

Hatfield Peverel Parish Council – Dignity at Work Policy (2026)

1. Introduction

Hatfield Peverel Parish Council is committed to creating a working environment where all employees are treated with dignity and respect. We recognise our duty to provide a workplace free from bullying, harassment, discrimination, and victimisation. This policy sets out our approach to promoting dignity at work in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and ACAS guidance (2024).

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to prevent and address all forms of bullying, harassment, and other unacceptable behaviour in the workplace. It aims to ensure that all employees feel safe, respected, and supported in their roles.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, councillors, contractors, volunteers, and others working on behalf of Hatfield Peverel Parish Council. It covers behaviour in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, such as meetings, events, or social functions.

4. Definitions

- **Bullying:** Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour that undermines, humiliates or injures the recipient.
- **Harassment:** Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
- **Victimisation:** Treating someone unfairly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance.
- **Unacceptable Behaviour:** Any behaviour that is unreasonable, inappropriate, or offensive, whether intentional or not.

5. Standards of Behaviour Expected

All individuals are expected to treat others with courtesy, dignity, and respect. Discriminatory, offensive, or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated. Professional conduct must be maintained at all times.

6. Responsibilities of the Council

The Council is responsible for promoting a culture of dignity and respect, ensuring that this policy is implemented, and taking appropriate action when breaches occur. The Council will provide training and support to staff and councillors.

7. Responsibilities of Employees

Employees are expected to uphold the principles of this policy, treat others respectfully, and report any concerns promptly. They should cooperate fully with investigations and maintain confidentiality.

8. Reporting Concerns (Informal and Formal Routes)

Employees are encouraged to raise concerns informally with the individual involved or their line manager. If informal resolution is not possible or appropriate, a formal complaint should be submitted in writing to the Clerk or Chairman. All complaints will be taken seriously and handled sensitively.

9. Investigation Process

Formal complaints will be investigated promptly and impartially. The investigator will gather evidence, interview relevant parties, and produce a report. Both the complainant and the subject of the complaint will have the opportunity to present their views.

10. Outcomes and Actions

Following the investigation, appropriate action will be taken, which may include mediation, training, disciplinary action, or other measures. The outcome will be communicated in writing to the parties involved.

11. Malicious or Vexatious Complaints

While all complaints will be taken seriously, malicious or knowingly false complaints may result in disciplinary action against the complainant.

12. Support for Employees

The Council is committed to supporting employees affected by bullying or harassment. Support may include access to counselling, adjustments to working arrangements, or mediation services.

13. Confidentiality

All complaints and investigations will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

14. Monitoring & Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in legislation or best practice. Feedback from employees will be considered in future updates.