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DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

1. Introduction

This disciplinary procedure is designed to help and encourage employees and volunteers to achieve and maintain acceptable standards of conduct and job performance at all times, including the need to:

- Fulfil the duties specified in their contract of employment
- Maintain high standards of integrity and conduct to protect the council's image and reputation with the public

1.1 This policy indicates the disciplinary procedure that will normally be followed in the event of misconduct. The following list provides examples of conduct that will normally be regarded as misconduct leading to disciplinary proceedings. The list is not exhaustive. These are examples only:

- Unsatisfactory time keeping
- Absenteeism, including any absence from work during a working day without prior authorisation or instruction
- Failure to comply with rules and regulations applicable to job requirements
- Failure by an employee/volunteer to perform the duties and responsibilities of his or her post to the standard expected by the council
- Insubordination

1.2 For first instances of minor misconduct the Chairman/the Clerk may speak to the employee or volunteer informally before implementing a formal disciplinary procedure. However, there is no obligation for the Chairman/Clerk to do this.

2. Scope

The procedure applies to all employees and volunteers representing Hartshill Parish Council

3. Verbal Warnings

Verbal Warnings are issued for most first instances of general misconduct depending on the seriousness of the offence. If the employee or volunteer is given a Verbal Warning he or she will be warned of the likely consequences of any further disciplinary offences or a failure to improve his or her conduct to the satisfaction of the Council. A note confirming the Verbal Warning will be placed on the employee/volunteers personal file and a copy will be provided. A Verbal Warning will normally remain in force for six months.

The Verbal Warning stage of the procedure may be omitted if the offence is of a sufficiently serious nature.

4. First Written Warning

In the case of a serious offence or repetition of an earlier minor offence the employee/volunteer will normally be given a First Written Warning. A First Written Warning will be issued by the Chairman/the clerk and will set out:

- The nature of the offence and the improvement required (if appropriate) and over what period;
- The likely consequences of any further offence or failure by the employee/volunteer to improve his/her conduct to an acceptable standard;
- That further offences will result in more serious disciplinary action; and
- The employee/volunteers right of appeal.

A first Written Warning will normally remain in force for six months.

The First Written Warning stage of the procedure may be omitted if the offence is of a sufficiently serious nature.

5. Final Written Warning

If further misconduct occurs within the time period specified in a First Written Warning, or if the misconduct is sufficiently serious the employee/volunteer will be given a Final Written Warning. A Final Written Warning will be issued by the Chairman/the Clerk and will set out:

- The nature of the offence and the improvement required (if appropriate) and over what period;
- The likely consequences of any further offence or failure by the employee/volunteer to improve his/her conduct to an acceptable standard;
- That further offences will result in more serious disciplinary action up to and including dismissal; and
- The employee/volunteer's right of appeal.

Final Written Warnings may also be issued in circumstances where the misconduct does not amount to gross misconduct, but is sufficiently serious enough to warrant only one written warning.

A Final Written Warning will normally remain in force for 12 months

6. Standard Council Disciplinary Procedure

6.1 In the case of further misconduct within the time period specified in any Final Written Warning or if the misconduct is sufficiently serious and the council deems it to be appropriate to contemplate the dismissal, demotion or suspension of the employee/volunteer the following formal disciplinary procedure will be followed.

6.2 The council will investigate the alleged misconduct and will establish the facts surrounding the complaint as necessary, taking into account the statements of any available witnesses.

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6.3 The council will set out in writing the alleged conduct or other circumstances which lead the council to contemplate dismissing the employee/volunteer or taking disciplinary action against the employee/volunteer and the basis for the allegation and will send the employee/volunteer a copy of the statement inviting the employee/volunteer to attend a disciplinary meeting to discuss the matter. The employee /volunteer will be provided with a reasonable opportunity to consider his or her response to the information provided in the statement before attending the meeting. The employee/volunteer must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.

6.4 Disciplinary meetings will normally be convened within five working days of the Council sending the employee/volunteer the written statement referred to in 6.3 above. The employee /volunteer may be accompanied to any disciplinary meeting by a fellow employee, volunteer or by a representative of a trade union. The council will be represented by the Chairman/the Clerk.

6.5 If the time or date proposed for the meeting is inconvenient (either for the employee/volunteer, or for the employee/volunteers companion should he or she wish to be accompanied to the meeting pursuant to 6.4 above) the employee/volunteer may ask to postpone the meeting by up to five working days.

6.6 The meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated, or to afford the Chairman/the Clerk time to consider their decision.

6.7 After the meeting the council will inform the employee/volunteer of their decision and any applicable sanction within five working days. The meeting may be reconvened for this purpose. The decision will be confirmed to the employee/volunteer in writing.

6.8 If the employee/volunteer wishes to appeal against the decision he or she must notify the Council in writing within five working days of receiving written notice of the decision.

6.9 If the employee/volunteer notifies the Council that he or she wishes to appeal, the employee/volunteer will be invited to attend a disciplinary appeal meeting before the full Council. The employee/volunteer must take all reasonable steps to attend that disciplinary appeal meeting. The employee/volunteer has the right to be accompanied to a disciplinary meeting by a fellow employee, volunteer or by a representative of a trade union.

6.10 A disciplinary appeal meeting will normally be convened within seven working days of the Council receiving notification that the employee /volunteer wishes to appeal pursuant to 6.8 above. If the meeting date is inconvenient for the employee/volunteer or the employee/volunteers companion he or she may ask to postpone the meeting by up to five working days.

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- Any new evidence that the employee/volunteer wishes to put forward will be considered, as will any new evidence from the Council. The original disciplinary penalty will be reviewed.
- The disciplinary appeal sanction originally imposed cannot be increased upon appeal.
- The disciplinary appeal meeting will not necessarily take place before any disciplinary sanction imposed by the Council takes effect. If the employee/volunteer appeal is against dismissal and the appeal is successful the employee/volunteer will be reinstated and continuity of employment will be preserved.
- The meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated, or to afford the full Council time to consider its decision.

6.11 After the disciplinary appeal meeting the Council will inform the employee/volunteer of its final decision within five working days. The meeting may be reconvened for this purpose. The decision will be confirmed to the employee/volunteer in writing.

7. Council Dismissal Procedure for use in Gross Misconduct

7.1 The following list provides examples of conduct that will normally be regarded by the council as Gross Misconduct. This list is not exhaustive. These are examples only:

- Refusal or repeated failure by an employee/volunteer to carry out his or her duties
- Falsification of documents or information (including expense claims)
- Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information
- Assaulting a fellow employee/volunteer or any other person whilst acting or purporting to act on behalf of the Council
- *Insulting, indecent or offensive behaviour towards a fellow employee/volunteer or any other person whilst acting or purporting to act on behalf of the Council
- Serious or repeated harassment (including sexual and racial harassment)
- Incapacity at work due to the influence of alcohol, un-prescribed drugs or any other substance
- Wilful damage to council property
- Theft, unauthorised use or possession of council property or theft of the property of a fellow employee/volunteer
- Conduct bringing the Council into disrepute
- Any other conduct that from time to time is defined by the Council as amounting to gross misconduct

7.2 If any employee/volunteer is accused of any Gross Misconduct he or she may be suspended from work on full pay (if in paid employment) pending the outcome of an investigation into the alleged offence/s. Such a period of suspension will not normally exceed 10 working days unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Disciplinary Procedure – 2019/2010 Adopted Ref:

7.3 The Council will investigate the matter and will establish the facts surrounding the complaint as necessary, taking into account the statements of any available witnesses. As part of that investigation the employee/volunteer will be interviewed.

7.4 If the Council believes the employee/volunteer is guilty of gross misconduct his or her employment or volunteering opportunity will be terminated summarily without notice or pay (if applicable) in lieu of notice.

7.5 The Council will send the employee/volunteer a statement, setting out the allegations of misconduct that led to the employee/volunteer's dismissal and the Council's basis for thinking that the employee/volunteer is guilty of that misconduct. The date on which the employment /volunteering opportunity terminated will be confirmed to the employee/volunteer and the employee/volunteer may be reminded of any continuing obligations he or she may have following the termination of employment/volunteering opportunity. This statement will also explain the employee/volunteer's right to appeal against the council's decision.

7.6 If the employee/volunteer wishes to appeal against the Council's decision he or she must notify the Council in writing within five working days of receiving notice of the Council's decision pursuant to 7.5 above.

7.7 If the employee/volunteer appeals the Council will invite the employee/volunteer to attend a disciplinary appeal meeting before the full Council. The Employee/volunteer must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting. The employee/volunteer has the right to be accompanied to a disciplinary appeal meeting by a fellow employee/volunteer or by a trade union representative.

7.8 Any disciplinary appeal meeting will normally be convened within seven working days of the Council receiving notice from the employee/volunteer that he or she wishes to appeal pursuant to 7.6 above. If the date of the meeting is inconvenient for the employee/volunteer or his or her companion the employee/volunteer may ask to postpone the meeting by up to five working days.

- Any new evidence that the employee/volunteer wishes to put forward will be considered, as will any new evidence from the Council. The original disciplinary penalty will be reviewed.
- The disciplinary sanction originally imposed cannot be increased upon appeal.
- The disciplinary appeal meeting will not necessarily take place before any disciplinary sanction imposed by the Council takes effect.
If the employee/volunteer's appeal is against dismissal and the appeal is successful the employee/volunteer will be reinstated and continuity of employment/volunteering opportunity will be preserved.
- The meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated, or to afford the full Council time to consider its decision.

Disciplinary Procedure – 2019/2010 Adopted Ref:

7.9 After the disciplinary appeal meeting the employee/volunteer will be informed of the Council's final decision within five working days. The meeting may be reconvened for this purpose. The Council's decision will be confirmed to the employee/volunteer in writing.

8. General Procedural Information

8.1 Verbal Warnings and Written Warnings will normally be issued by the Chairman/Clerk. Disciplinary proceedings raised under the standard Council disciplinary procedure will also normally be investigated and any meetings to discuss the disciplinary proceedings conducted by the Chairman/the Clerk.

8.2 Where disciplinary proceedings are instigated against the Clerk, matters are dealt with by the full Council.

Verbal Warnings and Written Warnings will be given by the Chairman. Any investigations and any meetings will be carried out by the full Council.

9. History

Reviewed 2012, 2014, 2017