



DRAFT GRIEVANCE POLICY

Date of first adoption	13/09/2019
Date of review	19/02/2025
Adoption minute	
Date of next review	02/2027

Part I: Policy details

1. What does this policy cover and who is covered?

Dodderhill Parish Council endeavours to ensure that our employees are happy working for us. An important part of that commitment includes putting in place a policy to ensure that we promptly, fairly and consistently address any complaints, concerns, and problems relating to your employment with us.

Complaints about matters not concerning your employment, such as the behaviour of other workers towards you, or about the way that unlawful, unethical or inappropriate behaviour within, or affecting Dodderhill Parish Council, should be raised under our other policies for Bullying and Harassment, or Whistleblowing.

If someone makes a complaint against you, under this or any of our other policies, we will apply our Disciplinary Policy and/or Performance Improvement Policy if appropriate.

2. Who does it apply to?

All employees.

3. It is not part of your employment contract

This policy is not part of your employment contract. We, Dodderhill Parish Council, may amend this policy at any time.

4. Your right to be accompanied at grievance meetings

During any meeting that takes place under this policy, you may bring someone with you (normally referred to as a companion). That person is generally a work colleague, or, if appropriate, a trade union representative.

We will remind you of this entitlement when we send you a meeting invite. You must then let us know if you intend to invite someone to accompany you and who that person is, as well as their relationship to you, if this is not known to us. You will be responsible for them attending the meeting, including making (if necessary), any travel arrangements and costs.

You are entirely free to choose a work colleague to accompany you. If you do choose a work colleague, please be aware that, on occasion, we may need to adjust scheduled meeting timings to ensure that we can ensure your colleague's attendance (and absence from their usual work duties) does not cause any operational challenges.

Speaking on your behalf

If you would prefer them to do so, your companion may present the key points of your grievance and may also speak openly on your behalf at the meeting. You should feel free to seek their views and confer with them during the meeting and you are entitled to leave the room for a reasonable period of time to do so.

Your companion is not permitted, however, to answer questions put directly to you or try to prevent Dodderhill Parish Council asking you questions or outlining its views.

Part II: Our procedure for raising a grievance

Please follow this procedure. It is designed to ensure fair and efficient handling of any complaint or concern raised by Dodderhill Parish Council's employees.

1. Before formal action is taken: If you have a concern

We strongly encourage you to approach your line manager if you are concerned or unhappy about any problems or issues with your employment. We believe that an informal discussion can often be the most effective and rapid means to resolve most concerns that employees raise. Your line manager understands that they are expected to help address any such concerns in line with the parish council's policies and values.

If you do not feel comfortable raising a particular concern with your line manager, or your complaint is about your line manager, then you should instead notify the Chair of the Staffing Committee or the Chair of the Council.

If this discussion is not successful in resolving your concern, you must follow the procedure below.

2. Stage 1: formal grievance action – reporting and gathering the facts

- a. Provide written details of your complaint to your line manager or, where not suitable, the Chair of the Staffing Committee or the Chair of the Council if that person is part of your complaint. Make sure that you include:
 - What has happened
 - The names of any individuals involved
 - The history and any relevant dates (at least approximate ones) relating to all of the facts you describe
 - Any materials (correspondence, screenshots of communications, etc.) that help to support what you have described
 - What steps you have already taken to resolve your concern(s) (including whether you have already spoken with your line manager or specified alternative person) and the outcome of those steps.
 - What action you want Dodderhill Parish Council to take in response to your complaint, and what outcome you would like. For example, you might request that a particular policy, procedure, practice or set-up within the parish council is changed; or perhaps that a warning be issued to a particular individual to whom your complaint might relate.

- b. You should also clearly state within this written document that you intend for it to be handled under Dodderhill Parish Council's formal grievance procedure.
- c. We will acknowledge receipt of your grievance (in writing within 3 days) and tell you how we intend to deal with it, the precise nature of which may depend on what you have told us.
- d. We will thoroughly examine all relevant facts and materials available to us and you will be required to co-operate with us so that we can ensure a fair and thorough investigation into the issue(s) you have raised. As soon as we have completed our investigation, we may ask you to attend a formal interview and/or take a formal statement from you about the matter. We may also ask other people to attend interviews and/or provide statements too.
- e. We will do our best to give you a timeframe of how long the investigations may take, if they cannot be completed within 7 days.

3. Stage 2: formal grievance action – the grievance meeting(s)

- a. We will hold a formal meeting and invite you to attend. At this meeting, we will ask you to explain your concern(s) and how you think we should resolve it/them. It is an important part of our formal grievance process.
- b. The meeting will usually take place within 5 working days of you lodging your grievance. We ask that you make every effort to attend it. If you are unable to attend, we will make all reasonable efforts to reschedule the meeting to an alternative time that you are able to make.
- c. If you wish to do so, you may bring someone with you to the meeting. You are free to determine who that person might be. Ordinarily, it will be a work colleague or a relevant trade union representative, for example, as you prefer. (See Part I, paragraph 4 – “Speaking on your behalf”)
- d. We may record this meeting, but we will not do so without telling you. You may of course record the meeting if you wish to do so; but please tell us and agree it with us beforehand if you intend to do so, as it would be discourteous and potentially unlawful to make a covert recording.
- e. Once the above meeting has been held, we will often need to further investigate the matters discussed. That may involve further locating and considering relevant documentation and speaking with other people, whom we may wish to formally interview or reinterview. It is not generally permitted for you to participate in these activities, including to ask direct questions of other people during an interview. But we will keep you informed of progress, and we may well ask you for more information for another meeting. It is also possible that we will not consider there to be a need for further meetings or follow-up after the above meeting.

4. Stage 3: formal grievance action – Dodderhill Parish Council’s decision

Within a week of the final meeting that we decide to hold with you during this stage, we will provide you with a written decision, outlining our conclusions and how we have decided to address your grievance.

5. Stage 4: formal grievance action – your right to appeal

- a. If you are not happy with our decision, you are entitled to appeal it. You must do so in writing within one week of receiving our decision.
- b. Your appeal must be set out in writing and:
 - Addressed to the relevant person identified as the correct recipient for an appeal in our written decision.
 - Clearly set out why you are appealing against our decision.
 - Provide any new information or evidence on which you wish to rely since our earlier investigations were completed.

6. Stage 5: formal grievance action – the appeal hearing

Usually within two weeks of you notifying us of your appeal, we will invite you to attend a further meeting with us. Wherever possible, the councillor who led the original grievance meeting will not lead this appeal meeting. As before, you are entitled to ask someone to accompany you.

7. Stage 6: formal grievance action – Dodderhill Parish Council’s final decision

- a. Following this meeting, we will provide you with our written, final decision. We aim, wherever we can, for you to receive this decision within two weeks of the appeal hearing.
- b. This concludes our process. We do not consider any further appeals.

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