

L& Wi Lan (LWL)

Employee Handbook (2026-2027)

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SECTION A — INTRODUCTION

1.1 Welcome Message

Welcome to Lē Wi Lan.

Every member of our team plays an essential role in improving learning outcomes and strengthening education delivery across Sierra Leone. This Handbook explains how we work, what is expected of you, and the support available throughout your employment journey.

We are committed to fostering a workplace grounded in respect, fairness, collaboration, inclusion, and continuous growth all aligned with Sierra Leone's labour legislation, including the Employment Act (2023) and the existing sector-related Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Thank you for joining us. Together, we will continue to deliver meaningful and lasting impact.

1.2 About Lē Wi Lan

History

Lē Wi Lan was formally registered as a Sierra Leonean not-for-profit company limited by guarantee on 23 December 2025. The organisation was established by 17 founding members united by a strong commitment to supporting the Ministry of Education in improving the relevance and quality of learning outcomes across all levels of Sierra Leone's education system.

LWL was technically and financially supported at its founding by Transforming Teaching, Education and Learning (T-TEL) and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). T-TEL itself transitioned in 2020 from an FCDO-funded programme into a Ghanaian national entity delivering education reform. The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) and the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE) both welcomed LWL's registration and contributed to shaping its institutional model.

LWL builds on more than a decade of experience from the Leh Wi Lan programme (since 2016) a £65+ million FCDO-funded initiative that supported sector recovery after Ebola, the rollout of the Free Quality Education Programme, resilience during COVID-19, and large-scale system strengthening in secondary education. LWL is also a founding member of the Alliance for Transforming African Education (ATAE), a network of national education organisation united by a shared belief in education as a powerful driver of national development.

Vision, Mission & Core Values

Vision: A transformed education system that supports national development and brighter futures for every child in Sierra Leone.

Mission: To provide high-quality educational and technical assistance, working in close partnership with government to promote quality education and inclusive growth in Sierra Leone.

Core Values:

- Inclusivity
- Excellence
- Integrity
- Collaboration
- Equity
- Accountability

Organisational Objects

- To provide educational technical assistance for relevant quality and inclusive education for high-performance and productivity in Sierra Leone.
- To promote an evidence and learning-based approach to achieving sustainable development and improved educational outcomes.
- To coordinate and support strategic collaboration across the education sector, including the development of strategic partnerships which promote the goals and objects of the organisation.
- To mobilise citizen action and advocate for quality education outcomes in Sierra Leone.
- To convene inclusive dialogue and collaboration across Sierra Leonean society (including, government, civil society, educational institutions and the private sector) to improve educational outcomes.
- To promote gender equality and social inclusion in all its programmes.
- To receive donations, including financial support, in aid of these objects.
- To assist in and advocate for stringent quality assurance by conforming to international quality standards and norms in the provision of quality education in Sierra Leone.
- To provide need-based education support and materials to enhance classroom, distance, digital, online and other emerging modes of educational and learning systems.
- To do all lawful actions as are incidental or conducive to the above objects or any of them.

1.3 Purpose of this Handbook

This Handbook serves as a practical reference, one place employees can turn to understand their rights, responsibilities, and the values that shape the way we work. Specifically, it aims to:

- Provide clear guidance on organisational policies and procedures.
- Define expectations for conduct, performance, and professionalism.
- Explain employment terms, rights, and responsibilities.
- Promote fair and consistent treatment across the organisation.
- Support compliance with Sierra Leone's labour law.
- Serve as a reference for decision-making and conflict resolution.

This Handbook does not replace individual employment contracts. Where any discrepancy arises between the Handbook and an employment contract or applicable law, the contract and the law shall prevail. The Handbook will be reviewed and updated annually, and additionally whenever there is a material change in national legislation, internal policies, or recognised HR best practice. Interim amendments may be authorised by the Executive Director with Board ratification at the next scheduled Board meeting.

All revisions are subject to Board approval, constituting a resolution passed by a simple majority of Board members present at a duly quorate meeting, or by written resolution signed by all Board members in lieu of a meeting. Between scheduled Board meetings, the Board Chair may provide interim approval for urgent operational amendments on behalf of the Board, subject to ratification at the next meeting.

Updates are formally communicated to all staff within 30 days of approval, and the most current version is made available at all LWL offices and on internal platforms. The next scheduled review is due by 31 July 2027. Financial approval authorities referenced throughout this handbook are outlined in the Finance Manual.

1.4 Scope and Applicability

- This Handbook applies to all LWL personnel, including permanent, fixed-term, temporary, casual, interns/trainees, and, where relevant, consultants and volunteers. It establishes standards of conduct across all departments and work locations. Where provisions differ by employment category, those distinctions are clearly stated.
- For all intents and purposes, this Handbook is subject to the laws of Sierra Leone including but not limited to the Employment Act (Act No. 15 of 2023), the Employment Regulations 2023, any applicable collective bargaining agreement(s) and any other law(s) in Sierra Leone with specific application on the matters outlined herein.
- In the event of any dispute, concerning or relating to the internal operations of Lɛ Wi Lan, the workers agree and consent that recourse shall be had to stipulations of this Handbook in consonance with the laws of Sierra Leone before seeking external redress in accordance with the labour laws of Sierra Leone.
- Compliance with this Handbook is a condition of engagement with LWL.
- Throughout this Handbook, gender-neutral and inclusive language has been used. Where a gendered pronoun or role descriptor appears, it applies equally to all individuals regardless of gender identity, gender expression, or sex, and no gendered interpretation should be presumed from any such reference.

1.5 Governance

LWL's governance structure is designed to ensure clear accountability, effective oversight, and compliance with applicable laws, donor requirements and internal policies. The Members are the highest organ of the organisation. The Board of Directors is responsible for strategic oversight and direction, while management is responsible for day-to-day implementation of approved policies, procedures and plans.

LWL was established by a group of 17 founding members who are strongly committed to assisting MBSSE and MTHE to improve the relevance and quality of learning outcomes for learners across Sierra Leone's education system and levels.

The Board of Directors acts on behalf of the Members to provide strategic leadership, approve organizational policies, oversee risk and compliance, and ensure that LWL operates in accordance with its vision, mission and legal obligations. The Board meets as required and receives reports from management and its sub-committees.

The Members shall be the highest organ of LWL, but the Board of Directors has been vested with the responsibility of management of LWL on behalf of the members and to provide strategic oversight and direction in accordance with LWL's vision and mission as well as ensuring compliance with all the applicable laws of Sierra Leone. Members meet formally once a year at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

The nine (9) members of the Board shall comprise:

- six (6) of the founding members;
 - two (2) representatives from the Government of Sierra Leone (Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education & Ministry of Technical and Higher Education); and
 - One (1) representative from the Alliance for Transforming African Education (ATAE).
- LWL's Executive Director and the Company Secretary are non-voting members of the board.

The Board has established sub-committees to provide focused oversight and advice in key areas. Each sub-committee reports to the Board on progress, risks and recommendations at Board meetings. The current sub-committees are:

- Finance sub-committee assists the LWL board to oversee the finance functions of the LWL entity. This sub-committee comprises four members, including two board members (of whom one is the chair of the sub-committee) and two non-board members.
- Audit and Governance committee assists the LWL board to oversee the audit and governance functions of the LWL entity. This sub-committee comprises four members, including two board members (of whom one is the chair of the sub-committee) and two non-board members.
- Fundraising and Resource Mobilisations assists the LWL board to oversee fundraising and business development functions of the LWL entity. This sub-committee comprises four members, including two board members (of whom one is the chair of the sub-committee) and two non-board members.

LWL is led by an experienced Executive Director and leadership team, ensuring strong oversight, accountability, and sector expertise. LWL is focused on further growing its national impact.

Board members	Role in the Board
Professor Yatta Kanu	Board Chair
Musu Gorvie	Vice Chair
Dr. Albert Chuku Dupigny	Board Member
Ophelia Morrison	Board member and member of the Audit and Governance Committee
Dr. Nyande Fania	Board member, Chair of the Audit and Governance committee and member of the Fundraising committee
Andy Brock	Board member, Chair of the Fundraising committee and member of the Finance committee
Prof. Mohammed Salifu	Board member and Chair of the Finance committee
Lans Keifala	Non-Voting representative of MBSSE on the board
Emmanuel Momoh	Non-Voting representative of MTHE on the board
Dr. Mohamed Barrie	Executive Director of LWL
Augustine Marrah Esq	Company Secretary

SECTION B — THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

This section explains how employment relationships are established at LWL covering recruitment, contracts, classification, onboarding, and probation. All employment practices are conducted ethically, transparently, and without discrimination, in compliance with the Employment Act (Act No. 15 of 2023), the Employment Regulations 2023, any extant collective bargaining agreement(s) and any other law(s) in Sierra Leone with specific application on the matters outlined herein.

2.1 Employment Contracts and Staff Categories

All employees are issued written contracts that set out the conditions of their employment. These contracts specify the role, duties, pay, working hours, leave entitlements, notice requirements, and relevant policies. Contracts must be signed before employment begins and are binding in English as the governing version. They may be signed electronically and incorporate these Terms and Conditions by reference.

Employment Terms refer to the rights and obligations that apply to each staff category, including entitlements such as salary, leave, and benefits.

Notice Period refers to the amount of time an employee must give the organisation before resigning, or the time the organisation must give before ending employment. This ensures a smooth transition and continuity of work.

The table below outlines the applicable employment terms and resignation notice periods for each staff category:

Staff Category	Employment Terms	Resignation Notice Period
Permanent (indefinite-term)	Full entitlements	30 days or one month salary in lieu of notice
Fixed-term contract	Full terms; contract-specific variations as noted	As specified in contract; or one month salary in lieu of notice if not stated
Temporary or casual	Limited; as stated in contract	As agreed in contract
Part-time	Pro-rated terms as specified in contract	As specified in contract
Probationary employees	Full terms except as noted in Section B3	1 week per completed month of service (max 4 weeks) or 1 week wages in lieu of notice see Section 2.6

The following are key definitions used throughout this Handbook:

Term	Definition
Gross Salary	Base salary before statutory deductions (PAYE, NASSIT).
Net Salary	Gross salary after all statutory deductions.
Continuous Service	Unbroken employment with LWL, including the probation period.
Effective Date	The date on which employment commences, as stated in the contract.

2.2 Place of Work, Mobility, and Intellectual Property

Place of Work and Mobility

Each employee's primary duty station shall be specified in their employment contract. Where operational needs require it, LWL may arrange temporary transfers or reassignments. Any such change should be made with reasonable notice and supported by appropriate organisational arrangements.

Intellectual Property

Any intellectual property created by an employee in the course of their employment, including reports, software, databases, training materials, and publications, shall be the sole property of LWL. The employee waives any moral rights in such intellectual property to the extent permitted by law. Any intellectual property owned by the employee prior to employment shall remain their property, provided it is disclosed to LWL in writing at the time of hire.

2.3 Recruitment, Selection and Vetting

LWL is committed to recruiting and selecting the most qualified candidates in a fair, transparent, and merit-based manner, prioritising local and national candidates where qualifications are equal, and respecting donor requirements throughout.

Recruitment Principles

Principle	Description
Merit-based	Selection based on skills, experience, and qualifications — never personal connections.
Transparent	Clear criteria, documented process, and auditable decisions at every stage.
Non-discriminatory	No discrimination based on tribes, religion, gender, disability, age, or political affiliation.
Child protection	Enhanced background checks for all roles involving contact with children.
Donor compliance	Donor-mandated vetting procedures shall be followed and documented.

Principle	Description
Confidentiality	Candidate information handled securely and retained per the data protection policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Key Responsibilities
Hiring Manager	Draft job description, initiate recruitment request, participate in shortlisting and interviews, and provide feedback on candidates.
HR Manager	Manage the full recruitment process: advertise, coordinate interviews, conduct reference checks, issue offers, and maintain records.
Interview Panel	Evaluate candidates objectively using approved tools, select finalist, and document assessment.
Executive Director	Approve new positions and final selection for all staff. All salary exceptions must be confirmed in writing by the Finance and Operations Director before an offer is issued.
Board of Directors	Approves the recruitment of the Executive Director.

The Seven-Stage Recruitment Process

All recruitment follows a structured, seven-stage process:

Stage	Key Actions and Requirements
1 Need Identification	Hiring Manager identifies need (new budget post, vacancy, leave cover, or new project) and completes a Recruitment Request Form justifying the position.
2 Position Approval	All positions to be recruited are to be approved by the Executive Director or a delegated member of the LWL Leadership Team. Written approval and confirmed budget availability required before proceeding.
3 Job Description & Advertising	Every JD/ToR must include job title and grade, reporting lines, duty station, and key responsibilities, essential vs. desirable qualifications, core competencies, salary range, and application deadline. Minimum advertising period: 10 working days. LWL can explore the possibility of internal recruitment where there are suitable internal candidates.
4 Shortlisting	HR screens against essential criteria only; a shortlisting matrix is completed and retained. Minimum shortlist: 3 candidates. All unsuccessful applicants are informed respectfully.
5 Assessment & Interview	Panels use structured STAR-format (Situation, Task, Action, and Result) questions and consistent scoring sheets. Role-specific assessments apply (finance, IT, drivers, programme, and management). All panel members are to declare conflicts of interest in writing before participating.
6 Reference & Background Checks	Two professional references required (at least one former direct supervisor). Background checks include national ID verification; employment history; qualifications; criminal records (Sierra Leone

Stage	Key Actions and Requirements
	Police clearance and any donor-specific list required by the relevant grant agreement. Any match or potential match is escalated immediately to the Executive Director. Any serious discrepancy in background checks is also escalated to the Executive Director before proceeding.
7 Offer & Onboarding	HR issues a verbal offer then a written offer letter within 3 working days. Candidate has 5 working days to accept. Upon acceptance, HR initiates: contract signing, staff ID and email creation, NASSIT registration, payroll setup, and the onboarding schedule.

Internal Transfers and Promotions

Internal mobility within the organisation is guided by clear principles to ensure fairness and alignment with organisational needs.

Promotions are awarded on the basis of exceptional performance, demonstrated capability, and readiness for greater responsibility. They are not automatic but are considered when an employee's contribution significantly exceeds expectations. Salary adjustments for promotions follow the established grading structure outlined in Section 5.3, with increases applied in line with organisational policy. All promotions across grades require the approval of the Executive Director, and promotions to the most senior grades additionally require notification to the Board.

Transfers, on the other hand, are initiated through a formal application process. Employees seeking a transfer must have completed at least twelve months in their current role and hold a satisfactory performance record. Human Resources will verify eligibility, and an abbreviated panel interview may be conducted to assess suitability for the new role. Transfers are subject to availability of positions and organisational requirements.

Promotions

- Based on exceptional performance and readiness for greater responsibility.
- Not automatic; considered when contributions significantly exceed expectations.
- Salary adjustments follow the organisation's grading structure.
- Require Executive Director Approval; senior-level promotions also involve Board notification.

Transfers

- Require a formal application through HR.
- Eligibility: at least 12 months in current role with a satisfactory performance record.
- HR verifies eligibility; a short interview may be conducted.
- Subject to position availability and organisational needs.

Temporary, Casual, and Internship Recruitment

Temporary and casual positions (under 3 months, maximum 90 days in any 12-month period) follow a simplified process: HR Manager Approval, a brief job description, local advertisement or word-of-mouth, a single-panel interview minimum, and one verbal reference. Contracts are daily or weekly at a rate with no benefits.

LWL may offer unpaid or stipend-based internships of 3–6 months (non-renewable) to recent graduates (within 2 years) or current students. Selection involves an interview and other relevant processes with HR

and the Hiring Manager. An internship agreement, not an employment contract, governs the relationship. Completion carries no automatic right to future employment. HR coordinates placement, ensuring clarity of tasks, adequate supervision, and structured performance feedback throughout.

Prohibited Recruitment Practices

The following are strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action up to dismissal:

- Nepotism hiring an immediate family member without Board disclosure.
- Soliciting payments or gifts in exchange for employment.
- Knowingly accepting falsified credentials or documents.
- Asking discriminatory questions (tribe, religion, pregnancy, HIV status, marital status, sexuality, parental status).
- Commencing or continuing recruitment without following this process.

Donor-Specific Requirements and Record Retention

Where a donor agreement specifies additional recruitment requirements, those requirements take precedence. HR maintains a register of donor-specific variations.

Document	Retention Period
Successful candidate file	Duration of employment + 3 years
Unsuccessful candidate applications	12 months from decision date
Interview score sheets	24 months
Recruitment request forms	5 years

Evaluation criteria applied during selection typically weight technical approach and methodology relevant experience and qualifications, contextual understanding of Sierra Leone's education context, and value for money, with PSEAH compliance as a mandatory pass/fail condition. Where a donor's grant agreement, procurement rules, or prior approval requirement specifies specific evaluation criteria that donor-specific criteria take precedence and must be applied and documented.

2.4 Volunteers

LWL values the contributions of volunteers. Volunteers provide services without a contract of employment and without expectation of salary; they may receive a modest stipend or expense reimbursement only. Volunteers are not employees, save for the rights guaranteed under the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991 and any other statute of general application, Volunteers are not covered by the Employment Act (Act No.15 of 2023), the Employment Regulations 2023, any extant collective bargaining agreement(s) in respect of employment and are not entitled to employee benefits. They are nonetheless bound by LWL's Code of Conduct, PSEAH policy, and confidentiality obligations.

Volunteers shall not be used to replace paid staff, to perform inherently governmental functions, to handle sensitive beneficiary data without explicit authorisation, or to work unsupervised with children unless cleared and trained. Misclassifying an employee as a volunteer is illegal.

A Volunteer Agreement must be signed before commencement, covering role description, time commitment, start and end dates, reporting line, expenses policy, stipend (if any), Code of Conduct and PSEAH acknowledgement, confidentiality, insurance status, and a clear statement of non-employment. HR maintains a Volunteer File for each volunteer.

Where applicable, stipends or expense reimbursements for volunteers are determined by HR and confirmed in writing in the Volunteer Agreement. Rates are reviewed annually and are available from HR upon request.

2.5 Onboarding

LWL provides a structured, supportive onboarding experience for all new employees, designed to accelerate productivity, communicate culture and expectations, ensure legal and donor compliance, and support long-term retention.

Employment Type	Onboarding Programme
Full-time permanent	Full programme (90-day)
Fixed-term contract (6+ months)	Full programme (90-day)
Fixed-term contract (under 6 months)	Abbreviated programme
Temporary / casual staff	Orientation only
Interns	Orientation only
Rehired employees	Abbreviated programme

Pre-Start Preparation (HR and Hiring Manager)

Task	Responsible	Deadline
Employment contract signed	HR Manager	5 days before start
Workspace prepared	Operations	3 days before start
IT accounts and systems created	IT	3 days before start
Staff ID card prepared	HR Manager	2 days before start
Onboarding schedule sent to employee	HR Manager	3 days before start
Buddy assigned and briefed	Hiring Manager	5 days before start
NASSIT registration initiated	HR Manager	Before first payroll

Milestones during Onboarding

Period	Key Requirements
First day	Welcome meeting with HR; office tour; submit documents (ID, bank details, NASSIT form); receive Handbook and policies; IT setup; meet Hiring Manager.
First week	Sign all policy acknowledgement forms; complete health and safety orientation; sign Code of Conduct; understand reporting lines; set up salary direct deposit.
First 30 days	Complete mandatory training (Child Safeguarding, PSEAH, and Code of Conduct); set first 90-day performance goals with Hiring Manager; demonstrate system competency.

Period	Key Requirements
First 90 days	Formal probation reviews at 30, 60, and 90 days; complete all mandatory and role-specific training; 90-day goals reviewed and evaluated.

HR surveys all new employees over 90 days to evaluate onboarding effectiveness and improve the programme annually.

2.5.1 The Buddy System

LWL operates a structured Buddy System as an integral part of onboarding. Every new employee joining on a permanent or fixed-term contract of six months or more is assigned a designated Buddy and experienced colleague from within or adjacent to their team before their first day of work. The Buddy System is not a management or supervisory arrangement; it is a peer-support relationship designed to ease the social and cultural transition into LWL, complement formal induction, and accelerate the new employee's confidence and effectiveness.

Purpose and Objectives

The Buddy System exists to:

- Provide a safe, informal point of contact for day-to-day questions that a new employee may feel reluctant to raise with their manager.
- Help the new employee navigate LWL's culture, unwritten norms, internal processes, and physical and digital workspaces.
- Reduce the anxiety and isolation that commonly accompanies the first weeks in a new role.
- Accelerate integration into the team and the broader organisation.
- Complement does not duplicate the formal induction and probation review processes managed by HR and the Line Manager.

Buddy Selection Criteria

Buddies are selected by the Hiring Manager in consultation with HR at least five working days before the new employee's start date. A Buddy must meet all the following criteria:

Criterion	Requirement
Seniority	At least one full year of service with LWL and has successfully completed their own probation period.
Grade	At the same grade level or one grade above the new employee; not the new employee's direct Line Manager or supervisor.
Availability	Confirmed as available and not on planned leave during the new employee's first 90 days.
Performance	Rated Meets Expectations or above at the most recent annual appraisal.
Attitude	Demonstrates a positive, inclusive, and collegial approach to work; ideally volunteers for the role.
Conflict of interest	Has no close personal relationship with the new employee (family, close friendship) that could compromise the objectivity of the support.

Buddy Responsibilities

The Buddy is expected to perform the following activities during the 90-day onboarding window:

Period	Minimum Contact	Key Activities
Before Day 1	1 introductory message or call	Send a welcome message; share practical information (where to park, what to bring, dress code, lunch options); confirm first-day meeting point and time.
Day 1	Full day check-in	Meet the new employee on arrival; accompany them on the office tour; make introductions to immediate colleagues; share an informal first-day overview; have lunch together where possible.
Week 1	Daily brief check-in (15–20 min)	Answer day-to-day questions; help with system access and practical tools; flag useful internal resources; check in on how the first week is going.
Weeks 2–4	2–3 check-ins per week	Continue answering questions; share insights on how teams work together; flag upcoming meetings or events the new employee should know about.
Month 2 (Days 31–60)	1–2 check-ins per week	Monitor wellbeing and integration; encourage the new employee to raise questions with their manager; flag any concerns to HR (not the Line Manager) if serious wellbeing issues arise.
Month 3 (Days 61–90)	Weekly check-in; end-of-period debrief	Celebrate progress and achievements; prepare the new employee for the 90-day probation review conversation; complete the Buddy Feedback Form (available from HR) and submit to HR.

Boundaries and Confidentiality

The Buddy relationship is one of peer support, not management. The Buddy must:

- Not share information disclosed by the new employee with the Line Manager, HR, or others without the new employee's explicit consent except where there is a safeguarding concern or a serious risk of harm.
- Not evaluate, assess, or provide formal feedback on the new employee's performance to the Line Manager or HR.
- Not be used as a channel to relay management instructions or performance concerns to the new employee.
- Signpost the new employee to their Line Manager or HR for issues that fall outside the peer-support role (e.g., salary queries, conduct matters, formal grievances).

HR and Line Manager Responsibilities

Responsible Party	Actions
HR Manager	Maintain a pool of trained, willing Buddies; match Buddies with new employees; provide the Buddy Briefing Pack; collect Buddy Feedback Forms (available from HR) at 90 days; review the programme annually.
Hiring Manager	Select and confirm the Buddy at least 5 days before start; ensure the Buddy is informed and has capacity; include Buddy check-in time in team schedules.
Buddy	Complete the mandatory Buddy Orientation session (1 hour, run by HR); follow the contact schedule; submit the Buddy Feedback Form (available from HR); flag serious concerns to HR.
New Employee	Engage actively with the Buddy; raise questions and concerns early; participate in the Buddy check-ins; provide honest feedback in the 90-day survey.

Training and Recognition

All Buddies complete a one-hour Buddy Orientation facilitated by HR before or on the new employee's first day. The orientation covers the purpose and boundaries of the role, active listening and peer-support skills, confidentiality obligations, how to handle difficult situations, and the completion of the Buddy Feedback Form (available from HR). Buddy service is recognised in the annual performance review as evidence of contribution to organisational culture and colleague development. Consistent and effective Buddy performance may be cited in support of a promotion recommendation.

Buddy Feedback and Programme Review

At the end of the 90-day onboarding window, both the Buddy and the new employee complete a short, structured feedback form (available from HR). HR collates this data anonymously and uses it to improve the Buddy Programme, the Buddy pool, and the matching process. The programme is formally reviewed annually by HR in consultation with department heads.

2.6 Probation

Duration and Extension

Employee Category	Standard Period	Maximum Extension	Total Maximum
All new employees	4 months	+2 months	4 months
Fixed term (12+ months)	3 months	+2 months	4 months
Temporary / casual / interns	No probation	—	—

Probation begins on the first day of work. The standard probation period is 4 months for all new permanent and fixed-term employees extendable by up to 2 additional months when performance concerns are identified and formally communicated in writing before the original probation end date.

The maximum total probation period is 6 months. Full details are set out on the table above and in the individual employment contract. These periods are consistent with the Sierra Leone Employment Act 2023, which permits a probationary period of reasonable duration but not exceeding 6 months as agreed in the employment contract.

During probation, employees receive full salary and all standard benefits (NASSIT contributions, sick leave); annual leave accrued in full but may be restricted in timing pending supervisor approval; and voluntary training requires supervisor approval.

Probationary employees have the same protection against discrimination, harassment, and PSEAH violations as confirmed employees. Performance during probation is assessed against the objectives and standards agreed at the start of employment. The Line Manager is responsible for providing regular feedback at a minimum at the halfway point and for completing a written probation assessment no later than 5 working days before the probation end date.

Where performance is satisfactory, the employee is confirmed in post in writing. Where performance gives rise to concerns, the employee is informed in writing with sufficient time to respond before any decision to extend or terminate is made.

Notice during probation:

Either party may terminate during probation by giving written notice in accordance with the Sierra Leone Employment Act (Act No. 15 of 2023).

The minimum notice period is one week or one-week wages in lieu of notice, for each completed month of service up to a maximum of four weeks (28 days):

Completed month of service	Minimum Notice Period
Up to 1 month	1 week
2 months	2 weeks
3 months	3 weeks

A few additional points from the text that sit outside the table:

- **Probation termination** requires written notice in accordance with the Sierra Leone Employment Act 2023.
- **Payment in lieu of notices** either party may elect to pay salary instead of giving notice.
- **Gross misconduct** may result in immediate summary dismissal with no notice or payment in lieu, subject to a fair investigation and hearing under Section 11.3.

Review Schedule

Review	Timing	Format	Purpose
30-day	Day 30 (±5 days)	Informal documented conversation	Early feedback; identify concerns; set priorities for next 30 days.
60-day	Day 60 (±5 days)	Formal meeting with written assessment	Assess progress; address gaps; signal likelihood of confirmation.
90-day (final)	Day 90 (±5 days)	Formal meeting + written outcome	Final decision: confirm, extend, or terminate.

Outcomes at 90 Days

Decision	Meaning	Action Required
Confirm	Employees have met all expectations	Confirmation letter issued; employment continues.
Extend	Potential shown but more time needed (once only)	Extension letter with new end date and specific improvement targets.
Terminate	Employees have not met expectations	Written termination letter with 7 days' notice (or immediate dismissal for gross misconduct).

An employee terminated during probation may appeal only on grounds of procedural error or discrimination, in writing to HR within 10 working days. The Executive Director (or Board Chair if the ED was the decision-maker) responds within 15 working days. Early confirmation before 90 days is possible in exceptional cases where performance consistently exceeds expectations, all mandatory training is complete, and there are no conduct concerns.

SECTION C — EQUALITY, DIGNITY & SAFE WORK

LWL is committed to providing a workplace in which every individual is treated with dignity, respect, fairness, and professionalism free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation, and retaliation. All employment decisions are based solely on merit, competence, qualifications, and performance. This section applies to all employees, interns, trainees, consultants, contractors, volunteers, and any other person engaged by or representing LWL.

3.1 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

LWL is committed to promoting equal opportunities for all employees; removing barriers that hinder fair participation or advancement; valuing diversity of background, identity, perspective, and experience; and strengthening organisational effectiveness through inclusive practices.

Discrimination whether direct or indirect is strictly prohibited on the following grounds: sex, gender, pregnancy, maternity, or family responsibilities; marital status; disability or long-term health condition; age; race, ethnicity, colour, or tribe; religion or belief; political opinion; national extraction or social origin; sexual orientation; HIV/AIDS status; trade union membership or activity; and any other ground protected under applicable law.

LWL's inclusive employment commitments include:

Commitment	How LWL Delivers It
Fair recruitment	All vacancies open to all qualified candidates; shortlisting based on criteria only.
Equal pay	Equal pay for equal work regardless of protected characteristics, monitored annually.
Women in leadership	Target female representation at Grade D and above, with progressive reviews to track progress.
Reasonable accommodation	Adjustments for employees with disabilities, pregnancy, nursing, or faith-based needs assessed confidentially and promptly by HR.
Positive action	Encouraging applications from underrepresented groups; diversity as a tiebreaker where two candidates are equally qualified (not quotas or automatic preferences).
Training	All staff receive equality and anti-harassment training at hire and every two years.
Diversity monitoring	Anonymised voluntary self-identification data collected for Board reporting and internal improvement only never used in individual employment decisions.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

LWL is committed to a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) approach embedded in all HR operations, not only in recruitment. In practice this means: providing flexible working arrangements that support employees with caregiving responsibilities, including parents of young children and those caring for older dependants; ensuring that disability inclusion goes beyond reasonable adjustments to include proactive accessibility reviews of all work environments and materials; Recognising that discrimination is often intersectional based on the combination of two or more protected characteristics and training managers to identify and respond to intersectional disadvantage; and ensuring that programme activities involving beneficiaries apply the same GESI principles to participant selection, engagement, and feedback.

LWL is developing a standalone GESI-related Guide that will document the organisation's detailed approach to gender equality and social inclusion across all operations and programmes.

The GESI Guide will be developed by HR and the appointed LWL Safeguarding focal point, in consultation with the Senior Management Team, and submitted to the Board for approval. Once approved, the GESI Policy will be reviewed annually and made available to all staff, and implementing partners.

3.2 Dignity at Work — Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying

LWL maintains zero tolerance toward harassment (including sexual harassment), bullying, intimidation, workplace violence, threats, coercion, and retaliation against anyone who raises concerns in good faith. Such conduct is serious misconduct addressed under Section L.

Employees involved in personal or intimate relationships that may give rise to a real or perceived power imbalance must declare this to HR. LWL may implement safeguards such as adjusted reporting lines or role reassignment to prevent conflicts of interest or undue influence.

Harassment complaints, including those involving managers, should be reported promptly to HR or the Executive Director. The investigation procedure, timeframes, and possible outcomes are set out in Section L. All reports are handled confidentially and without retaliation.

3.3 Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH)

LWL has zero tolerance for Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH) by any personnel, consultant, partner, or associate in the workplace, at organisational events, in field locations, online, and outside working hours where conduct impacts the organisation or its beneficiaries.

Key definitions:

Term	Definition
Sexual Exploitation	Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes.
Sexual Abuse	Actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.
Sexual Harassment	Any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour, or verbal/physical conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected to cause offence or humiliation.
Survivor	The person who has experienced sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment (preferred over 'victim').
Consent	Voluntary, informed, and freely given agreement. Cannot be given by anyone under 18, anyone with diminished capacity, or any beneficiary who depends on LWL for aid or services.

Zero-tolerance prohibited conduct includes (among other things): any sexual exploitation or abuse by personnel; sexual relationships between staff and beneficiaries (power imbalance negates consent); any sexual activity with persons under 18; exchange of money, employment, or goods for sex; quid pro quo sexual harassment; hostile-environment harassment; and any retaliation against a person who reports PSEAH in good faith.

Prevention measures include: PSEAH-specific reference and criminal record checks during recruitment; mandatory PSEAH training at hire and every two years (annually for managers); PSEAH clauses in all contracts and partner agreements; and accessible reporting mechanisms for beneficiaries.

Board accountability: The Board of Directors holds ultimate institutional accountability for PSEAH.

3.3.1 Reporting PSEAH

Any person staff, beneficiary, or community member may report suspected PSEAH through any of the following channels. No person is required to report to their supervisor if that supervisor is the alleged perpetrator.

Channel	Confidentiality	Anonymous?
Safeguarding Focal Point	High	No (but protected)
HR Manager	High	No (but protected)
Executive Director	High	No (but protected)
Board Chair (for reports involving the ED)	High	No (but protected)
Confidential reporting email (address available from HR or the Safeguarding Focal Point)	High	Yes
Physical drop box (office — Safeguarding Focal Point access only)	High	Yes
Report from beneficiaries (government	High	Can be anonymous

LWL follows a survivor-centered approach: safety, dignity, and wellbeing of the survivor are the priority in every response. Survivors decide whether to pursue formal complaints except where mandatory reporting applies. Information about the report, the survivor, and the alleged perpetrator is shared only on a strict need-to-know basis.

Survivors are entitled to the following support, regardless of whether they choose to make a formal complaint: immediate safety planning and, where necessary, temporary security measures including removal of the alleged perpetrator from the work environment pending investigation; access to medical care, including referral to a health facility for treatment and, where applicable, post-exposure prophylaxis; psychosocial support through referral to a qualified counsellor or support service contact details are held by HR and the Safeguarding Focal Point; legal assistance and information about options, provided by or through HR; and ongoing updates on the status of any investigation, communicated in a manner the survivor agrees to.

The Safeguarding Focal Point coordinates survivor support. Where the Safeguarding Focal Point is the alleged perpetrator, the Executive Director assumes this responsibility. Certain violations must be reported to external authorities including sexual abuse of a child (Sierra Leone Police, Family Support Unit), rape or serious assault, trafficking, and donor-specific requirements. Mandatory reporting overrides survivor confidentiality where required by law; the survivor is informed before any external report is made unless doing so would endanger them.

Substantiated high-severity violations rape, sexual assault, and exploitation of a beneficiary, sexual activity with a child, or transactional sex result in immediate summary dismissal, police referral, and donor reporting. Retaliation against anyone who reports PSEAH in good faith is itself grounds for immediate termination.

PSEAH records are kept strictly confidential and separately from personnel files. Substantiated reports are retained for the duration of the perpetrator's employment plus 10 years; unsubstantiated reports for 5 years then destroyed; investigation records for 10 years.

3.4 Safeguarding and Child Protection

LWL is committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable people across all programmes, activities, and work environments. The organisation implements enhanced vetting for roles involving contact with children; mandatory safeguarding and child protection training for relevant staff; a code of behaviour governing contact, communication, supervision, and data handling; and clear, confidential reporting and response procedures centered on the safety, dignity, and rights of survivors.

Youth-specific conduct standards: All LWL personnel working with or near people under 18 must observe the following mandatory conduct standards, regardless of programme context or duty station:

- i. No unsupervised one-to-one contact with a minor, a second adult or the minor's parent/guardian must always be present;
- ii. No personal social media contact, messaging, or phone contact with beneficiary minors outside of official programme channels;
- iii. Photography or video recording of minors requires the prior written consent of the parent or guardian, and images must be stored and shared in line with LWL's data protection and communications policies;
- iv. any concern, suspicion, or allegation involving a minor must be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Focal Point and, where required by law, to the Sierra Leone Police Family Support Unit, delay in reporting is itself a disciplinary matter; and
- v. Online facilitation of education or programme activities involving minors must use approved LWL platforms only, with session records retained. The designated Safeguarding Lead who is responsible for monitoring compliance with these standards and reporting to the Board Safeguarding Lead each quarter.

Any safeguarding concern, suspicion, or allegation must be reported immediately through designated safeguarding or HR channels. Failure to report may itself constitute a serious disciplinary offence.

3.5 Freedom of Association and Social Dialogue

LWL respects and upholds employees' rights to form or join any lawful trade union, elect representatives of their choosing, and participate in union activities outside working hours free from intimidation, discrimination, interference, or retaliation. Engagement with employee representatives will be conducted in good faith and in accordance with applicable law.

3.6 Protection from Retaliation

No employee shall suffer retaliation, victimisation, or adverse treatment for reporting discrimination, harassment, bullying, or safeguarding concerns; participating in investigations or grievance processes; or exercising lawful workplace rights in good faith. Any retaliation will be treated as serious misconduct and addressed under Section L.

SECTION D — CODE OF CONDUCT & PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

This Code sets out the standards of behaviour, integrity, professionalism, and accountability expected of all LWL employees, interns, volunteers, board members, consultants, and contractors whenever and wherever they are acting on behalf of LWL. Compliance with this Code is a condition of engagement with LWL. Any exception must be in writing, approved by the Executive Director (or Board for the ED), and documented in the personnel file.

4.1 Core Ethical Principles

Value	What It Means in Practice
Integrity	Act honestly, ethically, and transparently in all actions. Make decisions objectively and in the best interests of the organisation.
Respect	Treat all people with dignity regardless of status. Maintain courtesy, professionalism, and constructive communication.
Accountability	Take responsibility for decisions and actions. Meet commitments reliably and on time.
Excellence	Strive for quality and continuous improvement. Bring a solution-focused approach to challenges.
Compassion	Act with empathy toward beneficiaries and colleagues. Support a culture of wellbeing and inclusion.

Ethical behaviour is not optional, it applies regardless of role, seniority, or location. All personnel shall promptly report unethical, unsafe, or inappropriate conduct through approved channels.

4.2 Professional Behaviour

All employees are expected to demonstrate reliability, punctuality, and accountability for assigned duties; clear, respectful, and constructive communication; cooperation, teamwork, and openness to diverse perspectives; and professional and personal presentation appropriate to their role, including compliance with safety, cultural, or partner-specific dress requirements and use of PPE where required.

Behaviour that undermines trust, collaboration, or workplace harmony is inconsistent with LWL standards. Reasonable accommodation related to cultural, religious, or disability-related needs will be considered in consultation with HR.

4.3 Prohibited Conduct

Category	Prohibited Actions
Harassment & Discrimination	Any form of harassment (sexual, racial, religious, tribal), bullying, intimidation, or discriminatory treatment of colleagues, beneficiaries, or partners.
Fraud & Corruption	Embezzlement, bribery, kickbacks, falsification of documents, or misappropriation of funds.
Conflict of Interest	Using position for personal gain; hiring relatives without disclosure; taking outside employment that interferes with duties without approval.

Category	Prohibited Actions
Misuse of Assets	Theft; personal use of vehicles; unauthorised use of funds, equipment, or IT systems.
Abuse of Power	Any exploitation of beneficiaries, staff, or vulnerable persons.
Sexual Misconduct (PSEAH)	Sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment — zero tolerance. (See Section C3 for full policy.)
Retaliation	Punishing anyone who reports a violation in good faith.
Substance Abuse	Reporting to work or conducting LWL business under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
Political Misuse	Using LWL resources, name, or position for partisan political purposes.

4.3.1 Environmental Responsibility and Do No Harm

LWL is committed to conducting its operations and programmes in an environmentally responsible manner and to applying a “do no harm” principle across all its activities. In practice this means: avoiding environmental damage through LWL’s operational activities, including waste disposal, vehicle use, and procurement decisions; ensuring that programme activities do not cause unintended harm to communities, ecosystems, or natural resources; complying with applicable Sierra Leone environmental legislation and with any environmental and social safeguard requirements specified in donor grant agreements; raising concerns about potential environmental or social harm through the whistleblowing channel in Section 11.9; and reporting any environmental incident, spill, or unintended harm to the Finance and Operations Director and HR within 24 hours. Deliberate environmental damage or willful disregard of this obligation is treated as misconduct under Section 11.2.

4.4 Conflict of Interest

Employees must avoid situations in which personal, family, financial, or external interests may conflict or appear in conflict with their official duties. This means disclosing any actual, potential, or perceived conflict to HR or Management promptly; refraining from participating in decisions where a conflict exists; seeking written approval before accepting external employment, consultancy, or board roles; and completing an annual Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form.

Board members are held to the same standard and additionally must: complete a written Conflict of Interest Disclosure at the time of appointment and at the commencement of each financial year; declare any conflict actual, potential, or perceived at the start of any Board or committee meeting at which a related item is to be discussed; withdraw from discussion, decision-making, and voting on any matter in which they have a conflict; and ensure their disclosure is recorded in the Board minutes. Board disclosures are reviewed annually by the Board Chair (or, where the Chair has a conflict, by the longest-serving independent Board member). Non-compliance by a Board member is referred to the full Board for determination of appropriate action in accordance with the LWL Constitution and applicable law.

Situation	Required Action
Hiring a relative	Full disclosure to HR before any involvement in recruitment.
Outside employment or consultancy	Prior written approval from the Executive Director.
Accepting gifts from vendors/beneficiaries	Decline or declare to HR see gifts policy below.
Written disclosure and full recusal from related decisions.	

4.5 Gifts and Hospitality

To maintain integrity and transparency, staff must exercise caution when receiving or offering gifts and hospitality. The following guidelines set out what is acceptable, what must be declared, and what is strictly prohibited. Financial thresholds are deliberately kept minimally to avoid undue influence or perceptions of favoritism.

Item	Status	Limit/Financial Value
Low-value promotional items (e.g., pens, calendars)	Acceptable	Up to SLE 50 (≈ USD \$5) per item; no cumulative limit.
Meals during work meetings	Acceptable	Must be modest and reasonable, not exceeding SLE 300 (≈ USD \$25) per person.
Small gifts from beneficiaries	Decline politely	Not permitted, regardless of value.
Cash, vouchers, or cash equivalents	Strictly prohibited	No exceptions.
Gifts from vendors or partners	Declare or decline	All gifts must be declared to HR. Retention is only permitted if value is below SLE 1,200 (≈ USD \$50) , approved by ED and the Board Chair when the gift is to the ED.

4.6 Use of Organisational Property and Resources

Organisational assets are provided to staff for the sole purpose of supporting official duties. Responsible use ensures efficiency, accountability, and protection of the organisation's reputation. The following guidelines outline permitted and prohibited uses of key resources:

Asset	Permitted Use	Prohibited Use
Vehicle	Official travel only	Personal errands; unauthorised passengers
Computer/phone	Work duties; limited reasonable personal use	Excessive personal use; inappropriate content
Internet	Work-related research and official email	Pornography, gambling, illegal downloads

Asset	Permitted Use	Prohibited Use
Funds	As per approved budget and finance procedures	Personal expenses; unapproved advances

No employee shall drive an LWL vehicle without a valid driver's license and written authorisation. Passengers must be on official business. All assets must be used only for authorised purposes; employees must take reasonable care to prevent loss, damage, misuse, or unauthorised access, and must report any such incident immediately.

4.7 Confidentiality and Information Protection

Employees must protect all confidential and sensitive information relating to personnel, finance, operations, programmes, partners, beneficiaries, donors, and strategic matters. In practice, this means accessing only information necessary for assigned duties; storing and transmitting information securely; using official email (not personal email, WhatsApp, or social media) for work communication; and complying with data protection and information security policies. Confidentiality obligations survive the end of employment.

Information Type	Examples
Beneficiary data	Names, addresses, health information, case details, photos
Staff personal data	Salaries, medical information, disciplinary records, performance ratings
Donor information	Contracts, funding amounts, reporting requirements
Internal decisions	Unpublished board minutes, strategic plans, funding proposals
Investigative matters	Whistleblower reports, misconduct investigations, PSEAH records

4.8 Media, Social Media, and External Communication

All media inquiries shall be referred to the Executive Director or Communications Focal Point. No employee shall speak to the press, make public statements, or represent LWL externally without authorisation. Photographs of beneficiaries require signed consent forms.

On personal social media, employees should state clearly that views are their own; not post confidential or internal information; not post defamatory content about LWL, donors, colleagues, or beneficiaries; and not identify themselves as representing LWL without permission. Violations that harm LWL's reputation or breach confidentiality may result in disciplinary action.

4.9 Professional Qualifications, HR Records, and Accuracy

Where a role requires a professional license, certification, or registration, employees must maintain valid and current credentials and immediately report any suspension, revocation, or expiry to Management and HR. Failure to maintain mandatory qualifications may affect continued employment.

Employees are responsible for providing accurate and complete personal information to HR, notifying HR promptly of any changes (address, bank details, emergency contacts), and cooperating with periodic verification of employment records. Knowingly providing false or misleading information constitutes misconduct.

4.10 Reporting Violations and Consequences of Breach

All personnel have a duty to report suspected violations of this Code through approved channels:

Reporting Channel	Contact
Immediate supervisor	Direct conversation
HR Manager	Contact HR Manager details available from HR and on the staff intranet
Executive Director	Contact Executive Director details available from HR and on the staff intranet
Anonymous drop box or hotline	Confidential Section K, 11.9 (Whistleblowing)

Non-compliance with this Code may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination in accordance with Section L. Serious breaches may also result in civil or criminal liability. Malicious reporting (knowingly false accusations) is itself a violation of this Cod

SECTION E — WORKING TIME, PAY & BENEFITS

This section sets out LWL's standards on working hours, attendance, overtime, salary administration, and the full range of employee benefits. It applies to all employees unless otherwise stated in individual contracts.

5.1 Working Hours and Attendance

The standard working week is 40 hours of productive working time, equating to 8 productive hours per day Monday to Friday (8:30 AM to 5:30 PM with a one-hour unpaid lunch break). The lunch break is a genuine, uninterrupted rest period and may not be shortened, skipped, or treated as working time without Line Manager Approval and corresponding TOIL entitlement under Section 5.2. Employees must not be required or expected to work through their lunch break as a matter of routine. Normal working hours are:

Day	Hours
Monday to Friday	8:30 AM – 5:30 PM (1-hour lunch break; 8 productive hours)

LWL may adjust working hours to meet operational needs with reasonable notice. Employees are entitled to a meal break of at least 30 minutes (up to 1 hour) for any shift exceeding 6 hours, and a continuous rest period of at least 24 hours in every 7-day period.

Attendance expectations: employees must report on work on time and be ready to commence duties; remain available during agreed working hours; accurately record attendance and working time where required; and obtain prior approval for any absence, lateness, or early departure. An employee is deemed absent without authorisation if they fail to report or leave work without approval. Repeated or unauthorised absence may result in disciplinary action under Section L.

Timekeeping and Timesheets

Accurate timekeeping underpins correct payroll, TOIL accrual, and compliance with the Sierra Leone Employment Act 2023. Where LWL requires employees to record their working time whether on timesheets or through an HRIS the following standards apply.

Recording working time. Employees must record their actual working time each day, including start time, end time, and the unpaid lunch break, and must do so contemporaneously as hours are worked rather than reconstruct them later from memory. Any additional hours must be approved in advance under Section 5.2 before they are worked and recorded; unapproved additional hours are not compensated and do not accrue TOIL. Absences must be entered using the correct leave codes (for example, annual leave, sick leave, or other approved leave).

Submission and approval. Timesheets must be completed daily and submitted by the end of each working week. The Line Manager reviews and approves them no later than the following Monday, ensuring that recorded time, any approved TOIL, and leave entries are correct. Late or incomplete submissions may delay the approval of related TOIL and any payroll adjustment; where a timesheet affects pay for the current month, it must reach HR and Finance by the 22nd of month query deadline set out in Section 5.3.

Accuracy and accountability. Employees are responsible for the accuracy and completeness of their own records. Line Managers must verify that timesheets are complete and accurate before approving them and must not approve records they know or suspect to be inaccurate. Falsifying time records, including recording time not worked, altering another employee's records, or recording attendance on another's behalf, constitutes gross misconduct under Section 5.7 and may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal under Section L.

Corrections. If an error is identified after submission, the employee must notify their Line Manager immediately. All corrections must be documented and approved; those affecting the current month's pay

must be confirmed before the 22nd, while discrepancies confirmed after payment is processed are corrected in the following month's payroll in line with Section 5.3.

Records. Attendance and timekeeping records are maintained by HR, are available to the Finance and Operations Director and external auditors on request, and are retained for a minimum of seven years, consistent with Section 5.2. Employees may request access to their own records through HR or the HRIS.

5.2 Overtime and Additional Hours

LWL does not pay for overtime worked. LWL prioritises employee wellbeing and sustainable workloads. Regular overtime is not expected, encouraged, or treated as a measure of commitment or performance. Where additional hours genuinely cannot be avoided, they must be: exceptional and limited to genuine operational necessity; approved in writing by the Line Manager in advance (with the operational reason, why work cannot be rescheduled, and proposed TOIL arrangement stated); and the total working time must not exceed 10 hours in a single day as an internal LWL operational limit (this is an organisational safeguard, not a specific statutory ceiling; the Sierra Leone Employment Act 2023 requires a minimum rest period of 11 consecutive hours between working days and at least 24 consecutive hours of rest in every 7-day period, both of which LWL's limit is designed to protect).

For drivers and field staff in genuine exceptional operational circumstances, the 10-hour limit may be extended with prior HR approval and a mandatory compensatory rest arrangement; the total working time in any case must never breach the statutory rest period requirements. Approvals are recorded using the Overtime Authorisation Form held by HR or where an HRIS is in use, in that system. Attendance and overtime records are maintained by HR, available to the Finance and Operations Director and external auditors upon request and retained for a minimum of 7 years.

Unapproved overtime will not be compensated. At LWL, all approved overtime is compensated exclusively through Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) and is not paid in monetary form. TOIL must be agreed in writing with the Line Manager at the time of approving the overtime and must be taken within the month of the overtime being worked. TOIL that is not taken within this period lapses and is not convertible to cash. Monetary cash payment for overtime is not available under LWL's compensation framework.

Public holiday work: The Sierra Leone Employment Act 2023 provides that employees required to work on a gazette public holiday are entitled to a compensatory rest day. At LWL, this statutory entitlement is fulfilled through TOIL at the enhanced rate of 2 hours TOIL for every 1 hour worked on a public holiday, as set out in the table below. This TOIL accrual constitutes LWL's method of providing the compensatory rest day required by the Act.

TOIL accrued for public holiday work must be taken within 3 months of the holiday; where this is genuinely not possible due to operational requirements, the Line Manager and HR must agree to an extension in writing. No monetary payment is made in lieu of TOIL for public holiday work. The TOIL rates applied are:

Day	TOIL Rate (Time awarded per hour worked)
Weekdays	1.5 hours TOIL per hour worked
Saturdays	2 hours TOIL per hour worked
Sundays and Public Holidays	2 hours TOIL per hour worked

TOIL is not paid out upon separation and is forfeited if not taken within the agreed 3-month period. No monetary cash payment is made in lieu of TOIL at any time, including on separation, except where a court or the Commissioner of Labour determines otherwise following a lawful dispute resolution process.

5.3 Payroll and Salary Administration

Payroll Cycle

Salaries are paid monthly in arrears on the 25th of each month, or on the last working day before the 25th where that date falls on a weekend or public holiday. Payment is made by bank transfer directly to the employee's designated Sierra Leone bank account.

The 25th has been chosen as the payment date deliberately: it allows sufficient processing time for inter-bank transfers across all commercial banks in Sierra Leone so that employees banking with different institutions receive cleared funds by no later than the last working day of the month. Any payroll queries or discrepancies must be submitted to HR and Finance no later than the 22nd of the month to allow investigation and resolution before payment is processed.

Queries raised after the 22nd will be investigated and resolved by the last working day of the same month. Discrepancies confirmed after payment is processed will be corrected in the following month's payroll or, where significant, through an off-cycle supplementary payment at the Finance and Operations Director's discretion.

Pay Slips

Pay slips are issued monthly and item basic salary, allowances, statutory deductions, and any approved adjustments. Employees are responsible for reviewing their pay slips and reporting any discrepancies to HR promptly.

Currency of Payment

Although salaries may be quoted and contracted in foreign currency, such as USD or GBP, all payments are made in Sierra Leone Leones (SLE). The applicable amount is calculated using the Bank of Sierra Leone (BSL) mid-market exchange rate published on the date of payroll processing, as obtained from the BSL official website or confirmed by the organisation's principal commercial bank. The Finance and Operations Director record the rate applied on each payroll run. Where a donor grant agreement specifies a different exchange rate methodology, that methodology governs expenditure charged to that grant.

Statutory Deductions

Deduction	Details
PAYE (Pay as You Earn) Income Tax	Deducted monthly at source in accordance with NRA salary thresholds and income tax brackets as prescribed by the National Revenue Authority of Sierra Leone.
NASSIT Contribution	Employee contribution: 5% of basic salary deducted at source. Employer contribution: 10% of employees' monthly basic salary, remitted to NASSIT by LWL as per the 2002 NASSIT Act.

Other deductions may be made only where lawful, authorised in writing by the employee, and properly documented. No deduction will be made without a legal basis and prior notification to the employee.

Salary Grade and Structure

Each employee is assigned a grade from Grade A (Entry Level) to Grade I (Executive), based on role responsibilities, autonomy, and experience requirements. The grade determines the salary range. The

employee's base monthly gross salary is stated in the employment contract. Salaries are reviewed annually on 1 January, based on performance, budget, and market conditions. Increases are not automatic. Annual salary increments are directly informed by the annual performance review.

Note on confidentiality: Actual salary amounts are held in a separate access-controlled salary schedule maintained by HR and Finance and shared only on a need-to-know basis.

Grade Overview and Profile

Grade	Level	Typical Experience
Grade A	Entry Level / Administrative Assistant, Driver and Janitor level	0–1 year
Grade B	Intermediate / Technical and Support	1–3 years
Grade C	Senior Support / Junior Specialist	3–5 years
Grade D	Professional / Supervisor	5–7 years
Grade E	Senior Professional / Specialist	7–10 years
Grade F	Manager / Senior Expert	10–15 years
Grade G	Senior Manager / Deputy Director	15–20 years
Grade H	Executive / Director	20+ years
Grade I	Executive Senior Executive	20+ years

Salary Review and Progression

Annual increments are directly informed by the annual performance review. Employees rated Exceptional or Exceeds Expectations are rewarded based on the discretion of the LWL SMT. Those that Meet Expectations might not be rewarded. Below Expectations and Unsatisfactory recipient might be placed on a Performance Improvement Plan.

Performance Rating	Rewards
Exceptional (5/5) or Exceeds Expectations (4/5)	SMT might consider full salary increment and grade promotion
Meets Expectations (3/5)	SMT might consider partial salary increment
Below Expectations (2/5) or Unsatisfactory (1/5)	SMT might consider Performance Improvement Plan.

Promotion

A promotion is a move to a higher grade and requires a vacancy, requisite tenure, and strong performance. All cross-grade promotions require Executive Director Approval.

5.4 Promotions and Salary Reviews

Annual salary increments are directly informed by the annual performance review. No salary increase is automatic all increases are merit-based and subject to budget availability.

Promotions and salary reviews are merit-based, dependent on performance, role scope, and organisational need, and subject to budget availability and authorised approval. There is no automatic entitlement to promotion or salary increase.

5.5 Compensation Structure and Allowances

An employee's gross salary consists of a basic salary plus approved allowances. Allowance types and values are grade-based and are specified in each employee's individual employment contract. LWL ensures that no employee receives less than the statutory national minimum wage.

The annual gross salary is structured as follows:

- **Basic Salary:** 75% of the annual gross salary
- **Allowances:** 25% of the annual gross salary, divided equally into a Transport Allowance (12.5%) and a Housing Allowance (12.5%)

Any additional approved monthly allowances are paid above and above this structure and do not form part of the 75%/25% split.

Acting / Responsibility Allowance

An acting allowance may be paid where an employee is formally assigned to perform the full duties of a higher-grade position for 21 or more consecutive days. The arrangement must be operationally justified, approved in writing before duties commence, and time bound. The allowance equals the difference between the employee's current gross salary and the minimum gross salary of the acting grade. No employee shall act in a vacant position for more than six months without a formal decision on the substantive filling of the post. Acting allowances are taxable and appear on pay slips.

Annual Leave Allowance (ALA)

Employees who have been employed at Lε Wi Lan for a continuous period of one year shall be entitled to at least one month of their basic salary as annual leave allowance for each completed year of service in accordance with the applicable laws of Sierra Leone. Employees eligible for paid annual leave are entitled to an Annual Leave Allowance which is based on the annual basic salary. The ALA is planned for new joiners, part-time employees, and exiting employees during the year. It becomes payable once the employee has booked at least 25% of their prorated annual leave entitlement within the calendar year. The ALA is fully taxable and subject to PAYE.

5.6 Benefits

Benefit	Summary
NASSIT pension	10% employer + 5% employee contribution (see E3 above).
Health insurance	Eligible employees receive coverage subject to organisational policy and provider terms; may include outpatient, inpatient, emergency, prescriptions, and approved dependants. Full details provided at enrolment.
Transport allowance	Grade-dependent; specified in individual contracts.
Communication allowance	Grade-dependent; specified in individual contracts.
Training and development	As per Section J (10.0 Training, Learning & Development).

Insurance Coverage

LWL provides the following insurance coverage to eligible employees as part of the overall benefits package. Full policy terms, coverage limits, and enrolment procedures are provided by HR at the time of joining and updated whenever plan terms change. All insurance benefits are subject to organisational funding and the terms of the applicable insurance provider.

Coverage Type	Key Details
Medical Insurance — Outpatient	Covers primary care consultations, diagnostic tests, prescribed medications, and specialist referrals up to the annual outpatient limit. Available to the employee and approved dependants (spouse and up to three children under 18). Employees must use network providers except in emergencies.
Medical Insurance — Inpatient / Hospitalisation	Covers accommodation, surgery, anesthesia, theatre fees, and nursing care for approved hospital admissions. Pre-authorisation is required for non-emergency admissions. Coverage extends to the employee and approved dependants.
Medical Insurance — Maternity	Covers antenatal visits, delivery (normal and caesarean), postnatal care, and newborn care for up to 72 hours post-delivery. Maternity leave entitlement: In accordance with the Sierra Leone Employment Act 2023, all female employees are entitled to maternity leave and associated benefits from the first day of employment. Employees should contact HR as early as possible in their pregnancy to receive full information on current coverage, support options, and any interim arrangements that may apply.
Medical Insurance — Emergency	Provides 24/7 cover for life-threatening emergencies at any registered facility. Emergency cover applies outside the provider network. The employee or their representative must notify the insurer within 48 hours of admission.
Medical Insurance — Dental and Optical (where applicable)	Subject to plan tier and grade eligibility. Covers routine dental check-ups, basic dental treatment, and optical tests with a contribution toward spectacles or contact lenses. Detailed limits are specified in the plan schedule.
Group Life Insurance	In the event of the death of an employee during active service, a lump-sum benefit is payable to the employee's nominated beneficiary. The benefit is typically calculated as a multiple of the employee's annual basic salary (the specific multiple is defined in the group life policy schedule). Employees must nominate a beneficiary on joining and update the nomination following a change in circumstances.
Group Personal Accident Insurance	Provides a benefit in the event of accidental death or permanent disability arising from an accident occurring during employment, including approved work-related travel. The benefit is calculated as a defined multiple of annual salary in the case of death or total permanent disability, with partial benefits for partial permanent disabilities as specified in the policy schedule.
Employer's Liability / Workers' Compensation	LWL maintains employer's liability coverage in compliance with Sierra Leone labour legislation. This provides for medical costs and compensation in respect of work-related illness or injury sustained

Coverage Type	Key Details
	during employment. Claims are processed through HR and Finance in accordance with the applicable legal framework.

Eligibility: Permanent and fixed-term employees on contracts for six months or more are eligible for the full insurance package from their first day of confirmed employment (i.e., upon successful completion of probation, unless the contract expressly provides for earlier enrolment). Temporary and casual staff may be eligible for Employer's Liability cover only. Interns are covered by organisational public liability insurance only.

Claims and queries: Employees should contact HR for the insurer's claims forms, pre-authorisation requests, and guidance on the claims process. All insurance-related information is treated as confidential.

Performance Bonus

A performance bonus may be awarded at management discretion, subject to individual and overall organisational performance and the availability of approved funds. Bonuses are not guaranteed and do not form part of contractual pay. To be eligible, an employee must: be actively employed at the time of payment; have completed probation; have met minimum service requirements for the cycle; have achieved the required performance rating; and have no active disciplinary process.

Approval process: HR compiles a recommended bonus list with individual amounts and supporting performance ratings; the Finance and Operations Director confirm budget availability in writing; the Executive Director approves the final list; and the Board is notified of the aggregate bonus spent at the next scheduled meeting. No bonus payment is processed without a signed approval record held by HR and Finance. The basis for each award is documented to ensure consistency and provide an audit trail.

13th-Month Salary

Subject to organisational performance and funding, a 13th-month payment equivalent to one month's basic salary may be paid on or before 15 December each year. This payment is processed separately from monthly payroll and is subject to the same eligibility conditions as the performance bonus.

Approval process: the Finance and Operations Director confirm the funding position and presents a recommendation to the Executive Director no later than 30 November each year; the Executive Director approves in writing; and the Board is notified at the next scheduled meeting. The 13th-month payment is not processed without a written approval record signed by both the Finance and Operations Director and the Executive Director.

Rent Advances

Employees with at least 12 months of continuous service may request a rent advance of their annual rent entitlement once in January per calendar year. The advance is interest-free and must be repaid in equal monthly instalments over no more than 12 months.

Approval requires a written application to HR, confirmation by the Finance and Operations Director of fund availability, and approval of the Executive Director.

All rent advances are recorded in the Rent Advance Register maintained by Finance. Any outstanding balance is deducted from final pay upon separation. LWL does not provide personal loans and assumes no liability for employees' personal financial obligations.

Long-Service Recognition

LWL recognises and rewards employees for their continued commitment to key service milestones, namely the completion of 5, 10, 15, and 20 years of service. Recognition may take the form of certificates, trophies, public acknowledgement, or monetary awards. Non-monetary recognition (certificates, trophies, and public acknowledgement) is approved by the Executive Director. Monetary awards require Executive Director Recommendation and Finance and Operations Director confirmation of budget availability, with Board notification at the next scheduled meeting. No monetary award under this provision is paid without a written approval record.

5.7 Record Keeping and Compliance

Employees and managers must maintain accurate attendance and performance records, submit truthful overtime and payroll information, and comply with verification and audit requirements. Falsification of records constitutes gross misconduct.

5.8 End-of-Service Benefits

An employee who has served LWL for a continuous period of at least one year and whose services are terminated for reasons other than gross misconduct, or an employee who retires, dies, resigns or is made redundant shall be entitled to severance pay or end of service benefit. Severance payments will be in accordance with the Employment Act or Regulations or any extant law or collective bargaining agreement at the date of exiting.

On separation, employees may be entitled to the following end-of-service payments, calculated in accordance with the Employment Act (Act No.15 of 2023), the Employment Regulations 2023 and LWL policy.

End of Service Benefit compensation rates

Minimum entitlements rise with length of continuous service:

Length of service	Minimum entitlement
Over 1 to under 4 years	6 weeks' basic pay per year
4 to under 8 years	8 weeks' basic pay per year
8 to under 12 years	10 weeks' basic pay per year
12 to under 15 years	14 weeks' basic pay per year
Over 15 years	18 weeks' basic pay per year

End-of-Service Benefit (Gratuity)

Permanent employees who complete at least one year of continuous service and leave LWL for any reason other than summary dismissal for gross misconduct are entitled to an End-of-Service Benefit (Gratuity).

Item	Provision
Basis of calculation	The basic salary for final month of service shall be used as the basic figure for the computations. The final incomplete year shall be paid pro rata based on completed months, any final period equal to or exceeding six (6) months but less than a year shall instead be treated as a full completed year
Formula	Severance = (Monthly Basic Salary ÷ 22 standard working days per month) × minimum days accrued for the length of service × years of completed service
Minimum service	Employees with fewer than 12 months of service are not entitled to severance, unless the Sierra Leone Employment Act 2023 requires otherwise

Item	Provision
Salary basis	Basic salary only allowances, bonuses, and benefits are excluded
Tax	Not taxable under the Finance Act 2026
Authorisation	The Finance and Operations Director reviews and confirms the calculation in writing before final payment is processed

NASSIT contributions and benefits

The End-of-Service Benefit is in addition to, and does not replace or reduce, the employees' entitlements under the National Social Security and Insurance Trust Act 2001 (as amended). LWL's obligation to remit NASSIT contributions 10% employee and 5% employer, deducted at source is a non-negotiable statutory obligation that continues regardless of the organisation's financial position.

Employees who have made the required contributions are independently entitled to NASSIT retirement, invalidity, and survivors' benefits. These are administered directly by NASSIT, are entirely separate from any gratuity paid by LWL, and are unaffected by it. Employees are encouraged to keep their NASSIT records up to date and to contact NASSIT directly for information on their individual entitlements.

Other end-of-service payments

On separation, an employee also receives, where applicable:

- salary for any days worked in the final month not yet paid,
- payment in lieu of notice, and
- Payment for accrued unused annual leave, up to the permitted carryover limit.

SECTION F — PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

LWL operates a formal performance management system designed to ensure transparency, accountability, and alignment between individual performance and organisational objectives. The system supports effective programme delivery, stewardship of donor resources, and compliance with applicable labour laws and donor standards. Participation in the performance cycle is mandatory for all confirmed employees following successful completion of probation. Temporary and casual staff are excluded from the formal appraisal cycle but receive informal feedback.

6.1 Annual Performance Cycle

The performance year runs from January to December and is structured around four quarters:

Quarter / Period	Focus	Key Activities
Q1 — January	Performance Planning	Employee and Line Manager agree 3–5 SMART objectives with defined KPIs aligned to programme and donor deliverables. An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is also agreed. All objectives documented and approved by 31 January.
Q2 — April	Performance Monitoring	Formal check on progress against objectives and KPIs; document constraints and risks. Objective adjustments may be made to make changes in programme priorities, all changes recorded and approved for audit traceability.
Q3 — July (Mid-Year)	Mid-Year Review	Comprehensive review of behaviours, competencies, and results by 31 July. IDP progress assessed and updated. Corrective actions, where needed, formally agreed. No formal rating assigned.
Q4 — December	Annual Evaluation	Employee self-assessment (1–10 Dec). Line Manager evaluation and rating (11–13 Dec). HR moderation and calibration across departments (14–20 Dec). Salary and promotion decisions communicated in January.

6.2 Performance Rating Scale

Performance is assessed using a five-point scale. All ratings must be supported by verifiable evidence and documented justification. New employees with less than six months of service shall not receive a formal rating.

Rating	Label	Description	Typical Distribution
1	Exceptional	Consistently far exceeds all objectives. Significant impact beyond the scope of the role.	5–10% of staff
2	Exceeds Expectations	Regularly delivers above the required standard.	15–20%

Rating	Label	Description	Typical Distribution
3	Meets Expectations	Delivers all agreed objectives to the required standard solid and reliable performance.	60–70%
4	Partially Meets	Delivers some objectives but improvement is required in key areas.	10–15%
5	Does Not Meet	Fails to deliver agreed objectives. Significant improvement is required immediately.	<5%

6.3 Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

Employees receiving a rating of 4 or 5 will be placed on a formal Performance Improvement Plan. The PIP is a structured, supportive process not punitive, providing a clear and fair opportunity to improve.

PIP Element	Detail
Duration	30–90 days
Content	Clearly identified performance deficiencies; specific measurable improvement targets; support measures (coaching, training, supervision); regular review schedule (weekly or bi-weekly).
Documentation	Written notification signed by the employee, Line Manager, and HR; copy to personnel file.
Outcome	Successful completion (return to normal); extension; demotion; or termination.
Consequence of failure	Further administrative or disciplinary action under Section L.

If an employee fails a PIP or receives Rating 5 for two consecutive years, termination shall be considered with 30 days' written notice, full documentation of all feedback and support provided, and review by HR and the Executive Director before any final decision.

6.4 Personal Development Plan (PDP)

The Personal Development Plan supports employees in enhancing skills, knowledge, and competencies connecting individual career aspirations with organisational objectives. It is an integral part of the performance cycle, developed jointly by the employee and Line Manager, approved before implementation, reviewed at least annually, and maintained by HR.

PDP Component	Description
Development Goals	SMART objectives linked to role and organisational priorities.
Competency Areas	Technical, behavioural, and leadership competencies.
Development Activities	Training, mentoring, coaching, job rotation, or self-directed learning.
Resources Required	Budget, tools, or support needed.

PDP Component	Description
Timeline	Clear deadlines for each activity.
Success Indicators	Expected outcomes and measures of achievement.

6.5 Challenging Performance Review Ratings

Employees who disagree with their performance rating may first request clarification from their Line Manager. If not resolved, they may submit a formal written appeal to HR within 5–10 working days of receiving the rating, supported by specific evidence. HR reviews the appeal in consultation with the Line Manager and, where necessary, a neutral senior manager. The final decision is communicated in writing and is binding.

6.6 Performance-Related Pay

LWL may reward employee contributions based on measurable performance outcomes. Performance-related pay will be linked to individual, team, and/or organisational performance; applied consistently and transparently; and subject to organisational budget and approvals. Types may include performance bonuses, merit-based salary adjustments, and one-off recognition awards (see also Section 5.6 (Benefits)). All such payments are subject to applicable tax laws and statutory deductions.

6.7 Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Employees	Work toward agreed objectives; seek and apply feedback; participate actively in reviews; raise concerns about ratings through appropriate channels.
Line Managers	Set clear, measurable, and compliant objectives; provide ongoing documented feedback; conduct fair, objective, evidence-based evaluations; initiate and manage PIPs where necessary.
Human Resources	Provide oversight, tools, and guidance; ensure consistency and non-discrimination; conduct moderation and calibration; maintain documentation; manage performance-related grievances and appeals.

SECTION G — LEAVE & PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

LWL provides leave entitlements that support employee wellbeing, work-life balance, and compliance with Sierra Leone labour laws. All leave requires advance submission through the approved form or system, and approval by the Line Manager before commencement. Employees must ensure adequate handover arrangements before proceeding on leave.

7.1 Annual Leave

Annual leave is a fundamental right designed to promote rest, wellbeing, and productivity. The organisation grants paid annual leave to all employees based on their complete years of continuous service. Entitlement increases with tenure, rewarding long-term commitment and ensuring staff have adequate time to recharge.

Entitlement

All employees are entitled to pay annual leave per calendar year based on completed years of continuous service:

Length of Continuous Service	Annual Leave (Working Days / Year)
1–3 years	21 working days
4–6 years	26 working days
7–10 years	31 working days
11–15 years	36 working days
Over 15 years	38 working days

Leave is credited on 1 January each year and prorated for employees joining mid-year. Leave may be taken in full days (8 hours) or half days (4 hours). Employees are entitled to two days' travel each way in addition to leaving entitlement where applicable. Employees on probation accrue annual leave in full of the first day of employment. Generally, accrued leave may not be taken during the probationary period; this restriction reflects the operational need for the organisation to assess performance over a continuous period and is consistent with the terms of the individual employment contract. However, the organisation recognises that genuine emergencies can arise.

Where a probationary employee faces a documented urgent compassionate, medical, or family emergency, the Line Manager and HR may, at their discretion, approve a period of annual leave during probation. Such approval does not extend the probationary period. Any leave taken during probation is deducted from the employee's accrued annual leave balance. This provision ensures the restriction does not operate in a manner that conflicts with the employee's statutory rights under the Sierra Leone Employment Act 2023.

Advance Notice Required

Duration of Leave Requested	Minimum Advance Notice
1–3 days	3 working days
4–10 days	10 working days
11 days or more	20 working days

Carry-Over and Cash-Out

With management approval, employees on permanent or fixed-term contracts may carry forward up to 5 days of unused leave into the following calendar year. Carried-over leave must be used by 31 March of the following year; any days not used by that date are forfeited except where the carry-over arose from maternity leave, in which case Section 7.4 applies. Annual leave may not be converted to cash during active employment.

Upon separation, the following are paid out at the employee's final daily rate: all accrued unused leave from the current leave year up to the date of separation; and up to 5 carried-over days where the employee received written approval to carry them forward. The payout limit for carried-over leave is 5 days, consistent with the carry-over cap above. In the event of termination through no fault of the employee and provided at least 3 months of service have been completed, a proportionate leave entitlement applies. These entitlements meet or exceed the minimum leave standards prescribed by the Sierra Leone Employment Act 2023.

7.2 Public Holidays

LWL recognises all gazette public holidays and any additional holidays declared by the Government of Sierra Leone. Where a public holiday falls on a weekday or Sunday, compensatory time off in lieu is granted in line with official government declarations. Where it falls on a Saturday, no compensatory time is granted.

Public Holiday	Date
New Year's Day	1 January
Armed Forces Day	18 February
International Women's Day	8 March
Independence Day	27 April
Workers' Day	1 May
Christmas Day	25 December
Boxing Day	26 December

Religious observances on lunar-calendar dates include:

1. Good Friday
2. Easter Monday
3. Eid al-Fitr
4. Eid al-Adha
5. Maulid ul-Nabi.

The official holiday calendar is confirmed annually. Where operational needs require an employee to work on a public holiday, the employee is entitled to a compensatory rest day in accordance with the Sierra Leone Employment Act 2023. At LWL, this entitlement is fulfilled through TOIL at the enhanced rate of 2 hours for every 1 hour worked on the public holiday (as set out in Section 5.2). The TOIL must be taken within 3 months; where this is not possible due to operational requirements, the Line Manager and HR must agree to an extension in writing. No monetary payment is made in lieu of this TOIL entitlement.

7.3 Sick Leave

Sick leave enables employees to take necessary time off when unwell without fear of discrimination or disadvantage. Employees are expected to use sick leave responsibly only for genuine illness or medical reasons that prevent them from performing duties safely and effectively. All medical information is treated as confidential.

Reporting Requirements

When sick, employees must notify their Line Manager and HR as early as reasonably practicable. Absences exceeding three consecutive working days require a valid medical certificate or written documentation confirming incapacity to work, submitted within 48 hours of return or as soon as practicable. LWL respects the right of employees to seek treatment through any lawful healthcare pathway, including traditional medicine where this forms part of their cultural or personal practice.

However, what the organisation requires is evidence of incapacity to work, not evidence of the type of treatment sought. Where an employee is unable to obtain a conventional medical certificate, a written statement from a recognised traditional healer confirming the dates and nature of the incapacity may be considered at the Line Manager's and HR's discretion. LWL accepts no liability for the outcomes, safety, or efficacy of any traditional or alternative treatment chosen by an employee; all such decisions remain the employee's personal responsibility. Absence without any documentation or prior approval may result in disciplinary action.

Sick Leave Entitlement

Length of Service	Full Pay (per year)	Half Pay (per year)
1–5 years	35 working days	35 working days
5–10 years	42 working days	42 working days
Over 10 years	47 working days	47 working days

Sick leave is non-cumulative; unused sick leave is not payable upon separation; and entitlements are prorated for partial service years. Upon expiry of sick leave entitlement, LWL reserves the right to terminate on grounds of medical incapacity, following certification of incapacity from a recognised medical practitioner.

LWL may at any time require an independent medical assessment (at LWL's cost) where there are concerns about frequent absences, extended or recurring illnesses, or fitness to work. Employees injured in the course of duty may receive special paid leave and medical support where applicable. Misuse or abuse of sick leave constitutes misconduct.

7.4 Maternity Leave

Maternity leave is available to all female employees from the first day of employment. There is no qualifying service period. This applies equally to biological and adoptive mothers; adoptive maternity leave is available for up to two qualifying instances per employee.

Entitlement	Detail
Eligibility	All female employees — from day one of employment. No qualifying service period (Sierra Leone Employment Act 2023).
Total duration	14 weeks at full basic pay.
Prenatal leave	Minimum 6 weeks before the expected date of delivery.

Entitlement	Detail
Postnatal leave	Minimum 5 weeks compulsory after delivery. Remaining balance may be taken before or after delivery as agreed with a medical practitioner.
Adoptive maternity	Same entitlement as biological maternity; up to two qualifying instances per employee career.
Pay during leave	Full basic salary maintained throughout maternity leave.
Annual leave accrual	Annual leave accrues in full during maternity leave and runs consecutively — not simultaneously. Accrued leave that cannot be taken before year-end is carried forward to 31 March of the following year and is not forfeited.
Benefits retention	Continuity of service, seniority, all contractual benefits, and protection from dismissal related to pregnancy or maternity are maintained.
Right to return	Employees are entitled to return to the same or a comparable role.
Nursing breaks	Two paid breaks of 30 minutes each per working day (morning and afternoon) for 12 months post-birth. Statutory right under the Employment Act 2023. Breaks may be combined into one 60-minute break by agreement with the Line Manager.
Hazardous duties	LWL will avoid assigning hazardous duties and will provide role adjustments where health risks are identified by a medical practitioner.
Extended absence	Where complications extend absence beyond the maternity period, sick leave provisions apply and the right to return to role is preserved.
Notification	Employees should notify HR as early as reasonably practicable and provide an expected due date confirmed by a medical practitioner.

7.5 Paternity Leave

LWL provides paid paternity leave in recognition of shared parental responsibility and in the spirit of the Sierra Leone Employment Act 2023. This provision exceeds the statutory minimum and reflects LWL's commitment to employee wellbeing and family support.

Entitlement	Detail
Eligibility	All confirmed male employees on the birth or legal adoption of a child.
Duration	2 weeks (10 working days) at full basic pay.
Leave window	Must be taken within 4 weeks of the date of birth or adoption.
Split arrangement	May be taken as one continuous period or split into two separate weeks by agreement with the Line Manager.

Entitlement	Detail
Notification	Employees must notify the Line Manager and HR in writing at least 4 weeks before the expected birth date where practicable.
Multiple births	A multiple birth (twins, triplets, or more) from a single delivery constitutes one qualifying event and is fully covered by the 2-week entitlement regardless of the number of children born.
Calendar year cap	One period of paid paternity leave per calendar year. A second entirely separate birth or adoption event in the same year may be covered by annual leave or unpaid leave.
Documentation — 1st preference	Birth certificate or birth registration certificate (Office of the Registrar-General of Sierra Leone).
Documentation — 2nd preference	Hospital discharge letter or birth notification letter naming the father.
Documentation — 3rd preference	Statutory declaration of paternity sworn before a Commissioner for Oaths or Notary Public.
Documentation — Adoption	Adoption order or formal placement document from the relevant authority.
Where documentation unavailable	Employees may commence leave on a hospital confirmation of birth and must submit formal documentation within 60 days. Remote-area employees with documented geographic constraints may use a statutory declaration as interim proof. Failure to provide documentation within 60 days (without documented reason) may result in reclassification to annual or unpaid leave.
Return to work	LWL will facilitate a smooth return and will consider flexible working arrangements where operationally practicable.

7.6 Compassionate / Bereavement Leave

Relationship to Deceased / Event	Working Days Granted
Spouse, child, or parent	5 working days
Sibling, grandparent, or parent-in-law	3 working days
Extended family (aunt, uncle, cousin, etc.)	1 working day
Employee's own marriage	3 working days
Serious illness of a child	Up to 3 working days (with Line Manager approval)

Leave may be taken as consecutive days or single days within 14 days of the event. Additional paid or unpaid leave may be approved based on circumstances and operational needs. A death notice, obituary, or equivalent documentation may be requested.

7.7 Urgent Personal Affairs (UPA)

Employees may request up to 15 working days per year for urgent personal or legal matters. UPA leave is generally deducted from annual leave unless otherwise approved, is discretionary and subject to operational requirements, and is not payable upon separation. Unpaid UPA leave does not accrue benefits. Civic and legal duty leave: Where an employee is legally required to attend court as a party, witness, or juror; to fulfil a mandatory civic obligation recognised under Sierra Leone law; or to respond to a summons from a statutory authority, such absence shall not be deducted from the employee's annual leave entitlement.

The employee must provide the relevant summons, subpoena, or official notice to HR as soon as practicable. Civic and legal duty leave is paid for absences of up to 5 working days per calendar year; absences beyond 5 days are treated as unpaid unless the Executive Director determines otherwise. Employees are expected to return to work on the next working day after the obligation concludes.

7.8 Leave for Temporary Staff and Interns

Employee Type	Annual Leave	Sick Leave
Temporary (under 3 months)	None (unpaid time off by agreement only)	Unpaid only
Temporary (3–6 months)	1 day per month worked (pro-rated)	1 day per month worked
Interns (stipend)	As agreed with supervisor	Unpaid

7.10 Leave Application and Approval

All leave must be submitted through the approved system or leave form, approved by the Line Manager before commencement, and requested with the advance notice set out in Section G (7.1 Annual Leave). Emergency leave (sick, bereavement) should be notified verbally to the supervisor immediately; the written form should be submitted within 3 working days of return. HR maintains a central leave register and employees may request their leave balance at any time.

SECTION H — HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING

LWL is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and supportive working environment for all employees and persons engaged in its activities, in compliance with applicable health and safety laws of Sierra Leone. Health and safety are shared responsibilities: LWL takes reasonable steps to protect employees from harm, while employees are required to follow safety procedures, use equipment properly, and report risks promptly.

8.1 LWL's Duty of Care

LWL will, so far as is reasonably practicable: provide and maintain workplaces that are safe and free from recognised health risks; ensure machinery, equipment, vehicles, and workstations are properly maintained; provide adequate information, training, supervision, and instruction on health and safety; supply appropriate PPE at no cost where required; establish and communicate emergency procedures including fire safety, evacuation, and first-aid arrangements; conduct periodic risk assessments and hazard reviews; and ensure contractors, visitors, and partners comply with applicable safety requirements on LWL premises.

8.2 Employee Responsibilities

Employees must: take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others; follow all safety instructions, signage, and procedures; use PPE and safety equipment correctly and consistently; operate machinery, vehicles, or tools only if trained and authorised; keep work areas orderly and free of avoidable hazards; cooperate with safety inspections, audits, and investigations; and immediately report hazards, incidents, or unsafe conditions. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action under Section L.

8.3 Workplace Safety Rules

Employees must not engage in unsafe acts, tamper with or disable safety systems, use damaged equipment, or enter restricted areas without authorisation. Alcohol, drugs, or substances that impair judgement or performance are strictly prohibited during working hours or while conducting LWL business. Employees using machinery or equipment must conduct pre-use checks, report faults immediately, never remove safety guards, and return equipment to designated storage after use. Evacuation routes must always remain clear; participation in mandatory fire drills is required.

8.4 Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

A formal risk assessment shall be conducted: annually for all workplaces; before any new activity (new project, field site, or equipment); after any incident or near miss; and whenever circumstances change. Key hazard categories include physical (poor lighting, slippery floors, falling objects); electrical (faulty wiring, exposed cables); fire (flammable materials, blocked exits); ergonomic (poor workstation setup, heavy lifting); biological (infectious disease); psychosocial (stress, harassment, fatigue); and security and travel-related risks.

8.5 Fire Safety

Fire extinguishers of appropriate type must be present in each office, kitchen, and store and inspected monthly. Smoke detectors should be installed in all office areas and tested quarterly. Emergency exits shall be clearly marked and unobstructed. Evacuation plans shall be posted visibly. Fire drills shall be conducted at least annually. In the event of fire: raise the alarm, evacuate immediately via the nearest exit, assemble at the designated meeting point, and do not re-enter until declared safe. No employee shall attempt to fight a fire unless trained and the fire is small and contained.

8.6 First Aid and Medical Emergency Response

Workplace	First Aiders Required	First Aid Kit
Main office (10+ staff)	At least 2 trained first aiders	Fully stocked; checked monthly
Small field office (<5 staff)	1 trained first aider	Fully stocked
Vehicles	—	Travel first aid kit always carried

Medical emergency procedure: assess the situation; call for the designated first aider; provide first aid if trained; arrange transport to the nearest clinic or hospital for serious cases; notify the supervisor and HR immediately; and complete an Incident Report within 24 hours.

8.7 Reporting Hazards, Illness, and Incidents

All work-related injuries, illnesses, near-miss incidents, unsafe conditions, and threats must be reported promptly to the Line Manager, HR, Safety Officer, or Operations Manager. No employee will face retaliation for reporting safety concerns in good faith.

Incident Type	Report To	Time Limit
Minor injury (first aid only)	Supervisor and HR	End of day
Major injury (medical treatment needed)	Supervisor, HR, and Executive Director	Within 2 hours
Fatality	Executive Director immediately	Immediately
Near miss (no injury)	Health and Safety Focal Person	Within 24 hours
Security incident	Security Focal Person and Executive Director	Within 2 hours

Serious incidents will be investigated within 14 days with a written report and corrective recommendations. LWL will provide appropriate medical support and implement corrective measures.

8.8 Field Work and Travel Safety

Before field travel: complete a travel risk assessment; brief the employee on specific hazards; establish a communication plan; provide appropriate safety equipment; and carry out a vehicle safety check. All vehicles must have valid roadworthiness certificates. Seat belts must be always worn by all occupants. Speed limits must be observed. Night driving is prohibited unless specifically authorised. Drivers must hold a valid Sierra Leone driver's license, have completed defensive driving training, and must not drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Maximum driving time is 8 hours per day (10 hours in exceptional circumstances with prior approval).

8.9 Security

Office security measures include staff ID cards required for access; visitors signing in and out; and immediate reporting of any security incident (theft, threat, or intrusion). For field work in higher-risk areas: attend a security briefing before travel; obtain Executive Director approval before travelling to designated high-risk zones; maintain a communication check-in schedule; and follow the emergency evacuation plan for the specific field location. In the event of armed robbery, do not resist complying with demands, observe details safely, and report immediately.

8.10 Infection Control and Occupational Health

For infectious diseases (including COVID-19, Ebola, Lassa fever, and malaria): handwashing facilities with soap or alcohol-based sanitizer shall be available in all work areas; adequate ventilation maintained; PPE available as needed; and employees with fever, vomiting, or bleeding symptoms shall not attend work. Any suspected outbreak shall be reported to local health authorities. For field staff, insecticide-treated nets and repellent shall be provided for overnight stays, with prompt testing and treatment for any fever.

8.11 Mental Health and Wellbeing

LWL recognises the importance of psychological health alongside physical health. The organisation promotes wellbeing by encouraging reasonable workloads and work-life balance; supporting respectful and inclusive working relationships; and promoting open, stigma-free conversations about mental health. Mental health conditions are treated with the same respect as physical illness. Access to confidential support (via HR or an external provider where available) is encouraged.

Managers should monitor for signs of excessive stress, fatigue, or burnout such as increased absenteeism, declining performance, withdrawal from colleagues, or emotional distress and raise concerns with HR to arrange appropriate support. After traumatic events, debriefing and psychological support will be offered to affected staff.

8.12 Health & Safety Training

Training	Frequency	Audience
Health & Safety induction	Upon hire	All new employees
Fire safety and evacuation	At hire, then annually	All employees
First aid	At hire; refresh every 2 years	Designated first aiders
Defensive driving	At hire; refresh every 2 years	All drivers
Field safety and security	Before each field deployment	Staff travelling to field sites
Infection control	As needed / outbreak response	Relevant staff

Participation in mandatory health and safety training is a condition of employment. All training is documented in employee personnel files.

8.13 Non-Compliance

Failure to comply with health and safety rules, or behaviour that endangers oneself or others, may result in disciplinary action under Section L. Serious breaches such as deliberate tampering with safety systems or reckless conduct may result in summary dismissal, subject to due process.

SECTION I — TRAINING, LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

LWL is committed to the continuous development of its workforce to enhance organisational effectiveness, programme quality, and compliance with donor expectations and national labour standards. All training and development initiatives are implemented fairly, transparently, and without discrimination. The organisation recognises that learning is critical to building employee capacity, improving individual performance, strengthening institutional effectiveness, and ensuring regulatory and donor compliance.

10.1 Types of Training and Development

Category	Description	Examples
Mandatory	Required by law, donor, or organisational policy for all staff or specific roles.	Code of Conduct, PSEAH, Safeguarding, Fire Safety, First Aid
Job-specific	Required to perform the current role effectively.	Project management software, financial systems, M&E methods, Defensive driving
Professional Dev.	Enhance skills for current or future roles (not strictly required).	Leadership, Communication, Grant writing
Career progression	Prepares employees for a higher-level role.	Management training, Advanced degree, Professional certification
Donor-required	Mandated by specific donor agreements.	Anti-terrorism, Environmental compliance

10.2 Training Needs Identification

Training and development needs are identified through: the annual performance appraisal and PDF process (Section F); organisational capacity assessments conducted by HR each February; new programme or project requirements; donor compliance requirements; and employee requests via the Training Request Form. Line Managers and employees share joint responsibility for identifying and documenting these needs. An Annual Training Plan is developed by HR in consultation with department heads each year and approved by the Executive Director.

10.3 Mandatory Training Requirements

Training	Initial Deadline	Refresher Frequency	Applicable To
Employee Orientation	Within 30 days of hire	Not required	All new employees
Code of Conduct	Within 14 days of hire	Annually	All employees
PSEAH	Within 14 days of hire	Annually	All employees (annually for managers)
Child Safeguarding	Within 30 days of hire	Bi Annually	All employees (especially those working with children)
Health and Safety	Within 30 days of hire	Bi Annually	All employees
Fire Safety and Evacuation	Within 30 days of hire	Annually	All office-based employees

Training	Initial Deadline	Refresher Frequency	Applicable To
First Aid	Within 90 days of hire	Annually	Designated first aiders
Defensive Driving	Within 90 days of hire	Annually	All drivers
Fraud Awareness	Within 90 days of hire	Bi Annually	Finance, procurement, and senior managers
Counter-terrorism and sanctions compliance	Within 60 days of hire	Annually	All staff; mandatory for finance, procurement, grants, and senior management
Anti-money laundering (AML)	Within 60 days of hire	Annually	Finance, grants, procurement, operations, and senior management
Donor compliance (per grant)	As specified	Per donor/Annually	Staff working on that grant

Failure to complete mandatory training within deadlines: verbal reminder if 1–30 days overdue; written warning if 31–60 days overdue; and final written warning or suspension until training is completed if 61+ days overdue (except where training is genuinely unavailable).

SECTION J — DISCIPLINARY & GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

LWL maintains fair, transparent, and lawful disciplinary procedures that are corrective rather than punitive applied proportionately and aimed at promoting professionalism, accountability, and improvement while protecting the dignity and rights of all parties. These procedures comply with the Sierra Leone Employment Act 2023 and promote a respectful, safe, and productive workplace. Ultimate disciplinary authority rests with the Executive Director, with Board oversight where required. HR coordinates all disciplinary processes and maintains official records in confidence.

Scope: This policy applies to all LWL employees regardless of role, grade, contract type, or duty station, including permanent, fixed-term, temporary, casual, and probationary employees. It applies from the first day of employment. Consultants and volunteers are subject to equivalent standards under their respective agreements.

11.1 Principles of Natural Justice and Fairness

Every disciplinary process at LWL, regardless of the severity of the alleged misconduct, is governed by the following principles. These principles reflect both the requirements of the Sierra Leone Employment Act 2023 and LWL's commitment to treating every employee with dignity and fairness. No disciplinary sanction may be imposed unless these principles have been observed.

Principle	What It Requires in Practice
Right to know	The employee is informed clearly and in writing of the full nature of the allegations against them before any hearing takes place. There must be no ambiguity about what conduct is in question.
Right to be heard	The employee has a meaningful and genuine opportunity to respond to the allegations, present their account, call relevant witnesses, and submit documentary evidence before any decision is made.
Right to representation	The employee may be accompanied at any disciplinary or investigative meetings by a workplace colleague or a trade union representative of their choosing. The representative may support and speak on behalf of the employee.
Impartiality	The person conducting the investigation and the person presiding at the hearing must not have been directly involved in or materially affected by the incident under investigation. Where impartiality is in doubt, an alternative decision-maker should be appointed.
Proportionality	The sanction imposed must be proportionate to the severity of the misconduct, the employee's disciplinary history, and all relevant mitigating and aggravating circumstances. The most severe sanction available is summary dismissal, reserved for gross misconduct only.
Consistency	Sanctions are applied consistently and equitably across the organisation. Employees in similar circumstances should expect similar outcomes. HR monitors disciplinary decisions for patterns that may indicate inconsistent application.
Documentation	All warnings, decisions, notices, and records of disciplinary proceedings must be in writing, communicated to the employee,

Principle	What It Requires in Practice
	and retained by HR in line with the retention schedule in Section 11.5. No verbal arrangement substitutes for a written record.
Confidentiality	All disciplinary proceedings are handled with strict discretion on a need-to-know basis. Information about allegations, investigations, hearings, and outcomes is not disclosed to people who have no legitimate role in the process. Breach of confidentiality by any participant is itself a disciplinary matter.
No predetermination	An open mind is maintained throughout the investigation and hearing process. No decision on guilt or sanction is made before the employee has had a full opportunity to respond. Suspension pending investigation is a neutral act, not a finding of guilt.

11.2 Types of Misconduct

Minor Misconduct

Minor misconduct refers to breaches of workplace rules or standards that, while unacceptable, do not by themselves fundamentally undermine the employment relationship or pose a serious risk to the organisation, its people, or its beneficiaries. Minor misconduct nonetheless warrants a formal or documented response to prevent recurrence and to signal that LWL's standards apply consistently. In line with the Sierra Leone Employment Act 2023, the following are recognised examples of minor misconduct, alongside LWL's own workplace standards. This list is illustrative, not exhaustive.

- Persistent lateness or unauthorised absence**
 Arriving late for work or being absent without a valid reason or prior approval on a repeated basis, even where individual instances appear minor. A pattern of lateness is treated more seriously than a single isolated incident.
- Negligence or carelessness in performing duties**
 Failing to take reasonable care in carrying out assigned tasks, resulting in careless mistakes, substandard work quality, or avoidable errors where negligence does not rise to the level of gross negligence causing significant harm.
- Failure to follow lawful and reasonable instructions**
 Declining or neglecting to carry out a reasonable and lawful instruction given by a supervisor, manager, or authorised colleague, without a justifiable reason. Instructions must be lawful, reasonable, and within the scope of the employee's role for this provision to apply.
- Improper or unauthorised use of LWL property**
 Using LWL office equipment, supplies, vehicles, internet, or other organisational resources for personal purposes without authorisation, or in a manner inconsistent with LWL's asset use policy (see Section D, 4.7), where misuse is minor and does not result in significant loss or damage to the organisation.
- Disruptive behaviour, minor insubordination, or interpersonal quarrels**
 Behaving in a manner that disrupts the working environment, engages in minor insubordination, or involves quarrels or verbal altercations with colleagues where the behaviour does not involve threats, harassment, or physical aggression (which are treated as serious or gross misconduct).

- **Discourtesy or inappropriate language**

Using disrespectful, offensive, or inappropriate language toward colleagues, beneficiaries, partners, or visitors in a manner that falls below LWL's professional conduct standards, without rising to the level of harassment or discriminatory conduct.

- **Dress code violations or failure to maintain workplace standards**

Persistently failing to meet LWL's dress code or professional presentation standards, or neglecting to maintain a clean, orderly, and professional workspace after being reminded.

- **Failure to wear an identification badge**

Repeatedly failing to display a valid LWL staff identification badge while on LWL premises or at partner or beneficiary locations where identification is required.

- **Minor breaches of health and safety rules**

Failing to observe health and safety procedures, instructions, or signage in circumstances where the breach does not immediately endanger the employee, colleagues, or third parties. Where a safety breach creates a genuine risk to life, it is classified as serious or gross misconduct.

- **Poor timekeeping or missed internal deadlines**

Repeatedly failing to meet agreed internal deadlines, submitted required reports or forms on time, or managing working time effectively, in circumstances where the impact on the organisation is moderate and the employee has received prior guidance.

Applicable Sanctions: Verbal warning (documented); written warning; final written warning; short-term suspension with or without pay; or other corrective measures as determined by the severity of the breach and any history of prior warnings. The sanction applied will always be proportionate to the misconduct and consistent with the progressive discipline framework set out in Section 11.4. Repeated minor misconduct, or minor misconduct occurring after a warning is still active, may be escalated to serious misconduct.

Gross Misconduct

Gross misconduct involves serious breaches of the employment relationship that are so fundamentally incompatible with continued employment that they destroy, or seriously damage, the trust and confidence upon which the employment relationship depends. Unlike minor or serious misconduct, gross misconduct entitles LWL to terminate employment immediately and without notice or payment in lieu of notice, subject always to a fair investigation and hearing in accordance with the principles of natural justice set out in Section 11.1. In line with the Sierra Leone Employment Act 2023, the following are recognised examples of gross misconduct. This list is illustrative, not exhaustive; conduct of equivalent gravity not specifically listed may also constitute gross misconduct.

- **Theft, fraud, embezzlement, or dishonesty**

Stealing, misappropriating, or dishonestly obtaining money, property, or other assets belonging to LWL, a colleague, a beneficiary, a donor, or a partner regardless of the value involved. This includes fraudulent expense claims, falsification of financial records, kickbacks, bribery, and any other form of financial dishonesty or corrupt conduct. The actual or attempted nature of the act does not diminish its gravity.

- **Physical assault, fighting, or threats of violence**

Physically assaulting, fighting with, or making credible threats of violence against a colleague, beneficiary, partner, visitor, or any other person in connection with employment or LWL's work whether on LWL premises, at a field site, during travel, or at any work-related event. A single act of violence or a credible threat is sufficient to constitute gross misconduct, regardless of provocation.

- **Sexual harassment, exploitation, abuse, and PSEAH violations**

Any act of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, or sexual harassment including quid pro quo demands, hostile-environment conduct, unwanted physical contact, and coercive or transactional sexual conduct directed at a colleague, beneficiary, partner, visitor, or any other person encountered through LWL's work. This is a zero-tolerance category. See also Section C (3.3 PSEAH) for the full policy and reporting channels.

- **Harassment, bullying, and discriminatory conduct**

Subjecting a colleague, beneficiary, or partner to sustain or serious harassment or bullying including racial, ethnic, religious, or gender-based harassment or engaging in deliberate discriminatory conduct that violates LWL's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy (Section C, 3.1). Serious harassment or a sustained pattern of bullying is treated as gross misconduct even where individual incidents might appear minor in isolation.

- **Serious insubordination or willful refusal to carry out lawful instructions**

Deliberately and persistently refusing to carry out reasonable and lawful instruction from a supervisor or manager, particularly where the refusal is accompanied by aggression, public defiance, or a declared intention not to comply. A single instance of direct and deliberate insubordination may constitute gross misconduct where the context, severity, or impact on the organisation warrants it.

- **Gross negligence causing significant harm, loss, or danger**

Behaving with a reckless or willful disregard for the consequences of one's actions or a complete failure to take care that a reasonable person in the same role would take where that negligence results in or creates a real risk of significant financial loss, reputational damage, harm to beneficiaries, donor loss, or danger to the safety of people. Gross negligence is distinguished from ordinary carelessness by its severity and by the gravity of the consequences it causes or risks.

- **Drunkenness, drug use, or being unfit for duty due to substance use**

Reporting to work, remaining at work, or conducting LWL business while under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or any other substance that impairs judgement, performance, or safety. This applies equally to remote work, field assignments, and work-related travel. It includes bringing alcohol or illegal substances onto LWL premises or to a work-related event. Where impairment creates a safety risk to others, immediate suspension pending investigation is mandatory.

- **Serious breach of confidentiality or disclosure of privileged information**

Deliberately disclosing, misusing, or enabling unauthorised access to confidential or sensitive information belonging to LWL, its donors, partners, or beneficiary personal data, donor contracts, financial information, board minutes, strategic plans, investigative records, or PSEAH files without authorisation and in breach of the employee's confidentiality obligations (see Section D, 4.8). The disclosure of information that places an individual at risk of harm is treated with gravity.

- **Deliberate damage to LWL or third-party property**

Willfully or recklessly damaging, destroying, defacing, or rendering unusable property belonging to LWL, a colleague, a beneficiary, a donor, or a partner including equipment, vehicles, data, documents, and IT systems. Accidental damage is not gross misconduct, but deliberate or reckless acts are, regardless of the value of the property involved.

- **Fraudulent qualifications or misrepresentation in employment**

Knowingly providing false, misleading, or fabricated information during recruitment, selection, or at any point during employment including falsified academic certificates, professional qualifications, work history, identity documents, or reference letters. This applies whether misrepresentation was made before or after the commencement of employment.

- **Conviction of a criminal offence connected to employment**

Being convicted of, or pleading guilty to, a criminal offence that is directly connected to the employee's role, brings LWL into disrepute, or renders the employee unfit to perform their duties including offences involving dishonesty, violence, fraud, sexual offences, or offences against vulnerable people. LWL will assess each case on its merits; a criminal conviction does not automatically trigger dismissal, but it may do so where the nature of the offence is incompatible with continued employment.

- **Conduct bringing LWL into disrepute**

Engaging in conduct whether in the workplace, in public, or on social media that seriously damages or is likely to seriously damage LWL's reputation, its relationships with donors, partners, or government, or public confidence in the organisation. This includes making false public statements about LWL, public intoxication while identifiable as an LWL employee, and any other conduct that a reasonable observer would find grossly incompatible with LWL's values and public standing.

- **Retaliation against a whistleblower, complainant, or witness**

Taking or threatening any adverse action including dismissal, demotion, exclusion, intimidation, or any form of victimisation against an employee who has in good faith reported a concern, raised a grievance, made a PSEAH complaint, or participated as a witness in an investigation. Retaliation fundamentally undermines LWL's accountability culture and is treated as gross misconduct regardless of the outcome of the original report.

- **Abandonment of post**

Being absent from work without approved leave and without contact for five (5) or more consecutive working days, in circumstances where LWL has made reasonable attempts to reach the employee and received no response. Abandonment is treated as a repudiation of the employment contract and may result in summary dismissal. See also Section G (7.11 Abandonment of Employment).

Sanction — Summary Dismissal: A finding of gross misconduct may result in summary dismissal: immediate termination of employment without notices and without payment in lieu of notice. No notice period is served or compensated. Outstanding accrued annual leave entitlement and any statutory benefits required by the Sierra Leone Employment Act 2023 and NASSIT legislation remain payable. Where the matter involves theft, fraud, assault, PSEAH violations, or criminal conduct, LWL will refer the matter to the Sierra Leone Police and, where applicable, to relevant donors or regulatory authorities. Summary dismissal is subject to the investigation and hearing procedures in Section 11.3; no employee is dismissed for gross misconduct without a fair opportunity to respond to the allegations against them.

11.3 The Disciplinary Process

LWL follows a structured, six-stage disciplinary process that is consistent with the Sierra Leone Employment Act 2023 and the principles in Section 11.1. The process is progressive for minor and serious misconduct and immediate for gross misconduct. No stage may be skipped in a way that prejudices the employee's right to know, to be heard, or to be represented.

01	Informal Counselling For first or isolated instances of minor misconduct, the Line Manager discusses the issue informally and privately with the employee, clearly explains the concern, sets out the improvement expected, and records a brief note of the conversation. No formal warning is issued at this stage. If the behaviour is corrected, no further action is taken. Informal counselling does not appear on the employee's permanent record and is not referred to in future proceedings unless the misconduct recurs. Where informal counselling fails or is inappropriate (e.g., for serious or repeated misconduct), the matter moves to the formal process.
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02	Formal Investigation HR, in consultation with the relevant Line Manager or a designated investigating officer, conducts a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation. This may include interviews with the employees, witnesses, and other relevant parties; review of documentary evidence, records, and communications; and written statements from all parties. The employee is informed that an investigation is under way. For alleged gross misconduct, the employee may be suspended on full pay for up to 14 working days pending the investigation. Suspension is a neutral, precautionary measure not a finding of guilt and the employee must be informed of this in writing. During suspension, the employee must surrender all LWL property and may not enter LWL premises without prior written permission.
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03	Invitation to Disciplinary Hearing Where the investigation reveals sufficient grounds to proceed, HR issues a formal written notice to the employee at least five working days before the hearing. The notice must state: the specific allegations of misconduct in clear terms; the date, time, and venue of the hearing; the employee's right to be accompanied by a workplace colleague or trade union representative; the evidence on which the allegations are based, shared in advance where practicable; and a statement that the outcome may include a formal sanction up to and including dismissal. The employee has the right to request a reasonable postponement of the hearing once, if their chosen representative is unavailable on the scheduled date.
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04	Disciplinary Hearing The hearing is conducted by a manager or panel who has not been involved in the investigation, with HR present throughout. The process is: the chair introduces all parties and explains the procedure; the allegations are presented by HR or the investigating officer; the employee and their representative respond fully, present any evidence, and call any witnesses; both parties may ask questions of each other and of witnesses; the chair adjourns for deliberation before announcing any decision. The hearing is not a court of law; the standard of proof is the balance of probabilities. A written record of the hearing is prepared and provided to the employee.
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05	Decision and Sanction Following deliberation, management issues a written decision to the employee within five working days of the hearing (seven working days for gross misconduct cases). The written decision must set out: the finding on each allegation (upheld, partially upheld,
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or not upheld); the sanction imposed, if any; the reasons for the decision and the sanction; any conditions attached (e.g., improvement targets, review period); and the employee's right of appeal and the deadline for submitting it. Sanctions range from a verbal warning through to summary dismissal, as set out in Section 11.4.

Right of Appeal

06

Every employee subject to a formal disciplinary sanction has the right to appeal. The appeal must be submitted in writing to HR within five working days of receiving the decision (ten working days for dismissal or final written warning). The appeal must state clearly the grounds: new or material evidence not available at the hearing; a procedural irregularity that caused prejudice; or a sanction that is disproportionate to the misconduct found. The appeal is heard by the Executive Director or, where the ED was the original decision-maker, by the Board Chair or a delegated Board member. The appeal hearing is held within 15 working days of the appeal being received; the outcome is communicated in writing within 10 working days of the hearing. The appeal decision is final within LWL's internal processes. See Section 11.6 for full appeal provisions.

11.4 Progressive Discipline and Sanctions

LWL applies discipline progressively, escalating sanctions in proportion to the frequency and severity of misconduct. The overriding principle is that the sanction must fit the misconduct. Gross misconduct bypasses the progressive ladder and may result in immediate summary dismissal following a fair hearing.

Misconduct Level	First Occurrence	Second Occurrence	Third Occurrence
Minor	Verbal warning (documented) or informal counselling	Written warning	Final written warning or dismissal
Serious	Written warning or final written warning	Final written warning or dismissal	Dismissal
Gross	Summary dismissal	—	—

Note: Both the Disciplinary Procedure (Sections 11.3–11.5) and the Grievance Procedure (Section 11.7) follow a parallel six-stage structure with equivalent principles of natural justice, right to representation, and right of appeal. Where a disciplinary matter arises alongside a grievance, HR coordinates both processes to ensure fairness to all parties.

Warning Periods

Warning Type	Active Period
Verbal warning (documented)	6 months from the date of issue. Automatically expires if no further misconduct occurs within that period.
Written warning	12 months from the date of issue. Automatically expires if no further misconduct occurs.
Final written warning	18 months from the date of issue (or as otherwise specified in the warning letter).

An expired warning may not be used as the basis for a subsequent sanction but may be considered as contextual background where a pattern of similar misconduct emerges. Repeated minor misconduct, even after a warning has lapsed, may be treated as serious misconduct where the overall pattern warrants it.

Available Sanctions

The following sanctions are available to LWL, applied singly or in combination as appropriate to the circumstances. All sanctions (except verbal warnings) are confirmed in writing and recorded on the employee's file.

Sanction	When Applied	Key Conditions
Verbal warning	First instance of minor misconduct; informal counselling has not produced the required improvement.	Documented in writing by HR; copy provided to employee; active for 6 months.
Written warning	Repeated minor misconduct after a verbal warning; or a first instance of more serious minor misconduct.	Formal letter specifying the conduct, required improvement, review period, and consequence of further breach.
Final written warning	Misconduct continues after a written warning; or a first instance of serious misconduct.	States clearly that any further breach within the active period may result in dismissal.
Suspension pending investigation	As a standalone sanction for serious misconduct, or in conjunction with a final written warning.	Suspension pending investigation shall be on full pay. Following a disciplinary finding, other sanctions may be imposed.
Demotion or reassignment	Where the misconduct relates to misuse of authority, conflict of interest, or inability to fulfil current role responsibilities.	Accompanied by written confirmation of revised role, grade, and salary. Employees may appeal.
Dismissal with notice	Where the employment relationship is no longer viable following serious misconduct that does not reach the threshold of gross misconduct.	Notice period served or paid in lieu. Outstanding leave and statutory entitlements paid in full.
Summary dismissal (no notice)	Gross misconduct only — following a fair investigation and hearing.	No notice period served or compensated. Accrued annual leave and statutory entitlements (NASSIT) remain payable as required by law. Referral to Sierra Leone Police and donors where applicable.

11.5 Disciplinary Records Retention

Document	Retention Period
Verbal warning (documented)	12 months, then destroyed if no further issues
Written warning	12 months, then destroyed if no further issues
Final written warning	18 months, then destroyed if no further issues
Suspension record	12 months, then destroyed if no further issues
Termination for gross misconduct	Retain in accordance with LWL general filing policy

11.6 Appeal against Disciplinary Action

An employee may appeal a disciplinary decision within five (5) working days of receiving the outcome, or within ten (10) working days in cases involving a final written warning or dismissal. Appeals may be lodged on one or more of the following grounds:

- a) the emergence of new and material evidence that was not reasonably available at the time of the disciplinary hearing;
- b) procedural irregularity that may have affected the outcome of the disciplinary process; or
- c) a sanction that is manifestly disproportionate to the misconduct established.

The appeal shall be submitted in writing:

- to the Executive Director, where the original decision was made by a manager or any other authorised disciplinary officer below the level of Executive Director;
- to the Board Chairperson, where the Executive Director was the original decision-maker; and
- to the Board of Directors, through the Board Chairperson, in cases involving members of Senior Management. In such cases, the appeal shall be heard by a Board Appeals Panel chaired by the Board Chairperson. Where the Executive Director was not the original decision-maker, the Executive Director may participate as a member of the Appeals Panel but shall not chair the proceedings.

An appeal hearing shall be convened within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of the appeal, and the appeal decision shall be communicated in writing within ten (10) working days of the hearing. The decision of the appeal authority shall be final and binding.

11.7 Grievance Procedure

This procedure provides all LWL employees with a structured, fair, and confidential mechanism for raising workplace concerns, complaints, or disputes. It ensures that grievances are handled promptly, impartially, and in compliance with the Sierra Leone Employment Act 2023. The procedure applies to all employees regardless of role, grade, or contract type, and covers but is not limited to concerns arising from working conditions; treatment by supervisors, managers, or colleagues; discrimination, harassment, or bullying; breach of LWL policies or contractual terms; or any other matter affecting an employee's employment rights or wellbeing.

Governing Principles

Principle	What It Means
Fairness	Every grievance is investigated and decided impartially, without favour or prejudice. All parties, the employee raising grievance and the person or persons the grievance is raised against are given an equal opportunity to present their account.
Confidentiality	Grievance matters are handled on a strict need-to-know basis. Information about the grievance, the parties involved, and the outcome is not shared beyond those with a legitimate role in the process. Breach of confidentiality by any participant is itself a disciplinary matter.
Non-retaliation	No employee will suffer any adverse action including dismissal, demotion, exclusion, unfair treatment, or any form of victimisation for raising a grievance in good faith. Retaliation is treated as serious misconduct and addressed under Section 11.3. See also Section 11.10.
Timeliness	LWL is committed to acknowledging grievances promptly and resolving them within the timelines set out below. Where exceptional circumstances require an extension, the employee is notified in writing with an explanation and a revised timeline.
Right to representation	At any formal stage of this procedure, the employee may be accompanied by a workplace colleague or a trade union representative of their choosing. The representative may advise and speak on behalf of the employee at any meeting or hearing.
Good faith	Employees are expected to raise genuine concerns honestly and in good faith. A grievance that is not upheld carries no penalty for the employee. However, a grievance raised knowingly and maliciously with false information may itself constitute misconduct subject to Section 11.3.

What This Procedure Does and Does Not Cover

Matters Covered by This Procedure	Matters Covered by a Separate Procedure
Working conditions (physical environment, workload, schedule, equipment)	Sexual harassment and PSEAH complaints see Section 11.8
Treatment by supervisors, managers, or colleagues	Disciplinary appeals (appeals against a warning or dismissal) see Section 11.6
Discrimination, harassment, or bullying — non-sexual	Performance rating disputes see Section 6.5
Application or misapplication of LWL policies	Whistleblowing on fraud, PSEAH, or criminal conduct Section 11.9
Breach of contractual terms or employment rights	Concerns during probation follow probation appeal process (Section 2.6)

Matters Covered by This Procedure	Matters Covered by a Separate Procedure
Any other matter adversely affecting an employee's employment	

Grievance Procedure — Six Stages

01 Informal Resolution

Employees are strongly encouraged to attempt informal resolutions before escalating to the formal procedure. The employee raises the concern directly with the person involved, or through their immediate supervisor who may facilitate a structured conversation or informal mediation. Informal resolution should be made within 10 working days of the matter arising. If the concern is resolved at this stage, the supervisor records a brief written summary, and no further action is taken. Informal resolution is not appropriate where: the grievance is against the employee's own supervisor or Line Manager; the matter involves discrimination, harassment, or bullying; the employee reasonably fears retaliation; or the concern is sufficiently serious to warrant formal investigation from the outset. In those cases, the employee proceeds directly to Stage 2.

02 Formal Grievance Submission

The employee completes a Grievance Form (available from HR) and submits it in writing to the HR Manager. Where the grievance is about the HR Manager, the form is submitted directly to the Executive Director. Where the grievance concerns the Executive Director, it is submitted to the Board Chair. The grievance must be submitted within 15 working days of the matter arising (or 15 working days from the failure of informal resolution). The form must describe: the nature of the concern in clear terms; the date(s) and circumstances of the incident(s); the person(s) involved; any supporting evidence the employee wishes to attach; and the outcome the employee is seeking. HR acknowledges receipt in writing within 5 working days and provides the employee with an outline of the process and expected timeline.

03 Investigation

HR appoints an impartial investigating officer who has had no prior involvement in the matter — within 5 working days of acknowledging the grievance. The investigation commences within 10 working days of the grievance being received. It includes individual interviews with the employee, raising the grievance, the respondent(s), and any relevant witnesses; review of documentary evidence, records, and correspondence; and written statements from key parties where appropriate. All parties are treated with equal respect throughout. Both the employee and the respondent are informed of the allegations and given a full opportunity to respond. The investigation is completed within 15 working days of the investigating officer being assigned; HR notifies the employee if a longer period is needed and states the revised expected completion date.

04 Grievance Hearing

Following the investigation, HR convenes a formal grievance hearing where the employee presents their case in full. The hearing is chaired by a manager or senior officer not involved in the investigation. The employee is entitled to be accompanied by a workplace colleague or trade union representative. At the hearing: the investigating officer presents a summary of the investigation findings; the employee presents their account and any supporting evidence; witnesses may be called by either party; the chair asks questions to clarify the facts; and the respondent (if present) has an opportunity to respond. The hearing is adjourned before any decision is made. A written record of the hearing is prepared and a copy provided to the employee.

05 Decision and Outcome

The decision-maker reviews the investigation findings and the hearing record and issues a written decision to all parties within 10 working days of the hearing. The decision letter must state whether each element of grievance is upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld; the reasons for each finding; any remedial action to be taken; the timeline for implementing those actions; and the employee's right to appeal and the deadline. The total timeframe from formal submission (Stage 2) to written decision must not normally exceed 45 working days. Where an extension is unavoidable, the employee is informed in writing. Possible outcomes include: a formal apology; changes to policy, procedures, or working arrangements; training for the respondent or team; workplace or reporting-line adjustments; mediation (offered voluntarily see Section 11.10); or, where the investigation reveals misconduct by another employee, referral to the disciplinary process under Section 11.3.

06 Appeal

Either party may appeal the grievance decision on the following grounds: new or material evidence that was not available at the hearing; a procedural irregularity that caused prejudice; or a finding or recommended action that is clearly unreasonable or disproportionate. The appeal must be submitted in writing to HR within 10 working days of the decision letter. Where the original grievance was determined by HR, the appeal is heard by the Executive Director. Where the Executive Director was involved in the original process, the appeal is heard by the Board Chair or a delegated senior Board member. The appeal hearing is held within 15 working days of the appeal being received; the final written decision is issued within 10 working days of the hearing. The appeal decision is final within LWL's internal processes.

Grievance Procedure — Timeframe Summary

Stage	Action	Deadline
Stage 1 — Informal	Attempt informal resolution	Within 10 working days of the issue arising
Stage 2 — Submission	Submit Grievance Form	Within 15 working days of the issue (or informal failure)
Stage 2 — Acknowledgement	HR acknowledges receipt	Within 5 working days of submission

Stage	Action	Deadline
Stage 3 — Investigation	Investigating officer assigned	Within 5 working days of acknowledgement
Stage 3 — Investigation	Investigation commences	Within 10 working days of receipt
Stage 3 — Investigation	Investigation completed	Within 15 working days of assignment
Stage 4 — Hearing	Grievance hearing held	As soon as practicable after investigation; normally within 5 working days
Stage 5 — Decision	Written decision issued	Within 10 working days of the hearing; total process within 45 working days
Stage 6 — Appeal	Appeal submitted	Within 10 working days of the decision letter
Stage 6 — Appeal	Appeal hearing held	Within 15 working days of the appeal being received
Stage 6 — Appeal	Final appeal decision issued	Within 10 working days of the appeal hearing
Possible Outcomes		
Grievance not upheld	The investigation does not support the employees' complaint. The decision letter explains the reasons. No further action is taken against either party. The employee retains the right to appeal.	
Grievance upheld — apology	Where the grievance relates to an interpersonal incident and the respondent is found to have acted inappropriately, a formal written apology may be required.	
Grievance upheld — policy or process change	Where the grievance reveals a gap or inconsistency in LWL's policies, procedures, or management practices, the relevant policy is reviewed and updated.	
Grievance upheld — workplace adjustment	Changes to reporting lines, role responsibilities, work schedules, or the physical work environment to resolve the underlying concern and prevent recurrence.	
Grievance upheld — training	Mandatory training is arranged for the respondent or the wider team to address the conduct or competency issue identified by the investigation.	
Grievance upheld — mediation	Voluntary mediation is offered where grievance arises from an interpersonal conflict that would benefit from a facilitated dialogue between the parties. Mediation outcomes are documented separately from grievance records. See Section 11.10.	

Stage	Action	Deadline
Grievance upheld — disciplinary action	Where the investigation reveals that a fellow employee's conduct constitutes misconduct, the matter is referred to the disciplinary process under Section 11.3. Disciplinary proceedings are separate from the grievance process and conducted independently.	
Escalation — Labour Commissioner	Where the grievance is not resolved through LWL's internal process, or where the employee has reasonable grounds to believe the internal process was not conducted fairly, the employee may refer the matter to the Sierra Leone Labour Commissioner or the Ministry of Employment and Social Security. LWL will cooperate fully with any resulting external process.	

Important: Raising a grievance and pursuing a disciplinary process simultaneously (for example, where both parties make complaints about each other) is managed by HR on a case-by-case basis. In general, the grievance process will be paused while the disciplinary matter is resolved, or both processes will run in parallel with separate decision-makers and separate records, as HR determines is most appropriate to ensure fairness to all parties.

11.8 Sexual Harassment Complaints

Sexual harassment complaints are handled through a specialised, survivor-centered procedure ensuring confidentiality, dignity, and protection from retaliation (see also Section C). Employees may seek informal resolution or file a formal complaint with HR or a designated manager. Formal complaints trigger a structured investigation with equal opportunity for all parties to be heard. Corrective or disciplinary actions are implemented within 60 days of findings where warranted.

11.9 Whistleblowing

Donor notification obligation: Where suspected fraud, financial irregularity, or misappropriation involves donor-funded activities or assets, LWL is required to notify the relevant donor promptly and in accordance with the applicable grant agreement. Notification timelines vary by donor but are typically within 24 to 72 hours of the organisation becoming aware of a credible suspicion. The Executive Director is responsible for making donor notifications; in their absence, the Finance and Operations Director assume this responsibility. All donor notifications must be documented and a copy retained on file. Staff who become aware of suspected fraud involving donor funds must report immediately to the Executive Director or Finance and Operations Director without delay.

LWL provides a safe and confidential mechanism for reporting serious concerns including PSEAH, fraud, gross misconduct, abuse of authority, or significant breaches of law or policy. Whistleblowers are protected from retaliation from the moment a report is made, including after employment ends. Good-faith reports that are not substantiated carry no penalty for the reporter. Knowingly false reports constitute misconduct.

Reportable concerns include fraud and corruption; financial misconduct; PSEAH (mandatory); child protection violations; criminal activity; serious breaches of policy or the Code of Conduct; health and safety dangers; and donor fraud. Reports may be made to the immediate supervisor; the HR Manager; the Executive Director; the Safeguarding Focal Point; the Board Chair; or anonymously via confidential drop box or dedicated email.

External reporting — Board-level concerns:

Where an employee or any person has reasonable grounds to believe that a concern involves the Board of Directors, the Board Chair, or the entire leadership of LWL, they may direct such concerns to the leadership of the Alliance for Transforming African Education (ATAE)—a pan-African education coalition to which LWL belongs—through the coalition’s approved reporting channels. For any concerns that amount to criminal conduct, employees are free to utilise the mechanisms provided under the laws of Sierra Leone.

However, employees, unlike members of the Board of Directors, are not permitted under Sierra Leonean law to report any wrong done to, or crime committed against, LWL.

11.10 Mediation, Confidentiality, and Non-Retaliation

Mediation may be offered as a voluntary, non-disciplinary option to resolve interpersonal conflict, with outcomes documented separately from disciplinary records. All disciplinary, grievance, harassment, and whistleblowing matters are handled on a strict need-to-know basis. Retaliation of any kind against individuals acting in good faith including demotion, suspension, unfair reviews, and exclusion from training, threats, or intimidation is strictly prohibited and constitutes serious misconduct.

SECTION K — SEPARATION & EXIT MANAGEMENT

This section establishes fair, transparent, and consistent procedures governing all forms of employee separation from LWL. The objectives are to ensure compliance with applicable labour laws; to treat employees with dignity and respect; to protect organisational interests and continuity; and to provide clarity on notice, benefits, and final payments. All separations are managed in accordance with due process and documented by HR.

12.1 Forms of Separation

- Resignation (employee-initiated)
- End of fixed-term contract
- Retirement
- Redundancy or retrenchment
- Termination by the organisation (for performance, conduct, or capacity)
- Abandonment of post
- Separation due to operational requirements

12.2 Notice Periods

The following table sets out the minimum notice periods that apply upon separation, whether by resignation, dismissal, or non-renewal. Notice periods reflect the employee's grade and comply with the Sierra Leone Employment Act 2023.

Employee Category	Notice Required
Grades A–I (all permanent and fixed-term employees)	One calendar month's written notice, given by either party.
Probationary employees	One week per completed month of service (maximum 4 weeks) see Section 2.6.
Fixed-term contract	As specified in the contract; or one month if not stated.
Casual / temporary / interns	As specified in the engagement letter; minimum one week.

Note: All grades (A–I): one month's written notice. The notice period is uniform across all grades. All employment contracts should be checked for consistency with this table. Either party may pay salary in lieu of notice at their absolute discretion.

12.3 Resignation

Employees wishing to resign must submit written notice to their Line Manager and HR, provide the required contractual notice, and cooperate fully in handover arrangements including transfer of duties, files, passwords, and organisational property. LWL reserves the right to recover losses arising from failure to serve notice, subject to applicable law and any contractual authorization.

12.4 End of Fixed-Term Contract

Continued work after contract expiry without written renewal does not automatically extend employment and shall be reviewed immediately by HR. HR will notify the employee in writing at least one month before contract expiry. Renewal is not automatic and depends on operational needs, performance, and funding availability.

12.5 Retirement

Employees retiring at the statutory or contractual retirement age will receive written confirmation of their retirement six months ahead of their retirement date, be guided on NASSIT and other retirement-related statutory benefits, and complete standard exit clearance procedures. LWL may formally recognise retiring employees for long service and their contributions to the organisation.

12.6 Termination by LWL

Termination may occur due to poor performance following due process (Section K); misconduct or gross misconduct; inability to perform job requirements; medical incapacity following certification; or other lawful grounds. Except in cases of gross misconduct, termination will be accompanied by notice or payment in lieu. Summary dismissal (immediate termination without notice or notice pay) applies for gross misconduct.

12.7 Redundancy / Retrenchment

When a position is eliminated whether through funding loss, organisational restructuring, or another lawful operational reason LWL gives the affected employee written notice, or payment in lieu of notice, in line with the Sierra Leone Employment Act 2023. Entitlements are calculated from the employee's complete length of service.

Before any redundancy decision is final, LWL will:

- notify the Commissioner of Labour and Employment and trade union (where applicable) within three (3) months before the contemplated changes and any relevant information relating to the redundancy;
- consult the trade union or workers concerned in good faith providing relevant information necessary to mitigate the adverse effects of termination on the employees;
- explain the selection criteria in writing to the affected employees and apply the principle of “last in, first out” in the discharge of the particular category of workers affected, subject to all factors of relative merit, including skill, ability and reliability;
- give the employee a fair opportunity to respond;
- negotiate redundancy payments to all discharged employees.

Selection

LWL selects for redundancy fairly and lawfully, without exception.

Non-discrimination. Selection is never influenced by gender, pregnancy, disability, age, religion, political opinion, ethnic origin, or trade union membership. Any selection influenced by one of these protected characteristics is automatically unfair under the Employment Act 2023.

Objective selection criteria. Employees at risk are assessed against the following:

Criterion	How it is applied
Skills, qualifications, competencies	Measured against the requirements of the roles being retained
Performance record	Based on the two most recent completed appraisal cycles
Length of service (tiebreaker only)	Used only where skills and performance are equal
Attendance record	Unexplained or unapproved absences only; all statutory leave is excluded
Disciplinary record	Active, unexpired warnings only; spent warnings are disregarded

LIFO fallback. Where these criteria produce no clear difference between employees, a balanced Last In, First Out always subject to retaining the specific skills and competencies essential to programme delivery.

Process

HR documents are the criteria in writing.

The Executive Director approves them before any assessment begins.

Each employee receives the written outcome within five working days.

Employees may appeal under Section 11.6 before notice takes effect.

Statutory obligations

LWL notifies the Ministry as required, consults in good faith, and pays severance in accordance with the law.

Eligibility for redundancy compensation

Redundancy compensation is available to employees dismissed because of redundancy who have at least one year of continuous service. Probationary employees are not eligible.

Redundancy compensation rates

Minimum entitlements rise with length of continuous service:

Length of service	Minimum entitlement
Over 1 to under 4 years	6 weeks' s basic pay per year
4 to under 8 years	8 weeks' basic pay per year
8 to under 12 years	10 weeks' basic pay per year
12 to under 15 years	14 weeks' basic pay per year
Over 15 years	18 weeks' basic pay per year

Redundancy Benefit formula and Basis for Calculation

Item	Provision
Basis of calculation	The same basis as the End-of-Service Benefit under Section 5.8. The basic salary for final month of service shall be used as the basic figure for the computations. The final incomplete year shall be paid pro rata based on completed months, any final period equal to or exceeding six (6) months but less than a year shall instead be treated as a full completed year
Formula	Severance = (Monthly Basic Salary ÷ 22 standard working days per month) × minimum days accrued for the length of service × years of completed service
Minimum service	Employees with fewer than 12 months of service are not entitled to severance, unless the Sierra Leone Employment Act 2023 requires otherwise.
Salary basis	Basic salary only allowances, bonuses, and benefits are excluded
Tax	Not taxable under the Finance Act 2026
NASSIT benefit	Any NASSIT benefit payable does not reduce the severance entitlement under this clause
Authorisation	The Finance and Operations Director reviews and confirms the calculation in writing before final payment is processed

12.8 Exit Clearance

Before final payment is processed, all departing employees must: return all LWL property (ID card, keys, laptop, phone, documents, access cards, and any other assets); settle outstanding salary advances or other financial obligations; complete a formal handover of duties and files; sign an exit clearance form; and have all IT access revoked by the Operations team.

12.9 Terminal Benefits and Final Pay

Upon separation, the employee receives: salary for days worked in the final month; payment in lieu of unused notice period (if applicable); payment for accrued unused annual leave up to the carryover limit; and severance pay (if redundancy applies). The following will be deducted: outstanding salary or rent advances; value of unreturned organisational assets; and training bond repayments where applicable.

12.10 Certificates, Exit Interviews, and Post-Employment Obligations

Certificates and References

On request, LWL shall issue a departing employee with a certificate of employment stating their job title and dates of service. Where a reference is sought, LWL shall provide information only, namely job title, dates of employment, last salary drawn, and reason for leaving. LWL does not provide subjective opinions or evaluative comments as part of any reference.

Exit Interviews

HR shall offer an exit interview to all departing employees, except for those dismissed for gross misconduct. Participation is voluntary, and any information gathered will be treated in confidence and used solely to inform organisational improvement.

Post-Employment Obligations

Certain obligations continue after the employment relationship ends. The employee's duty of confidentiality remains in force indefinitely, and former employees shall not make false or malicious statements concerning LWL, its personnel, or its beneficiaries. All LWL property must be returned before an employee's final payment is processed.

SECTION L — DATA PROTECTION & PRIVACY

LWL is committed to protecting the privacy, confidentiality, and security of personal data it collects, processes, and stores. This policy complies with the Sierra Leone National Data Protection Policies, aligns with GDPR principles and international standards where relevant, and applies to all personal data processed by LWL regardless of format. All personnel are responsible for protecting personal data.

13.1 Data Protection Principles

Principle	What It Means
Lawfulness, fairness, transparency	Process data legally, fairly, and with clear communication to data subjects.
Purpose limitation	Collect data only for specified, explicit, and legitimate purposes.
Data minimisation	Collect only what is strictly necessary.
Accuracy	Keep data accurate, complete, and up to date.
Storage limitation	Retain data only for as long as necessary.
Integrity and confidentiality	Protect data with appropriate technical and organisational security measures.
Accountability	Demonstrate compliance through records, policies, and staff training.

13.2 Lawful Bases for Processing

Basis	Example
Consent	A beneficiary agrees to participate in a survey or to have their photograph used.
Contract	Processing employee personal data to administer the employment contract.
Legal obligation	NASSIT reporting, income tax compliance.
Vital interests	Emergency medical treatment.
Public interest	Donor-mandated reporting requirements.
Legitimate interests	Programme monitoring and evaluation (balanced against data subject rights).

For sensitive personal data (health, HIV status, disability, ethnic origin, political opinions, religious beliefs, criminal records, sexual orientation), additional conditions apply explicit written consent, a legal requirement, or a public health necessity. Processing children's data (under 18) requires written consent from a parent or legal guardian.

13.3 Types of Data Collected

Data Category	Examples	Lawful Basis
Beneficiary data	Name, address, age, gender, health status, programme participation, photos	Consent or programme necessity
Employee data	Name, ID, contact, bank details, NASSIT number, medical info, performance records	Contract, legal obligation
Volunteer data	Name, contact, role, hours, stipend records	Legitimate interest, consent
Donor/partner data	Name, contact, reporting requirements	Contract, legal obligation
Job applicant data	CV, application, references	Consent (pre-employment)

13.4 Data Security

Physical records: stored in locked cabinets with restricted access; shredded at disposal. Digital security: strong unique passwords changed every 90 days; encryption for laptops, external drives, and data in transit; role-based access controls; regular encrypted backups; up-to-date antivirus software; and regular software patching. VPN is required for accessing LWL systems remotely. LWL-issued phones and tablets must have password or PIN protection and remote wipe capability.

13.5 Data Retention

Data Category	Retention Period
Beneficiary programme data	Per donor agreement (typically 5–7 years after project end)
Employee personnel files	Duration of employment + 7 years
Employee medical records	Duration of employment + 10 years
Job applicant data (unsuccessful)	2 years
PSEAH records (substantiated)	Duration of perpetrator's employment + 10 years
Donor and partner records	7 years after last transaction
Volunteer records	Duration of relationship + 3 years

13.6 Data Subject Rights

Data subjects have the following rights, which LWL will respond to within 30 days of a request (free for the first request):

Right	What It Means
Right to be informed	Know how their data is being used (addressed through privacy notices).
Right of access	Request a copy of their personal data.
Right to rectification	Correct any inaccurate or incomplete data.
Right to erasure	Request deletion if there is no legal basis to retain.
Right to restrict	Limit how their data is used in certain circumstances.
Right to object	Object to certain types of processing.
Right to portability	Receive data in a portable, machine-readable format where applicable.

13.7 Data Breach Response

A data breach includes any accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, or unauthorised disclosure of personal data. All breaches must be reported immediately to the supervisor and Data Protection Focal Point. The Focal Point assesses severity and contains the breach within 24 hours, investigates cause and extent within 5 working days, and notifies affected individuals within 72 hours if there is a risk of harm. If legally required, the Right to Access Information Commission and relevant donors are notified within 72 hours. All breaches regardless of severity are documented in the Data Breach Register.

13.8 Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Data Protection Focal Point	Oversees compliance; handles subject data requests; manages breach response; trains staff. Contact: Contact via HR Manager
All Personnel	Comply with this policy; protect personal data; report breaches and suspected violations immediately.
Managers / Supervisors	Ensure team compliance; approve data sharing decisions; conduct impact assessments for high-risk processing activities.
HR Manager	Manage all employee data in accordance with this policy.
Technical Director and Finance and Operations Director	Ensure beneficiary data is collected, stored, and shared in line with this policy.
IT / Operations	Implement and maintain technical security measures (encryption, access controls, and backups).
Executive Director	Ultimate accountability for data protection compliance; approves high-risk processing activities.

Non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action for employees, termination of volunteer or consultant agreements, and potential legal liability.

SECTION M — EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & AGREEMENT

By signing this form, the employee confirms that they have received, read, and understood the Lē Wi Lan Employee Handbook (Version 1.0, 2026–2028), and agree to comply with the policies, procedures, and standards set out therein as a condition of their employment. This Handbook does not constitute an employment contract. LWL reserves the right to amend it in accordance with the procedures described in Section A.

14.1 Acknowledgement Requirements

All employees must sign and return this form to HR within their first week of employment, and again upon any material update to the Handbook. Signed forms are retained by HR in the employee's personnel file for the duration of employment plus 7 years. Line Managers are responsible for ensuring all employees in their teams have signed and understood the form. HR follows up on any outstanding signatures within 30 days of hire.

14.2 Updates and Revisions

Material changes to this Handbook will be communicated to all staff in writing at least 30 days before the effective date, and employees will be required to sign a new acknowledgement upon any material revision. No oral modification to any policy in this Handbook is binding on either party.

14.3 Employee Acknowledgement Form

Field	Details
Full Name (print)	_____
Job Title	_____
Department / Team	_____
Employee Grade (Grade A–I)	_____
Date of Commencement / Hire Date	_____
Employee Signature	_____
Date Signed	_____
Witness Name (HR Representative)	_____
Witness Signature	_____
Date	_____

For HR use only: Filed in personnel record on _____ by _____

SECTION N — ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

The following acronyms and abbreviations are used throughout this Handbook. Where a term is first introduced in the text, the full form is given in parentheses.

Acronyms and Abbreviations Reference Table

Acronym / Abbreviation	Full Form
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ALA	Annual Leave Allowance
ATAE	Alliance for Transforming African Education
CBA	Collective Bargaining Agreement
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DPA	Data Processing Agreement
DPIA	Data Protection Impact Assessment
DSA	Daily Subsistence Allowance
ED	Executive Director
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
EU	European Union
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (UK)
GBP	British Pound Sterling
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation (EU / applied by reference)
Grade A–I	LWL Employee Grade Levels A (Entry Level) to I (Executive) the salary and role grading system
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HR	Human Resources
ID	Identification / Identity Document
IDP	Individual Development Plan
IT	Information Technology
JD	Job Description
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LWL	Lé Wi Lan
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MBSSE	Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (Sierra Leone)

Acronym / Abbreviation	Full Form
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MTHE	Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (Sierra Leone)
NASSIT	National Social Security and Insurance Trust (Sierra Leone)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRA	National Revenue Authority (Sierra Leone)
PAYE	Pay As You Earn (income tax deducted at source)
PDP	Personal Development Plan
PIP	Performance Improvement Plan
PIN	Personal Identification Number
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PSEAH	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
SLE	Sierra Leone Leones (national currency)
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound (objective-setting framework)
STAR	Situation, Task, Action, Result (competency interview format)
TACOS	Terms and Conditions of Service
TOIL	Time Off In Lieu
ToR / TOR	Terms of Reference
T-TEL	Transforming Teaching, Education and Learning
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UPA	Urgent Personal Affairs (leave category)
USD	United States Dollar
VPN	Virtual Private Network
ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission (Sierra Leone)
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
SMT	Senior Management Team
STGNC	Service Trade Group Negotiating Council (Sierra Leone)
CBA	Collective Bargaining Agreement

