

Organisation Policy & Compliance Framework

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Section 1: Code of Conduct

1.1 Professional Standards

All employees are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism, respect, and integrity in all workplace interactions, whether in person, remote, or via digital communication. Northbridge Advisory Partners does not tolerate behaviour that undermines a colleague's dignity, professional standing, or ability to perform their role.

1.2 Reporting Obligations

Any employee who witnesses or experiences conduct that may breach this Code is encouraged to report the matter to the Employee Relations Specialist, their line manager, or via the confidential ethics hotline. Reports made in good faith will not result in adverse consequences for the reporter.

Section 2: Grievance Policy

2.1 Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Northbridge Advisory Partners and covers workplace grievances relating to working conditions, management conduct, pay and benefits, discrimination, and interpersonal conflict.

2.2 Informal Resolution

Employees are encouraged to resolve grievances informally where possible, by raising the matter directly with their line manager or the HR Business Partner. A record of the informal discussion should be retained by the HR Business Partner.

2.3 Formal Grievance Procedure

Where informal resolution has been attempted and failed, or where the matter is sufficiently serious, the employee may file a formal grievance in writing to the Employee Relations Specialist. The formal procedure is:

1. Written grievance submitted within 10 working days of the most recent incident
2. Acknowledgement issued within 3 working days
3. Investigation completed within 15 working days
4. Grievance hearing scheduled within 5 working days of investigation completion
5. Written outcome provided within 5 working days of the hearing

2.4 Appeal

The employee may appeal the grievance outcome in writing within 10 working days. Appeals are heard by the HR Director or a nominated senior leader who was not involved in the original decision.

Section 3: Performance Management Policy

3.1 Annual Performance Review

All employees receive an annual performance review conducted by their line manager. Reviews are documented in the HRIS and must include: (a) assessment against agreed objectives, (b) evidence of capability demonstration, and (c) development actions for the coming period.

3.2 Performance Improvement Process

Where a manager identifies a sustained performance concern, the following steps must be completed before initiating a formal Performance Improvement Plan (PIP):

1. Documented verbal feedback — the manager must provide specific, evidence-based feedback and record the date, content, and the employee's response
2. Formal discussion meeting — a face-to-face meeting with the employee to discuss the concerns, hear the employee's perspective, and agree on an improvement timeframe
3. Reasonable improvement period — a minimum of 4 weeks during which the employee receives documented support and regular feedback

3.3 Formal PIP

A PIP may only be initiated after the steps in Section 3.2 are completed. The PIP must specify: measurable improvement objectives, the support to be provided, the review period (typically 8-12 weeks), and the potential consequences of failing to meet the objectives.

3.4 Approval and Communication

No PIP may be communicated to the employee without prior written approval from the Employee Relations Specialist. The Employee Relations Specialist must confirm that the procedural requirements in Section 3.2 have been met.

3.5 Right to Representation

The employee has the right to be accompanied by a colleague or representative at any formal PIP meeting.

Section 4: Disciplinary Policy

4.1 Scope

This policy applies to conduct that may constitute misconduct or gross misconduct. Performance issues are managed under Section 3 unless the conduct element is separable.

4.2 Levels of Disciplinary Action

- **Verbal Warning:** For minor first offences where the employee has not previously been warned
- **Written Warning:** For repeated minor offences, or a first offence of moderate seriousness
- **Final Written Warning:** For serious offences or repeated misconduct following a written warning
- **Dismissal:** For gross misconduct, or failure to improve following a final written warning

4.3 Investigation

All disciplinary matters must be investigated before any formal action is taken. The investigation should be proportionate to the seriousness of the allegation and must be conducted by an individual who is not the line manager involved in the matter.

4.4 Right to Appeal

The employee may appeal any disciplinary decision in writing within 10 working days. Appeals are heard by the HR Director.

Section 5: Workplace Conflict Resolution Policy

5.1 Scope

This policy addresses interpersonal conflicts between employees that do not meet the threshold for formal grievance or disciplinary action but are affecting working relationships, team performance, or wellbeing.

5.2 Early Intervention

Managers who become aware of workplace conflict are expected to address the matter promptly. Early intervention includes separate conversations with each party, assessment of the situation, and a determination of whether informal resolution or mediation is appropriate.

5.3 Mediation

Where early intervention has not resolved the conflict, mediation should be offered to both parties. Mediation is voluntary but recommended. The mediator must be a trained individual who is not a line manager of either party.

5.4 Escalation

If mediation is declined or fails, the Employee Relations Specialist may escalate the matter to a formal process under the Grievance or Disciplinary Policy as appropriate.

Section 6: Equal Pay and Compensation Equity

6.1 Commitment

Northbridge Advisory Partners is committed to pay equity. Employees performing substantially similar work at the same grade level should receive comparable compensation, adjusted for tenure, performance, market benchmarking, and documented role-specific factors.

6.2 Pay Review Process

Pay equity concerns may be raised through the Grievance Policy (Section 2). The Compensation Analyst will conduct a benchmarking review and present findings to the HR Director within 20 working days.

6.3 Acquired Employee Salary Protections

Employees joining through acquisition may have protected salary arrangements for a transitional period. Protected salary terms must be documented, have a defined expiry date, and the rationale must be disclosed to the HR Director. After the protection period, standard pay equity principles apply.

Section 7: Data Protection and Confidentiality

7.1 Employee Data

Employee relations case files, performance records, and compensation data are classified as Internal Confidential. Access is restricted to the assigned Employee Relations Specialist, the HR Director, and any manager with a documented need-to-know basis.

7.2 GenAI Tool Use

Employee relations data must not be processed through public or unapproved GenAI tools. Only tools on the approved enterprise list (currently ChatGPT Enterprise and Microsoft Copilot) may be used, and only after redaction of personal identifiers including names, home addresses, and medical information.

Known Gaps and Overdue Reviews

Policy Section	Last Reviewed	Review Overdue Since	Status
Section 2: Grievance Policy	Prior annual review cycle	Subsequent review checkpoint missed	Overdue — 12 months
Section 3: Performance Management Policy	Prior annual review cycle	Subsequent review checkpoint missed	Overdue — 9 months
Section 5: Workplace Conflict Resolution	Prior annual review cycle	Subsequent review checkpoint missed	Overdue — 17 months
Section 6: Equal Pay and Compensation Equity	Prior annual review cycle	Subsequent review checkpoint missed	Overdue — 6 months

Note: Section 6.3 (Acquired Employee Salary Protections) was added as a temporary addendum after the Meridian acquisition but has not been through a formal policy review cycle. The expiry mechanism for salary protections (referenced in 6.3) lacks an operational procedure — there is no documented process for what happens when a protection period ends.