

# Explore Himalaya Travel & Adventure Human Resources Employee Handbook

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This Employee Handbook is a compilation of personnel policies, practices and procedures currently in effect at Explore Himalaya Travel & Adventure. The Handbook is prepared to introduce you to our Company, familiarize you with Company policies, provide general guidelines on work rules, benefits and other issues related to your employment, and help answer questions that may arise in connection with your employment.

The purpose of the Handbook is to provide you with a convenient explanation of present policies and practices at the Company. This Handbook is just a guideline and it cannot cover every matter that might arise in the workplace. For this reason, specific questions regarding the applicability of a particular policy or practice should be addressed to the Human Resources Department.

The Managing Director (MD) is responsible for leading an effective staff team and is thereby accountable for the development and implementation of the policies outlined in this handbook. Managers are responsible for human resource management within their teams and should refer this manual to ensure the consistency in the application of these practices.

The Company reserves the right to modify any of our policies and procedures, including those covered in this Handbook, at any time. We shall notify you about the changes by email and other appropriate means.

## ABOUT US

Explore Himalaya Travel & Adventure is a travel company, registered under 6862/054/055 on June 8, 1997. We have been innovating and leading tours across Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan and India. Our impeccable record in Himalayan adventures and reliable services has led over 25,000 travellers to an experience of a lifetime. We offer the largest range of Himalayan adventures for people with any experience and time frame. We organize Trekking, Mountaineering, Motorbike Rides, Heli Tours, Skydive, Photography, Cultural & Wildlife Tours, Family Holidays, Volunteering, Corporate Events & many more.

## MISSION

Our motto is "Tourism for Development". Suman Pandey, the founding President is an activist of Sustainable Tourism and one of the promoters of Eco Trekking Activities in Nepal.

Our mission is to develop tourism of Nepal through responsible best practices that improve the environmental, social and economic aspects of the area in which we operate. We ensure that all our employees are provided with proper working conditions that meet the government standards. Especially all the porters and other staff going above the tree line are provided with adequate clothing and equipment. We are the first ever company to supply high-altitude

porters with crampons. We provide life insurance and emergency helicopter evacuation for our staff.

## **PREAMBLE**

This Policy shall apply to all employees of Explore Himalaya Travel & Adventure except for those whose appointment has been made under a contract basis where a separate terms and condition for employment is applicable for specific case and for those whose engagement has been made on a temporary basis under wage basis for any specified work.

In case the provisions mentioned in the appointment letter are found to contravene National Law, due to amendment made on Act and Policy, the provisions of amended Act and the Policy, shall be applicable.

## **HR Management Policy Framework and Employment Legislation**

- HR management policies are formalized, documented and approved by the MD.
- HR management policies comply with employment, workplace health and safety, and other related legislation as is applicable in the jurisdiction in which the company operates.
- HR management policies are reviewed on an annual basis and revised if necessary under the final approval of the MD.
- HR management policies are made accessible to employees. One hard copy is available in the office.

## **2. EMPLOYMENT**

### **2.1 Getting the Right People(Recruitment and Hiring)**

The Company's primary goal when recruiting new employees is to fill vacancies with people who have the best skills, abilities or experience needed to perform the work. Decisions regarding the recruitment, selection and placement of employees are made on the basis of job description.

All individuals external to the company, who are offered a position, sign a letter of employment that outlines the working relationship between the individual and the company.

### **2.2 Equal Employment Opportunity**

The company extends equal opportunity to its employees. Our policy reflects and affirms the company's commitment to the principles of fair employment and the elimination of all discriminatory practices. It employs personnel without regard to race, ancestry, ethnicity, place of origin, language, citizenship, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, physical and/or mental handicap or financial ability.

The company will only employ candidates above the age of 18 for full time engagement. The company may engage candidates above the age of 14 and under the age of 18 through internship or temporary part-time work contract (maximum 36 hours a week).

### **2.3 Probation period of Employee**

The first three months of employment are probationary. During this time both parties may assess suitability for employment with the employer. At the completion of the probation period, the employee and employer shall meet and review progress of the employer. And after the discussion, with each other either the employer will be appointed in a respective position or the employment will end.

#### **2.4 Orientation and Training**

To familiarize the new recruit with the company and the process of our working, the company will provide an orientation and training session within the first few days after the employees begin work. They will have access to a copy of this Employee Handbook and will be expected to understand its contents. The company may periodically offer additional training or educational programs.

#### **2.5 Working Hours**

Normal working hours is from Sunday to Friday (6 days), 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. for fulltime employees with a one-hour lunch break from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. However, this shall vary depending on the nature of work. In case of interns and part-time employees, the time will be as per the agreement between the management and employees. The management may change the standard working hour and holidays from time to time as per the need of the business.

Each employee is responsible for their own work hours and tasks. If an employee is found to be misusing the flexible office time, supervisor may intervene and pose restrictions or sanctions. Employees are required to notify their supervisor, in advance, of planned days away from the office.

#### **2.6 Overtime**

The nature of work in tourism, especially in operations at times, demands the staff to work irregular hours and outside office. In such cases, overtime and TADA allowance shall be payable to any member of staff who are involved in movements for the clients (Arrival, Departure, and work of similar nature) under the approval of the line manager and MD. In continuation to the job assigned, staff members may be required to work beyond the regular working hours or during weekends, for which no overtime will be paid.

#### **2.7 Attendance and Punctuality**

It is the duty of all staffs to report for work and be punctual on every official working day. If they are unable to attend or are late due to unavoidable circumstances, they should inform their line manager as quickly as possible. The absent day will be deducted from the annual leave. All absences from duty require a reasonable explanation from the employees and approval of the line manager. Absenteeism and habitual late coming are causes for disciplinary action and will result in strict action.

#### **2.8 Annual Salary**

The MD, based on the company's set standards, budget considerations and commensurate with the experience of the successful candidate, shall determine salaries. The company shall pay employees on a monthly basis, less the usual and necessary statutory and other deductions payable in accordance with the

employer's standard payroll practices. These payroll practices may be changed from time to time at the employer's sole discretion. Payday occurs every first day of new month and covers the pay period ended the previous month. However, sometime the pay day may postpone for few days due to some internal problems

## **2.9 Public Holidays**

Public and official holidays will be observed as per the list published by the Management in accordance with the public holiday's laws of Nepal. As staffs are assigned with mission-based work, sometime they may be required to work on official holidays, extra hours and even from home.

## **3. LEAVE AND TIME OFF POLICY**

### **3.1 Annual Leave**

- Staff members will be entitled to twenty-four (24) working days of annual leave for each full year of service or two (2) working days per month. The line manager, depending on the workload and leave of other departmental colleagues, shall agree upon such leave.
- A staff member is eligible for Annual Leave after completion of probation, effective from the employment date.
- Annual leave may be taken in units of days or half days, the maximum duration of leave shall be fourteen (14) days. Application to take leave must be duly authorized by the line manager at least a week before the period of leave commences, unless the requested leave is due to an emergency.
- All leave arrangements are subject to the exigencies of service, which may require that a staff member takes leave at a time agreed upon by the line manager. The staffs are encouraged to take the fourteen-day leaving during off season (June-August & December-February). However, due consideration will be given to the personal circumstances and preferences of staff members whenever possible.
- The leave year will commence on 1 January and end on 31 December. Calculations of annual leave for service less than one year shall be made in proportion to the length of service. Staffs shall be required to take their annual leave within the calendar year.
- Line managers will draw up a leave schedule at the beginning of the year. Therequirements of the work and wishes of staffs must be given due consideration while scheduling annual leave.
- Encashment of unused leave will not be allowed. Any leave that is not utilized as provided for shall be automatically forfeited.
- Leave Request Forms are available at the Administration Department. Leave forms must be filled in and signed by the staff member and approved by the line manager and the MD or his designee.

### **3.2 Medical/Sick Leave**

- Staff members are entitled to medical/sick leave of up to seven (7) working days annually with full pay.
- For the first day a verbal note will suffice but from the second day, sick leave will be granted only on production of a medical certificate from a

registered medical practitioner, covering the period of ailment. If the staffs fail to present a medical certificate, the leave shall be deducted from the annual leave of the staff.

- Any staff member who exhausts their sick leave will be required to utilize their annual leave in case of continued absence.
- Sick leave of longer than one month will require the approval of the Management. A report from a doctor will be essential to determine whether a staff member may be retired on health grounds.
- Any unutilized sick leave will not be carried over to the next year and shall not be encashed, even upon termination.

### **3.3 Maternity Leave**

- Female staff members shall be entitled to paid maternity leave as defined in the labor laws of Nepal.
- When applying for maternity leave, the employee must submit a medical certificate from a qualified medical practitioner stating the expected date of delivery.
- Expectant mothers shall be eligible for time off for ante and postnatal medical examination with prior approval of the line manager until the child is six months old.
- A staff member granted maternity leave as set forth above are guaranteed reinstatement at the same level occupied at the time she commenced maternity leave upon resuming work.
- A staff member wishing to stay away from work for longer than the stipulated period to care for the infant may apply for special leave without pay if no vacation leave credit is available, provided that they have served at least six (6) additional months of service for their appointment.
- Provided the total absence does not exceed six months, the Company will reinstate the staff member upon return from such extended leave in the same position occupied at the time or in a mutually agreed comparable position with salary and benefits equivalent to those to which she was entitled at the beginning of maternity leave.

### **3.4 Paternity Leave**

- A male staff member shall be eligible to paid paternity leave of Seven (7) working days per delivery by their registered spouse/partner.
- Valid evidence of delivery must support the request or expected delivery, and prior approval must be obtained from the line manager.
- Paternity leave must be taken within four weeks period before or after the wife's delivery. Paternity leaves not taken during this period will be forfeited.

### **3.5 Compassionate Leave**

- Staffs shall be granted a leave up to a maximum of fifteen (15) days to attend to personal misfortunes such as the death of an immediate member of the staff member's family (parents, spouse, and child).
- Such leave is paid and not deducted from annual leave but must be approved by the line manager.

- All time over the fifteen (15) days plus travel time shall be deducted from annual leave or shall be deemed leave without pay if the staff has already exhausted the annual leave.

### **3.6 Examination Leave**

- Full-time staffs and Interns enrolled in University shall be granted examination leave up to a maximum of ten (10) days. This staff must present legitimate admit cards or supportive documents to the line manager for approval, and such leave shall be deducted from the annual leave of the staffs.
- Depending on the nature of the examination, the examination leave can also be
- extended and the extra days shall also be adjusted with the annual leave of the staff.

### **3.7 Leave without pay**

- Unpaid leave may be granted in writing at the discretion of the Management when a staff member wishes to interrupt service with the company for professional or exceptional personal reasons. Staff members may proceed on such leave upon receiving approval in writing. Eligibility for unpaid leave is generally limited to staff members who have rendered at least five (5) Years of continuous service.
- The maximum period of leave without pay shall not exceed six months for the entire period of employment with the company, except in special circumstances to be approved by the Management.
- During the period of special leave without pay, staff members are not entitled to their salaries or their allowances or benefits.

NB: If a Staff plans to take leave on the above grounds, regardless of the number of days, they must handover any work taken responsibility of to his/her colleague so that no work remains pending.

## **4. BENEFITS**

### **4.1 Provident Fund / Citizen Investment Fund**

10% of an employee's basic pay shall be deducted from their salary each month. The company shall contribute a same amount towards the employee's provident fund. The fund will be deposited into Citizen Investment Trust or other approved Retirement Fund as approved by the MD. This provision is applicable only to permanent staff.

### **4.2 Loans and Advances**

The MD may approve request for loans or advances from time to time and decision will be on case-by-case basis. Loans and advances cannot be claimed as a matter of right.

### **4.3 Performance Bonus**

Management may develop and provide performance bonus scheme to reward and retain performing employees.

#### **4.4 Festival Bonus**

The employees who have completed six months of service with the company shall be paid their respective one month's gross salary per year and those who have less than six months of service shall be paid on pro rata basis to the number of months served as Dashian Festival Bonus.

### **5. DEPARTURE**

#### **5.1 Termination for Cause**

The employer may terminate an Employment Contract at any time for cause, without notice or payment in lieu of notice or severance pay whatsoever, except payment of outstanding wages, overtime and vacation pay to the date of termination. Cause includes, but is not limited to, any act of dishonesty, conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality, harassment, insubordination, or careless, negligent or documented poor work performance.

#### **5.2 Resignation**

After completion of the probationary period, employees must give the employer **four (4)** weeks' notice of resignation. The employer may waive the resignation notice period in whole or in part at any time by providing payment of regular wages for the period so waived.

#### **5.3 Layoff**

Operation requirements are subject to change based on workload and the funding levels received on an annual basis. All efforts will be made to keep staff in a position similar, in scope and salary, to that they have become accustomed to. If the company is unable to do this, then employees will receive one (1) week notice for each year of service.

#### **5.4 Employer Property**

Upon termination of employment for any reason, all items of any kind created or used pursuant to the employee's service or furnished by the Employer including but not limited to computers, reports, files, diskettes, manuals, literature, confidential information, or other materials shall remain and be considered the exclusive property of the Employer at all times, and shall be surrendered to the MD, in good condition, promptly and without being requested to do so.

### **6. WORK ENVIRONMENT**

The company aims to provide an enabling work environment for its staffs.

#### **6.1 Freedom of association**

All our staffs are at liberty to decide whether they would like to join a trade union or not.

#### **6.2 Harassment**

The company wants to provide a harassment-free environment for its employees. Mutual respect, along with cooperation and understanding, must be the basis of interaction between members and staff. The company will neither tolerate nor condone behaviour that is likely to undermine the dignity or self-



esteem of an individual, or create an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

### **6.3 Complaints / Dispute Procedure**

Regrettably, conflict can occur in any working environment. In an effort to resolve conflict in an expedient, yet fair manner, the company recommends the following process for conflict or dispute resolution.

- Many times, disputes arise due to misunderstandings and miscommunications. Speak to the person you are having the dispute with.
- If speaking to the individual does not work, speak to the Managing Director. The MD will arrange a meeting between those involved in the dispute, to determine a resolution.
- If the MD is unable to resolve a workplace dispute, the parties may be referred to mediation by an outside third party. The resolution of the mediator is binding on both parties of the dispute.

### **6.4 Representation/Participation in the Company**

The company will have an annual all staff meeting in which staff members could present important work-related matters to the Management. During these meetings, employee satisfaction is measured and suggestions are taken into account.

## **7. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The company, along with its employees, must take reasonable precautions to ensure that the workplace is safe. The company complies with all requirements for creating a healthy and safe workplace.

Employees who have health and safety concerns or identify potential hazards should contact the MD.

### **7.1 Safe Work Environment**

To ensure a safe working environment for all staffs, the company will ensure:

- Daily cleaning of the working area with water, and use of disinfectants in toilets, sinks, drains, etc. according to need.
- Adequate hygienic water where staff can fill cups, glasses and re-usable bottles during the period of work.
- Sanitary toilet in easily accessible places.
- At least one accessible fire extinguisher in the office. Offices with multiple floors will have one fire extinguisher on each floor.
- Accessible first aid kit.
- Repairing and maintaining from time to time, ensuring that dirt and filth do not cause any stench.
- Declaration of all or any part of the establishment as a non-smoking zone, according to the nature of the establishment.
- Office establishment will be checked for hazard safety (including earthquake and fire) at least once every 10 years by a professional advisor and recommendations will be documented, implemented and communicated to all staff.



## **7.2 Guidance on Health and Safety**

All staff members receive periodic guidance and training regarding their roles, rights and responsibilities concerning health and safety issues. This includes fire and relevant natural disasters (earthquake, floods). These topics will at least be included in the annual all staff meeting.

## **8. Penalty**

- If the staff members fail to meet the criteria mentioned above and crosses the number of the holidays as stipulated by the Management, a penalty of One (1) working day wage shall be proportionately deducted from their basic salary.
- If habitual late coming and absenteeism without legit reason is observed in the behaviour of the staffs, the Management shall be compelled to take other strict actions deemed necessary by them.