

ANTI-BRIBERY POLICY

Introduction

One of the AEC's core values is to uphold responsible and fair business practices.

It is committed to promoting and maintaining the highest level of ethical standards in relation to all of its business activities.

AEC therefore has a zero tolerance policy towards bribery and corruption and is committed to acting fairly and with integrity in all of its business dealings and relationships.

We will therefore implement and enforce effective systems to counteract any bribery.

Purpose and scope of Policy

This Policy sets out the AEC's position on any form of bribery and corruption and has put together the following guidelines:

1. Ensuring compliance with anti-bribery laws, rules and regulations, not just within the UK but in any other country which the Company may carry out its business or in relation to which its business may be connected.
2. Enabling employees and people associated with AEC to understand the risks connected with bribery and to encourage them to be vigilant and effectively recognise, prevent and report any wrongdoing, whether by themselves or others.
3. Providing suitable and secure reporting and communication channels and ensuring that any information that is reported is properly and effectively dealt with.
4. Creating and maintaining a rigorous and effective framework for dealing with any suspected instances of bribery or corruption.

This Policy applies to all permanent and temporary/fixed term/casual employees of AEC.

All employees and associated persons are expected to adhere to the principles set out in this Policy.

Legal obligations

The UK legislation on which this Policy is based is the Bribery Act 2010 and it applies to the AEC's conduct both in the UK and abroad. A bribe is an incentive or reward offered, promised or provided in order to gain any commercial, contractual, regulatory or personal advantage.

It is an offence in the UK to:

Offer, promise or give a financial or other advantage to another person (i.e. bribe a person), whether within the UK or abroad, with the intention of providing an incentive or rewarding improper conduct.

Bribe another person in the course of doing business intending either to obtain or retain business, or to obtain or retain an advantage in the conduct of business, for AEC.

Request, agree to receive or accept a financial or other advantage (i.e. receive a bribe) for or in relation to improper conduct.

Bribe a foreign public official.

AEC could be liable for these types of offences where it has failed to prevent such bribery by associated persons. As well as an unlimited fine, it could suffer substantial reputational damage.

You can be held personally liable for any such offence.

Policy statement

All employees and associated persons are required to:

Comply with any anti-bribery and anti-corruption legislation that applies in any jurisdiction in any part of the world in which they might be expected to conduct business.

Act honestly, responsibly and with integrity.

Safeguard and uphold AEC's core values by operating in an ethical, professional and lawful manner at all times.

Bribery of any kind is strictly prohibited. Under no circumstances should any provision be made, money set aside or accounts created for the purposes of facilitating the payment or receipt of a bribe.

The Directors of AEC, recognise that industry practices may vary from country to country or from culture to culture. What is considered unacceptable in one place may be normal or usual practice in another.

Nevertheless, a strict adherence to the guidelines set out in this Policy is expected of all employees and associated persons at all times. If in doubt as to what might amount to bribery or what might constitute a breach of this Policy, refer the matter to the Directors of AEC.

The Directors of AEC have rules and procedures in relation to the receipt of business gifts from third parties and corporate hospitality offered to or received from third parties, please refer to the Company's Gifts from Clients/Suppliers Policy and its Corporate Hospitality Policy. They form part of the AEC's zero tolerance policy towards bribery and they should be read in conjunction with this Policy.

The giving of business gifts to clients, customers, contractors and suppliers is not prohibited provided the following requirements are met:

1. The gift is not made with the intention of influencing a third party to obtain or retain business or a business advantage, or to reward the provision or retention of business or a business advantage.
2. It complies with local laws.
3. It is given in the Company's name, not in the giver's personal name.
4. It does not include cash or a cash equivalent (such as gift vouchers).
5. It is of an appropriate and reasonable type and value and given at an appropriate time.

6. It is given openly, not secretly.
7. It is approved in advance by a Director of the Company.

In summary, it is not acceptable to give, promise to give, or offer, a payment, gift or hospitality with the expectation or hope that a business advantage will be received, or to reward a business advantage already given, or to accept a payment, gift or hospitality from a third party that you know or suspect is offered or provided with the expectation that it will obtain a business advantage for them.

Any payment or gift to a public official or other person to secure or accelerate the prompt or proper performance of a routine government procedure or process, otherwise known as a “facilitation payment”, is also strictly prohibited. Facilitation payments are not commonly paid in the UK but they are common in some other jurisdictions.

It is the contractual duty and responsibility of all employees and associated persons to take whatever reasonable steps are necessary to ensure compliance with this Policy and to prevent, detect and report any suspected bribery or corruption in accordance with the procedure set out in AEC’s Disclosures in the Public Interest Policy.

You must immediately disclose to a Director, any knowledge or suspicion you may have that you, or any other employee or associated person, has plans to offer, promise or give a bribe or to request, agree to receive or accept a bribe in connection with the business of the Company. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes reporting your own wrongdoing. The duty to prevent, detect and report any incident of bribery and any potential risks rests not only with the directors of AEC, but equally to all employees and associated persons.

The Directors and Management of AEC, would encourage all employees and associated persons to be vigilant and to report any unlawful conduct, suspicions or concerns promptly and without undue delay so that investigation may proceed and any action can be taken expeditiously. In the event that you wish to report an instance or suspected instance of bribery, you should follow the steps set out in AEC’s Disclosures in the Public Interest Policy.

Confidentiality will be maintained during the investigation to the extent that this is practical and appropriate in the circumstances.

The Company is committed to taking appropriate action against bribery and corruption. This could include either reporting the matter to an appropriate external government department, regulatory agency or the police and/or taking internal disciplinary action against relevant employees and/or terminating contracts with associated persons.

The Company will support anyone who raises genuine concerns in good faith under this Policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken. It is also committed to ensuring nobody suffers any detrimental treatment as a result of refusing to take part in bribery or corruption, or because of reporting in good faith their suspicion that an actual or potential bribery or corruption offence has taken place or may take place in the future.

Record keeping

All accounts, receipts, invoices and other documents and records relating to dealings with third parties must be prepared and maintained with strict accuracy and completeness. No accounts must be kept “off the record” to facilitate or conceal improper payments.

Sanctions for breach

A breach of any of the provisions of this Policy will constitute a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with in accordance with the AEC's disciplinary procedure. Depending on the gravity of the offence, it may be treated as gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal.

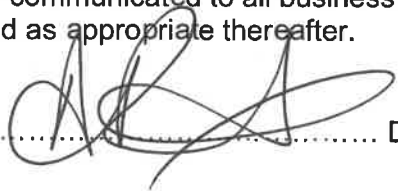
As far as associated persons are concerned, a breach of this Policy could lead to the suspension or termination of any relevant contract, sub-contract or other agreement.

Monitoring compliance

The Company's Business Analyst, has lead responsibility for ensuring compliance with this Policy and will review its contents on a regular basis. They will be responsible for monitoring its effectiveness and will provide regular reports in this regard to the directors of the Company who have overall responsibility for ensuring this Policy complies with the Company's legal and ethical obligations.

Training

The Company will provide training to all employees to help them understand their duties and responsibilities under this Policy. AEC has a zero tolerance approach to bribery and this will also be communicated to all business partners at the outset of the business relationship with them and as appropriate thereafter.

 Director Signature

01.03.24 Date