



Noak Bridge Parish Council

# Grievance Procedure

Version	Date Adopted	Minute Reference	Review Date
1	21/01/2026	09/2026/04	21/01/2029

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 This procedure is based on and complies with the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures (2015) and takes into account the Equality Act 2010. It is designed to encourage good working relationships by addressing grievances quickly, fairly, and consistently.

1.2 The procedure applies to the Clerk as the Council's only employee. It may also guide councillors in raising concerns, except where a complaint relates to a breach of the Councillor Code of Conduct (see section 1.7).

1.3 The Council will handle all grievances in accordance with equality law and treat employees fairly, regardless of any protected characteristic (such as age, disability, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation).

1.4 Employees raising a grievance in good faith will not be penalised. Malicious or knowingly false grievances may result in disciplinary action.

1.5 Employees have the right to be accompanied at any grievance or appeal meeting by a workplace colleague, trade union representative, or trade union official. The companion may present the case and confer with the employee but cannot answer questions on the employee's behalf unless agreed.

1.6 The Council will give reasonable notice of meetings, normally at least 10 working days, and any proposed changes to deadlines will be agreed with the employee.

1.7 If a grievance relates to a councillor's conduct under the Code of Conduct, the employee can raise it at the informal stage. If unresolved, the employee may contact the Monitoring Officer at Basildon Borough Council. Formal grievance stages cannot be used for Code of Conduct matters.

1.8 The Council has a duty of care to ensure a safe working environment and will take appropriate steps if a grievance involves safety concerns, bullying, harassment, or discrimination.

## **2. Informal Grievance Procedure**

2.1 The Council encourages resolving grievances informally wherever possible, as quickly as possible.

### **Steps:**

1. Raise the concern promptly with the Chairman or a member of the Personnel Committee.
2. Explain clearly what the grievance is and what outcome you hope for.
3. If the grievance concerns the Chairman, raise it with the Chairman of the Personnel Committee.
4. If the grievance involves a councillor, informal discussion with their consent may be attempted.

5. Consider mediation if both parties agree, especially for issues involving communication breakdowns, bullying, or harassment.

2.2 The Council will aim to resolve the matter informally within 10 working days where possible.

### **3. Formal Grievance Procedure**

3.1 If the grievance cannot be resolved informally and is not a Code of Conduct issue, it may be submitted in writing to the Chairman of the Personnel Committee.

3.2 The Personnel Committee will appoint three members to hear the grievance and will select a Chairman from among them. Councillors directly involved in the grievance will not sit on the panel.

#### **3.3 Investigation:**

- The panel may appoint an investigator to gather facts before the grievance meeting.
- Investigation steps may include interviews with the employee, witnesses, councillors, or contractors, and review of relevant documents.
- The investigator reports only to the Personnel Committee.

### **4. Notification**

4.1 The employee will normally receive written notice of the grievance meeting within 10 working days of submitting the formal grievance.

4.2 The notice will include:

- Names of the panel members and Chairman
- Date, time, and place of the meeting (normally within 25 working days)
- Right to be accompanied by a workplace colleague, trade union representative, or trade union official
- Copy of this Grievance Procedure
- Information about witnesses (if applicable) and request for supporting evidence in advance
- Opportunity to request adjustments for health or accessibility needs

### **5. The Grievance Meeting**

5.1 At the meeting:

- The Chairman introduces the panel to the employee
- The employee (or companion) presents the grievance and evidence
- Panel members may ask questions and clarify points
- Witnesses may be questioned if appropriate
- The employee (or companion) may summarise the case

5.2 The meeting may be adjourned if further investigation is required.

5.3 The panel's decision will be provided in writing within 5 working days, including:

- Outcome of the grievance
- Actions the Council will take (if any)
- Right to appeal

## **6. Appeal**

6.1 If the grievance is not satisfactorily resolved, the employee may submit a written appeal to the Personnel Committee within 5 working days of receiving the decision. The appeal must state the grounds, such as:

- Failure to follow the grievance procedure
- Decision not supported by evidence
- Proposed action is inadequate
- New evidence has arisen

6.2 The appeal panel will normally consist of three councillors who were not involved in the original grievance panel. If insufficient members are available, the panel may include other councillors, but no one directly involved in the grievance.

6.3 The employee will receive written notice of the appeal meeting within 10 working days, and the meeting will usually take place within 25 working days of receipt of the appeal.

6.4 At the appeal meeting:

- Panel members are introduced
- Purpose of the meeting and potential outcomes are explained
- Employee (or companion) presents the grounds for appeal
- Panel may ask questions and review evidence

6.5 The appeal panel will issue a written decision within 5 working days. The decision is final.

## **7. Confidentiality**

7.1 All grievance records, evidence, and discussions will be treated **confidentially** and shared only with those involved in the process.

7.2 Records will be maintained in line with the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**.

## **8. Mediation**

8.1 Mediation may be offered at any stage if appropriate, with consent from all parties. It can help resolve disputes without formal disciplinary action.

## **9. Related Policies**

- Dignity at Work Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Data Protection Policy