
Statement

Independent News and Media – Ireland is pledged to be professional in its pursuit of truth in the news. It is committed to independence, fairness and balance in all its editorial products in informing people of events and issues which they have a right to know.

The responsibility to fulfil this pledge applies to all editors, editorial staff, journalists, reporters, picture editors, artists, photographers, sub-editors, designers, and all who contribute to our publications across all print, digital, social media and other platforms including blogging, television, video, audio or any other platform.

The Company acknowledges that our journalists must prepare and present material fairly, fully and regardless of any commercial, political or personal interests, including those of proprietors, shareholders or board members.

The Editors in determining the editorial content of the newspapers are directly responsible to the Group Chief Executive Officer and senior management of the company.

The management and staff of Independent News and Media – Ireland fully support the Office of the Press Ombudsman and the Press Council of Ireland. We also fully support the Code of Practice for Newspapers and Periodicals as outlined in Appendix 1.

We also support the UK Office of the Press Complaints Commission and the Editors' Code of Conduct.

Independent News and Media (Ireland) believes that its staff shares the values this Charter is intended to protect. It will be the policy of the company to primarily try to resolve any differences of view over the application of these values through discussion and resolution. Nevertheless, the company will view any complaint of an alleged violation of this Charter as a serious issue that may be the subject of an

inquiry within the terms of the company's Code of Practice for Investigation and Disciplinary Procedures as included in Appendix 3 to this document. This inquiry will determine whether disciplinary action will be recommended to the Managing Director or nominated deputy. Final adjudication of appeals against any disciplinary action or sanction under the Charter will normally reside with the company Group Chief Executive or nominated deputy.

1. General

Journalists will comply fully with the Editorial Charter and adhere to the Principles of the Code of Practice for Newspapers and Periodicals of the Press Ombudsman and the Press Council of Ireland. In the UK, journalists will fully adhere to the principles of the UK Press Complaints Commission and the Editors' Code of Practice.

2. Accuracy, distinguish fact from comment

Journalists will strive to be accurate and distinguish fact from comment and conjecture.

3. Gathering Material

Journalists will strive to use first hand sources and confirm facts before publication.

4. Note Taking

Journalists will retain accurate and contemporaneous notes of all relevant information and interviews. Full notes of interviews must be kept for a minimum of one year.

5. Tape recording

In order to ensure accuracy, tape / digital recorders may be used during interviews / conversations, whether such interviews / conversations are via telephone or otherwise. There is no legal obligation to inform the other party to such interview / conversation that they are being taped but discretion should always be exercised. It is illegal ("telephone tapping" / "hacking") to intercept or record any telephonic conversation to which you are not a party or to improperly access any third party's telephonic facilities (e.g a person's voice-mail box). If in any doubt about where you stand, consult the Managing Editor or seek legal advice. Recordings should be maintained for a minimum of one year.

6. Fact/Picture Checking

Journalists must verify information particularly if researched on the Internet. This may include confirming with an individual or organisation that they posted

material and that it is accurate. Journalists will only use pictures where identification has been confirmed.

7. Fairness

Journalists will strive to be fair in affording individuals or organisations the right of pre-publication response. A decision not to afford such a right of response will only be taken with the written approval of the Editor or designated editorial executive. Sustained or repeated adversarial editorial material concerning individuals or organisations will only be maintained on the basis of justification in the public interest with the written approval of the Managing Editor.

8. Opinions

Journalists have a right to trenchant opinions on matters of public interest. However, journalists will ensure that when they comment on a matter of public interest that such comment is based upon material which is verifiably true.

9. Misleading Readers

Journalists will not mislead readers by invention or distortion of either copy or photographs. Altered pictures or montages used for illustrative purposes should be clearly labelled as such. The same ethical standards will apply to video and audio material.

10. Archived Content

When archive material - either text or images - is used, journalists will be responsible for ensuring that no legal issue has previously arisen in respect of that material.

11. Material from Outside Sources

Journalists should take care about using such material. In principle and where possible, they should research its origins before deciding to publish.

12. Legal Checking

Journalists must not publish anything which is in breach of defamation, contempt of court or privacy laws. Journalists must always seek legal advice if in any doubt. Any decision to proceed with a story, despite legal advice, must be referred to the Managing Editor for formal approval in writing.

There may be occasions when a story is legally safe to publish but raises editorial issues, such as taste, prudence, abuse etc. In these circumstances, Independent News and Media - Ireland seeks to strike a reasonable balance between public interest and ethical issues. While lawyers can therefore offer legal advice, the final decision remains an editorial one.

13. Complaints

Journalists must immediately inform the Managing Editor of any complaint received which they receive either verbally or in writing.

14. Privacy

See Principles 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5 of the Press Ombudsman Code of Practice for Newspapers and Periodicals in Appendix 1

UK: See clauses in the Editors' Code of Conduct, in particular Clauses 3,4,5,6,8 and 9

Journalists should respect privacy and must not infringe it without approval of the Editor or designated editorial executive on the basis that publication of the material is warranted in the public interest.

Photographs or images which have the potential to offend or harm, are intrusive, in doubtful taste should not be published without the written approval of the Editor or designated executive on the basis that publication of the material is warranted in the public interest.

Journalists in any doubt on principles of privacy or relevance of public interest should consult the Managing Editor.

15. Reporting Suffering and Distress

See Principle 5.3 Code of Press Ombudsman Code of Practice for Newspapers and Periodicals

UK: see the Editors' Code of Conduct, in particular Clauses 5 and 8.

Journalists must always balance the public interest with any infringement of privacy when we report deaths, accidents or instances where people are involved in distressing situations.

In cases involving personal grief or shock, approaches must be made with sympathy and discretion.

16. Children

See Principle 9 Press Ombudsman Code of Practice for Newspapers and Periodicals in Appendix 1

Journalists must in all dealings with children bear in mind the age of the child. The Principles in the Press Ombudsman's Code apply to children below the age of 16.

UK: Journalists should refer to the Editors' Code of Conduct, in particular Clauses 6 and 7. Journalists should note the principles apply to children under 16 but should also pay attention to the codes' references to children attending school, etc.

17A. Source Material

Journalists must never intercept private or mobile telephone calls, messages or emails; or engage in the unauthorised removal of documents or photographs; or seek to access digitally-held private information without consent.

17B.

For certain stories where there is a clear public interest involved such as serious criminality, anti-social or subversive behaviour, it may occasionally be acceptable to use a minimum level of proportionate deception. Any proposal to use deception must be referred to the Editor for formal approval in writing and for legal advice in advance.

18. Public Interest

Public interest issues include:

- (a) exposing illegal activities aimed at undermining the legitimate institutions of the state;
- (b) exposing violent activities, promotion of violence by individuals or organisations for political motives;
- (c) exposing or detecting crime;
- (d) exposing significantly anti-social behaviour;
- (e) exposing corruption or injustice;
- (f) disclosing significant incompetence or negligence;
- (g) protecting people's health and safety;
- (h) preventing people from being misled by some statement or action of an individual or organisation;
- (i) disclosing information that allows people to make a significantly more informed decision about matters of public importance.

19. Impartiality

Journalists must seek to reflect diverse opinions on a particular story or issue. It is the policy of the titles to allow a forum for the expression of opposing views either through a Right of Reply in editorial columns, Letters to the Editor or through monitored blogs or comment on our Digital platform.

20. Interviewees and Editorial Independence

Journalists must consider carefully the circumstances where an interview is granted on the basis that questions are agreed in advance. If we decide to agree, we should make clear to the readers the conditions under which the interview is obtained.

21. Crime

Journalists will ensure that detailed descriptions or demonstrations of criminal techniques which could enable the commission of a crime are not reported.

Journalists must refer to the Editor any proposal to:

- (a) interview an active or wanted criminal;
- (b) interview escaped criminals or wanted persons;
- (c) witness or record a specific and serious illegal activity.

Journalists will not:

- (a) pay or promise to pay criminals, former criminals, their families or associates, for an interview.
- (b) pay or promise to pay a witness or potential witness during active or likely criminal proceedings.
- (c) pay people whose behaviour is anti-social, subversive or notorious.
- (d) employ someone with a criminal record.

Interviews with criminals will not glamorise wrongdoing or undermine the judicial process.

Journalists should only engage in covert surveillance and/or confrontation of criminals or terrorists after discussion and agreement with the Editor whose approval will be given in writing.

UK. Particular attention must be paid to Clauses 9, 15 and 16 of the Editors' Code of Conduct.

22. Payments

Independent News and Media - Ireland does not normally make payments to interviewees or sources. No such payment will be made without prior authorisation from the Managing Editor in writing.

23. Taste, Harm and Offence

Prurience, profanities and obscenities are banned unless their use is so essential to a story that its meaning would be lost without them. In particular, journalists will not write or publish any of the following material except where the use is deemed an integral component of the material by the Editor.

- (a) sexual swearwords;
- (b) terms of racist abuse;
- (c) terms of sexual and sexist abuse or abuse referring to sexuality;
- (d) pejorative terms relating to illnesses or disabilities;
- (e) casual or derogatory use of holy names or religious words and especially in combination with other offensive language;
- (f) gratuitous and offensive language demeaning of an individual or organisation.

Journalists must not write or publish anything liable to cause grave offence or stir up hatred by race, religion, nationality, colour, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, illness or age unless deemed to be editorially justified by the Editor.

24. Suicide / Attempted Suicide

Journalists must treat stories of suicide and attempted suicide with great sensitivity. The sensitive use of language is also important. Suicide was decriminalised and since then the use of the term "commit suicide" should not be used.

UK: Attention is drawn to Clause 5 of the Editors' Code of Conduct.

25. Reviewing Products or Services

Journalists must make every effort to avoid unqualified plugging in reviews of products or services. Reviews must be a service to the reader. Advertorial style material should be flagged appropriately.

26. Conflicts of Interest

Journalists must ensure that personal, commercial, business, financial or other interests have not influenced editorial decisions. Journalists should not accept free trips or gifts from news sources other than nominal courtesies such as business lunches or seasonal gifts.

Journalists should not accept personal benefits which could be construed as inducements.

Journalists cannot work for any person or body except Independent News and Media - Ireland without permission. The right to engage in freelance work for publications that compete with Independent News and Media - Ireland is subject to approval of the Managing Editor in every case

27. Radio and TV

Journalists who are asked to guest on radio and TV programmes should not express opinions which would not appear under their byline in Independent News and Media - Ireland titles. Journalists who are asked to guest on radio and TV programmes should discuss the opportunity with the Editor in advance. Journalists must always keep in mind that their first duty is to their newspaper and its readers. Under no circumstances should they ever scoop their newspaper by disclosing information which has not been published.

28. Facebook, Twitter and other on-line Social Networks

When using these networks, in particular posting on Facebook sites, tweeting and otherwise writing or commenting on social networks, journalists should ensure that the same principles of accuracy, tone, and integrity apply to their work. Those using social networks, tweeting etc for personal reasons should ensure that their use does not reflect on their title. Despite security controls, journalists should know that there is no total insulation or real privacy on the internet. Assume everything can be made public. independent News and Media

– Ireland cannot and will not be responsible for any utterances published by its journalists save for utterances properly published upon its own print and internet platforms in accordance with the contracted duties of its journalists.

29. Blogs

Please see *Appendix 2*

Journalists working for Independent News and Media - Ireland who wish to start their own blog site must seek approval from the Managing Editor to ensure clear legal and editorial distinction between the site and their title. Journalists should not contribute material to a blog site – including blogs other than their own – which would not be acceptable in their newspaper.

30. Speeches, seminars and other appearances

Journalists should only make speeches and undertake other appearances subject to prior consultation with the Editor.

31. Business Journalists

Business and Financial journalists are required to disclose all financial holdings, investments or dealings of them or their families. Journalists should not write about such financial matters unless they declare it in the article and have got approval from their Editor.

Journalists must not use for their own profit any privileged information they receive in advance of its general publication, nor should they pass on such information to others.

Journalists should not speculate by buying and selling shares on a short term basis if they have written about them recently or know that they will be doing so in the near future.

Financial journalists should not promote, or give the impression of promoting any business or financial service.

Journalists must inform their Editor if they have any interests or relationships which could be perceived as a conflict of interest.

UK: Attention is drawn to Clause 13 of the Editors' Code of Conduct.

32. Confidential Sources

Journalists should only use terms like 'sources', 'reliable sources' and 'the newspaper has learned' as the basis of a story as a last resort when the identity of the source has to be protected and only when it is certain that the story is true. Journalists traditionally have a moral obligation to protect confidential sources when anonymity is a pre-condition for the story. Before any story is published without full attribution, reporters must make every effort to get it verified.

Journalists should ensure that the level of protection required is established clearly. Is it understood that the writer could be challenged to identify the source in court? Will the source give evidence if the paper is sued?

33. Publication of the Decision of the Press Ombudsman or in the UK by the Press Complaints' Commission.

When requested or required by the Press Ombudsman and/or the Press Council to do so, Independent News and Media - Ireland shall publish the Ombudsman's decision in relation to a complaint with due prominence.

34. False Information

Deliberate creation of false or misleading information in our titles will not be permitted.

35. Hear the other side/testing a story

Journalists must ensure that the basic rule of fairness to hear the other side is always implemented.

Journalists must always adhere to the principle of testing a story against the following criteria:

- Is it true?
- Can it be proven?
- Has it been put to the other side?
- If the story is reliant on an unidentified source, will that source support the journalist in the event of a legal challenge?

36. Headlines

Sub editors must ensure that headlines accurately represent the story as presented, that cuts for space reasons do not make a story unbalanced or one-sided, and that introductions accurately reflect the body of the story.

37. Corrections

Journalists have a duty to ensure that a significant inaccuracy, misleading statement or distortion must be corrected promptly and with due prominence and – where appropriate – an apology, correction or clarification – published in consultation with the Managing Editor.

38. Plagiarism/Lifting

Journalists should never plagiarise material.

In relation to lifting of stories, journalists should only engage in this practice where permission is granted and credit attributed.

39. Illegal Activities

Journalists working for or contributing to any titles within Independent News and Media - Ireland will not write, edit or prepare material in any way which seeks to promote or encourage illegal activities or violence to achieve or further political objectives or foment violent activities aimed at undermining the lawful institutions of the State.

Appendix 1

Press Council of Ireland/Office of the Press Ombudsman Code of Practice for Newspapers and Periodicals

- Preamble

The freedom to publish is vital to the right of the people to be informed. This freedom includes the right of a newspaper to publish what it considers to be news, without fear or favour, and the right to comment upon it.

Freedom of the press carries responsibilities. Members of the press have a duty to maintain the highest professional and ethical standards.

This Code sets the benchmark for those standards. It is the duty of the Press Ombudsman and Press Council of Ireland to ensure that it is honoured in the spirit as well as in the letter, and it is the duty of publications to assist them in that task.

In dealing with complaints, the Ombudsman and Press Council will give consideration to what they perceive to be the public interest. It is for them to define the public interest in each case, but the general principle is that the public interest is invoked in relation to a matter capable of affecting the people at large so that they may legitimately be interested in receiving and the press legitimately interested in providing information about it.

- Principle 1 – Truth and Accuracy

- 1.1 In reporting news and information, newspapers and magazines shall strive at all times for truth and accuracy.
- 1.2 When a significant inaccuracy, misleading statement or distorted report or picture has been published, it shall be corrected promptly and with due prominence.
- 1.3 When appropriate, a retraction, apology, clarification, explanation or response shall be published promptly and with due prominence.

- Principle 2 – Distinguishing Fact and Comment

- 2.1 Newspapers and magazines are entitled to advocate strongly their own views on topics.

2.2 Comment, conjecture, rumour and unconfirmed reports shall not be reported as if they were fact.

2.3 Readers are entitled to expect that the content of a publication reflects the best judgment of editors and writers and has not been inappropriately influenced by undisclosed interests. Wherever relevant, any significant financial interest of an organization should be disclosed. Writers should disclose significant potential conflicts of interest to their editors.

- **Principle 3 – Fairness and Honesty**

3.1 Newspapers and magazines shall strive at all times for fairness and honesty in the procuring and publishing of news and information.

3.2 Publications shall not obtain information, photographs or other material through misrepresentation or subterfuge, unless justified by the public interest.

3.3 Journalists and photographers must not obtain, or seek to obtain, information and photographs through harassment, unless their actions are justified in the public interest.

- **Principle 4 – Respect for Rights**

Everyone has constitutional protection for his or her good name. Newspapers and magazines shall not knowingly publish matter based on malicious misrepresentation or unfounded accusations, and must take reasonable care in checking facts before publication.

- **Principle 5 – Privacy**

5.1 Privacy is a human right, protected as a personal right in the Irish Constitution and the European Convention on Human Rights, which is incorporated into Irish law. The private and family life, home and correspondence of everyone must be respected.

5.2 Readers are entitled to have news and comment presented with respect for the privacy and sensibilities of individuals. However, the right to privacy should not prevent publication of matters of public record or in the public interest.

5.3 Sympathy and discretion must be shown at all times in seeking information in situations of personal grief or shock. In publishing such information, the feelings of grieving families should be taken into account. This should not be interpreted as restricting the right to report judicial proceedings.

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- 5.4 Public persons are entitled to privacy. However, where a person holds public office, deals with public affairs, follows a public career, or has sought or obtained publicity for his activities, publication of relevant details of his private life and circumstances may be justifiable where the information revealed relates to the validity of the persons conduct, the credibility of his public statements, the value of his publicly expressed views or is otherwise in the public interest.
- 5.5 Taking photographs of individuals in private places without their consent is not acceptable, unless justified by the public interest.

- **Principle 6 – Protection of Sources**

Journalists shall protect confidential sources of information.

- **Principle 7 – Court Reporting**

Newspapers and magazines shall strive to ensure that court reports (including the use of photographs) are fair and accurate, are not prejudicial to the right to a fair trial and that the presumption of innocence is respected.

- **Principle 8 – Prejudice**

Newspapers and magazines shall not publish material intended or likely to cause grave offence or stir up hatred against an individual or group on the basis of their race, religion, nationality, colour, ethnic origin, membership of the travelling community, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, illness or age.

- **Principle 9 – Children**

- 9.1 Newspapers and magazines shall take particular care in seeking and presenting information or comment about a child under the age of 16.
- 9.2 Journalists and editors should have regard for the vulnerability of children, and in all dealings with children should bear in mind the age of the child, whether parental or other adult consent has been obtained for such dealings, the sensitivity of the subject-matter, and what circumstances if any make the story one of public interest. Young people should be free to complete their time at school without unnecessary intrusion. The fame, notoriety or position of a parent or guardian must not be used as sole justification for publishing details of the private life of a child.

- **Principle 10 – Publication of the Decision of the Press Ombudsman / Press Council**

10.1 When requested or required by the Press Ombudsman and/or the Press Council to do so, newspapers and magazines shall publish the decision in relation to a complaint with due prominence.

10.2 The content of this Code will be reviewed at regular intervals.

Appendix 2

Guidelines for blogs etc

Journalists who are preparing to provide blog material on to our company digital sites, should note that they should conform to the same rules as apply to print - in particular, the same rules pertaining to defamation, privacy and contempt apply.

In addition, it is mandatory that nothing is published which contravenes normal standards of taste in terms of content and language.

Journalists are also requested to take all reasonable steps to inform their Editor of the intention to supply this material for blogs etc.

Journalists should not maintain a blog site or provide blog material to any other site without the authorisation of the Editor or his designated deputy.

Journalists contributing to other social networking sites should note the following notice:

Kindly take note that, unless specifically agreed with Independent News and Media - Ireland (the "Company"), any of you who choose to maintain an individual or personal "blog" site or to contribute to any such site, and/or any social networking or other internet site of any description whatsoever, will be doing so in an entirely personal capacity. The Company will not bear any responsibility, legal or otherwise, for any material which you choose to publish in such a manner. In particular, save in the absence of express authorisation, the Company specifically forbids the usage of any of its logos and/or intellectual property (including articles [whether written by you or otherwise], headlines, photographs etc.) in such circumstances. In the event of any litigation arising from such publications, the Company will bear no responsibility whatsoever in the matter. In the event that the Company is named as a Defendant in any such litigation, then it will seek a full indemnity from the individual(s) who chose to publish the material in question and this notice shall be relied upon in that regard.

Appendix 3

**Code of Practice
For Investigation and Disciplinary
Procedures**

Issued by the Human Resources Department

INTRODUCTION

Disciplinary codes and procedures help to promote orderly employment relations as well as fairness and consistency in the treatment of individuals.

All employees have a responsibility in striving for and maintaining an acceptable level of performance and conduct, and at all times carry out designated duties to every required standard, subject to receiving the adequate and appropriate training.

All interviews, investigations and administration of this policy, including disciplinary action, will be carried out in private, unless the staff member(s) concerned wish it to be otherwise.

This document sets out guidelines for

- Initiation of complaint or allegation
- Method of Investigation into complaint or allegation
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Appeal Process.

INITIATION OF COMPLAINT OR ALLEGATION

Where a breach of acceptable rules of employment or of expected standards of performance or conduct has allegedly occurred on the part of an employee, an in-depth detail of the incident(s) must be submitted in writing to the Human Resources Department [HRD].

Some examples under which a complaint may be invoked:

- Work performance below acceptable standards
- Quality or accuracy of work
- Refusal or failure to carry out a legitimate instruction
- Breach of confidentiality
- Bringing the organisation into disrepute
- Poor timekeeping
- Absenteeism
- Breach of Code in the Editorial Charter
- Misuse of Company plant, equipment, facilities or name
- Behaviour by an individual likely to cause danger or distress to others or self (*Dignity at Work Policy*)
- Causing loss, damage or injury through negligence
- Theft or fraud
- Breach of rules (eg: *E-Mail, Internet; Health & Safety*)
- Attendance at work under the influence of alcohol
- Use or possession of proscribed drug
- Any other behaviour deemed to be an abuse of employment

Upon receipt of the complaint (or within a short reasonable period) the HRD will invite the person who initiated it to a preliminary interview to establish:

- Reliability and veracity of the claim
- Facts surrounding the complaint
- Background to the incident(s)
- If an investigation is warranted
- Scale of gravity in the complaint

In some cases of a very minor nature, in particular one of first offence, a quiet, informal and confidential approach by the complainant or the HRD to the offender may be all that is required. This could be recommended by the HRD in the first instance, but if this does not amend the situation and there is a recurrence of the offending incident, the episode will then move to a further stage.

INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

1. Inform Employee: If resulting from the initial interview with the complainant, the Human Resources Department considers the situation serious enough to warrant an investigation, the employee will be notified and invited to a meeting to discuss the issue.
2. Co-operation: Throughout all stages of the investigation procedure total co-operation with all aspects of the process is expected of any employee involved.
3. Investigation Body: A formal Investigation Body [IB] will be established to ascertain the circumstances, facts and history surrounding the case in question. The team will comprise:
 - HRD member
 - Up to two senior management personnel, one of whom should be a high ranking executive from within the area of complaint.
 - In relation to alleged breaches under the Editorial Charter, the Group Director Human Resources and the Managing Editor will comprise the Investigation Body with any appeal normally being to the Group Chief Executive or nominated deputy.

No individual having direct association with the original complaint shall be a member of the Investigating Body. The Group Director Human Resources may decide in certain circumstances that the matter should properly be investigated by an external third party.

4. Interviews: At the outset the IB will proceed to invite the parties to formal interviews where all aspects of the case can be outlined. It will be stressed to the parties their entitlement to have a representative of their choice to accompany them to interview sessions. This representative should not have been associated with the case in question or be a possible future witness. All interviews will be recorded.
5. Suspension-With-Pay: In the interest of fair and proper investigation, the IB will determine at the first meeting with the alleged offender if suspension-with-pay is appropriate for the duration of the investigation. It is emphasised that this move is not disciplinary action.

6. Investigation Process: The investigation will be conducted in a comprehensive and impartial manner. In the course of the investigation all reasonable avenues relevant to the case will be pursued by means of series of interviews with all relevant parties. Any suggested witnesses will be afforded the opportunity to testify, taking into account their availability (these may also wish to be accompanied by someone unconnected directly to the case). An individual may be recalled for interview a number of occasions should points pertinent to the situation arise, or clarification be required. Again, all interviews may be taped and, if requested, copy(ies) of the tape(s) supplied to an interviewee.

7. Investigation Conclusion: At the completion of the investigation, the IB will detail in writing a report of its findings and recommendations. As normal practice the ultimate version of the report — relevant only to the individual — will be presented to the concerned. It will be within the judgement of the IB to issue or withhold the report, or any aspect contained within it.

The IB may establish in its findings that an individual be justifiably cited on a disciplinary charge. If so found, this may take one – or any combination – of the following:

- Misdemeanour
- Misconduct
- Gross Misconduct.

Should the recommendations of the report comprise any of the above, the matter shall pass to a Disciplinary Hearing for adjudication on the imposition of a disciplinary sanction.

An individual will continue on suspension-with-pay at this stage if this had been the circumstance from the outset of the investigation.

DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

1. Disciplinary Body: On foot of the investigation, and concluding from the findings of the resultant report, a Disciplinary Body consisting of senior management personnel will convene to determine:
 - Justification of sanction
 - Appropriate penalty
2. Penalties: Depending on the gravity of the imposed sanction and having confirmed the justification of its imposition, taking into account any relevant former disciplinary data available, the following penalties could be applied:
 - Oral warning
 - Written warning
 - Final written warning
 - Period of suspension-without-pay
 - Transfer to another task/section
 - Demotion
 - Dismissal

In general the above steps are progressive in procedure; however the nature of the proven offence will determine the particular phase at which commencing action is warranted.

3. Hearing: The individual(s) concerned will be invited to a formal hearing with the Disciplinary Body where an opportunity will be afforded the employee to deliberate on the findings of the Investigation Body. Following due consideration by the DB the employee will be informed verbally of the its decision, if not at this particular Hearing, a subsequent session. The appeal options available will also be outlined.

All information will be verified fully in writing at the earliest possible stage.

4. Representation: At all stages in the process the individual, should they so wish, is entitled to representation of their choice.
5. Warnings: Oral or Written Warnings will be removed from an employee's record after a period of fifty-two weeks from its

effective date, provided no repetition of any disciplinary offence occurs during this period.

6. Dismissal: In cases where *Dismissal* is the applied sanction, prior approval will be required from a more senior-tiered level of management than members of the Disciplinary Body. Only if such approval is obtained can confirmation be made in writing to the individual.

Confidentiality: All and every matter pertaining to the investigation, the disciplinary process and the ultimate outcome of all matters are strictly confidential to the parties directly involved. During the course of all proceedings no disclosure of any nature shall be made to a third party or discussion on the related subject with persons outside of the formally designated sessions or deliberations.

APPEAL PROCESS

1. Option: An employee wishing to appeal a penalty imposed by the Disciplinary Body will have the option of appeal to a more senior tiered member of management than the two implicated bodies: Investigating, Disciplinary. The name of this individual will be supplied to the employee in the letter outlining the stated penalty and appeal option. In relation to appeals in respect of complaints under the Editorial Charter, the appeal will normally be to the Group Chief Executive or nominated deputy.

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2. **Notice:** An appeal must be lodged in writing within seven days of receipt of the disciplinary letter.
 3. **Grounds:** The letter of appeal to the nominated senior executive must also contain detailed grounds for the appeal.
 4. **Timeframe:** An invitation to an appeal meeting will be arranged, where practicable, within fourteen days of receipt of the appeal letter. The employee has the right to be accompanied at the meeting by a representative of choice.
 5. **Final Decision:** Within seven days the appeal hearer will communicate the adjudication of the appeal, upholding or amending the decision of the Disciplinary Body as fitting.
 6. **Action:** No disciplinary sanction will be implemented pending the outcome of the appeal process.
 7. **Payment:** An employee on suspension-with-pay will continue to receive payment only up to the conclusion of the internal appeal process.
 8. **External Appeals:** An individual may exercise the option to forego the preceding appeals process and generate an alternative external appeal.

In this event, the penalty as determined by the Disciplinary Body (where appropriate confirmed: *Disciplinary Process, Clause 4 Dismissal*) will have immediate effect.

Nothing in this document shall interfere with the rights of the Company to summarily dismiss any employee for gross misconduct, or the rights of the individual under the Unfair Dismissals Acts, 1977 – 2001

Appendix 4

Belfast Telegraph

THE EDITORS' CODE OF PRACTICE

All members of the press have a duty to maintain the highest professional standards. The Code, which includes this preamble and the public interest exceptions below, sets the benchmark for those ethical standards, protecting both the rights of the individual and the public's right to know. It is the cornerstone of the system of self-regulation to which the industry has made a binding commitment.

It is essential that an agreed code be honoured not only to the letter but in the full spirit. It should not be interpreted so narrowly as to compromise its commitment to respect the rights of the individual, nor so broadly that it constitutes an unnecessary interference with freedom of expression or prevents publication in the public interest.

It is the responsibility of editors and publishers to apply the Code to editorial material in both printed and online versions of publications. They should take care to ensure it is observed rigorously by all editorial staff and external contributors, including non-journalists, in printed and online versions of publications.

Editors should co-operate swiftly with the Press Complaints Commission in the resolution of complaints. Any publication judged to have breached the Code must publish the adjudication in full and with due prominence agreed by the Commission's Director, including headline reference to the PCC.

1 Accuracy

- i) The Press must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information, including pictures.
- ii) A significant inaccuracy, misleading statement or distortion once recognised must be corrected, promptly and with due prominence, and - where appropriate - an apology published. In cases involving the Commission, prominence should be agreed with the PCC in advance.
- iii) The Press, whilst free to be partisan, must distinguish clearly between comment, conjecture and fact.
- iv) A publication must report fairly and accurately the outcome of an action for defamation to which it has been a party, unless an agreed settlement states otherwise, or an agreed statement is published.

2 Opportunity to reply

A fair opportunity for reply to inaccuracies must be given when reasonably called for.

3 *Privacy

- i) Everyone is entitled to respect for his or her private and family life, home, health and correspondence, including digital communications.
 - ii) Editors will be expected to justify intrusions into any individual's private life without consent. Account will be taken of the complainant's own public disclosures of information.
 - iii) It is unacceptable to photograph individuals in private places without their consent.
- Note - Private places are public or private property where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.

4 *Harassment

- i) Journalists must not engage in intimidation, harassment or persistent pursuit.
- ii) They must not persist in questioning, telephoning, pursuing or photographing individuals once asked to desist; nor remain on their property when asked to leave and must not follow them. If requested, they must identify themselves and whom they represent.
- iii) Editors must ensure these principles are observed by those working for them and take care not to use non-compliant material from other sources.

5 Intrusion into grief or shock

- i) In cases involving personal grief or shock, enquiries and approaches must be made with sympathy and discretion and publication handled sensitively. This should not restrict the right to report legal proceedings, such as inquests.

*ii) When reporting suicide, care should be taken to avoid excessive detail about the method used.

6 *Children

- i) Young people should be free to complete their time at school without unnecessary intrusion.
- ii) A child under 16 must not be interviewed or photographed on issues involving their own or another child's welfare unless a custodial parent or similarly responsible adult consents.
- iii) Pupils must not be approached or photographed at school without the permission of the school authorities.
- iv) Minors must not be paid for material involving children's welfare, nor parents or guardians for material about their children or wards, unless it is clearly in the child's interest.
- v) Editors must not use the fame, notoriety or position of a parent or guardian as sole justification for publishing details of a child's private life.

7 *Children in sex cases

- 1. The press must not, even if legally free to do so, identify children under 16 who are victims or witnesses in cases involving sex offences.
- 2. In any press report of a case involving a sexual offence against a child -
 - i) The child must not be identified.
 - ii) The adult may be identified.
 - iii) The word "incest" must not be used where a child victim might be identified.
 - iv) Care must be taken that nothing in the report implies the relationship between the accused and the child.

8 *Hospitals

- i) Journalists must identify themselves and obtain permission from a responsible executive before entering non-public areas of hospitals or similar institutions to pursue enquiries.
- ii) The restrictions on intruding into privacy are particularly relevant to enquiries about individuals in hospitals or similar institutions.

9 *Reporting of Crime

- (i) Relatives or friends of persons convicted or accused of crime should not generally be identified without their consent, unless they are genuinely relevant to the story.
- (ii) Particular regard should be paid to the potentially vulnerable position of children who witness, or are victims of, crime. This should not restrict the right to report legal proceedings.

10 *Clandestine devices and subterfuge

- i) The press must not seek to obtain or publish material acquired by using hidden cameras or clandestine listening devices; or by intercepting private or mobile telephone calls, messages or emails; or by the unauthorised removal of documents or photographs; or by accessing digitally-held private information without consent.
- ii) Engaging in misrepresentation or subterfuge, including by agents or intermediaries, can generally be justified only in the public interest and then only when the material cannot be obtained by other means.

11 Victims of sexual assault

The press must not identify victims of sexual assault or publish material likely to contribute to such identification unless there is adequate justification and they are legally free to do so.

12 Discrimination

- i) The press must avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to an individual's race, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation or to any physical or mental illness or disability.
- ii) Details of an individual's race, colour, religion, sexual orientation, physical or mental illness or disability must be avoided unless genuinely relevant to the story.

13 Financial journalism

- i) Even where the law does not prohibit it, journalists must not use for their own profit financial information they receive in advance of its general publication, nor should they pass such information to others.
- ii) They must not write about shares or securities in whose performance they know that they or their close families have a significant financial interest without disclosing the interest to the editor or financial editor.
- iii) They must not buy or sell, either directly or through nominees or agents, shares or securities about which they have written recently or about which they intend to write in the near future.

14 Confidential sources

Journalists have a moral obligation to protect confidential sources of information.

15 Witness payments in criminal trials

i) No payment or offer of payment to a witness - or any person who may reasonably be expected to be called as a witness - should be made in any case once proceedings are active as defined by the Contempt of Court Act 1981.

This prohibition lasts until the suspect has been freed unconditionally by police without charge or bail or the proceedings are otherwise discontinued; or has entered a guilty plea to the court; or, in the event of a not guilty plea, the court has announced its verdict.

*ii) Where proceedings are not yet active but are likely and foreseeable, editors must not make or offer payment to any person who may reasonably be expected to be called as a witness, unless the information concerned ought demonstrably to be published in the public interest and there is an over-riding need to make or promise payment for this to be done; and all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure no financial dealings influence the evidence those witnesses give. In no circumstances should such payment be conditional on the outcome of a trial.

*iii) Any payment or offer of payment made to a person later cited to give evidence in proceedings must be disclosed to the prosecution and defence. The witness must be advised of this requirement.

16 *Payment to criminals

i) Payment or offers of payment for stories, pictures or information, which seek to exploit a particular crime or to glorify or glamorise crime in general, must not be made directly or via agents to convicted or confessed criminals or to their associates - who may include family, friends and colleagues.

ii) Editors invoking the public interest to justify payment or offers would need to demonstrate that there was good reason to believe the public interest would be served. If, despite payment, no public interest emerged, then the material should not be published.

THE PUBLIC INTEREST

There may be exceptions to the clauses marked * where they can be demonstrated to be in the public interest.

1. The public interest includes, but is not confined to:

i) Detecting or exposing crime or serious impropriety.

ii) Protecting public health and safety.

iii) Preventing the public from being misled by an action or statement of an individual or organisation.

2. There is a public interest in freedom of expression itself.

3. Whenever the public interest is invoked, the PCC will require editors to demonstrate fully that they reasonably believed that publication, or journalistic activity undertaken with a view to publication, would be in the public interest and how, and with whom, that was established at the time.

4. The PCC will consider the extent to which material is already in the public domain, or will become so.

5. In cases involving children under 16, editors must demonstrate an exceptional public interest to over-ride the normally paramount interest of the child.

As amended 2012

Appendix 5



Independent News & Media (Northern Ireland)

BELFAST TELEGRAPH • SUNDAY LIFE • COMMUNITY TELEGRAPH

A division of Independent News & Media Ltd

PROCEDURE ON

"INDIVIDUAL GRIEVANCE"

1. INTRODUCTION

When an individual has a problem, complaint or grievance relating to his/her employment it is the Company policy to resolve the matter as quickly as possible on an informal basis by discussion between the individual and his/her immediate superior.

2. FORMAL PROCEDURE

- (i) Should the grievance remain unresolved at this stage then the employee should put their grievance in writing to their immediate supervisor.
- (ii) Should the grievance still remain unresolved, then the matter may be raised in writing with the individual's Department Manager.
- (iii) The matter, if unresolved, may be taken in stages right through the management structure until the final stage of the procedure is reached at the level of Managing Director.

The decision of the Managing Director or an authorised deputy will be final.

- (iv) A hearing may be arranged in order to discuss the grievance. If requested, employees are entitled to be accompanied by a fellow worker or a Trade Union Official at any grievance hearing which concerns the performance of a duty by the employer in relation to the employee.

3. DURATION

The Company will endeavour to deal with any grievance as expeditiously as possible, in the interests of all parties concerned.