Food at desks policy

**Policy statement**

The Company imposes a blanket ban on staff eating food at their desks or whilst walking around the workplace. This includes both hot and cold food and it encompasses snack food, such as crisps, chocolate bars, fruit and sweets. If you need to eat during the day, you should do this in the designated kitchen or canteen areas. Food is restricted to these areas. Main meals should only be eaten during designated lunch breaks but light snacks may be consumed in reasonable amounts during working hours. Sore throat lozenges can, however, be consumed at desks.

The reasons for this ban are as follows:

* Food can easily get rubbed into desk surfaces or flooring and so cause a cleanliness and hygiene problem.
* Food can damage company property and equipment such as computer keyboards and books.
* Eating food can be noisy and hot food in particular can leave odours that linger in the workplace throughout the day.
* It avoids unprofessionalism in the workplace should a client, customer, contractor or supplier be present.
* It avoids unprofessionalism on the telephone should a client, customer, contractor or supplier call in.
* It helps to ensure the health and safety of all staff, for example by encouraging employees to take a break from sitting at their desks all day.
* It avoids smelly food garbage being placed in desk bins.

If you bring perishable food into the office, this should be stored in the refrigerators that are provided and, in any event, must not be stored there for longer than two days. It must be kept in sealed containers or properly packaged.

Non-perishable food can be stored in the cupboards in the designated kitchen or canteen areas, and light snacks such as crisps, chocolate bars and sweets can be stored in desk drawers, all to be consumed before the relevant expiry date, and provided again that it is kept in sealed containers or properly packaged.

Where food is stored in communal areas, you may wish to clearly mark it with your name.

Communal cupboards will be checked [monthly] and fridges will be checked [weekly] to maintain hygiene standards and to keep them fit for purpose. If an item has reached its expiry date or shows obvious signs of perishing, it will be immediately disposed of.

**Drinking in the workplace**

Employees are, however, permitted to drink at their desks (although for health and safety reasons they should not attempt to drink hot drinks whilst walking around the workplace). Both hot and cold drinks are permitted, such as tea, coffee, hot chocolate, water and fizzy drinks. A drink does not include soup of any kind or alcoholic beverages. It is important for staff to stay properly hydrated during the working day. However, all reasonable care must be taken to avoid spillages and you must thoroughly clean up accidental spillages as soon as possible and immediately report to your line manager any damage that they may have caused to company property or equipment.

1. **Contravention of this policy**
2. Failure to comply with any of the requirements of this policy is a disciplinary offence and may result in disciplinary action being taken under the Company’s disciplinary procedure.