

Unwritten Rules of the Workplace

When you first started school, nobody handed you a rule book with a list of dos and don'ts. But by taking in what was going on and watching others you soon learnt what was ok and what wasn't, both in and outside of the classroom.

The same principle applies to the office where there are written and unwritten codes of conduct that exist to ensure that colleagues get on well and can work together as a team.

<p>Mobile phones</p>	<p>Each company will have a policy about using mobile phones. Make sure you find out what it is and follow the guidelines. Even when phones are allowed they can still cause a lot of problems so be aware of the following:</p> <p>Keep calls and texts to an absolute minimum, and don't have annoying or offensive ringtones</p> <p>Don't ever think that you can get away with checking your phone or texting without others noticing – as you know it's pretty obvious and sends a clear message to your boss and colleagues that you don't care about your work.</p> <p>Never use your phone during a meeting or conversations with your boss or colleagues.</p>
<p>Using the internet</p>	<p>Most companies will have a policy about using the internet for personal use, such as checking email or social networking sites. Make sure you know what this policy is and follow it.</p> <p>Many companies have restrictions on the websites you can access but even if they don't you should limit the amount of time you spend on the net for personal use. If your screen is displaying Facebook every time your boss or colleague walks by, you're probably not going to be considered a hard-working team member.</p>
<p>Smoking</p>	<p>If you are a smoker then be careful not to take too many breaks, this is a good way to annoy the non-smokers! And make sure you don't have an overpowering smell of smoke on your clothes when you get back from your break.</p>
<p>Passing the buck</p>	<p>If you make a mistake, the best thing to do is own it and work out a way to fix it. Do not pass the blame onto someone else, this is the quickest way to get your colleagues off side and do not try and hide it, it will eventually come out.</p>

Kitchen Etiquette	<p>Staff kitchens can be a minefield. Arguments over who left dirty dishes in the sink, mouldy sandwiches in the fridge and who ate someone else’s lunch are alive and well throughout the country. In the kitchen always tidy up after yourself, pitch in and help. Don’t just leave the mess for someone else to sort out, don’t be greedy with the biscuit barrel and never steal someone else’s lunch from the fridge.</p>
Sloppy Eating	<p>Whether it’s sitting together on a construction site or sharing lunch in the lunch room, bad eating manners will not make you friends. You don’t want to be known as the ‘pig’ of the office. So close your mouth when you chew, don’t slurp, burp or grind your teeth. Eat slowly and never ever speak with your mouth full!</p>
Personal presentation	<p>How we dress and present ourselves isn’t just important for the interview, it’s ongoing! Make sure you stick to the dress codes and that your uniform or clothes are clean, ironed and generally look ok.</p> <p>Save your fun or more daring clothes and accessories for the weekend. And girls keep your makeup to the minimal.</p> <p>Don’t underestimate the power of showers and deodorant. Whether it’s in a small office or down a mine we often have to work very closely with others, you do not want to have an awkward conversation with your boss about personal hygiene –so use deodorant, shower regularly, wear clean clothes, brush and floss your teeth and again smokers be extra careful!</p>
Gossiping	<p>Human beings just love to gossip and unfortunately we typically focus on the bad stuff. Don’t get sucked in.</p> <p>While there is nothing wrong with venting or talking through your concerns or worries it is essential that you do this with people you can trust such as your mentor, and that you don’t overdo this.</p> <p>Always avoid making personal negative comments about colleagues, aside from not being particularly nice, you don’t know what will get back to them and what the consequences could be.</p>

**Keep the Personal
at Home**

Sometimes our personal lives can get chaotic and it's difficult not to let things get to us while we are at work. Always do your best to avoid bringing these issues to work. As difficult as it is to switch between our different worlds it's important that our other 'stuff' doesn't impact on the way we behave at work. If things are really getting too much, make some time to speak with your boss about what options you might have and how the workplace can best support you.