





# KINGSMEAD

## PARISH COUNCIL

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## INTRODUCTION

1.1. 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 Kingsmead Parish Council's image and reputation.

1.2. This document dictates 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. This list is not exhaustive, and the elements described below are provided as examples only.

- Unsatisfactory time keeping.
- Absenteeism, including any absence from work during a working day without prior authorisation or instruction.
- 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 Parish Council.
- Insubordination.
- Any other conduct that from time to time is defined by the Parish Council as amounting to misconduct.

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

1.4. Disciplinary proceedings should be regarded as confidential, whenever legally reasonable.

## 2. SCOPE

The procedure applies to all employees of Kingsmead Parish Council.

## 3. VERBAL WARNINGS

Verbal warnings are issued for most first instances of general misconduct, depending on the seriousness of the offence.

The verbal warning is given by the Parish Council Chair. 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 Parish Council Chair.

A note confirming the verbal warning will be placed on the employee's personnel file.

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 Parish Council Chair 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 failure by the employee to improve his/her conduct to an acceptable standard;
- iii. that further offences will result in more serious disciplinary action; and
- iv. the employee's right of appeal.

A first written warning will normally remain in force for 6 months.

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 Parish Council Chair 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 or her conduct to an acceptable standard;
- iii. that further offences will result in more serious disciplinary action up to and including dismissal; and
- iv. the employee's right of appeal to the Parish Council's Staffing Committee, which is made up of three Parish Councillors, independent of relevant previous disciplinary meetings.

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.

A final written warning will normally remain in force for 12 months.

## 6. STANDARD PARISH COUNCIL DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

6.1. 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 Parish 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:

- i. The Parish 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.
- ii. The Parish Council will set out in writing the alleged conduct or other circumstances which lead the Parish 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.
- iii. Disciplinary meetings will normally be convened within 7 working days of the Parish Council sending the employee the written statement referred to in ii above. The employee may be accompanied to any disciplinary meeting by a fellow employee or by a representative of a trade union. The Parish Council will be represented by the Parish Council Chair and another councillor, at the discretion of the Parish Council Chair.
- iv. If the time or date proposed for the meeting is inconvenient (either for the employee, or for the employees companion, should he or she wish to be accompanied to the meeting pursuant to iii above) the employee may ask to postpone the meeting by up to 7 working days.
- v. The meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised, during the course of the meeting, to be investigated or to afford the Parish Council Chair time to consider their decision.
- vi. After the meeting the Parish Council will inform the employee of its decision and any applicable sanction, as soon as possible, within 7 working days. The decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.
- vii. If the employee wishes to appeal against the decision, he or she must notify the Parish Council in writing within 7 working days of receiving written notice of the decision.

If the employee notifies the Parish Council that he or she wishes to appeal, the employee will be invited to attend a disciplinary appeal meeting before the Parish Council's Staffing Committee, which is made up of three Parish Councillors independent of relevant previous disciplinary meetings. 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 fellow employee or by a representative of a trade union.

A disciplinary appeal meeting will normally be convened within 7 working days of the Parish Council receiving notification that the employee wishes to appeal, pursuant to the time frame detailed above. 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 7 working days.

The outline of this meeting is as follows:

- Any new evidence that the employee wishes to put forward will be considered, as will any new evidence from the Parish Council. The original disciplinary penalty will be reviewed.
- The disciplinary appeal sanction originally imposed cannot be increased upon appeal.
- The disciplinary appeal meeting will not necessarily take place before any disciplinary sanction imposed by the Parish Council takes effect. If the employee's appeal is against dismissal and the appeal is successful, the employee will be re-instated and continuity of employment will be preserved.
- The meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated, or to afford the Parish Council's Staffing Committee time to consider its decision.
- After the disciplinary appeal meeting, the Parish Council will inform the employee of its final decision, as soon as possible, within 7 working days. The decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.

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

7.1. The following list provides examples of conduct that will normally be regarded by the Parish Council as gross misconduct. This list is not exhaustive, and the elements described below are provided as examples only.

- Refusal or repeated failure by an employee to carry out his or her duties.
- Falsification of documents or information (including expense claims).
- Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information.
- Assaulting a fellow employee or any other person whilst acting or purporting to act on behalf of the Parish Council.
- Insulting, indecent or offensive behaviour towards a fellow employee or any other person whilst acting or purporting to act on behalf of the Parish Council.
- Serious or repeated harassment (including sexual and racial harassment).
- Incapacity at work due to the influence of alcohol, un-prescribed drugs or any other substance.
- Wilful damage to Parish Council property.
- Theft, unauthorised use or possession of Parish Council property or theft of the property of a fellow employee.

- Conduct bringing the Parish Council into significant disrepute.
- Any other conduct that from time to time is defined by the Parish Council as amounting to gross misconduct.

7.2. 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 ten working days, unless there are exceptional circumstances. The following formal disciplinary procedure will be followed:

- i. The Parish 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.
- ii. If the Parish 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.
- iii. The Parish Council will send the employee a statement, setting out the allegations of misconduct that led to the employee's dismissal and the Parish 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, including confidentiality, he or she may have following the termination of employment. This statement will also explain the employee's right to appeal against the Parish Council's decision.
- iv. If the employee wishes to appeal against the Parish Council's decision, he or she must notify the Parish Council in writing within 7 working days of receiving notice of the Parish Council's decision pursuant to iii above.
- v. If the employee appeals, the Parish Council will invite the employee to attend a disciplinary appeal meeting before the Parish Council's Staffing Committee (as previously defined). 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 fellow employee or by a representative of a trade union.
- vi. A disciplinary appeal meeting will normally be convened within 7 working days of the Parish Council receiving notice from the employee that he or she wishes to appeal pursuant to iv above. 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 7 working days.

The outline of this meeting is as follows:

- Any new evidence that the employee wishes to put forward will be considered, as will any new evidence from the Parish Council. The original disciplinary penalty will be reviewed.
- The disciplinary sanction originally imposed cannot be increased upon appeal.
- The disciplinary appeal meeting will not necessarily take place before any disciplinary sanction imposed by the Parish 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.

- The meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated, or to afford the Parish Council's Staffing Committee (as previously defined) time to consider its decision.
- After the disciplinary appeal meeting, the employee will be informed of the Parish Council's final decision, as soon as possible, within 7 working days. The Parish Council's decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.

## 8. GENERAL PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

- 8.1. Verbal warnings and written warnings will normally be issued by the Parish Council Chair. Disciplinary proceedings raised under the standard Parish Council disciplinary procedure will also normally be investigated, and any meetings to discuss the disciplinary proceedings conducted, by the Parish Council Chair.
- 8.2. If the Parish Council Chair is unavailable, then the Parish Council's Vice-chair will take on this role.
- 8.3. The delivery date of written information may be confirmed by email receipt confirmations, for emails, or by recorded delivery receipt confirmations, for postal letters.