Employee Handbook 2024

AFK Compassionate Health Care







Because we Care, you thrive

Medical Agency
APPROVAL SHEET
Document Owner: Compliance
Document Version: 1.0
Implementation Responsibility: Compliance Department
Operating Jurisdiction: State of Oregon, United States
Review Frequency: 3 years or earlier if required
Review Responsibility: Compliance Department
Last Approved: N/A
Approval Date:
Effective Date: From the date of approval
Next Review Date: 2027
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1. Introduction

1.1. Mission Statement

1.1.1. Welcome to AFK Compassionate Care! We are delighted to have you as a valued member of our team. At AFK Compassionate Care, we are committed to creating a positive and supportive environment where every employee is empowered to provide exceptional care to our clients. Your role is critical in helping us achieve our mission of enhancing the quality of life for individuals in need of assisted living services. We believe that every team member contributes to our success and shares in our dedication to compassion, integrity, and excellence in everything we do. We look forward to your contributions and are excited to have you as part of our family.

1.2. About the Handbook

1.2.1. This employee handbook is designed to provide you with essential information about AFK Compassionate Care, our policies, procedures, and the standards we expect from all employees. The handbook serves as a comprehensive guide to help you understand your role, responsibilities, and rights as an employee, as well as the resources available to support you in your work. While this handbook provides a detailed overview of our employment policies, it is not exhaustive and does not cover every situation that may arise. We encourage you to speak with your supervisor or the Human Resources (HR) department if you have any questions or need further clarification about any of the policies outlined in this handbook.

1.3. Mission, Vision, and Core Values

1.3.1. **Mission:** Our mission is to maximize the quality of life for individuals in need of assisted living by providing personalized, high-quality care in a facility that promotes a safe, healthy, and caring environment.

1.3.2. **Vision:** We envision a community where all individuals, regardless of their abilities, have the opportunity to realize their full potential. We are dedicated to building nurturing relationships, promoting personal choice, and fostering active participation in daily activities to encourage growth and positive change.

1.3.3. **Core Values:**

- **Compassion:** We approach each client with kindness, empathy, and respect, ensuring their needs and preferences are prioritized.
- **Integrity:** We uphold the highest standards of honesty and ethical conduct in all interactions and decisions.
- **Excellence:** We are committed to delivering exceptional care through continuous improvement, professional development, and adherence to best practices.

- **Respect:** We honor the individuality of each client, respecting their choices, privacy, and cultural backgrounds.
- **Collaboration:** We work collaboratively with clients, families, caregivers, and community partners to provide comprehensive and coordinated care.
- **Accountability:** We take responsibility for our actions, ensuring transparency and reliability in all aspects of our services.

1.3.4. Our mission, vision, and core values guide every decision we make and every interaction we have with our clients, their families, and our community. We encourage you to embrace these principles in your daily work, as they are the foundation of our organization.

1.4. Equal Opportunity Employment Statement

1.4.1. AFK Compassionate Care is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We are committed to providing an inclusive and supportive workplace where all employees are treated fairly and with respect, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. We value diversity and believe that a diverse workforce strengthens our organization and enhances the quality of care we provide. We encourage applications from individuals of all backgrounds and are dedicated to maintaining a work environment free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

1.5. At-Will Employment Disclaimer

1.5.1. Employment with AFK Compassionate Care is "at-will," meaning that either you or the company may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause or notice, except as otherwise provided by applicable law. This handbook is not a contract of employment, and nothing in this handbook or any other document or statement shall change the at-will nature of your employment. While we hope that our relationship will be long and mutually beneficial, this at-will policy allows flexibility for both the employee and the employer to end the employment relationship when it is in their best interest.

2. Company Overview

2.1. History of AFK Compassionate Care

2.1.1. AFK Compassionate Care was founded by Abolhassan Karneh, a dedicated caregiver with over 13 years of experience in providing care to individuals in need of assisted living services. Over the years, Abolhassan has developed a deep understanding of the challenges faced by those who require assistance with daily activities, as well as a passion for improving their quality of life. This passion led to the establishment of AFK Compassionate Care, an organization committed to providing personalized, compassionate care that focuses on the unique needs of each individual.

2.1.2. Since its inception, AFK Compassionate Care has grown into a respected provider in the community, known for its commitment to excellence and personalized care. Our reputation is built on the trust and relationships we have established with our clients, their families, and our dedicated team members. We continue to expand and evolve, driven by our core values and our dedication to serving those who need us most.

2.2. Organizational Structure

2.2.1. AFK Compassionate Care operates with a clear organizational structure designed to ensure effective communication, collaboration, and delivery of high-quality care services. Below is an overview of the key roles within our organization:

- **Owner/Director:**
  The Owner/Director, Abolhassan Karneh, is responsible for the overall vision, strategy, and leadership of AFK Compassionate Care. The Director ensures that the organization's mission, vision, and values are reflected in all aspects of our operations and services.

- **Operations Manager:**
  The Operations Manager oversees the day-to-day management of the facility, ensuring that all departments function smoothly and efficiently. This role includes managing staff, coordinating care services, maintaining regulatory compliance, and ensuring a safe and welcoming environment for clients and employees.

- **Care Coordinators:**
  Care Coordinators are responsible for developing and managing individualized care plans for each client, based on their unique needs and preferences. They work closely with the nursing staff, support staff, and the clients' families to ensure seamless delivery of care.

- **Nursing Staff:**
  Our Nursing Staff includes Registered Nurses (RNs), Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), and Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) who provide medical care, health monitoring, and assistance with daily living activities. They play a critical role in maintaining the health and well-being of our clients.

- **Support Staff:**
  The Support Staff includes kitchen staff, housekeeping personnel, and maintenance workers who ensure that the facility is clean, safe, and comfortable for clients and staff. They contribute to creating a positive and supportive environment.

- **Human Resources (HR):**
  The HR department handles recruitment, onboarding, employee relations, training, and compliance with employment laws. HR is also responsible for implementing policies related to employee welfare and professional development.

2.3. Services Provided

2.3.1. AFK Compassionate Care offers a comprehensive range of services designed to meet the diverse needs of our clients and promote their overall well-being. Our services include:

- **Personalized Assisted Living:**
  We create individualized care plans tailored to each client's unique needs, preferences, and goals. This includes assistance with daily living activities such as bathing, dressing, grooming, and mobility.

- **24/7 Care Support:**
  Our trained staff is available around the clock to provide assistance, ensure safety, and respond to any emergencies. This continuous care ensures that clients receive the support they need at any time of day or night.

- **Health Monitoring:**
  We offer regular health checks, medication management, and coordination with healthcare providers to monitor and maintain the health of our clients. Our nursing staff is trained to identify early signs of health issues and provide prompt interventions.

- **Social and Recreational Activities:**
  AFK Compassionate Care provides a variety of social and recreational activities designed to engage clients, promote social interaction, and enhance their quality of life. Activities may include group exercises, arts and crafts, music therapy, and outings in the community.

- **Nutritional Services:**
  Our facility offers balanced meal plans that cater to the dietary needs and preferences of our clients. We focus on providing nutritious meals that support overall health and well-being, taking into account any dietary restrictions or medical conditions.

- **Emotional and Psychological Support:**
  We offer access to counseling services and mental health support to ensure the emotional and psychological well-being of our clients. This includes providing a safe space for clients to express their feelings and receive the care they need.

2.4. Workplace Culture and Philosophy

2.4.1. At AFK Compassionate Care, we pride ourselves on fostering a workplace culture that values compassion, respect, and teamwork. Our philosophy is rooted in the belief that every employee plays a vital role in delivering exceptional care and that a positive, inclusive work environment is key to achieving this goal.

- **Compassion and Empathy:**
  We approach our work with genuine care and empathy, recognizing that our clients are individuals with unique needs and experiences. We encourage our team members to build meaningful relationships with clients, based on trust and mutual respect.
- **Respect and Inclusivity:**
  We celebrate diversity and value the unique perspectives that each team member brings to our organization. We are committed to creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels respected, valued, and empowered to contribute their best.
- **Collaboration and Teamwork:**
  We believe that collaboration and teamwork are essential to delivering the highest quality of care. Our team members are encouraged to communicate openly, share knowledge, and support one another in achieving our shared goals.
- **Continuous Improvement:**
  We are dedicated to continuous learning and improvement. We encourage our employees to pursue professional development opportunities, stay updated on best practices, and contribute ideas that enhance the quality of our services.
- **Accountability and Integrity:**
  We hold ourselves accountable for our actions and decisions, maintaining the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct. We are transparent in our communication and ensure that our policies and practices align with our mission and values.

2.4.2. By embracing these principles, we create a positive work environment that not only supports our employees but also ensures the best possible outcomes for our clients. At AFK Compassionate Care, we believe that a happy and engaged workforce is the key to delivering exceptional care and achieving our vision.

3. Employment Policies

3.1. Employment Classification

3.1.1. AFK Compassionate Care classifies employees into the following categories for purposes of compensation, benefits, and eligibility:

- **Full-Time Employees:** Employees who are regularly scheduled to work 30 or more hours per week. Full-time employees are eligible for the full range of company benefits, including health insurance, paid time off, and retirement plans.
- **Part-Time Employees:** Employees who are regularly scheduled to work fewer than 30 hours per week. Part-time employees may be eligible for some benefits, as specified in the benefits section of this handbook.
- **Temporary Employees:** Employees hired for a specific project or a limited duration, usually not exceeding six months. Temporary employees are not eligible for benefits unless required by law.
- **On-Call Employees:** Employees who work on an as-needed basis and do not have a regular schedule. On-call employees are not eligible for benefits unless required by law.
- **Exempt Employees:** Employees who are exempt from overtime pay requirements under applicable laws. Exempt employees are generally paid a fixed salary and are expected to fulfill the responsibilities of their position regardless of hours worked.
- **Non-Exempt Employees:** Employees who are eligible for overtime pay under applicable laws. Non-exempt employees are paid hourly and receive overtime compensation for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week, in compliance with state and federal regulations.

3.2. Job Postings and Internal Opportunities

3.2.1. AFK Compassionate Care is committed to providing career advancement opportunities to its employees. All job openings will be posted internally for a minimum of five business days before external recruitment begins. Employees who meet the qualifications for the position are encouraged to apply.

- **Application Process:** Internal candidates should submit a letter of interest and an updated resume to the Human Resources (HR) department. HR will review applications, and qualified candidates will be invited for an interview.
- **Equal Opportunity:** AFK Compassionate Care promotes equal opportunity in all employment practices, including internal job postings. Selection for internal positions is based on qualifications, performance, and potential to fulfill the job requirements.

3.3. Recruitment and Hiring Process

3.3.1. AFK Compassionate Care aims to hire qualified and dedicated individuals who align with the organization's values and mission. The recruitment and hiring process includes:

- **Job Posting and Advertisement:** Open positions are advertised both internally and externally. Advertisements will clearly state the job title, duties, qualifications, and the statement that AFK Compassionate Care is an Equal Opportunity Employer.
- **Application Review:** HR will review all applications and resumes received to identify candidates who meet the minimum qualifications. Selected candidates will be contacted for an initial interview.
- **Interview Process:** The interview process may include multiple rounds, including a phone screening and in-person or virtual interviews. Interviews will be conducted by a panel consisting of HR representatives, supervisors, and department managers.
- **Selection Criteria:** Candidates will be evaluated based on their skills, experience, cultural fit, and alignment with the organization's values. Final selection is made based on the overall assessment of the candidate's suitability for the role.

3.4. Background Checks and Employment Verification

3.4.1. AFK Compassionate Care conducts background checks and employment verification as part of the hiring process to ensure a safe and secure environment for employees and clients.

- **Background Checks:** All prospective employees will undergo a background check, which may include criminal history, employment history, education verification, and reference checks. The results of the background check will be considered in determining the candidate's suitability for employment.
- **Employment Verification:** HR will verify previous employment and professional references provided by the candidate. Any discrepancies or concerns identified during the verification process may result in disqualification from employment consideration.
- **Confidentiality:** All information obtained during the background check and employment verification process will be kept confidential and used only for the purpose of evaluating the candidate's suitability for employment.

3.5. Orientation and Training

3.5.1. AFK Compassionate Care provides a comprehensive orientation and training program to ensure that all new employees are well-prepared for their roles.

- **Orientation Program:** All new employees will participate in an orientation program that includes an introduction to the organization's mission, vision, and values, a review of the employee handbook, and an overview of company policies and procedures.

- **Job-Specific Training:** Employees will receive job-specific training to understand their roles and responsibilities, including client care protocols, safety procedures, and the use of any necessary equipment or technology. Training will be conducted by supervisors, experienced staff, or external experts as needed.
- **Ongoing Training and Development:** AFK Compassionate Care is committed to continuous learning and development. Employees are encouraged to participate in ongoing training opportunities, professional development programs, and continuing education courses.

3.6. Probationary Period

3.6.1. All new employees are subject to a probationary period of 90 days from their start date. During this period, both the employee and the company have the opportunity to assess suitability for the position.

- **Performance Evaluation:** Supervisors will provide regular feedback during the probationary period. At the end of the 90 days, a formal performance evaluation will be conducted to determine whether the employee has successfully completed the probationary period.
- **Outcome of Probationary Period:** If the employee successfully completes the probationary period, their employment will continue under the terms and conditions outlined in this handbook. If the employee does not meet performance or behavioral expectations, employment may be terminated during or at the end of the probationary period.

3.7. Employment Records and Confidentiality

3.7.1. AFK Compassionate Care maintains employment records for all employees to ensure compliance with state and federal laws.

- **Record Keeping:** Employment records include job applications, resumes, offer letters, performance evaluations, disciplinary actions, and training records. These records are maintained in a secure location to protect confidentiality.
- **Access to Records:** Employees have the right to access their own employment records upon request. Requests must be submitted in writing to the HR department, and records will be provided within a reasonable time frame.
- **Confidentiality:** All employment records are confidential and will only be accessed by authorized personnel. Personal information will not be disclosed without the employee's consent, except as required by law.

3.8. Employee Conduct and Work Rules

3.8.1. AFK Compassionate Care expects all employees to maintain high standards of conduct and behavior at all times.

- **Professionalism:** Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner, showing respect for clients, colleagues, and the public. This includes adhering to the company's dress code, punctuality, and maintaining a positive attitude.
- **Compliance with Policies:** Employees must comply with all company policies, procedures, and regulations, including those outlined in this handbook. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
- **Confidentiality and Privacy:** Employees must maintain the confidentiality of all client and company information. Any breach of confidentiality or privacy will be considered a serious offense and may result in disciplinary action.
- **Safety and Security:** Employees must adhere to all safety protocols and report any hazards or incidents to their supervisor immediately. Employees are also expected to participate in safety training and drills.
- **Prohibited Conduct:** AFK Compassionate Care prohibits harassment, discrimination, violence, theft, substance abuse, and any other behavior that is disruptive or harmful to the workplace environment. Employees found engaging in prohibited conduct will be subject to disciplinary action.

4. Code of Conduct

AFK Compassionate Care is committed to maintaining a workplace environment where professionalism, respect, and ethical behavior are fundamental. Our Code of Conduct provides guidelines to ensure all employees understand the expectations and responsibilities necessary to uphold the values of our organization. Adhering to this Code of Conduct is essential to creating a positive, safe, and inclusive workplace for everyone.

4.1. Professionalism and Ethical Standards

- **Integrity and Honesty:** Employees are expected to act with integrity and honesty in all interactions with clients, colleagues, and external partners. This includes providing accurate information, being truthful, and maintaining the highest ethical standards.
- **Respectful Communication:** All employees must communicate respectfully with clients, colleagues, and stakeholders. This includes listening actively, avoiding aggressive or inappropriate language, and ensuring that all communication is clear and constructive.
- **Commitment to Excellence:** Employees are encouraged to pursue excellence in all aspects of their work, demonstrating dedication to high-quality service, continuous improvement, and professional development.
- **Accountability:** Employees are responsible for their actions and decisions. They should take ownership of their work, admit mistakes, and make every effort to rectify issues promptly and appropriately.

4.2. Confidentiality and Privacy Policies

- **Client Confidentiality:** All employees must protect the confidentiality of client information in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Client information should only be accessed or shared as necessary for job-related duties and with proper authorization.
- **Data Protection:** Employees must handle all personal, financial, and health information with the utmost care. Data should be stored securely, and electronic records should be accessed only through password-protected systems. Employees should not discuss or share client information in public or unsecured settings.
- **Employee Privacy:** AFK Compassionate Care respects the privacy of its employees. Personal employee information is confidential and will be protected. Employees' personal information will not be disclosed to third parties without consent, except as required by law.

4.3. Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy

- **Equal Treatment:** AFK Compassionate Care is committed to creating a workplace where everyone is treated equally and with respect. Discrimination or harassment based on race,

color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law is strictly prohibited.

- **Zero Tolerance for Harassment:** The organization maintains a zero-tolerance policy for any form of harassment, including but not limited to verbal, physical, or visual conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.
- **Reporting Harassment or Discrimination:** Employees who believe they have experienced or witnessed discrimination or harassment are encouraged to report the incident immediately to Human Resources. Reports will be investigated promptly and confidentially, and appropriate corrective actions will be taken.

4.4. Workplace Violence Prevention

- **Safe Workplace:** AFK Compassionate Care is committed to maintaining a safe work environment. Any act of violence, threats, intimidation, or abusive behavior will not be tolerated. This includes physical assault, verbal abuse, and any behavior that endangers the safety of others.
- **Reporting Incidents:** Employees must report any incidents of violence or threats immediately to their supervisor or Human Resources. The organization will investigate all reports promptly and take appropriate actions, including contacting law enforcement if necessary.
- **Prohibition of Weapons:** The possession or use of weapons on company premises is strictly prohibited unless expressly authorized by law and approved by the organization.

4.5. Conflict of Interest Policy

- **Avoiding Conflicts:** Employees must avoid situations where their personal interests could conflict with the interests of AFK Compassionate Care. Employees should not engage in activities or relationships that could compromise their judgment, objectivity, or ability to act in the best interests of the organization.
- **Disclosure Requirements:** Employees are required to disclose any potential conflicts of interest to their supervisor or Human Resources. This includes outside employment, business interests, or relationships that may impact their role or responsibilities within the organization.
- **Gifts and Hospitality:** Employees should not accept gifts, favors, or hospitality that could influence or appear to influence their professional decisions. Any gifts or offers of hospitality should be reported to Human Resources.

4.6. Dress Code and Personal Appearance

- **Professional Attire:** Employees are expected to maintain a professional appearance that reflects the standards of AFK Compassionate Care. Clothing should be clean, neat, and appropriate for the work environment. Uniforms should be worn as required.

- **Personal Hygiene:** Employees are expected to maintain good personal hygiene and grooming. This includes regular bathing, oral hygiene, and grooming of hair and nails.
- **Specific Attire Guidelines:** For roles that involve direct client care, employees may be required to wear specific clothing or uniforms for safety and hygiene purposes. Employees should adhere to any specific dress code requirements outlined by their department or role.

4.7. Use of Company Property and Resources

- **Appropriate Use:** Company property, including computers, telephones, vehicles, and other equipment, must be used for legitimate business purposes only. Employees are expected to take care of company property and report any damage or malfunction to their supervisor.
- **Prohibition of Personal Use:** Personal use of company resources is discouraged and may only occur with prior approval. Employees should not use company property for personal gain, unauthorized activities, or any purpose that is illegal or unethical.
- **Electronic Communication and Technology Use:** Employees should use electronic communication tools, such as email and internet access, responsibly and in compliance with company policies. Inappropriate use, such as accessing harmful or inappropriate content, is strictly prohibited.

4.8. Social Media and Public Relations Policy

- **Professional Representation:** Employees are expected to represent AFK Compassionate Care in a professional manner when using social media, both on and off duty. Employees should not post any content that could harm the company's reputation, disclose confidential information, or violate company policies.
- **Social Media Conduct:** Employees should avoid posting comments or content that could be considered discriminatory, harassing, or offensive. This includes statements that disparage clients, colleagues, or the organization.
- **Approval for Public Statements:** Only authorized personnel may speak on behalf of AFK Compassionate Care in public forums or the media. Employees should refer any media inquiries to the designated Public Relations Officer or Human Resources.

5. Compensation and Benefits

AFK Compassionate Care is committed to offering competitive compensation and a comprehensive benefits package to attract, retain, and reward talented employees. This section outlines the pay structure, benefits, and other compensation-related policies that support our employees' well-being and professional growth.

5.1. Pay Structure and Salary Reviews

- **Pay Structure:**
  AFK Compassionate Care offers a structured pay system based on the employee's position, qualifications, experience, and performance. All employees are classified as either exempt or non-exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and state labor laws, which determine eligibility for overtime pay.

- **Salary Reviews:**
  Employee salaries are reviewed annually as part of the performance evaluation process. Adjustments to salaries are based on various factors, including individual performance, market rates, changes in job responsibilities, and the organization's financial performance. Merit-based increases may be awarded to recognize outstanding performance and contributions.

- **Wage Transparency:**
  AFK Compassionate Care believes in wage transparency and fairness. Employees are encouraged to discuss any questions or concerns regarding their pay with Human Resources (HR) or their supervisor.

5.2. Overtime Policy

- **Eligibility for Overtime:**
  Non-exempt employees are eligible for overtime pay for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per workweek, in accordance with state and federal laws. Overtime is paid at a rate of 1.5 times the employee's regular hourly rate. Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime pay.

- **Authorization for Overtime:**
  All overtime must be pre-approved by the employee's supervisor. Unauthorized overtime may result in disciplinary action. Employees are required to accurately record all hours worked, including any overtime hours.

- **Compensatory Time:**
  In lieu of overtime pay, eligible employees may request compensatory time off at a rate of 1.5 hours for each hour of overtime worked, subject to supervisor approval. Compensatory time must be used within the same pay period or as soon as operationally feasible.

5.3. Payroll Schedule and Deductions

- **Payroll Schedule:**
  Employees are paid biweekly, with paychecks issued every other Friday. If a payday falls on a holiday, employees will receive their paychecks on the preceding business day.
- **Direct Deposit:**
  AFK Compassionate Care encourages employees to enroll in direct deposit for their paychecks. Direct deposit ensures timely and secure payment to the employee's designated bank account.
- **Deductions:**
  Payroll deductions may include federal and state income taxes, Social Security, Medicare, and any other required deductions. Employees may also choose to have voluntary deductions, such as contributions to health insurance premiums, retirement plans, or other benefit programs. Employees will receive a detailed pay stub with each paycheck showing all deductions.

5.4. Health and Wellness Benefits

- **Health Insurance:**
  AFK Compassionate Care offers comprehensive health insurance plans, including medical, dental, and vision coverage, to eligible full-time employees. Coverage is effective on the first day of the month following 30 days of employment. Employees may choose from various plan options to best meet their needs and those of their dependents.
- **Wellness Programs:**
  To promote overall well-being, AFK Compassionate Care offers wellness programs such as fitness classes, smoking cessation support, and access to mental health resources. Participation in wellness programs may be incentivized with rewards or discounts on health insurance premiums.
- **Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA):**
  Eligible employees may enroll in a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) to set aside pre-tax dollars for eligible medical, dental, and vision expenses, as well as dependent care costs.

5.5. Retirement and Pension Plans

- **Retirement Savings Plan:**
  AFK Compassionate Care offers a 401(k) retirement savings plan with a company match to help employees save for their future. Eligible employees may enroll in the plan after completing 90 days of employment. The company will match employee contributions up to a specified percentage of their salary.
- **Plan Enrollment and Contribution Changes:**
  Employees may enroll in the retirement plan or make changes to their contribution levels

during open enrollment periods or in the event of a qualifying life change. Employees are encouraged to review plan details and consult with a financial advisor as needed.

- **Vesting Schedule:**
  Employer contributions are subject to a vesting schedule. Employees will be fully vested in employer contributions after [Insert Number] years of continuous service with AFK Compassionate Care.

5.6. Workers' Compensation

- **Coverage for Workplace Injuries:**
  AFK Compassionate Care provides workers' compensation insurance to all employees in accordance with state law. This insurance covers medical expenses, lost wages, and rehabilitation services for employees who suffer a work-related injury or illness.

- **Reporting Procedures:**
  Employees must report any workplace injury or illness to their supervisor immediately, regardless of severity. A written incident report must be completed and submitted to HR within 24 hours of the incident. HR will assist the employee in filing a workers' compensation claim and ensure timely communication with the insurance provider.

- **Return-to-Work Program:**
  AFK Compassionate Care is committed to helping employees return to work as soon as medically feasible. A return-to-work program may include modified duties, temporary assignments, or reduced hours, based on the employee's medical restrictions and capabilities.

5.7. Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

- **Confidential Support Services:**
  AFK Compassionate Care offers an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to provide confidential counseling, support, and resources for employees and their immediate family members. The EAP can assist with a range of issues, including stress management, financial concerns, relationship challenges, and mental health support.

- **Access to EAP:**
  Employees can access EAP services 24/7 through a dedicated hotline or online portal. Services are provided by licensed professionals and are available at no cost to the employee.

- **Referral and Utilization:**
  Employees may self-refer to the EAP or be referred by a supervisor or HR. Participation in the EAP is voluntary and confidential, and utilization of the program does not impact employment status or performance evaluations.

5.8. Professional Development and Continuing Education

- **Commitment to Growth:**
  AFK Compassionate Care values continuous learning and encourages employees to pursue

professional development opportunities. The organization provides support for job-related training, workshops, seminars, and continuing education courses.

- **Tuition Reimbursement:**
  Eligible employees may apply for tuition reimbursement for approved courses and programs that enhance their skills and qualifications relevant to their roles. Reimbursement requests must be submitted to HR for approval prior to enrollment and will be granted based on budget availability and alignment with the employee's career development plan.

- **Mandatory Training:**
  Employees are required to complete mandatory training sessions, including but not limited to safety, compliance, and client care protocols. Failure to complete required training may result in disciplinary action.

- **Mentorship and Career Development:**
  AFK Compassionate Care offers mentorship programs and career development resources to help employees achieve their professional goals. Employees are encouraged to discuss their development needs and aspirations with their supervisors during performance reviews.

6. Work Schedule and Attendance

AFK Compassionate Care is dedicated to maintaining a productive, efficient, and fair work environment. This section outlines the policies and expectations related to work hours, attendance, timekeeping, and scheduling to ensure that employees understand their responsibilities and that client care remains uninterrupted.

6.1. Work Hours and Scheduling

- **Standard Work Hours:**
  The standard work hours for AFK Compassionate Care are from [insert start time] to [insert end time], [insert days, e.g., Monday through Friday]. However, due to the nature of our services, employees may be scheduled to work evenings, weekends, or holidays as required. Shift schedules will be established by department managers based on operational needs and client care requirements.

- **Flexible Scheduling:**
  Depending on the role and departmental needs, AFK Compassionate Care may offer flexible scheduling options, such as staggered start times or compressed workweeks. Employees interested in flexible schedules should discuss options with their supervisors. Approval for flexible scheduling is at the discretion of management and will be considered based on operational requirements.

- **Shift Assignments:**
  Employees will be assigned shifts based on their availability, role, and department needs. Shift assignments will be communicated in advance, and employees are expected to adhere to their assigned schedules. Requests for shift changes must be submitted to supervisors as early as possible and are subject to approval.

6.2. Attendance and Punctuality

- **Expectation of Regular Attendance:**
  AFK Compassionate Care expects all employees to maintain regular attendance and arrive at work on time. Consistent attendance is essential to provide quality care to our clients and to ensure that the organization functions smoothly.

- **Punctuality Requirements:**
  Employees must report to their designated work locations on time, prepared to begin their shifts. Repeated tardiness or unapproved absences may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

- **Tracking Attendance:**
  Supervisors are responsible for monitoring employee attendance and punctuality. Employees with attendance concerns will receive verbal or written warnings, and persistent issues will be addressed through the organization's disciplinary process.

6.3. Absence Reporting Procedure

- **Notifying Absences:**
  Employees who are unable to attend work or expect to be late must notify their supervisor or department manager as soon as possible, but no later than [insert number of hours, e.g., 2 hours] before their scheduled start time. Notification should be made by phone or another direct method of communication specified by the supervisor. Text messages or emails may not be sufficient unless otherwise approved.

- **Unplanned Absences:**
  In cases of illness or emergency, employees must notify their supervisor immediately. If an employee is unable to provide prior notice, they should contact their supervisor as soon as possible to explain the situation.

- **Extended Absences:**
  For absences expected to last more than three consecutive days, employees may be required to provide a doctor's note or other appropriate documentation. The employee should communicate with HR to discuss leave options, including Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave, if applicable.

- **Failure to Report Absences:**
  Failure to report absences according to these guidelines may be considered job abandonment and could result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

6.4. Timekeeping Requirements

- **Accurate Timekeeping:**
  All employees must accurately record their hours worked using the organization’s timekeeping system. Non-exempt employees are required to clock in at the start of their shift and clock out at the end of their shift, as well as for any unpaid breaks. Exempt employees are required to report their hours worked and any leave taken in accordance with company policy.

- **Time Corrections:**
  If an employee forgets to clock in or out, they must notify their supervisor immediately. Supervisors will review and correct time entries, as needed, to ensure accurate payroll processing.

- **Unauthorized Overtime:**
  Non-exempt employees must receive prior authorization from their supervisor before working any overtime hours. Unauthorized overtime may result in disciplinary action. Employees should not work "off the clock" under any circumstances.

- **Tampering with Time Records:**
  Falsifying, altering, or tampering with time records is a serious offense and may result in immediate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

6.5. Breaks and Meal Periods

- **Rest Breaks:**
  AFK Compassionate Care provides employees with paid rest breaks in accordance with state law. Non-exempt employees are entitled to a 10-minute paid rest break for every four hours worked. Rest breaks should be taken in the middle of each work period whenever possible. Employees are encouraged to take their breaks to ensure their well-being and productivity.
- **Meal Periods:**
  Non-exempt employees working more than six hours in a shift are entitled to an unpaid meal period of at least 30 minutes. Employees must clock out for meal periods and are required to take the full break without performing any work duties. Meal periods should be scheduled in consultation with the employee's supervisor to ensure coverage and continuity of care.
- **Break Scheduling:**
  Supervisors will coordinate break and meal period schedules to minimize disruptions to client care. Employees must communicate with their supervisor before taking their breaks to ensure coverage.

6.6. Remote Work Policy (if applicable)

- **Eligibility for Remote Work:**
  Remote work arrangements may be offered to eligible employees whose job duties can be performed outside of the office or facility setting. Eligibility is determined by the employee's role, performance, and the needs of the organization.
- **Remote Work Agreement:**
  Employees approved for remote work must sign a remote work agreement outlining the terms and expectations of the arrangement. The agreement will specify the employee's work schedule, communication protocols, and responsibilities for maintaining productivity and confidentiality.
- **Performance and Accountability:**
  Remote employees are expected to maintain the same level of performance, productivity, and availability as they would in the office. Supervisors will monitor remote work performance and may require periodic check-ins, progress reports, or virtual meetings to ensure effective communication and accountability.
- **Equipment and Technology:**
  AFK Compassionate Care will provide necessary equipment and technology for remote work, as appropriate. Employees are responsible for maintaining and safeguarding any company-provided equipment. The organization will offer IT support for technical issues related to remote work equipment.
- **Termination of Remote Work:**
  Remote work arrangements are subject to periodic review and may be modified or terminated

at the discretion of AFK Compassionate Care based on operational needs, employee performance, or other relevant factors.

7. Leave Policies

AFK Compassionate Care is committed to providing employees with time off to rest, recover, and fulfill personal or civic responsibilities. This section outlines the various types of leave available to employees, including paid and unpaid leave options, to support their work-life balance and well-being.

7.1. Paid Time Off (PTO)

- **Accrual of PTO:**
  All full-time employees are eligible to accrue Paid Time Off (PTO) beginning on their first day of employment. PTO is accrued at a rate of [insert rate, e.g., X hours per pay period], based on years of service and employment classification. Part-time employees may accrue PTO on a prorated basis according to their hours worked.

- **Use of PTO:**
  PTO may be used for vacation, personal time, or any other purpose that requires time away from work. Employees should submit PTO requests in writing to their supervisor at least two weeks in advance. Approval of PTO is subject to operational needs and adequate coverage.

- **Carryover and Maximum Accrual:**
  Employees may carry over a maximum of [insert number of hours, e.g., 40 hours] of unused PTO into the next calendar year. Any PTO in excess of this limit will be forfeited. Employees are encouraged to use their accrued PTO to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

- **Payout of PTO:**
  Upon separation from the company, employees will be paid for any accrued and unused PTO, provided they have given at least [insert number of weeks, e.g., two weeks] notice of resignation and have complied with all company policies.

7.2. Sick Leave

- **Eligibility and Accrual:**
  All employees, including full-time, part-time, and temporary staff, are eligible for paid sick leave. Employees accrue sick leave at a rate of [insert rate, e.g., 1 hour for every 30 hours worked], in accordance with state and local laws. Accrual begins on the first day of employment.

- **Use of Sick Leave:**
  Sick leave may be used for the employee's own illness or injury, medical appointments, or to care for an immediate family member who is ill or injured. Employees should notify their supervisor as soon as possible if they are unable to work due to illness or injury.

- **Carryover and Maximum Accrual:**
  Unused sick leave may be carried over to the next calendar year, up to a maximum of [insert

number of hours, e.g., 80 hours]. There is no payout of unused sick leave upon termination of employment.

- **Verification:**
  AFK Compassionate Care may require a doctor's note or medical certification if an employee is absent for more than three consecutive days or if there is a pattern of excessive or suspicious use of sick leave.

7.3. Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

- **Eligibility for FMLA:**
  AFK Compassionate Care complies with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which provides eligible employees with up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period for certain family and medical reasons. To be eligible, employees must have worked for the company for at least 12 months and have logged at least 1,250 hours of service in the preceding 12 months.
- **Qualifying Reasons for FMLA Leave:**
  FMLA leave may be taken for the following reasons:
  - The birth and care of the employee's child.
  - Placement of a child for adoption or foster care.
  - The care of a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition.
  - The employee's own serious health condition that prevents them from performing their job duties.
  - Qualifying exigencies arising out of a family member's military service.
- **Requesting FMLA Leave:**
  Employees must provide at least 30 days' notice when the need for leave is foreseeable. If the need for leave is unexpected, notice should be provided as soon as practicable. A medical certification or other supporting documentation may be required to substantiate the need for leave.
- **Reinstatement and Job Protection:**
  Employees on FMLA leave are entitled to reinstatement to their original job or an equivalent position with the same pay, benefits, and terms of employment upon returning from leave, provided that the total leave does not exceed 12 weeks in a 12-month period.

7.4. Bereavement Leave

- **Eligibility and Duration:**
  AFK Compassionate Care provides up to [insert number of days, e.g., three days] of paid bereavement leave for employees who experience the loss of an immediate family member

(spouse, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, or domestic partner). Employees may request additional unpaid leave with supervisor approval if needed.

- **Requesting Bereavement Leave:**
  Employees should notify their supervisor as soon as possible regarding the need for bereavement leave. Proof of death, such as an obituary or funeral program, may be required for documentation purposes.

7.5. Jury Duty and Court Appearances

- **Jury Duty Leave:**
  AFK Compassionate Care supports civic duty and provides paid leave for employees summoned to jury duty. Employees should notify their supervisor and provide a copy of the jury duty summons as soon as possible. Employees are expected to return to work promptly upon release from jury duty.

- **Court Appearances:**
  Employees required to appear in court as a witness or for other legal proceedings will be granted unpaid leave unless the appearance is job-related. Employees must provide advance notice and appropriate documentation to their supervisor.

- **Retention of Benefits:**
  Employees on jury duty or court leave will retain their benefits and employment status during their absence.

7.6. Military Leave

- **Eligibility for Military Leave:**
  AFK Compassionate Care complies with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and applicable state laws regarding military leave. Employees who serve in the U.S. Armed Forces, National Guard, or Reserves are entitled to unpaid leave for active duty, training, or other military obligations.

- **Requesting Military Leave:**
  Employees must provide advance notice of military service to their supervisor, except in cases of emergency. A copy of the military orders or other official documentation may be required.

- **Reemployment Rights:**
  Employees returning from military leave are entitled to reinstatement to their previous position or a similar position with the same pay, benefits, and seniority, as long as they return to work within the time frame specified by USERRA.

7.7. Personal Leave of Absence

- **Eligibility for Personal Leave:**
  AFK Compassionate Care may grant unpaid personal leave of absence to employees for

personal reasons not covered by other leave policies. Employees must submit a written request to their supervisor, stating the reason for the leave and the expected duration.

- **Approval of Personal Leave:**
  Personal leave is granted at the discretion of management, based on operational needs and the employee's length of service, performance, and reason for the leave request. Personal leave should not exceed [insert number of weeks, e.g., 4 weeks].
- **Continuation of Benefits:**
  During an approved personal leave, employees may be responsible for paying the full cost of any benefits they wish to maintain. Employees should contact HR to discuss the continuation of benefits during their leave.
- **Reinstatement After Personal Leave:**
  Reinstatement to the same or a similar position is not guaranteed after a personal leave. Employees should communicate with their supervisor and HR regarding their return-to-work plans.

8. Health and Safety

AFK Compassionate Care is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all employees, clients, and visitors. This section outlines our health and safety policies, emergency procedures, and protocols to ensure compliance with regulatory standards and to promote a safe environment for everyone.

8.1. Workplace Safety and Compliance

- **Commitment to Safety:**
  AFK Compassionate Care prioritizes the safety and well-being of all employees and clients. We adhere to all local, state, and federal safety regulations, including the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards, to maintain a safe working environment.

- **Employee Responsibilities:**
  All employees are responsible for following safety protocols, using equipment properly, wearing required personal protective equipment (PPE), and reporting unsafe conditions to their supervisors immediately. Employees are expected to attend mandatory safety training sessions and stay informed about safety policies and procedures.

- **Safety Inspections:**
  Regular safety inspections will be conducted to identify and address potential hazards. Employees are encouraged to participate in these inspections and provide feedback on safety practices.

- **Safety Committee:**
  AFK Compassionate Care maintains a Safety Committee that meets regularly to review safety protocols, incidents, and employee feedback. The committee's goal is to continually improve workplace safety and ensure compliance with all regulations.

8.2. Emergency Procedures and Evacuation Plans

- **Emergency Preparedness:**
  AFK Compassionate Care has established emergency procedures to handle various situations, including fire, medical emergencies, natural disasters, and other critical incidents. Employees must familiarize themselves with these procedures and know their roles in an emergency.

- **Evacuation Plans:**
  Evacuation routes and assembly points are clearly posted throughout the facility. Employees must be aware of their nearest exits and evacuation procedures. In the event of an emergency, employees are responsible for assisting clients and following the designated evacuation plan. Supervisors will conduct periodic evacuation drills to ensure preparedness.

- **Emergency Contact Information:**
  Employees must maintain updated emergency contact information with the Human Resources

(HR) department. In case of an emergency, employees should notify their supervisor and follow all instructions provided by emergency responders or management.

- **First Aid and Medical Emergencies:**
  AFK Compassionate Care provides first aid kits and automated external defibrillators (AEDs) throughout the facility. Employees should report any medical emergencies to their supervisor immediately and provide assistance within their training level until emergency medical services arrive.

8.3. Injury and Incident Reporting

- **Reporting Injuries and Incidents:**
  All injuries, accidents, and near-misses, regardless of severity, must be reported immediately to the employee's supervisor and HR. A written incident report must be completed within 24 hours of the occurrence. Prompt reporting is essential to ensure proper care, prevent future incidents, and maintain compliance with workers' compensation and OSHA requirements.

- **Investigation of Incidents:**
  AFK Compassionate Care will conduct a thorough investigation of all reported incidents to determine the cause and implement corrective actions to prevent recurrence. Employees involved in the incident will be interviewed, and any necessary documentation will be reviewed.

- **Follow-Up Actions:**
  Based on the findings of the investigation, appropriate corrective actions will be implemented to improve workplace safety. Employees are expected to cooperate fully with the investigation and comply with any new safety measures introduced.

8.4. Infection Control and Prevention

- **Infection Control Policies:**
  AFK Compassionate Care is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment by adhering to strict infection control practices. Employees must follow all infection control guidelines, including proper hand hygiene, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), and safe handling of potentially infectious materials.

- **Hand Hygiene:**
  Employees must wash their hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, especially after direct contact with clients, handling potentially contaminated materials, or using the restroom. Hand sanitizing stations are located throughout the facility.

- **Use of PPE:**
  Employees must use appropriate PPE, such as gloves, masks, gowns, and face shields, as required for their specific job duties and in accordance with CDC guidelines. PPE should be properly disposed of or sanitized after use to prevent contamination.

- **Cleaning and Disinfection:**
  Regular cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces, equipment, and shared areas are essential to prevent the spread of infections. Employees should follow established cleaning protocols and report any issues to their supervisor.

- **Vaccination Policy:**
  AFK Compassionate Care encourages employees to receive recommended vaccinations, such as the flu vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine, to protect themselves and others. Vaccination status may be required in accordance with federal or state guidelines or company policy.

8.5. Drug-Free Workplace Policy

- **Prohibition of Drugs and Alcohol:**
  AFK Compassionate Care maintains a drug-free workplace to ensure the safety and well-being of employees, clients, and visitors. The use, possession, sale, or distribution of illegal drugs or alcohol on company premises, during work hours, or while representing the organization is strictly prohibited.

- **Prescription Medications:**
  Employees using prescription medications that may affect their ability to perform their job duties safely must notify their supervisor or HR. The company will work with the employee to determine reasonable accommodations or alternative assignments, as necessary.

- **Drug and Alcohol Testing:**
  AFK Compassionate Care reserves the right to conduct drug and alcohol testing in accordance with applicable laws, including pre-employment screening, random testing, and testing for reasonable suspicion following an accident or incident.

- **Consequences of Violations:**
  Any violation of the Drug-Free Workplace Policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Employees are encouraged to seek assistance for substance abuse issues through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

8.6. Reasonable Accommodations and Accessibility

- **Commitment to Accessibility:**
  AFK Compassionate Care is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to qualified employees with disabilities to enable them to perform their essential job functions. The company complies with all state and federal laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

- **Requesting Accommodations:**
  Employees in need of accommodations should submit a written request to the HR department. The request should describe the specific accommodation needed and any supporting documentation, such as a medical certification, if required.

- **Interactive Process:**
  Upon receiving a request, HR will engage in an interactive process with the employee to determine the most appropriate accommodation. This may involve discussions with the employee, their healthcare provider, and their supervisor to identify suitable accommodations.
- **Implementation of Accommodations:**
  Approved accommodations will be implemented promptly, and HR will work with the employee and their supervisor to ensure the accommodation is effective. The company will also review the accommodation periodically to ensure it continues to meet the employee's needs.
- **Non-Retaliation Policy:**
  AFK Compassionate Care prohibits retaliation against employees who request accommodations or report accessibility concerns. Any employee who believes they have experienced retaliation should report the incident to HR immediately.

9. Performance Management

AFK Compassionate Care is dedicated to fostering a culture of continuous improvement and professional growth. The performance management process is designed to help employees understand their roles, set and achieve professional goals, receive constructive feedback, and be recognized for their contributions. This section outlines the policies and procedures related to performance evaluations, goal setting, disciplinary actions, grievances, and employee recognition.

9.1. Performance Evaluations and Feedback

- **Regular Performance Evaluations:**
  AFK Compassionate Care conducts formal performance evaluations annually to assess employee performance, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and set objectives for the upcoming year. These evaluations provide an opportunity for open dialogue between employees and their supervisors about job performance, expectations, and career development.

- **Mid-Year Check-Ins:**
  In addition to annual evaluations, supervisors will conduct mid-year check-ins with each employee to review progress toward goals, provide interim feedback, and address any concerns or support needed. These check-ins are designed to ensure that employees have ongoing guidance and support to achieve their objectives.

- **Continuous Feedback:**
  Supervisors are encouraged to provide continuous feedback throughout the year, recognizing achievements, and offering constructive feedback when needed. Employees are also encouraged to seek feedback and ask questions to enhance their performance and professional growth.

- **Performance Evaluation Criteria:**
  Performance evaluations will be based on objective criteria, including job-specific competencies, adherence to company policies, quality of work, communication skills, teamwork, and achievement of performance goals. The criteria will be tailored to each employee's role and responsibilities.

9.2. Goal Setting and Professional Development

- **Individual Development Plans (IDPs):**
  As part of the performance evaluation process, employees and their supervisors will work together to create an Individual Development Plan (IDP). The IDP will outline the employee's professional goals, skill development areas, and actions required to achieve these objectives over the next evaluation period.

- **Goal Setting:**
  Employees are encouraged to set SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) that align with their job responsibilities and the organization's strategic objectives. Supervisors will support employees in defining clear, realistic, and meaningful goals.

- **Professional Development Opportunities:**
  AFK Compassionate Care provides various opportunities for professional development, including training sessions, workshops, seminars, and continuing education courses. Employees are encouraged to participate in these opportunities to enhance their skills, knowledge, and career growth.

- **Career Advancement:**
  The company supports internal career advancement and encourages employees to pursue positions of increased responsibility within the organization. Employees interested in career advancement should discuss their goals with their supervisors and take advantage of available training and mentorship programs.

9.3. Disciplinary Action and Procedures

- **Purpose of Disciplinary Action:**
  Disciplinary action is intended to address and correct behavior or performance issues that do not meet AFK Compassionate Care's standards or expectations. The goal is to provide employees with clear guidance and support to improve and align with company policies and values.

- **Progressive Discipline Process:**
  The company follows a progressive discipline process, which may include the following steps:

  1. **Verbal Warning:** The supervisor will discuss the issue with the employee, clearly outlining the concerns, expected improvements, and a timeframe for corrective action. The discussion will be documented.

  2. **Written Warning:** If the issue persists, a formal written warning will be issued. The written warning will detail the nature of the problem, the expected improvements, and the consequences of continued non-compliance. The employee will be asked to sign the warning to acknowledge receipt.

  3. **Final Written Warning or Suspension:** Continued failure to improve may result in a final written warning or suspension without pay. This step will include a final opportunity for the employee to make the necessary changes.

  4. **Termination:** If the employee fails to meet the outlined expectations after the final warning, the company may terminate the employment relationship.

- **Immediate Disciplinary Action:**
  In cases of severe misconduct, such as harassment, violence, theft, or gross negligence, AFK Compassionate Care reserves the right to bypass the progressive discipline process and proceed directly to suspension or termination.

- **Employee Rights:**
  Employees have the right to respond to any disciplinary action and may provide their side of the story or appeal the decision to a higher-level manager or HR.

9.4. Grievance and Complaint Procedure

- **Grievance Policy:**
  AFK Compassionate Care is committed to providing a work environment where employees feel comfortable raising concerns or grievances. Employees are encouraged to communicate any concerns regarding their work, colleagues, or the work environment promptly and openly.

- **Procedure for Filing a Grievance:**

  1. **Step 1: Informal Resolution:** Employees should first attempt to resolve the grievance informally by discussing the issue with their immediate supervisor. Most concerns can be resolved through open communication and mutual understanding.

  2. **Step 2: Formal Complaint:** If the issue is not resolved informally, the employee may submit a formal written complaint to HR. The complaint should include a detailed description of the concern, the parties involved, and any steps taken to resolve the issue informally.

  3. **Step 3: Investigation:** HR will review the complaint and conduct a thorough investigation, which may include interviews with the parties involved and examination of relevant documentation. The investigation will be conducted promptly and confidentially.

  4. **Step 4: Resolution and Follow-Up:** HR will communicate the outcome of the investigation to the employee and take appropriate corrective action if needed. HR will also follow up to ensure that the resolution has been effective and that no further issues have arisen.

- **Non-Retaliation Policy:**
  AFK Compassionate Care strictly prohibits retaliation against any employee who files a grievance or participates in a complaint investigation in good faith. Any employee who believes they have experienced retaliation should report it to HR immediately.

9.5. Employee Recognition and Awards

- **Recognition Programs:**
  AFK Compassionate Care values the hard work and dedication of its employees and believes in recognizing and rewarding outstanding performance. The company offers various recognition programs, including:

- **Employee of the Month/Year:** Recognizes employees who demonstrate exceptional performance, teamwork, and a commitment to the company's values. Winners receive a certificate, a monetary award, and public recognition.
- **Service Awards:** Recognizes employees for their years of service and dedication to the organization. Employees reaching milestone anniversaries will receive a service award and acknowledgment at an annual recognition event.
- **Spot Bonuses:** May be awarded to employees who make significant contributions, go above and beyond their regular job duties, or achieve exceptional results.

- **Nomination Process:**
  Employees and supervisors are encouraged to nominate colleagues for recognition awards. Nominations should be submitted to HR with a brief description of the nominee's achievements and reasons for the recognition.
- **Celebration of Achievements:**
  The company holds regular events and celebrations to recognize and honor employee achievements, including quarterly town halls, team gatherings, and an annual recognition event.

10. Technology and Information Security

AFK Compassionate Care is committed to protecting the privacy and security of its clients, employees, and business information. This section outlines our technology and information security policies to ensure that all employees understand their responsibilities in using company technology resources appropriately and safeguarding sensitive information.

10.1. Acceptable Use of Technology

- **Purpose of Technology Resources:**
  The technology resources provided by AFK Compassionate Care, including computers, software, networks, and internet access, are intended for business purposes only. Employees are expected to use these resources responsibly, ethically, and in accordance with company policies.
- **Prohibited Activities:**
  Employees are strictly prohibited from using company technology resources for the following activities:
  - Accessing, downloading, or distributing illegal, inappropriate, or offensive content.
  - Engaging in activities that could harm the company's reputation or violate any laws or regulations.
  - Installing or using unauthorized software or applications.
  - Engaging in any form of cyberbullying, harassment, or discrimination.
  - Using company resources for personal financial gain or non-work-related commercial activities.
- **Monitoring and Compliance:**
  AFK Compassionate Care reserves the right to monitor and review all technology use to ensure compliance with company policies. Employees should have no expectation of privacy when using company technology resources, including email and internet access.

10.2. Data Protection and Privacy

- **Confidentiality of Information:**
  Employees must ensure that all client and company information is treated as confidential and handled in accordance with applicable laws, such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Employees are expected to protect confidential information from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, or destruction.
- **Data Handling and Storage:**
  Employees must use secure methods to handle and store sensitive information. This includes using encrypted storage devices, secure file-sharing platforms, and password-protected

systems. Physical documents containing sensitive information should be stored in locked cabinets or rooms.

- **Data Retention and Disposal:**
  Employees must follow data retention policies and ensure that records are maintained for the required duration and disposed of securely when no longer needed. This includes shredding physical documents and securely deleting electronic files.
- **Reporting Data Breaches:**
  Any suspected or actual data breach or unauthorized disclosure of sensitive information must be reported immediately to the IT department and Human Resources (HR). Prompt reporting is essential to mitigate risks and comply with regulatory requirements.

10.3. Use of Personal Devices at Work

- **Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Policy:**
  Employees who wish to use personal devices (such as smartphones, tablets, or laptops) for work purposes must obtain prior approval from their supervisor and the IT department. Approved devices must be configured to meet the company's security standards, including password protection and encryption.
- **Security Requirements for Personal Devices:**
  Employees using personal devices for work must comply with the following security requirements:
  - Install and regularly update antivirus software and security patches.
  - Enable device encryption and strong passwords.
  - Avoid connecting to unsecured Wi-Fi networks when accessing company systems or data.
  - Report any loss or theft of a personal device used for work to the IT department immediately.
- **Limitations on Personal Device Use:**
  Personal devices should not be used to store or transmit sensitive company or client information unless authorized by the IT department. Employees must also refrain from using personal devices for activities that violate company policies or compromise information security.

10.4. Cybersecurity Guidelines

- **Password Management:**
  Employees are required to use strong, unique passwords for all company accounts and systems. Passwords must be at least [insert number] characters long and include a

combination of letters, numbers, and special characters. Employees should change their passwords regularly and never share them with others.

- **Phishing and Social Engineering Awareness:**
  Employees must be vigilant against phishing attempts and social engineering attacks. Employees should not click on suspicious links or download attachments from unknown sources. Any suspicious emails or communications should be reported to the IT department immediately.

- **Access Controls:**
  Employees will be granted access to company systems and data based on their role and responsibilities. Employees must not attempt to access systems or data that they are not authorized to use. Access privileges will be reviewed regularly to ensure compliance.

- **Software and System Updates:**
  Employees must ensure that all software and operating systems are regularly updated with the latest security patches. The IT department will provide guidance on installing updates and maintaining security protocols.

- **Incident Response:**
  In the event of a cybersecurity incident, employees must follow the company's incident response procedures. This includes immediately notifying the IT department, cooperating with the investigation, and taking steps to mitigate potential damage.

10.5. Email and Internet Usage Policy

- **Email Use Guidelines:**
  Employees are expected to use the company's email system for business-related communication only. All email communication must be professional, respectful, and aligned with company policies. Employees should avoid sharing confidential information through email unless it is encrypted or otherwise secured.

- **Prohibited Email Activities:**
  Employees are prohibited from using the company's email system for the following activities:
  - Sending or forwarding chain letters, spam, or unsolicited emails.
  - Transmitting offensive, discriminatory, or defamatory content.
  - Sharing or distributing copyrighted material without proper authorization.

- **Internet Usage Guidelines:**
  Internet access provided by AFK Compassionate Care should be used primarily for work-related purposes. Employees must not use the internet to access inappropriate content, engage in illegal activities, or perform any actions that could compromise the company's network security.

- **Email and Internet Monitoring:**
  The company reserves the right to monitor email and internet usage to ensure compliance with this policy. Employees should have no expectation of privacy regarding their use of the company's email and internet resources.
- **Consequences of Policy Violations:**
  Violations of the Technology and Information Security policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Employees are encouraged to report any policy violations or security concerns to their supervisor or the IT department.

11. Termination of Employment

AFK Compassionate Care recognizes that the end of the employment relationship may occur for various reasons, whether initiated by the employee or the company. This section outlines the policies and procedures regarding the termination of employment, including voluntary resignation, involuntary termination, exit processes, final pay, benefits, and unemployment compensation.

11.1. Voluntary Resignation

- **Notice Requirement:**
  Employees who choose to resign are encouraged to provide at least [insert number, e.g., two weeks] written notice to their supervisor. A longer notice period may be required for certain positions to ensure a smooth transition and continuity of care for clients.
- **Resignation Process:**
  The resignation notice should include the last intended working day and the reason for resignation, if the employee chooses to provide it. The employee may be asked to assist in the transition of duties and complete any pending tasks before their departure.
- **Withdrawal of Resignation:**
  An employee who wishes to withdraw their resignation must submit a written request to their supervisor. AFK Compassionate Care reserves the right to accept or decline the withdrawal request based on operational needs and the circumstances of the resignation.

11.2. Involuntary Termination

- **Grounds for Involuntary Termination:**
  AFK Compassionate Care may terminate employment involuntarily for various reasons, including but not limited to:
  - Poor performance or failure to meet job expectations.
  - Violation of company policies or code of conduct.
  - Misconduct, such as harassment, discrimination, theft, or workplace violence.
  - Absenteeism or repeated tardiness without valid justification.
  - Failure to comply with safety or security protocols.
  - Business needs, including layoffs, restructuring, or redundancy.
- **Disciplinary Process:**
  In most cases, AFK Compassionate Care follows a progressive disciplinary process to address performance or behavior issues before considering termination. However, certain offenses, such as gross misconduct, may result in immediate termination without prior warning.

- **Notification of Termination:**
  Employees will be notified of their termination in a private meeting with their supervisor and a representative from Human Resources (HR). The reasons for termination will be clearly explained, and the employee will have an opportunity to ask questions or provide feedback.

11.3. Exit Interviews and Return of Company Property

- **Exit Interviews:**
  AFK Compassionate Care may conduct an exit interview with departing employees to gather feedback about their experience with the company, identify areas for improvement, and address any outstanding concerns. Exit interviews are voluntary and confidential. The information collected will be used to enhance the organization's practices and work environment.

- **Return of Company Property:**
  Before the final day of employment, employees are required to return all company property, including but not limited to:

  - Identification badges and keys.
  - Computers, laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices.
  - Company credit cards and expense accounts.
  - Files, documents, and any other materials belonging to the company. Employees must ensure that all data and documents on company devices are securely transferred or deleted as instructed by the IT department.

11.4. Final Pay and Benefits

- **Final Paycheck:**
  AFK Compassionate Care will provide the employee's final paycheck in compliance with state and federal laws. The final paycheck will include payment for all hours worked up to the termination date, including any accrued but unused Paid Time Off (PTO) if applicable.

- **Payment Method and Timing:**
  The final paycheck will be provided via direct deposit or a paper check, depending on the employee's preference and payroll schedule. The timing of the final paycheck will adhere to state laws and may vary based on the reason for termination.

- **Benefits Continuation:**
  Employees who are enrolled in company-sponsored health insurance or other benefits may be eligible for continuation of coverage under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) or state equivalent. Information regarding COBRA or other benefit continuation options will be provided by HR at the time of termination.

- **Severance Pay:**
  Severance pay may be offered to employees in cases of layoffs, restructuring, or other business-related terminations. The amount and eligibility for severance pay will be determined on a case-by-case basis and will be documented in a separation agreement, if applicable.

11.5. Unemployment Compensation

- **Eligibility for Unemployment Benefits:**
  Employees who are terminated involuntarily may be eligible for unemployment compensation in accordance with state laws. Eligibility for unemployment benefits is determined by the state unemployment agency and depends on the reason for termination, the employee's work history, and other factors.
- **Application Process:**
  Employees wishing to apply for unemployment benefits should contact their state's unemployment office to file a claim. AFK Compassionate Care will provide the necessary documentation, such as wage information and the reason for separation, as required by the state unemployment agency.
- **Verification of Employment Details:**
  The company will cooperate fully with the state unemployment agency in verifying employment details and providing accurate information to facilitate the processing of claims.

12. Employee Acknowledgment

To ensure that all employees understand the policies, procedures, and expectations outlined in this employee handbook, AFK Compassionate Care requires each employee to formally acknowledge receipt of the handbook and agree to comply with its contents. This section explains the acknowledgment process and the importance of compliance with company policies.

12.1. Handbook Receipt and Acknowledgment Form

- **Receipt of the Employee Handbook:**
  Upon joining AFK Compassionate Care, each employee will receive a copy of the employee handbook, either in physical or electronic format. The handbook provides essential information about the organization's mission, values, policies, and procedures, as well as the expectations for employee conduct and performance.

- **Acknowledgment Form:**
  Employees are required to sign the "Employee Handbook Receipt and Acknowledgment Form" to confirm that they have received, read, and understood the handbook. The acknowledgment form serves as a record that the employee is aware of the company's policies and agrees to adhere to them.

- **Submission of Acknowledgment:**
  The signed acknowledgment form must be submitted to the Human Resources (HR) department within [insert number, e.g., five business days] of receiving the handbook. Failure to return the signed form may result in disciplinary action.

- **Revised Handbooks:**
  If there are any updates or revisions to the employee handbook, employees will be notified and provided with the updated version. Employees are required to review the revised handbook and sign a new acknowledgment form to confirm their understanding of any changes.

12.2. Agreement to Comply with Policies

- **Commitment to Compliance:**
  By signing the acknowledgment form, employees agree to comply with all the policies, procedures, and guidelines outlined in the employee handbook. This includes but is not limited to policies related to workplace conduct, confidentiality, health and safety, performance management, and use of technology.

- **Understanding of At-Will Employment:**
  Employees acknowledge that the handbook does not constitute a contract of employment and that employment with AFK Compassionate Care is "at-will." This means that either the

employee or the company may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause or notice, except as otherwise required by applicable law.

- **Employee Responsibility:**
  Employees are responsible for understanding and adhering to the policies and procedures outlined in the handbook. Employees are encouraged to seek clarification from their supervisor or HR if they have any questions or need further explanation regarding the content of the handbook.
- **Non-Retaliation Policy:**
  AFK Compassionate Care is committed to creating a work environment where employees feel comfortable raising concerns or reporting policy violations without fear of retaliation. Employees who report violations in good faith will not be subject to retaliation or adverse employment actions.
- **Consequences of Non-Compliance:**
  Employees understand that failure to comply with the policies and procedures outlined in the handbook may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. AFK Compassionate Care reserves the right to interpret, revise, or rescind any policy in this handbook at any time, with or without prior notice.

Employee Handbook Receipt and Acknowledgment Form

Employee Name: _____

Position: _____

Department: _____

Date of Receipt: _____

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the AFK Compassionate Care Employee Handbook, have read and understood its contents, and agree to comply with the policies and procedures outlined herein. I understand that this handbook is not a contract of employment and that my employment with AFK Compassionate Care is at-will, meaning that either I or the company may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause or notice.

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

HR Representative Signature: _____

Date: _____