

# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



**NEST & CARE**  
HOME HEALTH CARE

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240-690-9900

10411 Motor City Dr Ste 325, Bethesda MD 20817

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# Employee's Acknowledgement

I have acknowledged receipt of Nest & Care's Employee Handbook and that I have read and understand the policies and procedures in it. I understand that the handbook describes certain policies and procedures of Nest & Care and is a guideline to assist all employees in understanding and following Nest & Care's policies and procedures. I further understand that the handbook is subject to change at the discretion of management and that Nest & Care may change or discontinue policies and procedures as it finds necessary. Furthermore, nothing contained in the manual or any other statements, either verbal or written, concerning policy and procedure constitutes a contract of employment.

I agree that either Nest & Care or I can terminate our employment relationship at any time, with or without cause and with or without notice, except that where possible due notice will be given by both.

I understand that all records are considered to be the property of Nest & Care and copying them in any way or giving information in them to anyone without Nest & Care's approval is prohibited. Any violation of this policy may result in legal proceedings against me.

# Agreement Not To Work For Clients or Former Clients of Nest & Care

Nest & Care spends considerable sums of money to obtain clients and to hire and match employees with these clients. Therefore, as a condition of employment, Nest & Care requires all employees to agree not to work independently for, or through another agency for any of Nest & Care's client or former client **for a period of six months** after the last date the employee has provided services for the client through Nest & Care.

Should I violate this agreement, and work independently for, or through another agency for Nest & Care's client or former client before this six (6) month period, I agree to pay Nest & Care **a fee equal to 80 percent of my regular monthly salary for the months remaining within this six month period.**

I HAVE READ, UNDERSTAND AND AGREE TO COMPLY WITH THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK AND AGREEMENT NOT TO WORK FOR CLIENT OR FORMER CLIENT.

# Welcome

Welcome to **Nest & Care!**

We are delighted to have you join our team, and we wish you every success in your career. After reading this Handbook, you will understand the expectations we have for all our employees and what you can expect from us.

From time to time **Nest & Care** will make decisions and establish policies which will affect you. Take time to become familiar with this Handbook as soon as possible. We reserve the right to change or withdraw policies at any time for any reason at the discretion of management. Speak with your Supervisor if you need clarification. We will do everything we can to make sure these policies are consistent, fair, and understood by you.

There is plenty of opportunities for you to learn and grow with **Nest & Care** and we wish you a challenging but rewarding experience.

Sincerely,

Katharina Villanueva, RN, BSN, CCRN-K, CNRN, SCRNI  
CEO

# Introduction

This Employee Handbook ("Handbook") compiles **Nest & Care's** personnel policies, practices, and procedures currently in effect.

The primary reason for this Handbook is to give clear advice to employees and to help employees to become more familiar with our policies, work guidelines, benefits and other issues related to their employment.

This Handbook does not create a contract, neither does it guarantee employees any specific term of employment, nor are employees obligated to continue their employment for a specified period. The purpose of this Handbook is to inform employees of **Nest & Care's** policies and procedures and to establish work expectations. It is an overview of our present policies and practices and while it does not include every matter that might arise it offers a good summary of **Nest & Care's** work environment. A violation of any **Nest & Care** policy can lead to disciplinary action.

## Section 1

# Employment Policies and Practices

### 1.1 EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS

The information contained in the employee's employment application should be accurate along with other documentation presented during the hiring process and employment. Any misrepresented, falsified, or material omissions in the information provided can result in termination of employment or non-consideration for employment.

### 1.2 EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

Employees enter employment voluntarily, and employees are free to resign at any time for any reason or no reason. Nest & Care is free to end its relationship with any employee at any time for any reason or no reason.

### 1.3 EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

This Handbook does not create any agreement, express or implied, neither does it guarantee employees any specific terms or conditions of employment. Nothing contained in this Handbook guarantees employment for any specified duration, nor does the Handbook obligate employees to continue their employment for a specified period. Unless an employee entered into an employment agreement that supersedes this document, the employee or Nest & Care can end the employment relationship without notice.

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### 1.4 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Nest & Care does not discriminate against employees or applicants based on race, color, creed, sex, age disability, national origin, marriage between co-workers, or veteran status. This policy applies not only apply to hiring, but also to working conditions, and privileges of employment. Each employee is asked to take responsibility and adhere to Nest & Care policies to ensure we fulfill our equal opportunity employer goals.

### 1.5 AMERICAN WITH DISABILITY ACT

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protects qualified applicants and employees with disabilities from discrimination in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, benefits, job training, and other aspects of employment. Nest & Care is required by law to provide qualified applicants and employees who have disabilities with reasonable accommodations that will not pose an undue hardship for Nest & Care. Any employee needing accommodation for a disability should notify the Supervisor of his/her request.

### 1.6 CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality of all client and family concerns is required. Information on clients is highly confidential and not discussed with anyone other than the Supervisor. Revealing sensitive information or improperly discussing a client condition is grounds for immediate termination.

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### 1.7 WORK ETHICS

Nest & Care is steadfast in providing the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct. All employees are required to adhere to Nest & Care's policies and procedures and comply with legal and regulatory requirements related to their job function. Any breaches of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action and/or termination.

### 1.8 PERSONNEL FILES

All personnel files are the property of Nest & Care. If any employee wishes to review their file they should contact their Supervisor. With reasonable notice, the employee may review his/her personnel file at Nest & Care's office in the presence of the Supervisor.

### 1.9 EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATION

- PRN (Pro re nata) employees work as needed or as the situation arises.
- Regular full-time employees are required to work at least 32 hours per week.
- Regular part-time employees are scheduled to work less than 32 hours per week. Work hours may fluctuate if an employee is asked to cover for other employees or to ensure proper care of all clients.
- Exempt employees hold executive, managerial, administrative, and professional jobs. Any employee holding a position that meets specific tests established by the Fair Labor Standards Act will be exempt from overtime pay.
- Nonexempt employees do not meet the tests for exempt employees under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Nonexempt employees will be paid at the rate of one and one-half times the regular rate for time worked over 40 hours in a given week.

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### 1.10 DEFINITION OF EMPLOYEE

An "employee" is a person who works for Nest & Care regularly on a wage or salary basis. An employee can be exempt, non-exempt, regular full-time, regular part-time, temporary and others employed by Nest & Care who are under the control and management of Nest & Care in the performance of their duties.

### 1.11 PROBATIONARY PERIOD

New employees are given a probationary period to evaluate their performance and to determine if employment with Nest & Care is suitable. During this period the employee also has an opportunity to evaluate Nest & Care. Employees are advised of their status with Nest & Care after their probationary period.

### 1.12 ATTENDANCE / TARDINESS

Frequent tardiness is not acceptable and can jeopardize an employee's position with Nest & Care.

Employees are expected to be punctual and regular in attendance at all times. Failing to report to work as assigned and being tardy can pose a problem for the client. If an employee is sick or is going to be late, he/she must call their Supervisor immediately, and Nest & Care will contact the client. The employee will be responsible for fulfilling their entire shift. However, if the employee is sick, Nest & Care will be responsible for seeking a replacement.

If on arrival the client does not respond to the door or buzzer, the employee must call the Supervisor immediately. Employees should never leave until they have first spoken to the Supervisor.

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### 1.13 SICK CALLS/CANCELLED VISITS

If an employee cannot make it to an assigned visit or shift, he/she must call their Supervisor no to ensure the information will be directed to the client promptly. We require 12 hours notice to give the office staff enough time to get a fill-in. Sick calls and canceled visit messages should not be left on voice mail or sent via text. The employee is required to speak directly to the Supervisor and give notice when possible. Employees are not allowed to call the client directly. Late notice is grounds for disciplinary action and possible termination if repeated.

If an employee is out for two (2) days or more, a doctor's note must be provided. Employees are responsible for indicating when they will be able to return to work.

### 1.14 REPLACEMENT STAFF

Employees should contact the Supervisor if their replacement staff is 10 minutes late. Nest & Care will make every effort to locate the replacement. However, the employee must remain with the client until arrangements are made.

### 1.15 EMPLOYEE HEALTH

Employees should call their Supervisor immediately if they become sick while on duty. The Supervisor will make plans for a replacement; however, an employee should never leave the client. Employees are to stay with the client until necessary arrangements are made.

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### 1.16 DRESS CODE / GROOMING

It is our policy that all employees present themselves professionally. Wearing the appropriate uniform is a condition of employment and failure to do so can lead to disciplinary actions.

How an employee looks and appears to the client forms the first impression of Nest & Care. Employees should always be clean in their appearance and wear the appropriate uniform and clothes as required.

During business hours and/or when representing Nest & Care, employee clothing should be wrinkle free, and employees should be clean and neat in appearance. All employees are required to maintain a high level of personal cleanliness and hygiene; they should be dressed and groomed according to the requirements of their position.

Caregivers are required to wear clean, neat and appropriate size uniforms at all times. Approved uniform colors includes: light blue, navy, gray, white and black. Appropriate undergarments must be worn at ALL times.

The below guidelines should be followed:

- Sandals, slides and or flip-flops are unacceptable footwear. Shoes must provide safe, secure, supportive footing, offer protection against hazards and cover the complete foot, toes, and heel.
- Clothing should be worn in such a way that it does not expose the abdomen, cleavage, or buttocks area. Clothes cannot be torn or ripped. Tank tops, tubes, halter-tops, t-shirts, sweatpants, spandex or shorts are not acceptable.
- Mustaches and beards must always be neat, clean and well-trimmed.
- Hairstyles must not be extreme or unusual neither should hair be unnaturally colored.

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Pull long hair back from the face and neck to avoid interference with job performance.

- Excessive makeup is not permitted. Visible tattoos and body art must be covered and should not be seen during work hours.
- Nails, natural and artificial, are to be kept short and clean while on the job. Long natural or artificial nails are not permitted. Nail polish, if used, cannot be chipped, cracked or peeled.
- Offensive body odor and poor personal hygiene are not acceptable.
- Some clients may be sensitive to strong fragrances, therefore, perfume or cologne, and aftershave lotion should be used moderately or avoided.
  - Excessive jewelry may interfere with your job performance and should not be worn.
- Body piercing jewelry must be concealed under clothing during work hours. The above is not a complete list; it is a guideline on how you should present yourself.

Due to the nature of our business, personal appearance and cleanliness are crucial to us. If your appearance is inappropriate, you may be asked, by your Supervisor, to leave the workplace and return adequately dressed or groomed; you will not be compensated for this time away from work.

### 1.17 SOLICITATION

Nest & Care recognizes employees may have interests in events and organizations outside the workplace. However, employees are prohibited from soliciting or distributing literature concerning these activities to the client onsite or at the client's property.

Employees should not solicit clients or the client's family to switch home care providers.

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### 1.18 SMOKING

Smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco products are prohibited within the home of clients. If the client smokes within their own home, employees are required to ask the client if they mind if they can smoke outside.

If requested, Nest & Care will make every attempt to avoid assigning non-smoking employees to clients who smoke. However, it should be noted there may be times Nest & Care may not be able to accommodate the employee request. If a client smokes, and the employee does not, the employee is prohibited from reprimanding or discriminating the client.

### 1.19 CELL PHONE / ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Cell phones and electronic devices can sometimes become a distraction from work and are not permitted to be used while on the job. Making or receiving personal calls or playing games on electronic devices is not allowed. Always keep cell phones on vibrate or silence while at work. Cell phones are allowed for emergency purposes only.

### 1.20 SCOPE OF PRACTICE

Employees are required to work within their scope of practice based on their credentials. All employees/ caregivers must adhere to the written Care Plan created by the Registered Nurse or Nest & Care appointed staff member. A violation of this rule can lead to disciplinary action or cause for termination.

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### 1.21 LIMITATIONS

Employees are **not** permitted to: -

- a. Bring friends or family members to the client's residence or property.
- b. Use client funds and debit/credit card for personal use.
- c. Use the client's telephone for personal use.
- d. Request or have client or client's family members phone number unless they have specific authorization by the Supervisor.
- e. Call client to rearrange work schedule (all communication should come from the Supervisor).

## Section 2

# Standards of Care

### 2.1 SAFETY

The health and safety of our employees is our top priority. No employee will be required to do a job that is considered unsafe, and employees are expected to obey safety guidelines and exercise caution in all their work activities. Any hazardous work conditions should be reported to the Supervisor immediately. Employees who violate safety standards, which cause unsafe or dangerous situations, or who fail to report or, where appropriate, improve such conditions, will be subject to disciplinary action, that can lead to termination of employment.

If an accident result in an injury, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, the Supervisor should be notified immediately.

Reports are needed to comply with state laws and to initiate insurance and Worker's Compensation.

### 2.2 PROFESSIONALISM

Our employees have a diverse background and provide professional and compassionate services to the client. We rely on our employees to perform a variety of tasks to help the client while remaining patient and friendly in performing their duties professionally. The following behaviors can help you to become successful in your career:

Punctuality - having the ability to complete a required task or fulfill an obligation before or at a designated time. The client expects employees to be punctual and dependable which is considered a professional courtesy. Tardiness or frequent absences are signs of laziness or disrespect.

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Courtesy – having a polite behavior and always displaying proper manners often symbolizes respect. Clients enjoy knowing that they are treated with the utmost respect and courtesy at all times. Professional courtesy should be extended to the client regularly.

Clear Communication – is the ability to convey a message clearly and to listen to others with every intention of trying to understand them. Not only should you focus on communicating your needs, you must also practice on being a good listener. Learn to pay close attention to the needs of others and the client. Listening can help you to understand better what others are trying to say and allow you to respond appropriately.

Professionalism – is behavior expected of a person who is trained to do a job well. Our clients expect professionalism from our employees; it is a combination of your work skills and abilities that can set your services apart from ordinary to exceptional. Never settle for ordinary performance always set your standards high.

Honest & Ethical – treating everyone with kindness and respect; dependable, reliable and punctual; always carry yourself as a professional on the job; respect others and their beliefs, and be honest in your communication to others.

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### 2.3 EMERGENCY

For life-threatening situations, call "911." In the event of a client's expected or unexpected death, record all data regarding the death accurately. Employees should record the exact time and the events that took place. Notify your Supervisor for further directions. Nest & Care will be responsible for calling the family with the status and nature of the emergency.

### 2.4 INCIDENTS

In the case of accidents, the employee or the client must call the office immediately. Following the telephone call, a written report is required to comply with laws.

## Section 3

# Compensation

### 3.1 SALARIES AND WAGES

Salaries and wages are determined at the time of employment and will not fall below the applicable Montgomery County minimum wage rates. Effective July 1, 2025:

- Large employers (51+ employees): \$17.15/hr
- Mid-size employers (11–50 employees): \$16.75/hr
- Small employers (1–10 employees): \$15.50/hr

Nest & Care will comply with any future county/state increases.

### 3.2 OVERTIME

Employees will be given overtime work assignments when operating requirements or other needs cannot be met during regular working hours. All overtime work must receive the Supervisor's prior authorization. Distribution of overtime assignments is assigned as equitably as practical to all employees qualified to perform the required work.

### 3.3 TIMEKEEPING

Every employee is responsible for reporting their time worked. Federal and state laws require Nest & Care to keep an accurate record of time worked to calculate employee pay. Time worked is all the time spent on the job performing assigned duties.

Employees should not clock-in electronically from a remote location when Nest & Care utilizes software to track time. Time must be recorded accurately when a shift begins and when it ends. The beginning and end of any split shift or departure from work for personal reasons should be recorded.

Timesheets should be completed and submitted for each client. All time sheets must be signed by the client or responsible party before submitting.

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Overtime must be approved before being performed. Compensation for any overtime hours is paid to all nonexempt employees in compliance with federal and state wage and hour restrictions. Overtime pay is actual hours worked. Overtime is not paid for time off on sick leave, vacation leave, or any leave of absence. Employees should not report to work without direct assignment and approval from their Supervisor.

### 3.4 PAY PERIOD

Employees are paid bi-weekly on every other Friday. Each paycheck will include earnings for all hours worked, and reimbursable mileage will be calculated through the end of the previous pay period. However, this will not take effect if the employee's time is received after the deadline.

If a regularly scheduled payday is on a bank holiday, employees are paid on the first business day after a bank holiday.

### 3.5 HOLIDAYS

We recognize eight (7) holidays each year for eligible active full-time and regular part-time employees.

New Year's Day

Memorial Day

Juneteenth

Independence Day

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day

Christmas Day

If a non-exempted employee is scheduled to work on a holiday, they will be paid time and one half for these holidays.

## Section 4

# Employee Conduct and Work Rules

### 4.1 STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

These work rules and standards of conduct for Nest & Care are necessary, and we regard them seriously. Employees have a right to work in an environment where they are treated with dignity and respect. Nest & Care is committed to conducting business in accordance with laws and regulations applicable to us.

We require all employees to become familiar with the work rules and standards of conduct that affect Nest & Care. The below list of infractions is unacceptable conduct but is not exhaustive; it is a guideline of undesirable behavior that can impact the integrity of Nest & Care and can lead to disciplinary action, including termination of employment. Any employee who suspects or knows of someone who is guilty of these practices should report the matter to their Supervisor immediately.

- Misrepresentation and falsification of employment records
- Disclosing privileged and confidential information or improperly discussing a client condition
  - Frequent tardiness
  - Regularly failing to report to work or failure to call in
  - Leaving a shift before the shift is over or before a replacement arrives
  - Failure to provide a doctor's note after being out sick for two (2) days or more

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- Reporting to work out of uniform and refusing to adhere to Nest & Care's dress code
- Solicitation on the job and/or soliciting clients
- Smoking or using smokeless tobacco products in the client's home or on client's property without client consent
- Reprimanding, scolding, criticizing or chastising a client
- Failure to submit a verbal and/or written report on a job-related accident and/or injury
- Refusing to get Supervisor's authorization to work overtime
- Inability to perform job duties in a professional manner
- Falsification of documents, time sheets, client records and other reports
- Sexual harassment or unlawful harassment of any kind while on the job or when conducting Nest & Care business
- Violation of Drug & Alcohol Policy
- Disorderly or threatening conduct; fighting; use of abusive, offensive or foul language; or inflicting bodily harm on anyone while on the job or when conducting Nest & Care business
  - Failure to follow safety rules or safe operating procedures while in the workplace or when conducting Nest & Care business
- Violation of Nest & Care work rules, insubordination, dishonesty, theft, unethical or other disrespectful conduct

### 4.2 HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Harassment is unwelcomed, unwanted, and uninvited behavior or conduct and violates the law; it creates a work environment that is intimidating, hostile and offensive which can decrease productivity and can have an adverse effect on a working relationship, and tarnish the image of Nest & Care.

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Nest & Care does not welcome harassing conduct. We are determined to provide a work environment that does not engage in discrimination and behavior that can be considered harassing, coercive, or disruptive, including sexual harassment. Discrimination based on an individual's legal characteristics, such as age, disability, gender, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation will not be tolerated. Employees are to refrain from engaging in verbal or physical conduct that degrades or shows hostility to another individual based on that person's race, creed, color, religion, sex, national origin, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, age, membership on a human rights commission or sexual orientation, or that of the person's relatives, friends or associates.

Nest & Care operates a zero-tolerance policy for any form of sexual harassment in the workplace; all incidents are treated seriously with respect and in confidence and promptly investigated. No one will be mistreated for making a complaint. An employee found to have sexually harassed another will face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment.

Sexual harassment is unwelcomed sexual advances, a request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature. It is unlawful to harass anyone because of their sex. It makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated; such behavior can create a hostile work environment. Sexual harassment includes situations where a person is asked to engage in sexual activity as a condition of that person's employment, as well as situations which create an environment which is hostile, intimidating or humiliating for the recipient. Sexual harassment is unwelcomed physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature that is severe or pervasive.

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Examples of conduct or behavior which constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

### Physical conduct

- Unwanted touching of a person or their clothing
- Frequently following or standing too close to a person on purpose
- Making sexually suggestive facial expressions
- Lewd hand gestures or other gestures meant to convey curse words

### Verbal conduct

- Sending emails with offensive jokes or graphics
- Requesting repeatedly for dates or sexual favors
- Making derogatory comments about someone's disability
- Sexual comments, stories, and jokes

### Non-verbal conduct

- Wearing clothing with offensive or vulgar language
- Displaying pictures of a sexual nature
- Looking a person's body up and down
- Making inappropriate sexual gestures

Employees who experience, witness or is aware of sexual harassment or any other unlawful harassment in the workplace, should report it immediately to their Supervisor. Concerns and reports can be made without fear of retaliation. All allegations of sexual and other unlawful harassment will be investigated

quickly and discreetly. Anyone engaging in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

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### 4.3 DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

The Drug and Alcohol policy was created to assist us in providing a safe, comfortable and productive work environment for all employees. We recognize that employees who abuse drugs or alcohol at work— or who appear at work under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol— can harm both themselves and others in the work environment. Illicit drug use includes more than just illegal drugs such as marijuana, cocaine or heroin. It also consists of the misuse of otherwise legal prescription and over-the-counter drugs.

While on duty or when conducting Nest & Care business, employees are prohibited from using, possessing, distributing, selling or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted on the job if it does not impair an employee's ability to perform the essential job functions efficiently and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals.

A violation of this policy can lead to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment. Such violations may also have legal consequences.

Nest & Care reserves the right to require employees to undergo random drug and alcohol testing to ensure a safe and healthful working environment. Employees may be required to provide body substance samples (such as urine and/or blood) to determine the illicit or illegal use of drugs and alcohol. Refusal to submit to drug testing may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

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### 4.4 DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

Nest & Care is committed to equal opportunity in all aspects of employment for qualified individuals with a disability in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ensuring equal opportunity in employment for qualified persons with disabilities. We will attempt to provide reasonable accommodations in employment to qualified individuals with disabilities unless the accommodation causes an undue hardship on Nest & Care's operations.

Qualified Persons with Disabilities is an employee or applicant with a disability who can perform the essential job functions in question with or without reasonable accommodations. They are entitled to equal pay and other forms of compensation (or changes in compensation) as well as in job assignments, classifications, organizational structures, position descriptions, lines of progression and seniority lists. Leave of all types is available to employees on an equal basis.

Nest & Care will not discriminate against any qualified employees or applicants who are related to or associated with a person with a disability. We will follow any state or local law that provides individuals with disabilities greater protection than the ADA.

This policy is neither exhaustive nor exclusive. Nest & Care will take every action necessary to ensure equal employment opportunity for persons with disabilities in accordance with the ADA and all other applicable federal, state, and local laws.

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### 4.5 PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Nest & Care conducts performance evaluations for all employees after the probationary period and at one year of employment, annually, after that. Nest & Care expects a high level of professionalism and accountability from all employees. Therefore, communication between the Supervisor and the employee regarding performance related issues is vital. The performance evaluation allows an opportunity for both the Supervisor and the employee to discuss job tasks, identify and correct weaknesses, encourage and recognize strengths, and address methods for reaching goals.

On an ongoing basis, job performance, attendance records, work attitude, quality of work, work relations with clients and other employees and the willingness and responsiveness to work will determine how pay increases are distributed. The award of such increase is based upon numerous factors, at Nest & Care's discretion.

Performance evaluations are an ongoing communication between the employee and Supervisor to provide a clear understanding of what is expected in the job; it provides employees an opportunity to communicate any concerns about the future of their job.

### 4.6 PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

A progressive discipline policy was adopted to identify and address employee-related problems. It is Nest & Care's position to administer fair and consistent discipline for unsatisfactory conduct in the workplace. Nest & Care will attempt to consider all relevant factors before making decisions regarding discipline and develop a process to improve and prevent recurring undesirable employee performance. If an employee demonstrates unacceptable behavior or has difficulty performing all the duties as assigned, the Supervisor will work with the employee to correct his/her performance or behavior. The Supervisor may provide the employee with additional training and coaching to prevent a recurrence of undesirable behavior to prepare the employee for satisfactory service in the future. We will always ensure disciplinary actions are prompt, uniform and impartial.

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The four steps of disciplinary action are:

- Verbal Warning – Used for minor issues to notify an employee that improvement is needed. Verbal warnings should be documented and placed in the employee file for a specified period.
- Written Warning – A written warning is more severe than a verbal warning. It provides notice to an employee about continued work performance issues or inappropriate work behavior that has not been resolved after being given a verbal warning. Written warnings are documented and placed in the employee file for a specified period.
- Suspension – A suspension follows a verbal or written warning if the desired results have not been accomplished. The term of suspension will depend on the facts of the case. Suspensions are documented and placed in the employee file for a specified period.
- Termination – the last step in progressive discipline when an employee does not correct performance and/or behavior or when an employee is involved in a more serious offense that warrants an immediate termination without going through the progressive discipline steps. A termination letter is given to the employee and a copy placed in his/her file.

Nest & Care recognizes there may be circumstances when one or more steps are bypassed, but by using progressive discipline, we hope that most employee problems can be corrected at an early stage, benefiting both the employee and the Company.

***NOTE: \*\*Due to the nature of the business, a no call/no show to work will result in immediate termination as an abandonment of your duty and the client and is considered a voluntary quit.***

## Section 5

# Benefits

### 5.1 SICK AND SAFE LEAVE (Updated for Maryland Healthy Working Families Act)

Paid sick and safe leave is provided to all eligible employees in accordance with Maryland law. Employees accrue 1 hour of paid leave for every 30 hours worked, up to 40 hours per year, with carryover permitted. Leave may be used for:

- The employee's own illness or injury
- Caring for a family member with illness or injury
- Preventive medical care
- Absences due to domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking
- Closures due to public health emergencies.

Employees must request Sick and Safe Leave through Nest & Care's online leave request form to ensure accurate tracking. In emergencies where online submission is not possible, employees must notify their Supervisor by phone as quickly as possible. A doctor's note may be required after 3 consecutive absences.

Accrued sick and safe leave balances will be reflected on each employee's paystub, as required by Maryland law.

### 5.2 FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

Nest & Care complies with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) (for employers with 50+ employees) and the Maryland Parental Leave Act (for 15–49 employees). Eligible employees may take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave (FMLA) or 6 weeks parental leave (Maryland PLA) for qualified reasons including:

## NEST & CARE, LLC

- Birth or adoption of a child
- Employee's own serious health condition
- Caring for a family member with a serious health condition
- Qualifying military family needs.

### 5.3 WORKERS COMPENSATION

Workers Compensation covers any injury or illness sustained on the job requiring medical treatment. Workers' compensation provides benefits after a short waiting period or if the employee is hospitalized, immediately. A comprehensive workers' compensation insurance program is provided, by Nest & Care, at no cost to the employee.

Supervisors must be informed immediately when an employee sustains a work-related injury or illness on the job. Client and employee safety is a priority; therefore, all work-related injuries are taken seriously. Regardless of how minor the injury may appear to be, to qualify for coverage as quickly as possible, it is crucial that it be reported. All reported injuries are investigated thoroughly.

Nest & Care will not be responsible for paying workers' compensation benefits for injuries incurred when employees voluntarily participate in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity sponsored by Nest & Care.

Disciplinary measures including termination and/or legal action will be taken for any employee who is found to have intentionally misled, perpetrated fraudulent information, or falsely claimed benefits.

## Section 6

# Termination

### 6.1 EMPLOYMENT TERMINATION

When an employee's relationship with Nest & Care is terminated, voluntarily or involuntarily, Nest & Care will attempt to make this a smooth transition for the departing employee. Examples of circumstances in which employment is terminated are below:

- Resignation - voluntary employment termination originated by the employee.
- Discharge - involuntary employment termination originated by the company.
- Layoff - involuntary employment termination originated by the company for non-disciplinary reasons.
- Retirement - voluntary employment termination originated by the employee meeting age, length of service, and any other criteria for retirement from work/and the organization.

An Exit Interview is scheduled at the time of employment termination. During this time suggestions, complaints and questions are discussed; this also provides an opportunity to discuss employee benefits, repayment of outstanding debts or the return of Company property.

Upon termination of employment, employees will be paid for any accrued but unused time. If vacation or sick time was taken in advance of accrued time, the last paycheck is adjusted accordingly.

Employment is based on mutual consent, both the employee and Nest & Care have the right to terminate employment at will, with or without cause, at any time. Employees will receive their final pay in accordance with applicable state and federal laws.