



Marlow FM - Disciplinary Policy

Introduction

We work to ensure that we handle any issues concerning a volunteer's conduct promptly and fairly.

If we have any concerns about your conduct, we will usually attempt to talk to you about this on an informal basis. An early conversation may be enough to identify the issue and take steps to resolve it. Most minor conduct-related issues can be resolved informally.

Examples of misconduct for which disciplinary action is appropriate include (but are not limited to):

- Failing to secure the studio site correctly
- Failing to comply with the Health and Safety guidelines, including but not limited to the correct signing in process
- persistently missing your allocated show and not informing the relevant persons
- disruptive, insulting or offensive behaviour towards others, not amounting to serious harassment or bullying
- Misuse of Marlow FM social media platforms

Allegations of misconduct

Where an allegation of misconduct is made against you that cannot be resolved informally, or it is not appropriate to do so, the allegation will be explained to you by the HR Director. The details of the allegation will also be confirmed to you in writing, together with a copy of this disciplinary procedure.

Depending on the nature of the alleged conduct, we may suggest mediation to try to resolve it. We will use mediation only where you, and any other individuals involved in the disciplinary issue, agree to do so.

However, where an informal approach is unsuccessful, or the allegations are so serious that an informal approach is inappropriate, we will follow a formal disciplinary procedure.

This policy outlines the disciplinary procedure, the roles of those involved and the support that is available to you.

This policy forms part of your volunteer agreement with Marlow FM, and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

Grievances

If you have a grievance that relates to ongoing disciplinary proceedings, you should raise this during the disciplinary procedure and not through our separate grievance procedure (for example during the disciplinary meeting or appeal stage).

If you raise a grievance during disciplinary proceedings that is unrelated to those proceedings, the disciplinary proceedings and grievance procedure will normally run independently in parallel.

Fairness and respect

We recognise that a disciplinary procedure can be stressful and upsetting. Everyone involved in the process is entitled to be treated calmly and with respect.



We will not tolerate abusive or insulting behaviour from anyone taking part in a disciplinary procedure and treat any such behaviour as further potential misconduct.

Remote proceedings

Where it is not possible to hold a face-to-face meeting under this procedure, we will conduct the process remotely. Your rights will not be affected, and we will ensure that the procedure remains fair and reasonable.

Adjustments to proceedings

If you have a disability that may have an impact on your ability to participate fully in this procedure, you should let us know by contacting the HR Director via direct message on Slack or direct email, who will make appropriate arrangements for you.

Recording of meetings

We will take a written record of all meetings conducted under this procedure. This will be done either by the person holding the meeting or by an additional person arranged by us to take notes.

You, or any person acting on your behalf, are not normally permitted to record electronically any meeting that we hold under this procedure. This is to encourage openness and full participation. Any breach of this provision may lead to further disciplinary action, which could include dismissal.

In certain limited circumstances, we may permit a meeting to be recorded electronically, for example where it is a reasonable adjustment for a volunteer with a disability. Where we permit a meeting to be recorded electronically, we will take responsibility for making the recording.

Change of circumstances

Sometimes circumstances prevent parts of this procedure from being followed in full. For example, a volunteer may be too ill to participate in a disciplinary meeting or a specified Director may be unavailable to chair the meeting. When this happens, we will do our best to ensure that you fully understand the allegations, are given a proper opportunity to respond to them and that your response is fairly and carefully considered.

Postponement of meetings

We will make every effort to ensure that any meeting we hold under this procedure is scheduled for a time and place that is reasonable. You are therefore required to attend the meeting if it is possible for you to do so. If you are too ill to attend, or have some other reasonable excuse, we will consider re-arranging the meeting to a time when your attendance is possible.

However, it is important to ensure that disciplinary procedures are completed within a reasonable timescale. We reserve the right to proceed with a meeting in your absence when it has not been possible to arrange a meeting that you are able to attend. In that case, we will make every effort to ensure that you are able to make representations in writing or through a representative.

Disciplinary Stages

Stage 1 - Investigation

Stage 2 – Formal Verbal Warning



Stage 3 – Written Warning

Stage 4 – Final Written Warning

Final Stage - Dismissal

Stage 1 - Investigation Stage

We will investigate the allegations to decide whether there is sufficient evidence to justify taking the matter further.

The person appointed to conduct the investigation will usually talk to you at an early stage to hear your response to the allegations and will talk to anyone else who may have relevant information.

Where appropriate, the investigation may also include the examination of documents, including emails and other forms of electronic communication. It is important that you cooperate fully with the investigation process as this is the best way to ensure a fair outcome.

Once the investigation is complete, we will decide which stage of the disciplinary policy is best suited.

Stage 2 – Formal Verbal Warning

A formal verbal warning may be given to a volunteer if, despite informal discussions or training, the conduct or performance still does not meet acceptable standards. This formal verbal warning will be kept on file for 12 months after which time it will lapse.

Stage 3 – Written Warning

If there is no improvement in standards within the prescribed time, or if a further offence occurs, the volunteer will receive a letter from the HR Director inviting them to attend a further disciplinary meeting. The disciplinary meeting will take place as soon as is reasonably possible, but with sufficient time for the volunteer to consider their response to the information contained in the letter. The meeting will be an opportunity for both the volunteer (with their representative if chosen by the volunteer) and the Director to talk about the issues or allegations being made, consider the information with a view to establishing whether to progress the disciplinary action.

Following the disciplinary meeting, if it is decided that no further action is warranted, the volunteer will be informed in writing. If the volunteer is found to be performing unsatisfactorily or their behaviour is deemed unsatisfactory they will be given a written warning. A copy of the written warning will be kept on file but the warning will lapse after 12 months subject to satisfactory conduct and/or performance. Where a written warning is given, the Managing Director will be advised and kept up to date with any progress.

Stage 4 – Final Written Warning

If the conduct or performance still remains unsatisfactory by the stipulated date, or if the misconduct is sufficiently serious to warrant only one written warning, a further disciplinary meeting (where the Managing Director will be present) should be called with the volunteer and their representative. The disciplinary meeting will be an opportunity for the volunteer to answer the issues raised. Were this meeting to establish that there has been a failure to improve or change behaviour, then a final written warning will be given to the volunteer.

Final Stage – Dismissal

If the volunteer's conduct or performance still fails to improve or if further serious misconduct occurs, the final stage in the disciplinary process may be instituted and the volunteer dismissed.

Conduct and behaviour

Gross misconduct

Gross misconduct is conduct that is so serious that it justifies immediate dismissal although we will always consider the circumstances of any case before deciding on the appropriate penalty.



Examples of gross misconduct include (but are not limited to):

- theft and dishonesty
- physical violence
- serious instances of bullying or harassment (whether it takes place in person or online)
- acts of discrimination against fellow members, guests or members of the public
- deliberate damage to Marlow FM property
- any conduct that negatively affects our reputation
- unauthorised disclosure of confidential information
- serious breach of our rules, policies and procedures including, but not restricted to, health and safety rules
- consuming alcohol or unlawful drugs in the studio or any outside broadcast event at which you are representing Marlow FM
- smoking (including the use of e-cigarettes) in the studio or in the OB trailer
- unauthorised use of computer equipment
- accessing obscene or pornographic material on equipment that we provide
- deliberate breach of procedures on the handling of personal data
- provision of false information relevant to a person's volunteering position
- deliberate refusal to follow reasonable instructions
- breach of cash-handling procedures
- deliberate breach of professional standards relevant to your volunteer role
- offering or accepting a bribe within the meaning of the Bribery Act 2010

Misconduct

Examples of misconduct for which disciplinary action is appropriate include (but are not limited to):

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Suspension

In some cases, it may be appropriate to suspend you from your volunteer role for a temporary period while the disciplinary matter is dealt with. This is in no way intended to indicate guilt on your part, but is an administrative measure designed to protect Marlow FM and to ensure the smooth running of the disciplinary procedure. Any period of suspension will be regularly reviewed and kept as short as possible.

Hearing your disciplinary case

Invitation to a disciplinary meeting

If we consider that it is necessary to hold a disciplinary meeting, we will confirm this to you in writing. You will usually be given at least two days' notice of any meeting, depending on the complexity of the case, to allow you to prepare and to arrange for a companion to accompany you.



You will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow volunteer. The responsibility for finding a companion rests with you. If your chosen companion is not a fellow volunteer, we reserve the right to refuse their attendance at any meetings.

We will give you a copy of any evidence collated during the investigation in advance of the disciplinary meeting, and you will be invited to submit any further evidence that you consider to be relevant.

The disciplinary meeting

The disciplinary meeting will be conducted by an appropriate representative of the management team.

The evidence gathered during the investigation will be presented and you will be given an opportunity to confer and to respond. You may also call on witnesses to give evidence on your behalf, if they are willing, and their evidence is relevant to the issues being considered in the meeting.

The chair of the meeting may choose to adjourn the meeting so that further evidence can be obtained. If this happens, the meeting will be reconvened once this is done, and you will be given an opportunity to respond to any new evidence. Before the meeting closes, you (or your companion) will be given an opportunity to make any comments or representations that you think are relevant and which may explain the situation.

The outcome

The chair of the meeting will usually adjourn for a period to consider the outcome. The outcome will usually be communicated when the meeting is reconvened but will, in any case, be confirmed to you in writing as soon as possible and usually within seven days after the meeting.

Disciplinary penalties

If the allegations are upheld to any extent, formal disciplinary action may be taken. This will usually take the form of a formal verbal warning for a first offence. However, we reserve the right to implement this procedure at any stage depending on the circumstances and misconduct.

Duration of warnings

When you are given a warning, we will tell you how long it will remain live. This will depend on the specific circumstances. Warnings may be live for a longer period depending on the seriousness of the misconduct and the wider circumstances of the case. Once a warning has expired, it will no longer be considered when determining the level of any further disciplinary action.

Dismissals

If you are found to have committed misconduct while subject to a live final written warning, the outcome may be that you are dismissed.

If you are found to have committed gross misconduct, the outcome may result in you being dismissed.

Appeal

Appealing against the outcome

If you believe that a disciplinary penalty is unfair, you are entitled to appeal.

You should appeal in writing to the person advised to you in the disciplinary outcome letter within seven days of its receipt. You should also set out in writing the grounds on which you believe the outcome of the original meeting to have been unfair.

Appeal meeting



Following receipt of your appeal, we will arrange an appeal meeting within five days or as soon as is practical. You are entitled to be accompanied at the appeal meeting by a fellow volunteer.

The appeal meeting will be conducted by a member of the Senior Management Team, who will consider the grounds that you have put forward and review the conclusion reached in the original disciplinary meeting. At the meeting you will be given the opportunity to explain why you feel the initial meeting reached the wrong conclusion. Depending on the circumstances, the meeting may either solely consider the points that you have raised, or it may reconsider the whole case and reach its own conclusion on the correct outcome.

Outcome of appeal

Following the appeal meeting, the relevant member of the management team will inform you in writing, usually within seven days, of the outcome. If the result of the appeal is that a decision to dismiss you is overturned, you will be reinstated with immediate effect.

The outcome of the appeal is final.