



# HEADCORN PARISH COUNCIL



## Disciplinary Procedures

### Introduction

It is necessary to have a minimum number of rules in the interests of the whole organisation.

The rules set standards of performance and behaviour whilst the procedures are designed to help promote fairness and order in the treatment of individuals. It is our Headcorn Parish Councils aim that the rules and procedures should emphasise and encourage improvement in the conduct of individuals, where they are failing to meet the required standards, and not be seen merely as a means of punishment. We reserve the right to amend these rules and procedures where appropriate.

Every effort will be made to ensure that any action taken under this procedure is fair, with staff being given the opportunity to state their case and appeal against any decision that they consider to be unjust.

The following rules and procedures should ensure that:

- The correct procedure is used when requiring attendance at a disciplinary hearing;
- Staff are fully aware of the standard of performance, action and behaviour required of them;
- Disciplinary action where necessary, is taken speedily and in a fair, uniform and consistent manner;
- Staff will only be disciplined after careful investigation of the facts and the opportunity to present their side of the case. On some occasions temporary suspension on contractual pay may be necessary in order that an uninterrupted investigation can take place. This must not be regarded as disciplinary action or a penalty of any kind;
- Other than for an “off the record” informal reprimand, they have the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee at all stages of the formal disciplinary process;
- Staff will not normally be dismissed for a first breach of discipline, except in the case of gross misconduct; and
- If they are disciplined, they will receive an explanation of the penalty imposed and will have the right to appeal against the finding and the penalty.

### Disciplinary Rules

It is not practicable to specify all disciplinary rules or offences that may result in disciplinary action, as they may vary depending on the nature of the work. In addition to the specific examples of unsatisfactory conduct, misconduct and gross misconduct shown in these policies, a breach of



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other specific conditions, procedures, rules etc. that are contained within these policies or that have otherwise been made known to you, will also result in the procedure being used to deal with such matters.

## **Rules Covering Unsatisfactory Conduct and Misconduct**

These are examples only and not an exhaustive list.

You will be liable to disciplinary action if you are found to have acted in any of the following ways:

- Failure to abide by the general health and safety rules and procedures;
- Smoking in designated non-smoking areas;
- Consumption of alcohol on the premises;
- Persistent absenteeism and/or lateness;
- Unsatisfactory standards or output of work;
- Rudeness towards parishioners, councillors or members of the public or other employees, objectionable or insulting behaviour, harassment, bullying or bad language;
- Failure to devote the whole of your time, attention and abilities to our business and its affairs during your normal working hours;
- Unauthorised use of E-mail and Internet;
- Failure to carry out all reasonable instructions or follow our rules and procedures;
- Unauthorised use or negligent damage or loss of our property; and
- Failure to report immediately any damage to property or premises caused by you.

## **Serious Misconduct**

Where one of the unsatisfactory conduct or misconduct rules has been broken and if, upon investigation, it is shown to be due to extreme carelessness or has a serious or substantial effect upon our operation or reputation, the individual may be issued with a final written warning in the first instance.

They may receive a final written warning as a first course of action, if, in an alleged gross misconduct disciplinary matter, upon investigation, there is shown to be some level of mitigation resulting in it being treated as an offence just short of dismissal.



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## Rules Covering Gross Misconduct

Occurrences of gross misconduct are very rare because the penalty is dismissal without notice and without any previous warning being issued. It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of examples of gross misconduct. However, any behaviour or negligence resulting in a fundamental breach of contractual terms that irrevocably destroys the trust and confidence necessary to continue the employment relationship will constitute gross misconduct. Examples of offences that will normally be deemed as gross misconduct include serious instances of:

- Theft or fraud;
- Physical violence or bullying;
- Deliberate damage to property;
- Deliberate acts of unlawful discrimination or harassment;
- Possession, or being under the influence, of illegal drugs at work; and
- Breach of health and safety rules that endangers the lives of, or may cause serious injury to, employees, parishioners, councillors or any other person.

These examples are illustrative and do not form an exhaustive list.

## Disciplinary Procedure

Disciplinary action taken against staff will be based on the following procedures:

Offence	First Occasion	Second Occasion	Third Occasion	Fourth Occasion
Unsatisfactory Conduct	Formal verbal warning	Written warning	Final written warning	Dismissal
Misconduct	Written warning	Final written warning	Dismissal	
Serious Misconduct	Final written warning	Dismissal		
Gross Misconduct	Dismissal			

Headcorn Parish Council retain discretion in respect of the disciplinary procedures to take account of the length of service and to vary the procedures accordingly. If the staff has a short



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amount of service they may not be in receipt of any warnings before dismissal but they will retain the right to a disciplinary hearing and will have the right of appeal.

If a disciplinary penalty is imposed it will be in with the procedure outlined above, which may encompass a formal verbal warning, written warning, final written warning, or dismissal, and full details will be given to the staff member.

In all cases warnings will be issued for misconduct, irrespective of the precise matters concerned, and any further breach of the rules in relation to similar or entirely independent matters of misconduct will be treated as further disciplinary matters and allow continuation of the disciplinary process through to dismissal if the warnings are not heeded.

## **Disciplinary Authority**

The operation of the disciplinary procedure contained in the previous section, is based on the following authority for the various levels of disciplinary action. However, the list does not prevent a higher or lower level of seniority, in the event of the appropriate level not being available, or suitable, progressing any action at whatever stage of the disciplinary process.

### **ALL EMPLOYEES**

Formal verbal warning	the Chair of the Staffing Committee
Written warning	the Chair of the Staffing Committee
Final written warning	the Chair of the Staffing Committee
Dismissal	the Chair of the Staffing Committee

## **Period of Warnings**

### Formal verbal warning

A formal verbal warning will normally be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after a three month period.

### Written warning

A written warning will normally be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after a six month period.

### Final written warning

A final written warning will normally be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after a twelve month period.



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## **General Notes**

If you are in a supervisory or Managerial position then demotion to a lower status at the appropriate rate may be considered as an alternative to dismissal except in cases of gross misconduct.

In exceptional circumstances, suspension from work without pay for up to five days as an alternative to dismissal, except dismissal for gross misconduct, may be considered by the person authorised to dismiss.

Gross Misconduct offences will normally result in dismissal without notice.

There is a right to appeal against any disciplinary action.

Headcorn Parish Council reserve the right to allow third parties to chair any formal hearing.

Caroline Carmichael  
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