



Russell Kennedy
Lawyers

Policies

Workplace Relations Checklist

Workplace policies – what issues should you be considering? November 2016

Workplace policies are an important and useful way of setting out how you expect your employees to go about their duties, and how they should behave generally. At Russell Kennedy we come across employers who implement policies on every workplace matter and some who have no policies at all.

There are certain policies which all employers must have, such as policies dealing with discrimination (including sexual harassment), bullying, and procedures regarding workplace health and safety.

There are a number of other areas which employers should also consider covering in a policy, including taking leave, use of information technology resources, and flexible working arrangements.

It is important to bear in mind the following key essentials when implementing policies:

- Policies must be relevant.
- Policies must be well drafted.
- Policies must be reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain up to date.
- Employees must be made aware of the policies, and trained in relation to their operation.

Whatever policies you choose to implement, consider the following questions:

- Is the policy appropriate or necessary for your particular workplace?
- Is the policy binding on the employee?
- Does the policy provide the employer with flexibility?
- Can the policy be amended without consultation with the employees?
- How does the policy interact with any award, enterprise agreement or contract of employment?
- Would the content be more appropriately included in the contract of employment?
- Does the policy duplicate content which is already contained in a contract or other document?
- Does the policy clearly set out its scope of application?

Remember, policies can only be effective if employees are aware of them, and they understand them. If you are reviewing your policies, consider whether it may also be appropriate to re-release the policies, or conduct refresher training with your staff.

Please contact the [Russell Kennedy Workplace Relations, Employment and Safety team](#) if you would like advice about implementing or updating policies, or about training.