

## **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

ADAPTED FROM THE MODEL PROCEDURES DRAWN UP BY  
THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (NALC) AND  
THE SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS (SLCC)

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This disciplinary procedure is designed to help and encourage employees 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
- Be honest and act beyond suspicion of dishonesty
- Maintain high standards of integrity and conduct to protect the council's image and reputation with the public.

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 but gives common examples:

- Unauthorised absence
- Failure to comply with rules and regulations applicable to job requirements
- Failure by an employee to perform the duties and responsibilities of his or her post to the standard expected by the council
- Behavioural and conduct problems.

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

### **2. SCOPE**

The procedure applies to all employees of Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council.

### **GENERAL PROCEDURAL INFORMATION**

The PC's Staffing Committee will conduct disciplinary proceedings. The Chairman of that Committee will give Verbal Warnings and Written Warnings. The Staffing Committee will carry out any investigations and hearings. Three members of the full council who do not sit on the Staffing Committee will conduct any disciplinary appeal meeting.

It is a requirement that all paperwork associated with the matter of a Disciplinary Hearing is kept under the Confidential Information classes of both the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

First Written Warning: to be kept on file for 6 months, then destroyed and the employee advised of the fact.

Final Written warning: to be kept on file for 12 months, then destroyed and the employee advised of the fact.

### **3. VERBAL WARNINGS**

Verbal Warnings are issued for most first instances of general misconduct, depending on the seriousness of the offence. If the employee 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's personnel file and a copy will be provided to the employee. A Verbal Warning will normally remain in force for 6 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 will normally be given a First Written Warning. A First Written Warning will be issued by the Chairman of the Staffing Committee and will set out:

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

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 will be given a Final Written Warning. A Final Written Warning will be issued by the Chairman of the Staffing Committee and will set out:

- i. the nature of the offence and the improvement required (if appropriate) and over what period
- ii. the likely consequences of any further offence or a failure by the employee to improve his/her conduct to an acceptable standard
- iii. that further offences will result in more serious disciplinary action up to and including dismissal
- iv. the employee'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.

## **6. STANDARD COUNCIL DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

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 (without pay) of the employee the following formal disciplinary procedure will be followed.

- 1 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.
- 2 The council will set out in writing the alleged conduct or other circumstances which lead the council to contemplate dismissing the employee or taking disciplinary action against the employee and the basis for the allegation and will send the employee a copy of the statement inviting the employee to attend a disciplinary meeting to discuss the matter. The employee 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 must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.
- 3 Disciplinary meetings will normally be convened within 5 working days of the council sending the employee the written statement referred to in point 3 above. The employee may be accompanied to any disciplinary meeting by a companion. The Chairman of the Staffing Committee will represent the council.
- 4 If the time or date proposed for the meeting is inconvenient (either for the employee or for the employee's companion) the employee may ask to postpone the meeting by up to 5 working days.
- 5 The meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated, or to afford the Chairman time to consider his or her decision.
- 6 After the meeting the council will inform the employee of their decision and any applicable sanction within 5 working days. (The meeting may be reconvened for this purpose). The decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.
- 7 If the employee wishes to appeal against the decision he or she must notify the council in writing within 5 days of receiving written notice of the decision.
- 8 If the employee notifies the council that he or she wishes to appeal, the employee will be invited to attend a disciplinary appeal meeting before the Council's Appeals Committee. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend that disciplinary appeal meeting. The employee has the right to be accompanied to a disciplinary appeal meeting by a companion.
- 9 A disciplinary appeal meeting will normally be convened within 7 working days of the council receiving notification that the employee wishes to appeal. If the meeting date

is inconvenient for the employee or the employee's companion he or she may ask to postpone the meeting by up to 5 working days.

- i. Any new evidence that the employee wishes to put forward will be considered, as will any new evidence from the council. The original disciplinary penalty will be reviewed.
- ii. The disciplinary appeal sanction originally imposed cannot be increased upon appeal.
- iii. The disciplinary appeal meeting will not necessarily take place before any disciplinary sanction imposed by the council takes effect. If the employee's appeal is against dismissal and the appeal is successful the employee will be reinstated and continuity of employment will be preserved.
- iv. The meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated, or to afford the Council's Appeals Committee time to consider its decision.
- v. After the disciplinary appeal meeting the council will inform the employee of its final decision within 5 working days. (The meeting may be reconvened for this purpose). The decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.

## **7. COUNCIL DISMISSAL PROCEDURE FOR USE IN GROSS MISCONDUCT**

The following list provides examples of conduct that will normally be regarded by the council as Gross Misconduct. These are examples only, indicative of the substantial nature of acts of Gross Misconduct:

- i. Falsification of documents or information
  - ii. Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information.
  - iii. Insulting, indecent or offensive behaviour towards a fellow employee or any other person whilst acting or purporting to act on behalf of the council.
  - iv. Wilful damage to council property.
  - v. Theft, unauthorised use or possession of council property or theft of the property of a fellow employee.
  - vi. Conduct bringing the council into disrepute.
- 1 If an employee is accused of any Gross Misconduct he or she may be suspended from work on full pay 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.
  - 2 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 will be interviewed.
  - 3 If the council believes the employee is guilty of gross misconduct his or her employment will be terminated summarily without notice or pay in lieu of notice.
  - 4 The council will send the employee a statement, setting out the allegations of misconduct that led to the employee's dismissal and the council's basis for thinking

that the employee is guilty of that misconduct. The date on which the employment terminated will be confirmed to the employee and the employee may be reminded of any continuing obligations he or she may have following the termination of employment. This statement will also explain the employee's right to appeal against the council's decision.

- 5 If the employee wishes to appeal against the council's decision he or she must notify the council in writing within 5 working days of receiving notice of the council's decision.
- 6 If the employee appeals, the council will invite the employee to attend a disciplinary appeal meeting before the Council's Appeals Committee. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting. The employee has the right to be accompanied to a disciplinary appeal meeting by a companion.
- 7 Any disciplinary appeal meeting will normally be convened within 7 working days of the council receiving notice from the employee that he or she wishes to appeal. If the date of the meeting is inconvenient for the employee or his or her companion the employee may ask to postpone the meeting by up to 5 working days.
  - i. Any new evidence that the employee wishes to put forward will be considered as well any new evidence from the council. The original disciplinary penalty will be reviewed.
  - ii. The disciplinary sanction originally imposed cannot be increased upon appeal.
  - iii. The disciplinary appeal meeting will not necessarily take place before any disciplinary sanction imposed by the council takes effect. If the employee's appeal is against dismissal and the appeal is successful he or she will be reinstated and continuity of employment will be preserved.
  - iv. The meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated, or to afford the Council's Appeals Committee time to consider its decision.
- 8 After the disciplinary appeal meeting the employee will be informed of the council's final decision within 5 working days (the meeting may be reconvened for this purpose). The council's decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.