

Hatfield Peverel Parish Council – Grievance & Disciplinary Policy (Updated 2026)

1. Introduction

Hatfield Peverel Parish Council is committed to promoting a positive working environment where staff are treated fairly, with dignity and respect. This policy outlines the procedures for handling grievances and disciplinary matters in accordance with the Employment Rights Act 1996, Employment Relations Act 1999, and the ACAS Code of Practice (2024).

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and fair framework for resolving workplace issues, whether raised by an employee as a grievance or by the Council as a disciplinary matter.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Hatfield Peverel Parish Council. It does not apply to councillors, volunteers, or contractors.

4. Key Principles

- All matters will be handled fairly, promptly, and consistently.
- The principles of natural justice will be upheld.
- Confidentiality will be maintained throughout.
- Employees have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague at any formal hearing.

5. Informal Resolution & Mediation

Where appropriate, issues should be resolved informally through discussion. Mediation may be offered as a voluntary and confidential process to help resolve disputes before formal procedures are initiated.

6. Formal Grievance Procedure (step-by-step)

Step 1: Employee submits a written grievance to the Clerk or Chairman.

Step 2: Acknowledgement and appointment of a Grievance Panel.

Step 3: Grievance hearing arranged within 10 working days.

Step 4: Decision communicated in writing within 5 working days.

Step 5: Right of appeal within 10 working days of decision.

7. Grievance Hearings & Appeals

Grievance hearings will be conducted by a panel not previously involved. Appeals will be heard by an Appeals Panel, whose decision is final.

8. Formal Disciplinary Procedure (step-by-step)

Step 1: Allegation is raised and preliminary review conducted.

Step 2: Formal investigation initiated.

Step 3: If warranted, a disciplinary hearing is arranged with written notice.

Step 4: Hearing conducted by Disciplinary Panel.

Step 5: Outcome and any sanctions communicated in writing.

Step 6: Right of appeal within 10 working days.

9. Investigation Stage

An impartial investigator will gather facts and evidence. The employee will be informed of the allegations and given an opportunity to respond.

10. Disciplinary Hearings

The employee will be given at least 5 working days' notice of the hearing, including details of the allegations and evidence. They may be accompanied by a representative.

11. Outcomes & Sanctions

- No action
- Informal warning
- First written warning (valid for 12 months)
- Final written warning (valid for 12 months)
- Dismissal (with or without notice depending on severity)

12. Gross Misconduct

Examples include:

- Theft or fraud
- Physical violence or threats
- Serious bullying or harassment
- Deliberate damage to property
- Serious misuse of Council property or systems
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol at work
- Serious breach of health and safety rules
- Gross insubordination

13. Right of Appeal

Employees have the right to appeal any formal disciplinary or grievance decision. Appeals must be submitted in writing within 10 working days. An Appeals Panel will hear the appeal and its decision is final.

14. Record-Keeping & Data Protection

Records of all grievance and disciplinary matters will be kept securely and in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy. Records will be retained only as long as necessary.

15. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in legislation or best practice. Last reviewed: May 2026.