

Title: Disconnecting from Work

Policy No: 2002

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Purpose: Prioritising the health and wellbeing of our employees is of the utmost importance to Greenview and we equally encourage and support our employees to prioritize their health and wellbeing while working and while away from work. To help employees achieve a healthy and sustainable work-life balance, Greenview recognises that every employee is entitled to switch off outside of their normal working hours, and enjoy their free time away from work without being disturbed unless there is an emergency, urgent matter, or agreement to do so. This policy also outlines Greenview's commitment to employees, and the responsibilities of employees, to ensure there is a supportive work culture which enables employees to feel they can disconnect from work and work-related devices outside their normal working hours without repercussion.

1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1. **CAO** means Chief Administrative Officer for the Municipal District of Greenview No. 16.
- 1.2. **Disconnecting from Work** means not engaging in work-related communications, including e-mails, telephone calls, video calls, text, or the sending or reviewing of other messages, to be free from the performance of work.
- 1.3. **Emergency** means an event that occurs and endangers Greenview elected officials, employees, clients, or the public; or has an imminent risk of disrupting workplace operations or causing catastrophic damage.
- 1.4. **Employee** means a person employed by Greenview, in any capacity.
- 1.5. **Greenview** means the Municipal District of Greenview No. 16.
- 1.6. **Normal working hours** means the time when employees are meant to complete work for Greenview excluding paid and unpaid breaks.
 - A) Full-time hours - 7.5 hours per day (37.5 hours in a work week).
 - B) Part-time hours - Up to 7.5 hours per day (less than 37.5 hours in a work week).
 - C) When required to be on-call or work overtime.
 - D) As specified in an Hours of Work Averaging Arrangement.
- 1.7. **Supervisor** means Council, CAO, Director, Manager or Supervisor or any other position title that determines an employee's work schedule.

- 1.8. **Business Communications** means any type of communication, related to work, between individuals. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - A) Phone calls to desk phones, cell phones and home phones
 - B) Emails
 - C) Text Messages
 - D) Social Media messages
- 1.9. **Urgent Matter** means a situation that is not an emergency and cannot be addressed during normal working hours and that will have immediate consequences of a serious nature if not addressed outside of normal working hours.
- 1.10. **Work Week** means Sunday through Saturday

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1. Greenview is committed to maintaining high standards in the delivery of its services and to ensuring the safety, health, and wellbeing of its employees. Greenview respects the right of all employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance and to disconnect from work outside of their normal working hours to enjoy their free time without being disturbed. While technological advances have brought significant benefits to the workplace, this does not mean that employees are expected to be contactable and accessible outside of their normal working hours (apart from occasional legitimate situations when it is necessary to contact staff outside of normal working hours).
- 2.2. Greenview supports a culture where employees feel they can disconnect from work without repercussion.
- 2.3. Greenview understands that due to work-related pressures, the current landscape of work, or the working environment, employees may feel obligated to perform their job duties outside their normal working hours. Work-related pressure and feeling an inability to disconnect from the job can lead to stress and deterioration of mental and physical health.
- 2.4. Greenview will ensure a safe workplace in accordance with health and safety legislation, health and safety policies and best practice. Disconnecting from work is vital for employee wellbeing and to help achieve a healthy and sustainable work-life balance. Employees are encouraged and supported to prioritise their own wellbeing.
- 2.5. Some employees, depending on their role may be provided with handheld devices, including but not limited to a mobile phone, laptop or tablet. It is important to be aware that these are provided to allow flexibility and convenience in how employees complete their work. This does not imply that the employee must be connected to work at all times.

3. PROCEDURE

- 3.1. A joint approach from Greenview and its employees will be taken to recognise we all have an obligation to achieve disconnecting from work. Greenview grants its employees permission to disconnect from work.
- 3.2. All employees will be provided with written information, as part of their Terms of Conditions of Employment, regarding their normal working hours.

- 3.3. Supervisors will ensure that employees are aware of their work schedule, including on-call requirements and overtime arrangements.
- 3.4. All business communications should be done mindfully. It is unreasonable to expect instant responses for regular and day-to-day concerns, comments and questions. Communications outside of regular working hours are only appropriate in situations where Urgent Matters and Emergencies are present.
- 3.5. In the event of an urgent matter or an emergency, a phone call must be placed to applicable parties to ensure that no employee is expected to continuously monitor and respond to email or text messages.
- 3.6. While Management staff receive time in lieu of overtime, the expectation to receive and respond to business communications outside of normal work hours is still intended to be reasonable. A phone call is required, as stated in subsection 3.5, and electronic communication monitoring is therefore, not required outside of regular work hours.
- 3.7. Delayed delivery options should be used when knowingly sending electronic communications outside an employee's normal working hours and set to a specified delivery time on the next closest working day.
- 3.8. Employees on approved leave are not expected to respond to business communications. Every effort should be made to redirect inquiries, utilizing out of office and voicemails tools, to other employees who can be available, during regular work hours, for the duration of your absence.
- 3.9. Everyone has a duty to respect an employee's entitlement to disconnect outside of their normal working hours. Contacting employees outside their normal working hours should be the exception rather than the norm.
- 3.10. Greenview expects that all communications are in alignment with the intentions of this policy and that mindfulness and reasonableness are the guiding philosophies applied within this policy.

4. APPLICATION

- 4.1. This policy applies to all Greenview employees, and Council regarding the CAO.
- 4.2. This policy will not apply during declared States of Local Emergency.

5. COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1. Council will support the health and wellbeing of Greenview employees by supporting a work-life balance.
- 5.2. Council will support a workplace culture where Greenview employees feel they can disconnect from work without repercussion.

6. ADMINISTRATION RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1. Administration will inform Greenview employees of this policy.
- 6.2. Administration will support the health and wellbeing of Greenview employees by supporting a work-life balance.
- 6.3. Administration will support a workplace culture where Greenview employees feel they can disconnect from work without repercussion.