photo sessions are prohibited; and
- Photo sessions outside the organisation's activities are not allowed.

End of Safeguarding Policy.

4. Performance and Development

1. Statement on Performance and Development

APIE is committed to evaluating staff performance in line with industry best practice, to ensure that employee achievement is regularly recognised and rewarded, and to support the development of core skills and professional capability. The performance review process is built on a model of open communication and continuous feedback, to guarantee that staff always feel supported in their roles, and to facilitate the identification and delivery of targeted Learning and Development (L&D).

2. Performance Appraisal

Within one month of joining APIE, employees are responsible for drafting their own objectives in consultation with managers; these are re-written on an annual basis, though they can be updated whenever necessary (with a manager's approval). The performance of an employee is evaluated against these objectives throughout the year, during both formal and informal reviews. An outline of the evaluation process is:

- An end-of-year appraisal for formal evaluation, using the *Performance Review* form (2 hours)
- Less formal, but still structured quarterly reviews (1 hour)
- Regular informal 1-2-1s (fortnightly) to discuss performance, challenges, and development against on-going work (30-45 mins)

Guidance on conducting the year-end appraisal, quarterly reviews, and 1-2-1s can be found on OneDrive, along with the *Performance Review* form and support for drafting Objectives. At the end of the Performance Review, APIE employees will be assigned a Talent Rating which records their current performance level, as well as their potential to achieve. The employee and manager should keep all performance development records on file.

3. Professional Development

At each review, managers and employees should be discussing potential L&D opportunities that will help to build professional capability. L&D is designed to specifically target an employee's development needs; staff should not attend L&D on an ad-hoc basis, but should select appropriate opportunities by examining their strengths and weaknesses, work priorities, and career aspirations. While this analysis can be managed individually, joint reviews are an excellent opportunity for an employee and their manager to work through development needs together, and to discuss potential L&D.

- All APIE employees (full-time and part-time) have three days a year allocated for L&D.
- This is the **minimum** amount of time an employee should spend on L&D; if an employee would like to undergo further professional development, this should be discussed and agreed with the manager.
- L&D does not have to be undertaken consecutively or across full days. Allotted hours can be broken down, e.g.: a three hour seminar; a one hour workshop; 30 minutes mentoring.
- L&D can include (but is not limited to): classroom courses; workshops; seminars; lectures; online courses; shadowing; and mentoring.
- Employees need to agree L&D with their manager before they commit to attend.
- Any hours that an employee spends on L&D need to be logged on the *Professional Development Record* with their manager's sign-off.
- Managers need to discuss the relevance and applicability of L&D with employees before and after they attend.

End of Performance and Development Policy

5. Domestic Travel & Expenses

1. Statement on Travel and Subsistence

A Partner in Education (APIE) is a small charity, and all employees are expected to act with prudence with regard to travel and other expenses, ensuring that they obtain best value for money and comply with all the provisions of this policy. Employees and volunteers are entitled to be reimbursed by APIE for all travelling and other expenses *actually, necessarily* and *reasonably* incurred by them in carrying out their duties, on submission of an appropriately authorised claim form and relevant supporting receipts.

This policy sets out the procedures that apply to all staff and volunteers in the UK and Rwanda in their work with APIE in their **normal place of work**. It does not apply to Trustees, who have an alternative Code of Conduct, and does not cover activity when employees are travelling internationally (for this, please see the [APIE International Travel Policy](#)). However, this policy does apply if an employee is to be based away from their usual place of work for a significant period of time. A significant period of time is defined on a case by case basis, to be agreed with your line manager.

2. Definitions

“Actually” means that the claimant actually incurred the claimed expenditure, for example: the bus fare for a journey cannot be claimed if the claimant had decided to leave earlier and walk the journey instead;

“Necessary” means that the charitable activity could not have been undertaken efficiently and effectively without incurring the expenditure;

“Reasonable” means that the cost of the expense must be commensurate with prudent, value-for-money use of APIE funds to promote & deliver its charitable purposes. Thus, the cost incurred must be competitive in comparison to the costs of alternatives of similar quality and suitability-for-purpose.

3. Responsibilities

Expenses may only be incurred, and subsequently reimbursed by APIE, in respect of activities which are part of the APIE’s agreed and budgeted programme of charitable activities. Likewise, goods and/or services may only be purchased on behalf of APIE, and subsequently reimbursed, in respect of activities which are part of APIE’s agreed and budgeted programme of charitable activities.

The CEO is responsible for ensuring all employees adhere to this policy, but all employees are themselves responsible for ensuring they obtain best value for money and for adhering to the details of this policy. Staff and volunteers must provide comprehensive factual claims for reimbursement promptly, supported by VAT receipts, vouchers or other proof of payment.

4. Travel

Travel should be planned as far as possible in advance to take advantage of cheaper fares and allow flexibility in the time of travel to obtain best value for money; all employees are expected to take the most cost-effective means of travel available to them. Staff travel arrangements should be planned and considered carefully before booking any mode of transport. Comparisons should be made for each journey to ensure that the best value for money is being secured. Employees may not claim travel expenses from home to their normal place of work. Where possible, public transport should be used. All travel that will need to be expensed must be approved by your line manager in advance.

a. Private Vehicles

In the UK, private cars should be used only when it is a faster and cheaper alternative to public transport. Where employees use their own vehicles for approved business purposes, a mileage allowance of 40p per mile will be paid up to a limit of 10,000 miles per annum, thereafter 25p per mile will be paid. A private vehicle may only be used when in connection with APIE business if, at the time of each journey, it has a valid:

- (a) Certificate of insurance for the kind of journey involved;
- (b) Road tax (if required);
- (c) MOT certificate (if more than 3 years old)

Parking costs incurred when on APIE business away from the normal place of work will be reimbursed.

In Rwanda, staff have access to APIE's vehicle. This vehicle is primarily for use by the CEO in order to carry out her duties. This vehicle can also be used in personal time, as long as personal use does not conflict with APIE duties and expenses (fuel, etc.) are appropriately segregated.

b. Taxis

Taxis should be hired only where public transport is unavailable or when there are special circumstances such as significant inconvenience, unfamiliar locations, or when staff are carrying heavy or bulky packages or luggage, safety issues or reasons of economy, e.g. a group of people when combined public transportation costs would be higher. Expenses can only be claimed for journeys made on APIE business – personal use in the evenings is defined as a personal expense.

5. Accommodation and Subsistence

If an employee is required to work far away enough from their usual place of work to require an overnight stay (or several, if the work deems it necessary), the most cost-effective option is to be found. The details of each stay are to be considered and approved by the CEO on a case by case basis.

Subsistence costs (e.g. for refreshments & meals) can only be claimed when an employee is on authorised APIE business away from their normal place of work for more than 4 consecutive hours. The amount that can be claimed for this must be approved in advance by your line manager as part of office policy.

All entertaining must be on a modest scale and only expensed in exceptional circumstances, with approval from the CEO. Use of expensive restaurants is to be avoided wherever possible. When entertaining, APIE will meet the cost of one alcoholic beverage per person; any drinks that exceed this limit are categorised as personal expenses.

6. Telephone Calls

APIE will reimburse employees and volunteers for the actual costs of calls made from their personal telephones made whilst carrying out work for the charity because APIE-provided telephone services were not available. No 'reimbursement' will be made for the notional cost of calls which incurred no actual cost to the claimant because they were covered by a contract which included an allocation of 'free' calls.

7. Other Types of Expenses

The above examples of expenses claims are illustrative, not definitive. Expenses not detailed above will only be paid if authorised (in advance whenever possible) by the relevant budget holder.

8. Procedures

All claims submitted for the reimbursement of expenses incurred on APIE activities and/or purchases made on behalf of APIE will be vetted for compliance with charity law, taxation law and these policies and procedures before being authorised for reimbursement. Valid claims will be authorised for reimbursement as soon as is reasonably practical after receipt. In the UK, payment will usually be made by BACS transfer directly to the claimant's bank account. In Rwanda, expenses will be reimbursed by petty cash.

- Claims for the reimbursement of expenses must be submitted on APIE's approved claims form. Ad hoc claims will not be considered;
- Claims for the reimbursement of expenses must be accompanied by documentary evidence of the expense (e.g. point-of-sale receipt, travel ticket, etc.). Where such evidence is not available the claimant must provide a written explanation to the relevant budget holder for approval;
- APIE reserves the right to decline to reimburse expenses for which reasonable documentary evidence has not been provided;
- Employees' and volunteers' completed expenses claim forms must be authorised by the relevant budget holder (relevance defined by location);
- All expenses claims must be submitted as soon as possible;
- Expenses claim forms may also include claims for the reimbursement of goods/services purchased by the claimant on behalf of APIE;
- Claims for the reimbursement of purchases must be accompanied by documentary evidence of the each purchase.

Failure to comply with this policy could result in the individual having to bear the excess costs and could lead to disciplinary action.

This policy will be reviewed annually or after a significant change in operations or a significant incident, whichever is sooner.

End of Domestic Travel & Expenses Policy.

6. International Travel, Expenses and Health

1. Statement on International Travel

As APIE is an international organisation that operates in the UK, Rwanda and as part of the international education community, international travel might be a necessary activity for employees, trustees and volunteers to undertake in order to carry out their duties. APIE is committed to ensuring the wellbeing of all staff, including when travelling internationally.

Employees and volunteers are entitled to be reimbursed by APIE for all international travel and some associated expenses *actually, necessarily* and *reasonably* incurred by them in carrying out their duties, on submission of an appropriately authorised claim form and relevant supporting receipts.

This policy sets out the procedures that apply to individuals undertaking previously approved international travel on behalf of APIE.

2. Definitions

“Actually” means that the claimant actually incurred the claimed expenditure, for example: the bus fare for a journey cannot be claimed if the claimant had decided to leave earlier and walk the journey instead;

“Necessary” means that the charitable activity could not have been undertaken efficiently and effectively without incurring the expenditure;

“Reasonable” means that the cost of the expense must be commensurate with prudent, value-for-money use of APIE funds to promote & deliver its charitable purposes. Thus, the cost incurred must be competitive in comparison to the costs of alternatives of similar quality and suitability-for-purpose.

3. Responsibilities

The CEO is responsible for ensuring all employees adhere to this policy, but all employees are themselves responsible for ensuring they adhere to the details laid out herein.

4. Travel

The details of international travel are to be approved by the CEO and paid for by APIE. Standard class of travel must be chosen wherever available. Comparative quotes (in line with the APIE Procurement Policy) are to be identified before any bookings are made to ensure competitive pricing. If for any reason international travel needs to be purchased individually, pre-approval must be sought to ensure that the cost of travel can be claimed as an expense.

Once in-country, all travel undertaken whilst carrying out APIE duties can be claimed from APIE by the employee.

5. Accommodation

Where required, accommodation shall be booked by staff based in the country of visit (for example, where UK staff visit the office in Kigali, the APIE Rwanda team are responsible for making the necessary reservations). Such bookings are still subject to finding comparative quotes, though some discretion is allowed as long as decisions are approved by the CEO. If travelling outside of the UK or Rwanda, the procedures outlined in the APIE Procurement Policy with regard to finding comparative and

competitive quotes are to be followed before booking. The approval of the CEO is to be sought prior to making any reservations.

6. Subsistence

When travelling internationally, APIE will provide a daily stipend as a contribution towards the cost of food. If breakfast is provided by the accommodation this comes to a total of £5 per day in Rwanda or £10 per day in the UK; if breakfast is not provided, this is increased by £2 in either location. If travelling outside the UK or Rwanda, the appropriate amount is to be agreed in writing with the CEO.

Further subsistence expenses can be claimed in line with the APIE Domestic Travel & Subsistence Policy (e.g. meeting expenses).

7. Travel Insurance

If travelling away from your usual place of work to a place where you do not have full, valid health cover, APIE requires staff to ensure they have purchased appropriate travel insurance for the relevant period of time. Insurance must include cover for: Cancellation and delay; medical expenses; personal liability; emergency assistance/repatriation; and baggage and belongings. If an employee has a pre-existing medical condition, this must be declared to the insurance provider. Due to the personal nature of purchasing travel insurance, it is to be processed by the staff member in question then claimed as an expense from APIE.

8. Health

All employees are responsible for ensuring that appropriate precautions have been taken prior to travel to remain in the best health. This includes checking to ensure they are up to date on relevant vaccinations, that they have secured necessary preventative medicine (anti-malarial medication, insect repellent etc.) and disclosing to their physician any pre-existing medical conditions that require approval for travel. APIE cannot be responsible for undertaking this due diligence on a case by case basis, but any reasonable and expected expenses incurred in ensuring staff are fit to travel can be expensed back to APIE.

9. Procedures

All claims submitted for the reimbursement of expenses incurred on APIE activities and/or purchases made on behalf of APIE will be vetted for compliance with charity law, taxation law and these policies and procedures before being authorised for reimbursement. Valid claims will be authorised for reimbursement as soon as is reasonably practical after receipt. In the UK, payment will usually be made by BACS transfer directly to the claimant's bank account. In Rwanda, expenses will be reimbursed by petty cash or cheque.

- Claims for the reimbursement of expenses must be submitted on APIE's approved claims form. Ad hoc claims will not be considered. Claims must be included in the currency of expenditure; conversion to the currency of reimbursement must be calculated using an APIE approved rate of exchange;
- Claims for the reimbursement of expenses must be accompanied by documentary evidence of the expense (e.g. point-of-sale receipt, travel ticket, etc.). Where such evidence is not available the claimant must provide a written explanation to the relevant budget holder for approval;



- APIE reserves the right to decline to reimburse expenses for which reasonable documentary evidence has not been provided;
- Employees' and volunteers' completed expenses claim forms must be authorised by the relevant budget holder (relevance defined by location);
- All expenses claims must be submitted as soon as possible.

Whilst APIE takes the health and wellbeing of all staff seriously, including when travelling internationally, it cannot be held responsible for any illness, harm or out of pocket expenses incurred if an employee has not followed the details of this policy. Failure to comply with this policy could result in the individual having to bear the excess costs and could lead to disciplinary action.

End of International Travel, Expenses and Health Policy.

7. Whistleblowing

1. Statement on Whistleblowing

A Partner in Education (APIE) is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. We recognise that a key aspect of accountability and transparency is a mechanism to enable staff and other members of APIE to voice concerns in a responsible and effective manner. Whilst it is a fundamental term of every contract of employment or consultancy that an employee or consultant will serve APIE and not disclose confidential information about APIE's affairs, where an individual discovers information which they believe shows serious malpractice or wrongdoing then this information should be disclosed internally without fear of reprisal, and there should be arrangements to enable this to be done independently of line management (although in relatively minor instances the line manager would be the appropriate person to be told).

This policy is designed to enable Trustees, employees, agents and volunteers of APIE to raise concerns internally and to disclose information which the individual believes shows malpractice or impropriety. This policy is intended to cover concerns which are in the public interest, and whilst initially may be investigated separately, might lead to the invocation of other procedures e.g. disciplinary.

These concerns could include:

- Financial malpractice, impropriety or fraud;
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation;
- Dangers to Health & Safety or the environment;
- Criminal activity;
- Improper conduct or unethical behaviour;
- Breach of safeguarding policy or procedures (see: [APIE Safeguarding Policy](#)); or
- Attempts to conceal any of these.

2. Safeguards

Protection

This policy is designed to offer protection to those Trustees, employees, agents and volunteers of APIE who disclose such concerns provided the disclosure is made in good faith; in the reasonable belief that the disclosure shows malpractice or impropriety; and provided the disclosure is made to an appropriate person. It is important to note that no protection from internal disciplinary procedures is offered to those who choose not to use the procedure. In an extreme case, malicious or wild allegations could give rise to legal action on the part of the persons complained about.

Confidentiality

APIE will treat all such disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner. The identity of the individual making the allegation may be kept confidential so long as it does not hinder or frustrate any investigation. However, the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and the individual making the disclosure may need to provide a statement as part of the evidence required.

Anonymous Allegations

This policy encourages individuals to put their name to any disclosures they make. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less credible, but they may be considered at the discretion of APIE. In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account will include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised;
- The credibility of the concern; and
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

Untrue Allegations

If an individual makes an allegation in good faith, which is not confirmed by subsequent investigation, no action will be taken against that individual. In making a disclosure the individual should exercise due care to ensure the accuracy of the information. If, however, an individual makes malicious or vexatious allegations, and particularly if he or she persists with making them, disciplinary action may be taken against that individual.

3. Procedures for Making a Disclosure

On receipt of a complaint of malpractice, the member of staff who receives and takes note of the complaint must pass on this information as soon as is reasonably possible to the appropriate designated investigating officer as follows:

- Complaints of malpractice will be investigated by the Chair of Trustees unless the complaint is against the Chair or is in any way related to the actions of the Chair. In such cases, the complaint should be passed to the CEO for referral
- In the case of a complaint, which is any way connected with but not against the CEO, the CEO will nominate an alternative Trustee as the investigating officer;
- Complaints against the CEO should be passed to the Chair of Trustees who will either act as the investigating officer or nominate an appropriate alternative;
- The complainant has the right to bypass the line management structure and take their complaint direct to the Chair of Trustees. The Chair has the right to refer the complaint back to management if they feel that without any conflict of interest management can more appropriately investigate the complaint.

Should none of the above routes be suitable or acceptable to the complainant, then the complainant may approach an alternative member of the Board of Trustees to handle their complaint.

If there is evidence of criminal activity then the investigating officer should inform the police. APIE will ensure that any internal investigation does not hinder a formal police investigation.

4. Timescales

Due to the varied nature of these sorts of complaints, which may involve internal/external investigators and/or the police, it is not possible to lay down precise timescales for such investigations. The investigating officer should ensure that the investigations are undertaken as quickly as possible without affecting the quality and depth of those investigations.

The investigating officer should, as soon as practically possible, send a written acknowledgement of the concern to the complainant and thereafter report back to them in writing the outcome of the investigation and on the proposed action. If the investigation is prolonged, the investigating officer should keep the complainant informed, in writing, as to the progress of the investigation and as to when it is likely to be concluded.

5. Investigating Procedure

The investigating officer should follow these steps:

- Full details and clarifications of the complaint should be obtained;
- The investigating officer should inform the member of staff against whom the complaint is made as soon as is practically possible. The member of staff will be informed of their right to be accompanied by a work colleague at any future interview or hearing held under the provision of these procedures. At the discretion of the investigating officer and dependant on the circumstances of the complaint an alternative representative may be allowed e.g. the individual's legal representative;



- The investigating officer should consider the involvement of the police at this stage and should consult with the Board of Trustees and senior management if appropriate;
- The allegations should be fully investigated by the investigating officer with the assistance – where appropriate – of other individuals/bodies;
- A judgement concerning the complaint and validity of the complaint will be made by the investigating officer. This judgement will be detailed in a written report containing the findings of the investigations and reasons for the judgement. The report will be passed to the Board of Trustees and senior management as appropriate;
- The Chair and CEO will decide what action to take. If the complaint is shown to be justified, then they will invoke the disciplinary or other appropriate procedures;
- The complainant should be kept informed of the progress of the investigations and, if appropriate, of the final outcome;
- If appropriate, a copy of the outcomes will be used to enable a review of APIE procedures.

If the complainant is not satisfied that their concern is being properly dealt with by the investigating officer, they have the right to raise it in confidence with the CEO or other members of the Board of Trustees.

If the investigation finds the allegations unsubstantiated and all internal procedures have been exhausted, but the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, APIE recognises the lawful rights of employees and ex-employees to make disclosures to prescribed people or bodies. A full list of prescribed people and bodies can be found on the [Government Website \(https://www.gov.uk/\)](https://www.gov.uk/).

End of Whistleblowing Policy.

8. Conflict of Interest

1. Statement on Conflicts of Interest

A Partner in Education (APIE) is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability at all times, and as such requires all staff, volunteers, Trustees and other stakeholders to strive to avoid any conflict of interest between the interests of APIE on the one hand, and their personal, professional and business interests on the other. This includes avoiding actual conflicts of interest as well as the perception of conflicts of interest. APIE also recognises the importance of protecting the organisation whilst preserving the rights of employees, volunteers and Board members to participate as private citizens in the life of their communities.

As such, the purpose of this policy is to protect the integrity of APIE's decision-making process, to enable all stakeholders to have confidence in our integrity, and to protect the reputation of volunteers, staff and Trustees without eroding their autonomy. It is meant to supplement good judgement, and staff, volunteers and Trustees should respect its intention as well as its wording.

APIE requires all stakeholders across the organisation to take a proactive role in applying and adhering to the organisation's Conflict of Interest policy and practice.

2. Board of Trustees

Upon appointment each Trustee will be responsible for declaring any interests, such as relationships and posts held, that could potentially result in a conflict of interest. If a potentially significant conflict is declared, this disclosure will be written up and stored on file.

Examples of conflicts of interest for Trustees include:

- A Trustee who is related to a member of staff and there is a decision to be taken on staff pay and/or conditions;
- A Trustee who is also on the Board of another organisation that is competing for the same funding;
- A Trustee who has shares in a business that may be awarded a contract to do work or provide services for the organisation.

In the course of meetings or activities, Trustees will all disclose any further interests in a transaction or decision where there may be a conflict between the organisation's best interests and the best interests of said Trustee, or a conflict between the best interests of two organisations that the Trustee is involved with. If this situation arises, after disclosure the Trustee may be asked to leave the room for the discussion and will not be able to take part in any vote or decision-making that relates to the conflict of interest. Whether this happens will be down to the discretion of the rest of the board. Any such disclosure and the subsequent actions taken will be noted in the meeting minutes.

3. Staff and Volunteers

Before or on assuming their duties with APIE, staff and volunteers must declare any interests that may give rise to a conflict of interest. If a potentially significant conflict is declared, this disclosure will be written up and stored on file.

Examples of conflicts of interest for staff and volunteers include:

- Where an employee or volunteer's private affairs or financial interests are in conflict with their work duties, responsibilities and obligations, or result in a public perception that a conflict exists;
- Where an employee or volunteer has other interests which may impair their ability to act in the best interests of APIE;
- Where the actions of an employee or volunteer could compromise or undermine the trust that stakeholders place in APIE.

It is the responsibility of every APIE employee or volunteer to inform their line manager of any conflicts that arise in the line of their work as soon as possible. If the issue is easily resolved (by delegating responsibility for the task at hand, for example), then there is no need for further action. However, if the issue proves to be ongoing or is otherwise not easily resolved, the line manager must elevate the issue to the Board of Trustees. In the case of the CEO, all conflicts must be reported directly to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

4. Performance of Duties

An employee or volunteer will not vote on, or participate in, any discussion about a resolution to approve a contract in which he/she has an interest, nor will an employee or volunteer approve and/or sign off under such circumstances.

In the performance of their duties, employees and volunteers must not:

- Place themselves in a position of obligation to persons who might benefit or appear to benefit from special consideration with respect to APIE business;
- Have a monetary interest that would conflict with the discharge of the duties owed to APIE;
- Disclose, discuss, use, take advantage of, benefit or appear to benefit from the use of information not generally available to the public and which has been acquired during their duties with APIE;
- Communicate with any level of government, or with any elected or appointed government official in relation to the business of APIE, unless they have specific APIE authorisation;
- Assist private entities or persons in their dealings with APIE where this could result in preferential treatment to any person (also see: *APIE Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy*);
- Directly or indirectly use, or allow the use of, APIE property or information for anything other than officially approved activities.

5. Outside Employment

Staff members may engage in remunerative employment with another employer, volunteer activity, carry on a business, or receive remuneration from public funds for activities outside their position provided that:

- It does not interfere with the performance of their duties;
- It does not bring APIE into disrepute;
- It is not performed in such a way as to appear to be an official act or to represent the organisation's public positions or policies;
- It does not involve the use of APIE premises, services, equipment or supplies to which the staff member has access by virtue of their employment, unless official authorisation is secured;
- It does not infringe upon the intellectual property rights of APIE.

6. Breach of conflict of interest

Trustees, employees and volunteers are all required to consult with the organisation (their line manager or colleagues on the Board of Trustees) whenever they have any question or issue relating to a potential conflict of interest. Individuals who fail to comply with these standards during the course of their relationship with APIE will be subject to such appropriate measures as may be determined by



the Board of Trustees. Employees who fail to honour the provisions of this policy will be considered to be in breach of their contract with APIE and may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Likewise, non-compliance of this policy on the part of members of the Board of Trustees shall constitute cause for removal.

Persons who fail to comply with these standards following termination of their relationship with APIE hereby acknowledge that the disclosure of confidential information could result in irreparable harm to the organisation, and that APIE shall have the right to enforce its lawful rights and remedies against any offending person.

End of Conflict of Interest Policy.

9. Bullying and Harassment

1. Statement Against Bullying and Harassment

A Partner in Education (APIE) is committed to the principles of equal opportunities and respect for all individuals in creating and maintaining an inclusive environment. We value and celebrate diversity, recognising its key role in achieving our strategic aims and long-term success. We want to promote and develop a supportive and inclusive working environment where:

- Everyone feels that they are valued and can work to achieve their potential;
- All staff, volunteers and other stakeholders are treated fairly and equally, and with dignity and respect; and
- The opportunities we provide are open to everyone, and decisions are based on merit, not on background or circumstance.

APIE has a zero-tolerance policy on bullying or harassment, and we aim to provide an environment where people know that we take such allegations seriously and we all have the confidence to report harassment or bullying without fear of victimisation.

This policy applies to employees, volunteers and anyone else directly working on our behalf.

2. Applying this Policy

This policy can include the way employees, volunteers and Trustees behave towards each other outside of APIE-related activities on social occasions. It can also include behaviour towards people who are not staff, volunteers or Trustees of APIE, such as applicants, contractors, and members of the public who use our services.

3. Responsibilities

All members of APIE and all those working on our behalf have a duty to make sure that people do not suffer any form of harassment or bullying and that, if they do, they are supported in trying to stop it through informal or formal resolution procedures.

Although the ultimate responsibility for this policy rests with the Board of Trustees, it is the responsibility of the CEO to make sure that it is applied effectively by all employees and Trustees who hold positions of authority over others.

All employees, volunteers and Trustees are expected to:

- Encourage a person who says they have been bullied or harassed to contact their line manager, another APIE employee or Trustee;
- Be sensitive to the feelings of that person; and
- Not take part in, and actively discourage other people from taking part in, gossip about cases of alleged or actual harassment or bullying.

4. Definitions

Harassment

The [Equality Act 2010](#) defines harassment as being 'unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual'. As per the [Equality Act 2010](#), there are three types of harassment. These are **harassment related to the 'protected characteristics'** (as defined by the Equality Act 2010); **sexual harassment**; and **treating an**

employee less favourably because he or she rejects sexual harassment related to sex or gender reassignment or submits to it (tolerates it or allows it to happen).

The [protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act 2010](#) are:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Race;
- Sex;
- Gender reassignment;
- Religion or belief; or
- Sexual orientation.

The Equality Act also protects people from harassment because of perception and association. This means it is still harassment even if the person does not have the characteristic but is wrongly considered to have the characteristic or is harassed because of their association with someone who has the characteristic, such as a family member, friend or partner.

Bullying

Bullying can be described as threatening, abusive, intimidating, undermining or insulting behaviour that may be an abuse of power, position or knowledge. What one person may consider as bullying behaviour may be viewed as no more than firm management or strong personality by another, and so may sometimes be difficult to define. However, inappropriate behaviour that leads to other people becoming stressed, demotivated or frightened is unacceptable.

Bullying can take many forms, and APIE consider all types to be equally serious. In the context of APIE's operations, bullying can take, but is not limited to, the following forms:

- Overbearing supervision, shouting, or verbal, written, online or other published abuse;
- Abuse of power or behaviour that causes fear or distress for others;
- Deliberately undermining someone by not allocating work fairly or constantly criticising them;
- Inconsistent management style where some people are favoured more than others;
- Public ridicule, sarcasm or humiliation.

Hate-crime incidents

Hate crime is a crime motivated by racial, sexual or other prejudice, typically involving violence. APIE will not tolerate homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, racist or disablist hate incidents. This includes racial hatred, encouraging racial hatred, and any form of violence or encouraging violence.

Victimisation

Victimisation is when a person is mistreated because they have made, or intend to make, a complaint of discrimination (including harassment or bullying), or have helped another person to make a complaint by providing evidence or information. Victimisation can count as unlawful discrimination and result in disciplinary action, regardless of the outcome of the original complaint.

5. Procedures

Informal action

If possible, you should make it clear to the person causing the offence that you find the behaviour unacceptable and ask them to stop. It may be helpful to talk to a colleague before approaching the person.



If you are not able to speak to the person concerned, or if the behaviour continues after you have spoken to them, you should keep a note of details, dates, times, circumstances and witnesses. If you do not want to approach the person concerned, APIE will not interpret this to mean that the behaviour is acceptable, and it will not affect the outcome of your complaint.

If this informal discussion does not help to deal with the issue, you (and the person who is supporting you, if this is what you want) should consult the Chair of the Board of Trustees. You can do this in person or in writing. If the person responsible for the unacceptable behaviour is the Chair, then the CEO or other nominated member of the Board of Trustees will be involved in the discussions. The matter may then be dealt with informally or the next step may be to start formal action, which we would normally only do with your permission.

Formal action

In situations where informal action has not been successful or where informal action is not appropriate, we may take formal action. For an employee, this would be through the [APIE Grievance Policy and Procedure](#). If we are considering formal action, we will follow the process as identified in the [APIE Disciplinary Policy](#).

10. Grievance Policy & Procedure

1. Statement

A Partner in Education (APIE)'s Grievance Policy and Procedure document outlines the process used to prevent and resolve conflict in the workplace, to protect the interest of management and employees alike and to recognise the rights of an employee or employees to appeal and to be given a fair hearing against any measure which they consider to be unjust. It provides an avenue for the escalation of legitimate employee frustrations regarding dissatisfaction that arises from work, and promotes a process that encourages a workplace free of unfair discrimination and harassment.

The aim of this policy is to settle grievances or complaints fairly and is intended to operate simply and quickly. Every effort will be made to resolve the issue at the earliest possible stage, and at each stage efforts will be made in order to avoid proceeding to the next stage and to settle the issue amicably.

2. Responsibilities

If an employee has a problem with any other member of staff, and is unable to sort it out informally, the matter should be referred to their line manager or, if that is not appropriate, a nominated member of the Board of Trustees (not the Chair, who may be required to oversee the escalation of the process if required).

APIE encourages informal approaches to resolving disputes. Often a quiet word or asking for support from a line manager, colleague or Trustee may be all that is needed to resolve an issue.

3. Mediation

In certain circumstances it may, with mutual agreement, be helpful to consider using a mediator to help resolve the problem. In the case of APIE, the proposed mediator would be a member of the Board of Trustees (not the Chair, who would have responsibility for overseeing disciplinary procedures if required). Mediation does not decide who is right or wrong. Nor can the parties be forced to undertake mediation; it must be a purely voluntary process.

In the case of a grievance being taken out as a counter-grievance, or in response to the start of disciplinary action, it may be appropriate to deal with both issues at the same time. If appropriate, the disciplinary procedure may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance.

If the problem cannot be resolved informally, is serious or remains unresolved, or the employee wishes to raise the matter formally, the employee can use the formal grievance procedure.

4. Formal Grievance Procedure

a. Raise the Grievance in Writing

The employee should raise a grievance with their line manager without unreasonable delay, normally within one month of the incident (or final incident) which gives rise to the complaint.

If the grievance is against the line manager, the matter should be raised with the CEO. In the case of the grievance being against the CEO, the matter should be raised with the Chair of the Board of Trustees. APIE will endeavour to ensure that whoever deals with the grievance at the meeting will normally be excluded from hearing any appeal. However, due to the small size of the organisation, this might not always be possible. If this is the case, APIE representatives will ensure to treat all grievances fairly and objectively even if the grievance is about something they have said or done.

The employee must detail in writing the specific circumstance or circumstances which constitute the grievance, with dates, times, witnesses, etc. as applicable. Employees should stick to the facts and avoid insulting or abusive language. Where employees have difficulty expressing themselves because of language or other difficulties they may seek help from friends or colleagues.

b. Invitation to a Grievance Meeting

The Line Manager (or CEO or Chair of the Board of Trustees as appropriate) will invite the employee to attend a meeting without unavoidable delay to discuss the matter. The meeting should ideally be arranged within five working days of receiving the written grievance. They will also state that the employee is entitled to be accompanied at the meeting. This companion can speak at the meeting on behalf of the employee, but they cannot answer questions put directly to the employee. APIE will always consider whether any reasonable adjustments are required for disabled employees.

c. Grievance Meeting Process

Where possible, a note-taker, who must be uninvolved in the case will take down a record of the proceedings. The Line Manager (or CEO or Chair of the Board of Trustees as appropriate) will introduce the meeting, read out the grounds of the employee's grievance, ask the employee if they are correct and require the employee to provide clarification regarding details of the grievance if unclear.

The employee will be given the opportunity to put forward their case and say how they would like to see it resolved. The employee may call witnesses and refer to any documents previously provided to the Line Manager (or CEO or Chair or Trustees).

The Line Manager (or CEO or Chair of Trustees) may question the employee and any of the employee's witnesses. The employee or their companion will then be given the opportunity to sum up but may not introduce any new material.

The meeting may be adjourned by the Line Manager (or CEO or Chair of Trustees) if it is considered necessary to undertake further investigation. Any necessary investigations will be carried out to establish the facts of the case. The meeting will be reconvened as soon as possible.

Ideally the person who is investigating the issue will not be the person making the final decision, particularly in serious grievance cases such as allegations about bullying and harassment. However, due to the small size of APIE, this may not always be possible.

Having considered the grievance, the Line Manager (or CEO or Chair of Trustees) will give their decision regarding the case in writing to the employee, normally within five working days. If appropriate, the decision will set out what action the employer intends to take to resolve the grievance or, if the grievance is not upheld, will explain the reasons. This will also include notifying the employee of her/his right of appeal and the procedure to be followed.

5. Appeal

If still unresolved, the employee may refer the matter, in writing, to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, or if the Chair has already been involved in an earlier stage of the procedure, to an alternative, nominated member of the Board of Trustees.

The employee wishing to appeal against a grievance decision must do so in writing within five working days of receiving written notification of the grievance decision, stating the reasons for the appeal. Any documents submitted in support of the appeal must be attached.

Arrangements for the appeal meeting will be made by the Chair (or other nominated Trustee as appropriate) who will ensure that a note-taker is present if possible. The appeal meeting should be held without unavoidable delay. Where possible, at least two members of the Board will constitute an Appeal Panel. The Trustee or Trustees hearing the appeal should, if at all possible, have had no direct involvement in the case. As stated, however, due to the small size of APIE this might not always be possible. In the case that the Trustees on the Appeal Panel have had prior involvement, APIE will ensure that the decision-making process is unbiased and equitable.

The decision of the Appeal Panel or person hearing the appeal shall be final.

11. Disciplinary Policy & Procedure

1. Statement

A Partner in Education (APIE)'s Disciplinary Policy and Procedure document explains how we address and manage employee misconduct or inadequate performance. The purpose of the document is to help and encourage all employees to achieve and maintain required standards of conduct and work performance. The aim is also to ensure that APIE's services are maintained and effective while all staff are treated fairly and equitably.

This procedure sets out the action that will be taken in response to alleged misconduct or poor work performance. APIE's CEO has responsibility to ensure that all staff are aware of general and specific rules, standards and procedures covering work and conduct. Employees must familiarise themselves with these standards and procedures and follow them.

2. Responsibilities

In cases of minor misconduct or unacceptable performance or behaviour, the CEO or other manager should use informal action before formal disciplinary action is taken. This may include setting clear targets and expectations, monitoring progress over a reasonable time period and providing additional coaching or training. APIE encourages the use of informal approaches; a quiet word with a staff member or asking for support from a Line Manager may be all that is needed.

With regard to formal procedures, the responsibilities for action are as below:

- Informal action or first warning: Line Manager
- Improvement note or final warning: Line Manager or CEO (if the CEO is not already the Line Manager);
- Dismissal: CEO, Chair of the Board of Trustees or other designated member or members of the Board of Trustees.

3. Disciplinary Processes

a. Mediation

Some workplace disputes can be resolved through the support of an independent third party or mediator. In the case of APIE, the proposed mediator would be a member of the Board of Trustees (not the Chair, who would have responsibility for overseeing disciplinary procedures if required). Mediation does not decide who is right or wrong. Nor can the parties be forced to undertake mediation; it must be a purely voluntary process.

b. Investigation

No disciplinary action will be taken until a case has been thoroughly investigated. When starting an investigation into an allegation of misconduct or poor performance, there shall be no assumption that disciplinary action will automatically follow.

The investigation is a crucial part of the disciplinary procedure. Where a serious level of disciplinary sanction is being considered, particularly if a potential dismissal is being considered, every effort will be made to ensure that the investigating officer is not the same person as the person or people making the disciplinary decision. However it is recognised that, due to the small size of APIE, this may not be possible. The aim of the investigation is to establish the facts before taking any disciplinary action, and an open mind should be kept. It should be carried out without unreasonable delay.

A fact-finding meeting with the employee and any witnesses may be necessary, or it may just involve collation of evidence, whatever is appropriate for the case. But without some means of establishing the facts through an investigation, any subsequent decision on dismissal may be unfair. If an investigation meeting is required with the employee, the employee will be warned in advance to allow time to prepare.

c. Dismissal

Employees will not normally be dismissed for a first breach of discipline, except in the case of gross misconduct, when the penalty will be dismissal without notice and without payment in lieu of notice.

Sometimes when misconduct is so serious, or could have such serious consequences, it would be appropriate to dismiss someone without notice (here referred to as 'summary dismissal'). However, the employer should still follow a fair procedure with an investigation, an opportunity for the employee to put forward their side of the case at a meeting and the right to appeal, as well as the right to be accompanied to the disciplinary meeting and appeal meeting. It should be made clear to the employee before the meeting takes place that dismissal is a possibility.

After careful consideration, a short period of suspension with full pay may be helpful whilst the investigation is taking place (see [Section 5.5 for more information](#)).

4. Gross Misconduct

Gross misconduct is defined as misconduct serious enough to destroy the employment contract between APIE and an employee, making further working relationships and trust impossible. Gross misconduct is normally restricted to serious offences. The principal reasons for summary dismissal could include but are not limited to:

- Criminal offence which affects the individual's ability to carry out his/her job;
- Physical assault by an employee on any other person;
- Theft, misappropriation or unlawful destruction of property: APIE's, employees' or others';
- The giving or receiving of bribes or unauthorised gifts;
- Serious infringement of safety rules or negligence which causes unacceptable loss, damage or injury;
- Supplying security access codes to any unauthorised person;
- Unauthorised disclosure of information or misuse of trust of a serious nature;
- Making malicious or unfounded allegations of a serious nature;
- Deliberate falsification of any documents or claims, including time sheets, overtime or expense forms;
- Misconduct at work or away from work of such a serious nature as to bring into disrepute either the employee's position or the organisation;
- Serious discrimination relating to a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Harassment of a serious nature;
- Persistent alcohol or drug abuse;
- Engaging in unauthorised employment during hours when contracted to work for APIE, or during periods of designated leave, for example annual or sick leave, time off for training, etc.;
- Failure to disclose unspent criminal conviction(s) or any convictions, whether spent or not, in respect of posts exempt under the terms of the [Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#);
- Providing false information on a job application form including false information concerning immigration status.

5. Procedures

If informal action fails to achieve the required improvement in performance or behaviour, or in cases of gross misconduct where informal action would not be appropriate, then this procedure is followed. This procedure applies to all employees once their probationary period is completed.

a. Invitation to a Disciplinary Meeting

Following an investigation the employee should, without unavoidable delay, be given a letter detailing the allegation, the possible consequences and inviting them to a disciplinary meeting. The meeting will be arranged as soon as possible following the raising of the issue, yet still allowing reasonable time for the employee to prepare their case. This will also state that they have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague at the meeting.

The employee only has the right to be accompanied to this meeting. Any entitlement offered above this is entirely at the discretion of APIE. This companion can speak at the meeting on behalf of the employee, but they cannot answer questions on the employee's behalf. APIE will always consider whether any reasonable adjustments are required for disabled employees.

The employee will be provided with copies of all documentation and supporting evidence to be presented at the meeting. The employee will receive details about the problem in advance of any formal meeting to give them time to read and digest the information. To suddenly produce new information or allegations about an employee at a disciplinary meeting is likely to be seen as unreasonable.

It will be unusual for witnesses to give oral evidence at a disciplinary hearing but if witnesses are to be called the employee will be notified in advance. The notification letter should also explain the possible consequences such as a potential warning or dismissal.

If an employee fails to attend a disciplinary meeting, APIE will try and rearrange the meeting at least one more time. If the employee continues to be absent but has a good reason such as sickness (including stress-related illness) APIE will work to be as flexible as possible to make alternative arrangements. However, ultimately APIE has the right to go ahead with the meeting in the absence of the employee and make a decision based on the information they have, as long as the employee has been given every opportunity to participate and put forward their side of the case. The employee will be given due notice that this will happen. APIE will consider any written representations made or representations made by the representative if they attend alone.

b. Disciplinary Meeting

The Line Manager (or Chair of the Board of Trustees as appropriate) will open the meeting with an explanation of its purpose and will read aloud the allegations. Where possible a note-taker, who must be uninvolved in the case, will take down a record of the meeting.

The Line Manager/Chair will then ask the employee if they wish to take the opportunity to respond to the allegations or concerns or if there are any mitigating circumstances to be taken into account. The Line Manager/Chair may question the employee and any witnesses called. If there are any witnesses, they should not be present throughout the meeting. They should be called in, one by one, to give their evidence and asked to leave once they have done so. The employee and their representative can ask questions of any witnesses called.

The Line Manager (or Chair) will summarise the main points of the discussion and ask the employee if they have anything further to say. The Line Manager (or Chair) will then consider the details heard in private. They must decide whether the case against the employee has been

established on the balance of probabilities, i.e. whether misconduct is confirmed or the employee's performance is found to be unsatisfactory. If this is the case, when they are considering appropriate disciplinary action, they should also consider any special, mitigating circumstances, the employee's previous disciplinary or performance record, how APIE has dealt with similar cases in the past and whether the proposed action is reasonable in view of all the circumstances.

The Line Manager (or Chair) shall give the employee written confirmation of the decision within five working days of the meeting. This will include notifying the employee of their right of appeal and the procedure to be followed. The employee should be informed in writing of any decision on whether disciplinary action is appropriate and how long the penalty will last, the improvement expected, the time period for improvement, and the procedure and time limits for appeal.

If the decision is to be dismissal, the employee should be notified as quickly as possible, explaining the reasons for the dismissal and the date when the employment will end.

c. Disciplinary Action

If following the disciplinary meeting it is decided to take action, one of the sanctions below may be applied.

Stage 1 - Written Warning

If conduct does not meet acceptable standards, the employee will normally be given a written warning by their Line Manager (or in the case of the CEO, the Chair of Trustees). They will be advised of the reason for the warning, that it is the first stage of the disciplinary procedure and of their right of appeal. A copy of this written warning detailing the complaint, the change in behaviour required and dates for review will be kept in the employee's personal file but will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 12 months.

Or Improvement Note for Unsatisfactory Performance

If performance does not meet acceptable standards the employee will normally be given an improvement note by their Line Manager (or in the case of the CEO, the Chair of Trustees). They will be advised of the reason for the note and of their right of appeal. A copy of this note detailing the performance problem, the improvement required, the set timescale for improvement and dates for review will be kept in the employee's personal file but will be considered spent after 12 months, subject to achieving and sustaining satisfactory performance.

A copy of any written warning or improvement note should be kept and used as the basis for monitoring and reviewing performance over the course of the following year.

Stage 2 – Final Written Warning

If performance is still unsatisfactory or if a further misconduct occurs, or if the misconduct is sufficiently serious to warrant only one written warning but insufficiently serious to justify dismissal (in effect both first and final written warnings), the employee will be given a final written warning. This will give details of the complaint, the improvement required, the set timescale for improvement and dates for review. It will warn that dismissal may result if there is no satisfactory improvement and will advise of the right of appeal. A copy of this final written warning will be kept on file but will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after a period to be specified by the decision maker at the time the final warning is given, subject to achieving and sustaining satisfactory conduct or performance.

Stage 3 - Dismissal

If conduct or performance is still unsatisfactory and the employee fails to reach the prescribed standards, or if the offence constitutes gross misconduct, dismissal will normally result. The employee will be provided as soon as reasonably practicable with written reasons for dismissal, the date on which his/her employment will terminate and be advised of the right of appeal.

All employees outside of their probationary periods have the right, on request, to have a written statement of particulars of reasons for dismissal.

d. Appeal

An employee may appeal against the decisions of the disciplinary meeting taken under this procedure to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, or if the Chair has already been involved in an earlier stage of the procedure, to any other member of the Board of Trustees. The employee wishing to appeal against a disciplinary decision must do so in writing within five working days of receiving written notification of the disciplinary action, stating the reasons for the appeal. Any documents submitted in support of the appeal must be attached.

Arrangements for the appeal meeting will be made by the Chair (or other nominated Trustee, if appropriate) who will ensure that a note-taker is present if possible. The appeal meeting should be held without unavoidable delay. Where possible, at least two members of the Board will constitute an Appeal Panel and excluding any who line-manage the employee and who made the decision which is the subject of the appeal.

Ideally the manager or Board members who will deal with the appeal should not have undertaken the original investigation or made the original disciplinary decision. However, due to the size of APIE this may not always be possible. As such, any appeal undertaken will be approached in as unbiased and open-minded a manner as possible.

The decision following the appeal meeting will be given in writing to the employee. The decision of the Appeal Panel or person hearing the appeal shall be final.

e. Suspension

Suspension without pay is regarded as a form of penalty once a disciplinary decision has been made. It can only be used as per its explicit mention in an employee's contract of employment.

Suspension with pay for a reasonable period will not be in breach of contract where the allegation is of a serious nature. It is part of the disciplinary procedure but it is not a penalty. The suspension period should be kept to a minimum and the investigation should be carried out speedily.

Suspension will only take place where it is considered that the employee may impede the disciplinary investigation or commit further offences if they remain at work.

The CEO or Chair of the Board of Trustees will inform the employee in writing that they are to be suspended immediately: stating the nature of the alleged offence, the purpose of suspension, and its anticipated duration. Suspension in these circumstances should be no longer than required to complete the investigation.

If, on completion of the investigation and the full disciplinary procedure, the organisation is satisfied that gross misconduct has occurred, the result will normally be summary dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice.

6. Probationary Employees

This full procedure does not apply to probationary employees. The Line Manager of a probationary employee will assess the employee's performance through the probationary supervision and review process. Warnings will normally be given to employees before any final action being taken should there be concerns about performance or conduct.

Where dismissal of the probationary employee is considered due to unsatisfactory performance or conduct, or in cases of gross misconduct, the employee will be notified in writing of the problem, the time and venue for the probationary review meeting, their right to be accompanied and the potential dismissal outcome. A meeting will be held and the employee will be entitled to appeal.

If the employee wishes to appeal against the dismissal, they must do so in writing to the Chair of the Board of Trustees (or other nominated Trustee in the case of the position being line-managed by the Chair of Trustees) within five working days of receiving written notification of the dismissal, stating the reasons for the appeal. Any supporting documents must be attached.

Arrangements for the appeal hearing will be made by the Chair who will ensure that a note-taker is present. Where possible, at least two members of the Board will constitute an Appeal Panel, and will exclude any who line-manage the employee, or who made the decision which is the subject of the appeal. The employee may be accompanied at any appeal hearing.

The decision of the Appeal Panel or person hearing the appeal shall be final.

End of Disciplinary Policy & Procedure.