

SHALFLEET PARISH COUNCIL.

SHALFLEET PARISH COUNCIL. Disciplinary Policy

Dated: January 28, 2026. Adopted February 11, 2026.

Signed.

1. Purpose

Shalfleet Parish Council aims to maintain a positive, supportive working environment. This policy explains how concerns about conduct or behaviour will be handled in a fair, consistent and transparent way. It applies to all council employees.

The policy follows the principles of the ACAS Code of Practice.

2. Key Principles

- Concerns will be looked into promptly and fairly.
- No formal action will be taken until reasonable enquiries have been made.
- Employees will always know what the concern is and have the chance to respond.
- At formal meetings, employees may be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative.
- Disciplinary action will be proportionate.
- Dismissal will only be considered where misconduct is serious or where previous warnings have not led to improvement.
- Employees have the right to appeal any formal decision.

3. Informal Resolution

Most issues can be resolved through a quiet, confidential conversation. This is often the quickest and most constructive way to put things right.

If the concern involves the Clerk, an informal discussion will be held with members of the HR Committee.

If informal steps do not resolve the issue, or if the matter is more serious, the formal process may be used.

4. Formal Process

4.1 Investigation

The council will gather the facts before any decision is made. This may involve speaking to those involved and reviewing relevant information.

Where the Clerk is the subject of the concern, the investigation will be overseen by councillors not involved in the allegation.

4.2 Invitation to a Meeting

If a formal meeting is needed, the employee will receive a letter explaining:

- the concern
- the possible outcomes
- the date, time and place of the meeting
- their right to be accompanied
- any documents that will be discussed

4.3 The Meeting

At the meeting:

- the council will explain the concern and the evidence
- the employee can respond, ask questions, and provide information
- witnesses may be heard if agreed in advance

If the employee cannot attend for a good reason, the meeting will be rearranged. If they do not attend without explanation, the meeting may proceed in their absence.

5. Possible Outcomes

Stage 1 – Written Warning

Given when conduct needs to improve or where the issue is more than minor. The warning will explain what needs to change and by when. It will normally remain active for 6 months.

Stage 2 – Final Written Warning

Given if the issue is serious, or if there has been no improvement after a previous warning. It will normally remain active for 12 months.

Stage 3 – Dismissal or Other Sanction

If conduct does not improve, or if the council reasonably believes gross misconduct has occurred, dismissal may be considered.

Other outcomes may include:

- a final written warning
- loss of pay
- demotion (where appropriate and agreed)

The employee will receive the decision in writing.

6. Gross Misconduct

Gross misconduct is behaviour so serious that it may justify dismissal without notice. Examples include:

- theft, fraud or deliberate dishonesty
- violence or threatening behaviour
- serious breach of confidentiality
- discrimination, harassment or bullying
- serious breach of health and safety
- being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at work
- actions that seriously damage the council's reputation

This list is not exhaustive.

7. Suspension

If a serious allegation is made, the council may suspend the employee on full pay while the matter is investigated. Suspension is a neutral act and not a disciplinary penalty.

8. Appeals

Employees may appeal any formal decision. Appeals must be made in writing within five working days, explaining the reasons.

Where possible, appeals will be heard by councillors who were not involved in the original decision. The outcome will be confirmed in writing and will be final.

9. Grievances Raised During the Process

If an employee raises a grievance during disciplinary proceedings, the council may pause the disciplinary process while the grievance is considered. In some cases, both matters may be handled together if appropriate.

10. Note-Taking and Confidentiality

A note-taker will normally be present at formal meetings. All information will be handled sensitively and in line with data protection requirements.

11. Criminal Charges

Being charged with or convicted of a criminal offence will not automatically lead to disciplinary action. The council will consider whether the matter affects the **employee's role or the council's reputation.**

12. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains fair, clear and up to date.