

supportis seasonal survival guide for employers

Party Pointers

As the festive season approaches, it's crucial to remind employees of workplace policies and expectations, especially regarding company events, to ensure:

- 🎄 Misconduct is prevented
- 🎄 Your business reputation is maintained
- 🎄 The environment is safe and enjoyable
- 🎄 Compliance is promoted
- 🎄 Legal risks are mitigated
- 🎄 Employee wellbeing is protected
- 🎄 Company values are reinforced.

What do I need to communicate to employees?

Distributing a polite but clear etiquette reminder, along with your policy on behaviour during work-related social events are proactive steps that can help ensure a successful and enjoyable Christmas party for everyone involved.

HR remin-deers

Remind employees, when attending events and over the festive season generally:

- 🎄 Employees represent the business at work-related events, whether in uniform or not, and especially when the event is held alongside members of the general public.
- 🎄 Any unacceptable behaviour will be subject to disciplinary action, and serious breaches of expected behaviour standards could lead to summary dismissal.

Free Party policy & reminder

We're offering contacts of Pareto a no-obligation, complimentary Work Events policy and email template to employees ahead of any work events.

Contact us at hello@supportis.com mentioning you're a contact of Pareto.

HR remin-deers

- 🎄 Ensure there are clear rules on the consumption of alcohol and that members of staff are required to drink responsibly.
- 🎄 Stipulate the use of recreational drugs is illegal, and any employee found using recreational drugs could be summarily dismissed.
- 🎄 Clarify that your Company standards/rules in relation to discrimination and harassment still apply at work-related social events. Inform employees that unacceptable behaviour could lead to summary dismissal.
- 🎄 If employees are expected to entertain clients, give clear guidelines on acceptable expenditure limits, including the permitted amount to be spent on alcohol (if any).
- 🎄 Consider whether employees should be banned from consuming any alcohol at events that take place during working hours.
- 🎄 Inform employees of any rules in relation to dress.
- 🎄 Allocate a designated manager to receive concerns from members of staff regarding the event itself. These can then be addressed appropriately on the return to work.
- 🎄 Consider providing transport to and from a central location, particularly following evening events.

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Dilemma 1 - I'm not sure we're in a position to pay a Christmas bonus this year, but have paid one historically?

The current economic climate, inflation, rising interest and NI rates presents significant challenges for businesses. As a result, we understand employers may need to reevaluate discretionary benefits such as Christmas bonuses.

It's crucial to distinguish between **contractual** and **discretionary** bonuses.

Contractual Bonuses

If a bonus is contractually obligated, employers must adhere to the terms of the employment contract. This includes meeting specific performance criteria to qualify for the bonus.

Discretionary Bonuses

Discretionary bonuses are not legally enforceable. However, employers must exercise their discretion reasonably and consistently. Established practices or custom may, over time, become **implied terms** of the contract, making the bonus payment obligatory.

Supportis can navigate the complexities of bonus payments during challenging economic times.

We advise on a case-by-case basis and can provide template communications to inform employees of your decision. We're offering your business no obligation, trial advice around any Christmas HR conundrums. Get in touch [here](#), and let us know you found us via the Pareto newsletter.

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Dilemma 2 - I'm noticing a shift in our office's dress code. How can we maintain a professional appearance?

As the holiday season approaches, it's common for workplace attire to become more relaxed. While some flexibility can boost morale, it's important to maintain professional standards, especially in roles requiring protective clothing or formal dress.

If an employee's attire deviates from the dress code, a discreet conversation is often sufficient to remind them of the policy. However, for persistent violations, more formal disciplinary action may be necessary.

Supportis provide expert advice to help you navigate any HR issues, including guidance on handling sensitive conversations. Get in touch [here](#), and let us know you found us via the Pareto newsletter for some complimentary advice.



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Dilemma 3 - I want to make the Christmas event as inclusive as possible. What do I need to consider?

To create an inclusive work Christmas event, avoid alcohol-centric activities and religious-specific themes. Consider diverse food options, non-alcoholic drinks, and inclusive activities.

Ensure a comfortable atmosphere and safe transportation options. Remind employees of appropriate behaviour to maintain a respectful environment.

Dilemma 4 - Any tips for a successful Secret Santa?

Setting a budget limit helps alleviate stress and ensures fairness among participants. It also allows employees to budget accordingly, especially during challenging economic times.

Clearly outline the rules and expectations for the Secret Santa, including the deadline, gift exchange method, and budget limit. Avoid forcing participation to ensure a positive and voluntary experience.

Encourage employees to consider the recipient's interests and avoid potentially offensive or inappropriate gifts.

Remind employees to avoid gifts that could be perceived as offensive, discriminatory, or sexually suggestive. A well-executed Secret Santa can boost morale and strengthen team bonds, but a poorly executed one can have negative consequences.

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Seasonal summary

By implementing these HR best practices and setting clear expectations, you can ensure a successful and enjoyable holiday season for your team. By striking a balance between protecting your business, mitigating risk whilst maintaining a positive and fun festive work environment. A well-managed holiday season can boost morale, increase productivity, and strengthen your company culture.

We hope you found this helpful. If you need more in-depth advice, please remember that every case is unique, depending on your business structure, culture, size, and sector.

Supportis offer tailored advice and resources to ensure your business has a fantastic, safe, and risk-free festive season. Don't hesitate to contact us for complimentary resources as noted above, or some free trial advice on **0161 603 2156** or at hello@supportis.com, letting us know you're a contact of Pareto.

Wishing you a peaceful and prosperous festive season from all of us at Supportis!

