



# **St Erme Parish Council**

## **Discipline and Grievances at Work Procedures**

## **1. Purpose and scope**

The council's aim is to encourage improvement in individual conduct or performance. This procedure sets out the action which will be taken when disciplinary rules are breached.

## **2. Principles**

a) The procedure is designed to establish the facts quickly and to deal consistently with disciplinary issues. No disciplinary action will be taken until the matter has been fully investigated.

b) At every stage employees will be informed in writing of what is alleged and have the opportunity to state their case at a disciplinary meeting and be represented or accompanied, if they wish, by a trade union representative or a work colleague.

c) An employee has the right to appeal against any disciplinary penalty.

## **3. The Procedure**

### **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 employees 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.

### **Stage 1 – first warning**

If conduct or performance is unsatisfactory, the employee will be given a written warning or performance note. Such warnings will be recorded, but disregarded after 6 months of satisfactory service. The employee will also be informed that a final written warning may be considered if there is no sustained satisfactory improvement or change. (Where the first offence is sufficiently serious, for example because it is having, or is likely to have, a serious harmful effect on the organisation, it may be justifiable to move directly to a final written warning.)

### **Stage 2 – final written warning**

If the offence is serious, or there is no improvement in standards, or if a further offence of a similar kind occurs, a final written warning will be given which will include the reason for the warning and a note that if no improvement results within 3 months, action at Stage 3 will be taken.

### **Stage 3 – dismissal or action short of dismissal**

If the conduct or performance has failed to improve, the employee may suffer demotion, disciplinary transfer, loss of seniority (as allowed in the contract) or dismissal.

**Gross misconduct**

If, after investigation, it is confirmed that an employee has committed an offence of the following nature (the list is not exhaustive), the normal consequence will be dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice: – theft, damage to property, fraud, incapacity for work due to being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, physical violence, bullying and gross insubordination. While the alleged gross misconduct is being investigated, the employee may be suspended, during which time he or she will be paid their normal pay rate. Any decision to dismiss will be taken by the employer only after full investigation.

**Appeals**

An employee who wishes to appeal against any disciplinary decision must do so to the named person in the organisation within five working days. The employer will hear the appeal and decide the case as impartially as possible.

**Dealing with grievances informally**

If you have a grievance or complaint to do with your work or the people you work with you should, wherever possible, start by talking it over with your manager and/or Chairman of the council. You may be able to agree a solution informally between you.

**Formal grievance**

If the matter is serious and/or you wish to raise the matter formally you should set out the grievance in writing to your manager and/or Chairman of the Council. You should stick to the facts and avoid language that is insulting or abusive. Where your grievance is against your manager/Chairman of the council and you feel unable to approach him or her you should talk to the Vice-Chairman of the council.

**Grievance hearing**

Your manager will call you to a meeting, normally within five days, to discuss your grievance. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at this meeting if you make a reasonable request. After the meeting the manager will give you a decision in writing, normally within 24 hours.

Appeal if you are unhappy with your manager's decision and you wish to appeal you should let your manager know. You will be invited to an appeal meeting, normally within five days, and your appeal will be heard by the council. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at this meeting if you make a reasonable request. After the meeting the manager/council will give you a decision, normally within 24 hours. The manager's /council's decision is final.