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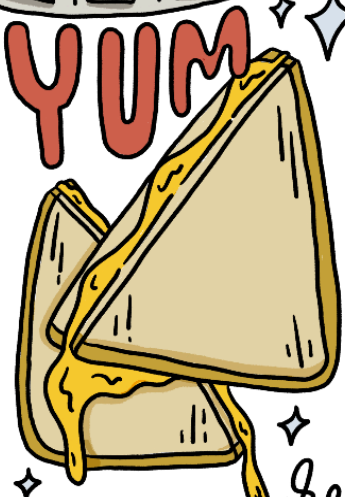


**HAND
BOOK** 2024

ARTISAN GRILLED CHEESE

**KEEP IT
CHEESY**

**CHEESE
LOUISE**



NH X ME X BEYOND

hope you're
HUNGRY



**SWEET DREAMS
ARE MADE OF
CHEESE**



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Our mission

To build the most people-focused restaurant company that we can imagine.

Our Journey (so far):

Cheese Louise didn't begin with a grand mission; it started as a scheme to get out of our boring summer jobs, work with our best friends, and help pay for college. We got hooked on the idea of a food truck, and after trying out a few different concepts we decided to attempt a perfect grilled cheese.

The inaugural summer was a blast. Just three kids slinging sandwiches, making a little extra cash, and sharing the excitement of something new with our community. Our success that summer led us to expand, buying a second truck and enlisting our friends and siblings to help us run it. The following year our miniature fleet rolled out across New England, leaving smiles at music festivals and private events. We realized we were onto something more significant than just having fun: we were building a company.

We returned to school more energized than ever. Eager to see what this could turn into, we immediately got to work planning the next summer of festivals and events. In the midst of these efforts, the COVID-19 pandemic struck, teaching us how quickly the best-laid plans can go awry. Our entire new business model went out the window; there would be no festivals with large crowds to serve in the near future.

We had no choice but to adapt, swiftly pivoting from food trucks to brick-and-mortar locations. The Commissary, featuring only outdoor seating, came to life on the Kancamagus Highway and we seized the opportunity to move into a kiosk space at Settlers Green, an outdoor shopping mall. Despite global challenges, our emerging team persevered, focusing on what we do best: creating delicious grilled cheese sandwiches and putting smiles on our guest's faces, even if we couldn't see them behind their masks.

In a year when restaurant sales plummeted worldwide we not only survived but more than doubled our previous year's revenue. Our shift to brick-and-mortar locations set

Cheese Louise on a new trajectory. We started to dream big, aiming to innovate and bring delicious, creative grilled cheese sandwiches to cities and towns across New England. In 2021 we began to realize this dream when we opened our first year-round location in Portland, Maine. Two years later we opened another location in Portsmouth, NH, and we still feel like we're just getting started.

Our journey began with the desire to have fun with friends, and as we grow, we are committed to bucking the norms of the restaurant industry and building a company that our people are proud to be a part of.

Join us as we continue this exciting journey of making Cheese Louise a company that you will be proud to be a part of.

-Bryce, James & Ian

Our Values

There is nothing more important to us at Cheese Louise than our values. Without them, we would be indistinguishable from so many other companies: competing for customers, chasing profits, and adopting the ever-changing values of any given moment. We would never take a stand for what we truly believe in out of fear of what others might think or how it might impact our bottom line. We admire companies like Patagonia and Ben and Jerry's who stand for what they believe in and make decisions that align with their values, even when it hurts their bottom line. So whose values are our values?

Team first: This value commands that we prioritize the needs of our team before anyone else. If we cannot meet the needs of our team then the company will cease to exist.

Collaboration: This value commands that we are always looking for win-win solutions with those we work with. We see collaboration as a mechanism for avoiding zero-sum competition and producing excess value.

Curiosity: This value commands that we are always open to new people, perspectives, and ideas.

Authenticity: This value commands that we act in a way that is in line with who we are and what we believe in regardless of how that will be perceived by those around us.

Playfulness: This value commands that we maintain a playful approach to all that we do, we see work as a game we play together, hospitality as a way to have fun with our guests, and grilled cheese as a nostalgic meal that transports us back to a time when fun and play was what life was all about.

Community: This value commands that we act in a way that improves the communities in which we operate.

Simplicity: This value commands that we approach all decisions intending to keep things simple and focus on what is essential and can be summed up by the phrase: less is more.

Hospitality: This value commands that we interact with all people in a kind and generous way. This starts with our team and extends to our guests, our suppliers, and our communities.

Handbook Purpose:

The Rules of The Game

'The Game'

We like to think of working at Cheese Louise as a game. Games are fun, goal-oriented, and generally social. When playing games we find ourselves inspired to win, to excel, and to enjoy ourselves along the way. All of these connections apply to how we envision work at Cheese Louise. A game is its rules and its objectives, which are interconnected, and this document describes these facets of Cheese Louise.

Why have rules to begin with?

In any good game, the objectives are made clear and rules are designed to help players achieve these objectives in a fun and fair way. Without rules, most great games would not be very enjoyable to play. Imagine playing Monopoly where you could just take money from the bank, or soccer where you could use your hands. The reason both of these games are enjoyable to play is because there is a set of rules that makes them fun and challenging. This is the way we view our company handbook; a set of rules that, when followed, make the game of Cheese Louise fun for everyone involved. All good games also have structures to ensure that their rules are followed. For simple games, rules can often be enforced by the players themselves. However, when the stakes are high and the game is more complex the rules are often enforced by a group of gamekeepers. In the Cheese Louise game, these are our General Managers, Assistant General Managers, and our shift leads. Unlike in most games, these gamekeepers are also your mentors, helping you learn the rules of the game and giving you the strategies you need to win along the way.

Okay, so what does winning look like?

To win the game we must accomplish three key objectives:

1. First, and before all else, we must take care of our team and ensure that their needs are met. These needs include a living wage, a safe and supportive work environment, and opportunities for personal growth within our organization.
2. Second, we must take care of our guests by providing remarkable hospitality and a high-quality meal at a price that will encourage them to come back.
3. Third, we must generate a healthy profit such that we can continue to invest in the company and return capital to shareholders. We define a healthy profit as 15% of revenue.

That sounds great! So how do I win?

Well, the short answer is you don't. Cheese Louise is a team activity and winning takes a team of motivated people all working together towards these common goals.

Okay, so how can I help my team win?

To help your team win it is first important that you know the rules of the game. As you go through this handbook, read closely: we do things differently here. Reflect on the rules of the Cheese Louise game laid out here. If, after reading these rules, this does not sound like a game you would like to play, that is okay. The game of Cheese Louise is not for everyone. But if this sounds like a game you would enjoy then get ready, because you have a lot more to learn. Over the next 8 shifts, you will be taught the strategies and tactics that will be necessary to contribute to your team's success.

A. Safety

1. Alcohol Service

At this Cheese Louise restaurant, we have been given the privilege by the state to sell alcohol. With this privilege comes a huge responsibility to do everything correctly and by the book. If you are working in a position at Cheese Louise that has you serving any alcohol to customers, this is serious business. You are making life-and-death decisions when you decide to sell alcohol to anybody. The rules are rather simple but the situations you may find yourself in could be complex. When in doubt, do not serve alcohol.

Rule #1 NO ALCOHOL WILL BE SERVED TO AN INTOXICATED PERSON

This is seemingly obvious, but you are required to evaluate persons who may not be falling down drunk. Those decisions are not easy. This is where professionalism and experience come in. As a guide, here are some signs of intoxication that a patron may exhibit (remember that the patron will be trying to act as sober as possible):

- Slurred speech
- Speaking loudly or inappropriately
- Bloodshot or glassy eyes
- Swaying while standing or walking
- Loss of coordination; fumbling with money or dropping change
- Smells of booze

Oftentimes, you just KNOW, even if they are not exhibiting classic symptoms. These people cannot be served. Not only can they not be served, but also, now that we have classified them as intoxicated, we have a responsibility to report the incident (see "Incident Documentation Form"). Further, if the person decides to leave and you have reason to think they might be driving, ask if you can call them a cab, offer them

a cup of water, or in some way discourage them from driving. If they are on foot, even walking may be dangerous. Do not succumb to pleading from the intoxicated person or peer pressure from others who may be listening to the exchange. You potentially have a person's life in your hands as well as the good reputation of yourself and Cheese Louise. A lot is riding on your good judgment.

Rule #2 NO ALCOHOL WILL BE SOLD TO A PERSON UNDER AGE 21

The law prohibits serving alcohol to an intoxicated person or a minor. Questionable minors must show a government document with a valid date, correct age, height, and weight, and a photograph. State and local enforcement officials send into establishments like Cheese Louise, older-looking, under-age people to make sure we comply. Do not budge, no matter what they say. When in doubt, bring in a leader. The penalties are enormous and it could result in serious consequences for both the restaurant and our team members. You are expected to card EVERYONE WHO LOOKS 40 YEARS OLD OR YOUNGER!!!

Rule #3 NO EXCEPTIONS

These rules apply to Cheese Louise team members, friends, and family members. If any team member is caught making exceptions to the above rules for friends, family, or another team member this is considered grounds for immediate termination.

2. Safety Program

Our company is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy work environment.

All team members are expected to follow these safety rules and are encouraged to make suggestions or ask questions regarding safety issues. Being aware of and reporting any potentially hazardous conditions will help avoid work-related injuries and accidents. In general, be attentive to the following:

- Immediately clean up slippery floors and keep aisles and passageways free of obstructions.

- Carefully handle broken glass, sharp objects, knives, hot liquids, and hot food.
- Make sure you receive the proper training before operating or maintaining equipment
- Lift heavy objects correctly
- Keep stored food items covered
- If you see something that makes you feel unsafe, mention it to a leader.

Worker's Compensation

You are covered immediately by Cheese Louise's worker's compensation program. This is provided, at no cost to you, for any job-related illness or injury. Coverage includes medical, surgical, and hospital treatment. Should you sustain a work-related illness or injury you must report the injury or illness to a leader as soon as it happens, regardless of how minor it may be. It is also important that you receive proper first aid and/or medical attention immediately, if necessary.

B. Accountability and Discipline

1. Card System Accountability

Intention

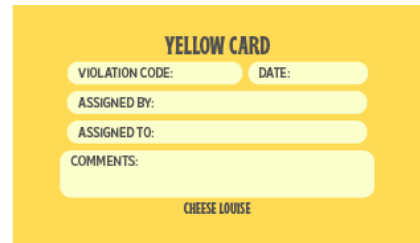
The following card system serves as a guide for holding one another accountable to our high standards of conduct, and cultivating a safe and enjoyable working environment within our Cheese Louise community. By explicitly outlining how we intend for these cards to be given or received, we hope this tool can help us all strengthen our direct communication skills, practice conflict resolution, and ultimately grow better together in both our professional and personal environments.

Card assignment

If it's deemed that you are in violation of any of the listed codes below, you will generally receive a physical "red card" or "yellow card" from someone in a leadership role, with an indication of the reason for the card assignment that references a code in the codebook below, and/or a brief description. If, for whatever reason, it is not possible for you to physically be given the red card, one will still be filled out at the restaurant with a copy left at your location for you to pick up. The person issuing the card will notify you by text or through Discord. Within one week, your GM will complete a more detailed report of the reason for the assigned card; for better mutual understanding, and for our records. If you would like to better understand why you received the card, you should contact your GM and ask to have a meeting to review the card form. *Be sure to do so if you are unsure of how to avoid repeating the offense.*

Any repeat of a warning (yellow card) will result in a red card. Three red cards of any variety within a year period will result in immediate termination. Red cards *expire* after one calendar year from the original incident. Any offense may be downgraded to a lower level only once if the GM or Shift Lead responsible believes that is appropriate. This allows us to grow from our mistakes when we are able. Any repeated offense cannot be downgraded.

Yellow cards are given out as a warning to team members who are violating handbook policies - where it is made clear that doing so will result in a yellow card (outlined below). Yellow cards can be given out by GMs, AGMs, and Shift Leads. Once you are given a yellow card for a particular violation/action - *you have been officially warned*. If you repeat the same violation/action, you will then be given a red card. Yellow Cards can be challenged by requesting a meeting with management.



A yellow card form with a yellow background. At the top, it says "YELLOW CARD". Below that are four input fields: "VIOLATION CODE:" and "DATE:" (smaller text), "ASSIGNED BY:", "ASSIGNED TO:", and "COMMENTS:". At the bottom, it says "CHEESE LOUISE".

Red cards are given out to team members who are violating any of our handbook policies where it is made clear that doing so will result in a red card (outlined below). Red Cards can be given out by GMs, AGMs, and Shift Leads. If any team member receives 3 Red cards within one year, *they will be removed from the team*. In this case, the year will be considered 365 days from when the first Red Card was received. Red Cards can be challenged. If you feel as though you have been given a red card without violating a handbook policy or being given a warning, please request a meeting with your GM, and the Regional Manager who will mediate the discussion.



A red card form with a red background. At the top, it says "RED CARD". Below that are four input fields: "VIOLATION CODE:" and "DATE:" (smaller text), "ASSIGNED BY:", "ASSIGNED TO:", and "COMMENTS:". At the bottom, it says "CHEESE LOUISE".

Immediate termination: GMs reserve the right to fire anyone when they judge necessary, *even without prior yellow or red cards*. The card structure outlined here exists to limit the risk of anyone's employment being terminated without warning, but unfortunately, this may at times be unavoidable. If you avoid the offenses listed in the following several sections, and strive to always be improving, you can expect security in your job at Cheese Louise! If you are worried about this, please speak with your GM.

YELLOW CARD VIOLATIONS		Handbook Section	Card Code
Operations Manual & Handbook	<i>Failure to adhere to recipes w/o manager approval</i>	B1	Y1B1
	<i>Improper phone use</i>	B2	Y2B2
	<i>Improper prepped food labeling</i>	B4	Y3B4
	<i>Unreliability or hygiene concern due to smoking/vaping breaks while on shift</i>	E4	Y4E4
	<i>More than 5 mins late to shift or mandatory meeting - with leader contact</i>	F3	Y5F3
	<i>Failure to ring in shift meal</i>	G1	Y6G1
RED CARD VIOLATIONS		Handbook Section	Card Code
Operations Manual & Handbook	<i>Receiving 2 yellow cards for the same violation</i>	B1	R1B1
	<i>Failure to uphold our hospitality standards</i>	B1	R2B1
	<i>Obvious lack of effort in adhering to standards set by the Operations Manual, ie. work ethic concerns</i>	B1	R3B1
	<i>Failure to maintain a clean work environment that makes safety or efficiency concerns</i>	B1	R4B1
	<i>Checking off checklist w/o completing task</i>	B3	R5B3
	<i>Smoking/vaping/cannabis/zyn or chew products use inside of Cheese Louise facility</i>	E3	R6E3
	<i>Non-compliance with company dress code without immediate corrective action</i>	F3	R7F3
	<i>Theft of any team member or company property, including failure to appropriately ring in food/drink or altering time cards w/o leader permission</i>	G1	R8G1
Time management	<i>Failure to check discord once a week minimum, and before every shift</i>	B1	R9B1
	<i>More than 5 mins late to shift or mandatory meeting - without leader contact</i>	F3	R10F3
	<i>Leaving shift w/o checking in with shift lead</i>	F3	R11F3
	<i>Leaving shift w/o confirming checklist completion</i>	F3	R12F3

Character & integrity	<i>Putting team members or guests in danger</i>	B1	R13B1
	<i>Insubordination: intentionally dismissing or undermining requests made by leadership</i>	B1	R14B1
	<i>Unintentionally sexist, racist, homophobic, xenophobic, abusive, or vulgar comments or actions</i>	D2	R15D2
	<i>Dishonesty: intentionally misleading a team member, talking behind people's back, failure to adhere to our grievance policy</i>	D4	R16D4
	<i>Disrespecting other team members, or team member/company property</i>	D4	R17D4
IMMEDIATE TERMINATION OFFENSES			Code
Unlawful	<i>All non-consensual violence: physical, verbal, psychological, and sexual (excluding consensual violence like sports, self defense training, etc.)</i>		T1
	<i>Committing any misdemeanor or felony violation outlined by regional/state laws</i>		T2
Cheese Louise Policy	<i>Receiving a 3rd red card within a 365-day period</i>		T3
	<i>Being intoxicated while clocked in</i>		T4
	<i>Making exceptions/not adhering to the standards for alcohol service (Handbook section A1)</i>		T5
	<i>Not showing up for a shift that you are scheduled for, without proper notification (Handbook section F3)</i>		T6
	<i>Any/all sexual harassment or threats of violence at work</i>		T7

Green Cards

Our green card system is a positive reinforcement mechanism to reward and encourage our team to both meet and exceed the expectations of their role. When a new team member starts at Cheese Louise they will receive green cards for working to learn and meet our standards. In practice, this could look like a shift lead giving a new team member a green card for perfectly executing our steps of service while at the register. The idea is that we want to focus just as much on calling out a job well done as we do on pointing out areas for improvement. After three months at Cheese Louise, we expect that New Team members will have learned the basics and be meeting the expectations of their position. At this point, we use green cards to encourage and reward team members for going above and beyond for their team or our guests. When considering team members for promotion or raises we will consider how many green cards they have received.

Green Card Assignment guidelines

Green cards will be given out by GMs, AGMs, and shift leads during or after shifts. A green card will be a green slip of paper and will include the name of both the person giving and receiving the card, the date, and the reason for giving the card. Green cards will be kept in the accountability binder under the green card section.

1. Dress Code

Dress and Appearance

All team members are expected to maintain a clean and professional appearance when at work. As a general rule: if you think it might not be appropriate for work, don't wear it.

Because all team members are expected to be prepared to interact with guests and prepare food during each shift we have a universal dress code for all Cheese Louise team members.

- All team members must wear a Cheese Louise hat, headband, or bandana at all times. If you show up to work without a hat you must either wear a hairnet

or purchase a new hat. If you are not wearing a hat or hair restraint while at work you will be given a **yellow card**, if it happens a second time you will be given a **red card**.

- All team members must wear a Cheese Louise shirt or sweatshirt while they are clocked in. If you show up to work without wearing a Cheese Louise shirt or sweatshirt you will be asked to buy another or given a **red card** and sent home to get one.
- All team members must wear closed-toed shoes at all times while at work. If you show up without closed-toed shoes you will be given a **red card** and be sent home to get some.

To maintain a professional appearance and safe work environment the following dress code must be followed while working at Cheese Louise. Violation of any of the following will result in a **red card**:

- No sweatpants - unprofessional
- No sagging pants - unprofessional
- No crop tops - food safety violation and hazard
- No nail polish - food safety violation
- No profanity on clothing - unprofessional
- No political clothing (clothing that is designed to promote or attack a candidate or political opinion) - while at work, you are representing the company and we do not want to be associated with any single team member's political views.
- No weapons - this includes knives, firearms, or anything that would make another team member or guest feel unsafe.

Merch

- All team members will be provided with 1 Cheese Louise hat
- All team members will be provided with 1 shirt for each day they expect to work each week. If you plan to work 2 days per week we will provide you with 2 shirts.
- Additional merch can be purchased at 50% of the price.
- Taking additional merchandise without paying for it will be considered theft and result in termination.

Good personal hygiene is expected of all team members. Team members who are visibly unhygienic and inappropriately dressed will not be allowed to work.

2. Cell Phone Policy

- Phone screens are gross - If you need to use your phone during a shift you must wash your hands before returning to work. Think of it like a trip to the bathroom. If you are seen using your phone and then do not wash your hands before returning to work you will be given a **red card**.
- Never in front of guests- If you do need to use your phone make sure you do it out of sight of our customers. If you are caught using your phone in front of guests you will be given a **yellow card**. If it happens again you will be given a **red card**.
- Phone calls - If you need to make a phone call please do so out of earshot of customers and only when there is downtime. If you get a phone call we trust you to use your judgment to determine if it is a good time to answer the call.
- Texting- if you need to send a quick text message that is okay, just make sure to do it where guests will not see you. Just make sure you wash your hands after.
- Changing music- If you are playing music it is okay for you to be on your phone to change songs. Again, make sure to wash your hands.
- If phone use becomes a problem - If being on your phone is becoming an issue and is preventing you from upholding your responsibilities, you will be given a **yellow card**. If the issue persists after this you will be given a **red card**.

3. Checklists

To ensure that our restaurants operate at our standards we use several checklists throughout the day. These checklists are intended to guide the work of our team and

ensure that no key tasks are missed during any part of the day. They also act as an accountability tool to ensure that our team is operating at our standards. Checklists include:

- Opening checklists for all stations
- Shift change checklists for all stations
- Closing checklists for all stations
- Checklists for loading, departing, and unloading the food truck.

All checklists are digital and are to be completed using the 7 Tasks app on the restaurant iPads or the 7 Shifts app on your phone. Each week the GM reviews all checklists to ensure that they were completed. When a task is completed the GM will see who checked it off. Do not check off tasks if they have not been completed.

- Failure to complete a checklist will result in a **yellow card** for the shift lead during the shift the first time it happens, and a **red card** every time after that.
- Checking off a task without completing that task will result in an immediate **red card** for the person who checked off the task.

4. Recipes & Prep Procedures

To ensure operational consistency in all of our operations it is important that when a guest orders an item at any Cheese Louise and then orders it again the next time they visit it will look and taste the same. This starts with our step-by-step prep recipes which have been designed for easy comprehension and execution.

- All recipes must be followed at all times. Failure to follow any of our recipes will result in a **yellow card**, and if it happens again you will be given a **red card**.
- If we are out of an ingredient for a recipe, any substitution must be approved by your GM. Failure to get approval for a substitution will result in a **yellow card**, and if it happens again it will result in a **red card**.
- All prepped food must be signed off by the shift lead on duty. Failure to do so will result in a **yellow card**. If it happens again you will receive a **red card**.

C. Compensation, Benefits, and Financial Policies

1. Open Book Policy with Wages and Company Finances

At Cheese Louise, we operate with an open-book policy when it comes to our finances. We believe it is important that all members of our company are allowed to know how the company operates financially, how every member of the company is compensated, and how the money earned by the company is used. Unfair compensation and exploitation often hide in the dark so we feel it is important to shine a light on the financial operations to avoid these issues and build the trust of our team members. This means that if you would like to know how much anyone in

the company is being paid you will be given this information within a reasonable amount of time, or if you would like to review our financial statements we will make time to do this with you. It also means that by joining the company you are agreeing to have your compensation be shared with anyone else working for Cheese Louise should they ask to see it. This includes paychecks, wages, salaries, and bonuses of any kind.

2. Compensation/Pay Periods

Team members are paid on an hourly basis according to their position. Tips are pooled weekly and distributed based on hours worked between all hourly team members. For example, if the total amount of tips earned throughout the week is \$1000 and the total number of hours worked is 100 hours, then the tip rate would be \$10 an hour. If you worked 25 hours you would receive \$250 in tips in addition to your base pay. Team Members are paid once a week by direct deposit.

To ensure that all team members are making a fair living wage we have a guaranteed minimum pay rate at each of our locations. If your base rate plus tips do not add up to the minimum then we will increase your base rate for that week such that you are making the minimum guarantee. For example, if your location has a guaranteed minimum of \$20 an hour and your base rate is \$10 an hour and the tip rate for the week is only \$8 an hour, then we will raise your base rate to \$12 an hour for the week so that you are paid at the minimum rate of \$20 an hour.

Payroll is run through the Toast payroll system on Monday of each week, so any concerns surrounding hours worked must be communicated before Monday. Direct deposits will be paid by the Friday of that week. If you have concerns about your paystub you must communicate these concerns with your GM as soon as possible so that they can resolve them quickly.

Food Truck Tips

All tips generated from our food trucks will be added to the weekly tip pool from the location from which the truck started the day. This includes credit cards, cash, and tips included in checks.

Mileage Reimbursement

If you are asked to drive more than 20 miles for a food truck event, a shift at another restaurant or other Cheese Louise-related work you will be reimbursed at a rate of \$.65 per mile driven. This reimbursement will cover your gas and the wear and tear on your vehicle. You will be paid for this mileage with a check. It will be your responsibility to self-report any miles driven for Cheese Louise to your GM.

Overtime

Our policy is to avoid scheduling overtime hours. If circumstances requiring overtime arise, you will receive overtime compensation according to federal and state laws.

**3. Cheese Louise insurance –
Health, vision, and dental coverage.**

We are excited to offer employee benefits to all full-time team members at Cheese Louise. We offer two tiers of benefits based on your position which is detailed below.

<p>Tier 1 : 90% Covered by Cheese Louise</p> <p>All General Managers, Owners, and full-time salaried corporate team members.</p>
<p>Tier 2 : 50% Covered by Cheese Louise</p> <p>All full-time staff not included in tier 1</p>

Joining the plan:

To be eligible for the employee benefits program you must work a minimum of 30 hours per week. All newly hired employees meeting that criteria are subject to a 90-day waiting period. Upon satisfaction of the waiting period you will have the opportunity to join our employee benefits program through a special enrollment period. At that time you will have 30 days to make your plan election. After 30 days the next opportunity to join will be during our annual open enrollment period in May. Enrollment requests outside of the initial date of eligibility may be subject to the occurrence of a qualifying event and/or evidence of insurability, as applicable. Qualifying events include but are not limited to: losing health coverage, moving, getting married, having a baby, or adopting a child. Please consult the GM should you have any questions.

Staying in the plan:

To maintain your benefits you must continue to work an average of 30 hours a week. This will be reviewed every 6 months.

How to Make Changes – Qualifying Events

Unless you experience a life-changing “Qualifying Event,” you cannot make changes to your benefits until the next Open Enrollment Period. Qualifying Events may include things like: (1) marriage, divorce, or legal separation; (2) birth or adoption of a child; (3) death of spouse, child, or other qualified dependent; (4) residence change in certain instances; (5) change in a child’s dependent status; (6) change in employment status or a change in coverage under another employer-sponsored plan; (7) a COBRA event; (8) Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave; or (9) entitlement to Medicare or Medicaid.

If you have a Qualifying Event, in most cases changes must be made within 30 days of the event, or you will need to wait until the next Open Enrollment.

Paying your part of the premium:

Depending on your position at Cheese Louise you will be responsible for either 10% or 50% of the insurance premium. To cover this cost we either deduct the annual

premium from your annual salary or if you are an hourly employee we will deduct 1/52 of your annual premium from each paycheck.

If you are interested in learning more about how our benefits program works please let your General Manager know and they will give you a packet with all of the information.

4. Parental Leave Policy

At Cheese Louise, we are committed to supporting our team members during the exciting and transformative period of parenthood. Our parental leave policy reflects our dedication to creating a supportive and inclusive work environment for all team members.

In creating this policy we hope to avoid unintentionally enforcing traditional hierarchies and roles within a family; these roles are fitting for some people and not for others, and we would like to give everyone the space to make their own decisions. As such we want to provide equal support for all types of parents. If you believe this policy is not supporting you in this way, please reach out to your GM to begin a conversation about how we might be able to accommodate your unique needs.

Parental Leave Entitlement:

Eligibility: All hourly team members who have worked for at least 1600 hours are eligible for parental leave. All salaried team members are eligible after 1 year of employment at Cheese Louise.

Duration: The team member is entitled to 12 weeks of paid parental leave. Additionally, employees may choose to take 4 additional weeks of unpaid leave, extending their time away from work.

Payment During Parental Leave:

Duration: 12 weeks

Hourly worker weekly pay: (Average weekly hours worked*) x (shift lead min. hourly)

12 weeks of parental leave will be fully paid at the team member's regular salary without any performance bonuses or incentive pay. All salaried team members will be paid their full salary not including any bonuses or incentive pay for the full 12 weeks. *For hourly team members, pay will be calculated based on the average number of hours worked during the previous year, excluding from the calculation the two months before going on parental leave. Hourly team members will be paid the guaranteed minimum hourly rate for their position at their location. For example, if a shift lead has been working at a location with a shift lead minimum of \$22 an hour, and they worked an average of 32 hours per week they could expect to be paid \$704 a week during their parental leave.

Unpaid Leave:

During the additional 4 weeks of unpaid leave, team members may choose to use accrued vacation days or take the leave without pay.

Flexible Work Arrangements:

Cheese Louise understands that returning to work after parental leave can be challenging. We offer flexible work arrangements, such as reduced hours, and part-time schedules, to help ease the transition back to the workplace. These arrangements will be discussed and agreed upon between the team members and their manager.

Health Benefits During Parental Leave:

Cheese Louise will continue to provide health insurance coverage for employees on parental leave, ensuring that essential health benefits are maintained.

Return-to-Work Transition:

Cheese Louise is committed to a smooth return-to-work transition. Employees returning from parental leave will have the opportunity to participate in a phased return, allowing for a gradual adjustment to their regular work schedule. All team

members will be guaranteed a position equal to the position they left for up to 16 weeks.

Communication and Confidentiality:

Open communication is encouraged throughout the parental leave process. Team members are welcome to discuss their plans with their managers, and all information shared will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

D. Interpersonal Relationships

1. Fraternalization Policy

Cheese Louise desires to avoid misunderstandings, actual or potential conflicts of interest, complaints of favoritism, possible claims of sexual harassment, and team member morale and dissension problems that can potentially result from romantic relationships involving managerial and supervisory employees in the Company as well as other team members in the Company.

Accordingly, members of our leadership teams are strongly discouraged from fraternizing or becoming romantically involved with one another or with any other employees of the Company. Additionally, all team members, both managerial and non-managerial, are reminded that their personal relationships within the Company have the potential to create conflicts of interest, cause disruption, create a negative

or unprofessional work environment, or present concerns regarding supervision, safety, security, or morale. In any case, where a team member's personal relationship within the Company creates a conflict of interest, causes disruption, creates a negative or unprofessional work environment, or presents concerns regarding supervision, safety, security, or morale, then Cheese Louise, in its sole discretion, may take whatever action it deems appropriate according to the circumstances, up to and including suspension, transfer, or discharge.

It is not the Company's intention to dictate choices made in your personal life with this Policy. However, leaders and team members must understand that Courts and other workers are holding Companies to higher standards to ensure a fair, conflict-free workplace. As Companies shoulder these greater burdens, more regulations and policies become necessary.

2. Sexual Harassment

Cheese Louise is committed to providing a work environment that is free from discrimination. In keeping with this commitment, we maintain a strict policy prohibiting unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment or any harassment in any form including verbal, physical, or visual harassment. We have a zero-tolerance policy for any team member who engages in retaliatory actions as a result of any reported misconduct.

Any employee who believes they have been harassed by a coworker, supervisor, or outside vendor should promptly report the incident and the names of individuals involved to the general manager or any of the owners. All claims will be investigated confidentially and appropriate action will be taken.

3. Horizontal Violence

The first thing we have to do is understand what it is and what it does. Please read:

“Horizontal Violence is harmful behavior, via attitudes, actions, words, and other behaviors, that is directed towards us by another colleague. Horizontal violence controls, humiliates, denigrates, or injures the dignity of another. Horizontal violence indicates a lack of mutual respect and value for the worth of the individual and denies another’s fundamental human rights.” Horizontal violence can take very specific forms:

- 1. Physical contact**
- 2. Verbal abuse**
- 3. Implied threats**
- 4. Jokes, offensive language, gossip, slander, offensive songs**
- 5. Posters, photocopied cartoons, graffiti, obscene gestures, flags, and emblems.**
- 6. Isolation, non-cooperation or exclusion from social activities**
- 7. Coercion for sexual favors**
- 8. Intrusion by pestering, spying, and stalking**
- 9. Repeated requests giving impossible deadlines or impossible tasks.**
- 10. Repeated unreasonable assignments to duties, which are unfavorable to one individual.**
- 11. Vandalism of personal property (destroying clothing, scratching paintwork on cars).**

4. Grievance Policy

In any workplace, particularly a social workplace like Cheese Louise, there will inevitably be friction between team members from time to time. This is natural and will often dissipate on its own or be worked out between team members. If however

an interpersonal issue does not resolve itself and is negatively impacting your experience at work, we have a process for you to follow.

Step one:

Reach out to the general manager of the restaurant and set up a time to talk about it one-on-one. Once you do this it will be the manager's responsibility to find a time that works for both of you within 7 days. If you do not feel comfortable bringing the issue up with them then reach out to your regional manager

Step two:

Meet with your general manager or regional manager and discuss the issue. From here the issue will be handled in one of two ways.

1. Your GM or Regional Manager will take responsibility for the grievance and you will agree on a solution.
2. Your GM or Regional Manager will set up a time to meet with any other parties involved so that you can have a productive dialogue to resolve your grievance.

Step three:

Your GM or Regional Manager will write up a grievance report documenting the issue and the agreed-upon solution and all involved parties will sign it.

If a grievance is not brought up in this way it will be considered a nonissue and will not be given any management attention. Gossiping and talking behind other people's backs will not be tolerated. As a general principle to live by while working at Cheese Louise. *If you wouldn't say something about someone if they were in the room, don't say when they are not.*

Failure to adhere to this grievance policy that results in you talking negatively behind someone's back will result in a **red card**.

E. Substance Usage

1. Drinking On The Job

To maintain a professional and safe work environment, we ask that while you are clocked in at any Cheese Louise location or food truck event you do not consume any alcoholic beverages. This includes events at breweries, concerts, festivals, and private venues. If you would like to have a drink after your shift it is okay as long as you are clocked out. When running the food trucks your shift is not complete until the truck is unloaded and parked in its designated spot and you are clocked out. Violation of any aspect of this policy will result in a **red card**.

2. Smoking or consuming cannabis products on the job

To maintain a professional and safe work environment, we ask that while you are clocked in at any Cheese Louise location or food truck event you do not smoke or consume any cannabis products. This includes events, concerts, festivals, and private venues. When running the food trucks your shift is not complete until the truck is unloaded and parked in its designated spot and you are clocked out. Cannabis use while at work will result in a **red card**.

3. Smoking tobacco

We are committed to a philosophy of good health and a clean work environment. In keeping with this mission, the entire restaurant and deck/patio as well as our food truck will be designated as smoke-free environments. Many of our customers are non-smokers and in general, smoking is perceived as harmful and dirty. Therefore it is important to remove all traces of your smoking while working in the restaurant. If you must smoke to maintain your sanity, do so outside and out of view of our customers. Under no circumstances are you to smoke where the smell can float to dining customers. After smoking, be sure to wash your hands thoroughly and use mouthwash if you are in direct contact with the customer. If humanly possible, we would ask you to refrain from smoking during your shift. Violation of this policy will result in a **red card**.

4. Vaping at work

To maintain a professional and safe work environment we do not allow vaping inside any Cheese Louise restaurant, food truck, or company facility, this rule applies during operating hours, at meetings or any other time you are inside a Cheese Louise facility. If you vape please leave the building at an appropriate time to do so.

- If you are caught using a vape inside a Cheese Louise facility you will be given a **red card**.

- If you are becoming unreliable or taking vaping breaks at inappropriate times you will be given a **yellow card**.

F. Scheduling, Punctuality, and Breaks

1. Scheduling

To ensure that you are given time to plan your life, we will always make sure to have the schedule posted at least 2 weeks out and aim to have it posted 4 weeks out at all times. Because of this, we enforce a strict scheduling policy.

2. Time off

Requesting time off

- All time off requests must be submitted through the 7 shifts scheduling app.

- Time off requests of 3 days or less will not be granted if they are not made at least 2 weeks in advance.
- Time off requests longer than 3 days will not be granted if they are not made at least 4 weeks in advance.
- Requesting time off is just that, a request and not a right. Until it has been approved do not commit to your plans.
- All time off requests will be approved or denied within 1 week by your GM or AGM

3. Shift coverage

Getting a shift covered:

If you are requesting shift coverage with less than 2 weeks' notice this is your responsibility. **Do not ask your GM to help you, it is not their responsibility.** Here are the steps we recommend taking to get your shift covered:

- Step 1: Put your shift up for grabs on 7 shifts
- Step 2: Send a message in Discord
- Step 3: Text people on the team individually
- Step 4: Call people on the team
- If nobody can cover your shift it is your responsibility to be there. **Failure to show up to a scheduled shift will result in immediate termination.**

Getting your shift covered when you are sick:

If you are sick it is still your responsibility to find coverage for your shift, but we do want you to involve your GM if necessary. A good rule of thumb here is under-promise and over-deliver. If you are feeling sick and think you may not be able to work the next day, start communicating the day before.

- First, text/call your teammates and see if they can cover your shift as soon as you start feeling sick.

- **Call your GM.** A text is never an acceptable way to call out of a shift when you are sick. If they do not pick up, leave a message on their voicemail.
- If you are sick and do not show up to your shift and have not called your GM you will be given a **red card**, if it happens again your employment will be terminated.
- If calling out sick becomes a trend: We will all get sick from time to time. The average person will call out of work sick 4-6 days a year. If you are calling out of work frequently due to being sick it will make it difficult for your GM to rely on you to show up for your scheduled shifts and they will need to fill your shifts with team members that can. Before they do this they will have a conversation with you to check in and communicate that you are becoming a liability on the schedule, and work to find a mutually agreeable solution.

Getting a shift covered in the event of an emergency:

We understand that emergencies happen and if they do we want to ensure that you can attend to them as needed. In the event of an emergency, we ask that you **call your GM** and explain the situation as soon as possible. Because the nature of emergencies varies it is difficult to write specific policies that will cover the full scope of potential emergencies. Therefore emergency call-outs will be evaluated on an individual basis with the following criteria:

- Was this something that happened unexpectedly?
- Is it important that action is taken immediately?
- Did it involve an immediate family member, pet, or partner?

Sick Policy

If you are not going to be able to come in due to an illness it's your responsibility to alert your GM as soon as possible, preferably at least **2 hours** before the start of your scheduled shift, so that they can make efforts to get your shift covered. Remember, under-promise over-deliver. The more notice you give your GM, the better. **Failure to alert your general manager with at least 1-hour notice will result in a red card.**

Here are a few more guidelines on our sick policy:

- If you are feeling sick and exhibiting signs of any sickness (cold, flu, COVID, etc), please do not come to work until you are no longer experiencing these symptoms.
- If you have had a fever over 100.4°F, do not come to work until your fever drops below 100.4°F.
- If you have vomited or had diarrhea, do not come to work until you have not experienced these symptoms for 24 hours.
- Your GM may ask you to provide a doctor's note to excuse your absence if you are frequently calling out due to sickness*. Failure to provide a doctor's note when asked may result in a **red card**.

*Chronic health conditions do not apply here. If you have a chronic health condition, please let your leadership team know so that we can support you and do our best to accommodate your needs.

Being On Time

What does it say to people when you are late? At Cheese Louise, we take being on time very seriously. When you are late, it communicates that you do not respect your coworkers, their time (and your own), or the team you are a part of. Make it a priority to be on time.

On our team, you are expected to arrive at work 5 minutes before your scheduled shift, in uniform and ready to jump in by your scheduled start time. It's encouraged to arrive 15 minutes before your shift starts in order to get settled in and prepare to get to work.

- If you are more than 5 minutes late and call the restaurant you will be given a **yellow card** by the shift lead on duty.
- If you are more than 5 minutes late to a shift and do not call the restaurant to let your team know you will be given a **red card** by the shift lead on duty.
- If you are late to a meeting you will be asked to go home and be given a **red card** by the GM.

Breaks

Because of the nature of our work scheduling breaks is not possible. That being said, we do want to ensure that during shifts longer than 6 hours all team members have the opportunity to take a break. For your break, you will have two options. Regardless of the type of break you would like to take you must first ask the shift lead or manager to make sure it is a good time. In general, we will not allow breaks between 11 am-2 pm or 6 pm-8 pm as these are generally when the restaurant will be the busiest. Breaks cannot be taken during the last hour of your shift. The two options for a break are as follows:

1. An unpaid break for half an hour. If you decide to take an unpaid break you can leave the restaurant for up to half an hour. Please clock out before leaving and back in when you return. Always check in with your shift lead and make sure they know you will be taking an off-the-clock break.
2. A paid break for up to 15 minutes. If you do not have time or do not want to take an unpaid break you are welcome to take up to 15 minutes to eat, grab a drink, and be on your phone. Because you are still on the clock during this time we may ask you to hop in and help out if we are unexpectedly busy. As with all breaks, please make sure you check in with your shift lead before sitting down to take a break.
3. Smoke breaks. We do not encourage smoking and ask that all team members limit their smoking to their single break period. If you need more smoke breaks throughout your shift then Cheese Louise will not be a good fit for you. If you are regularly taking multiple smoke breaks throughout your shift you will be given a **yellow card** and then if it happens again a **red card**.

Clocking in

- Do not clock in until you are scheduled to work.
- If you forget to clock in it will be your responsibility to inform your GM before the end of the week and to do so via a direct message on Discord.

Clocking out

- Confirm the completion of all relevant end-of-shift checklists before clocking out.
- Check in with your shift lead before clocking out.

G. Team Member Perks

1. Shift Meals

- All team members are entitled to 1 free meal of \$20 or less during each shift. Any team member working longer than 8 hours is entitled to a second meal of \$20 or less. All shift meals must be rung in and comped using the Shift Meal button through the POS system.
- Failure to ring in a shift meal will result in a **yellow card**, and if it happens again you will be given a **red card**.
- Ringing in a shift meal when you are not working will be considered theft and will result in a **red card**.

- Ringing in a shift meal for a team member who is not working will be considered theft and **both parties involved will be terminated.**

2. Shift Drinks

- All team members are entitled to 1 free alcoholic shift drink (21+) of \$15 or less during each shift. (Max 1 per day) All shift drinks must be consumed once clocked out and in the restaurant. They must also be rung in and comped using the Shift Drink discount button through the POS system.
- Failure to ring in a shift drink will result in a **yellow card**, and if it happens again you will be given a **red card**.
- Ringing in a shift drink when you are not working will be considered theft and will result in a **red card**.
- Ringing in a shift drink for a team member or other person who is not working for us will be considered theft and **both parties involved will be terminated.**

3. Discounted Meals

- If you come to the restaurant on a day off you will receive 50% off your food purchases and 50% off all drinks. This does not apply to friends or family that you bring with you.
- If you would like to offer a discount to a friend or family member who is visiting you at work, ask a leader first. Most likely they will approve it but always ask.

4. Sick Leave

For every 40 hours you work at Cheese Louise, you accrue 1 hour of sick leave. After 120 days of working for Cheese Louise, you can use your accrued sick leave hours to cover any missed shifts. If you would like to use sick leave hours please let your GM

know and they will check to see how many sick leave hours you have accrued. You will be paid the living wage minimum for all sick leave hours. Accrued sick leave hours will carry over from year to year. Larry the Lobster. Please ask your GM if you would ever like to know how many sick leave hours you have accrued.

5. We will pay you \$500 to quit

Yes, you read that right. As we said earlier in the handbook, we do not want to have anyone working on our team who does not want to be here. We would like to put our money where our mouth is and encourage anyone who has worked for the company for at least 6 months and does not enjoy working here to leave. We have all read the studies that say that a majority of people dislike their jobs and yet continue to work them for years. We do not want this to be the case for anyone working at Cheese Louise, so we will give you \$500 to ease the financial burden while you find another job that is a better fit for you. This policy is also meant to show our appreciation for team members who have worked for the company for an extended period of time and are moving on to a new chapter of life, whether that is in a new field or a new city. This bonus is a privilege and not an entitlement, please review the following terms and conditions to ensure eligibility before requesting.

***This bonus will not be paid if your employment is terminated.**

***To receive this bonus a team member must provide at least two weeks' notice and work the remainder of their shifts during the notice period. It is expected that the team member will fulfill their role fully during this time and leave with grace. If during this time a team member receives a red card or is terminated for cause they will not receive the bonus.**

***Once this bonus is paid you will not be considered for future employment at Cheese Louise.**

6. Emergency Fund

Shit happens. Cars break, pipes burst, and unexpected expenses arise. Having been there ourselves, we know this can be very stressful. As a company, we will always have an emergency fund on hand and would like to extend this benefit to anyone working for us. For this reason, we offer interest-free emergency loans up to \$1000 to all team members who have been with the company for more than 1 month. To request a loan, talk with a location leader or one of the owners. These loans will be given immediately and repaid in at least 6 months.

H. Legal Requirements

1. Equal Opportunity Commitment

Each applicant and team member is recruited, employed, evaluated, and considered for promotion without any regard to any characteristic such as race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, or handicap. We want employees in positions that best suit their needs and abilities. Whenever possible, our policy is to promote from within when filling available positions.

2. Tip Credit

Each state establishes the tip credit to allow for a reduction in the hourly rate that the employer pays the employees who work in tipped positions. While these reductions vary from state to state, Cheese Louise does use these credits when calculating your hourly wage. According to the rules of tip credit usage, you will always be paid at or above the established minimum wage through a combination of your hourly wages and tips received. As required by law, this serves as a notification that the tip credit is being applied to your hourly wage.

3. Immigration Laws

These laws require that all individuals pass an employment verification procedure before being permitted to work.

4. Employment "At Will"

You have entered into employment with Cheese Louise voluntarily and you are free to resign at any time you wish. Similarly, the owners are free to terminate an employment relationship at any time, when it is believed to be in the restaurant's best interest to do so. We have hired you with the expectation that our relationship will be mutually beneficial. It should be recognized that neither you nor we have entered into any contract of employment, expressed or implied. Our relationship is, and always will be, one of voluntary employment "at will."

Handbook Agreement

I acknowledge the receipt of my copy of the Cheese Louise Handbook. I understand that it provides guidelines and information about the company's policies, procedures, benefits, and rules of conduct. I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to read, understand, and comply with the policies and standards that have been established. I further understand that Cheese Louise reserves the right to modify, supplement, rescind, or revise any provision, benefit, or policy from time to time, with or without notice, as it deems fit.

I acknowledge that both Cheese Louise and I have the right to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause or advance notice, and that this "employment at will" relationship will remain in effect throughout my employment with the company unless it is specifically modified by a written agreement signed by me and the company. I further acknowledge that this "employment at will" relationship may not be modified by any oral or implied

agreement.

Name

Date

Signature

Spongebob Character Name
