

SOUTHWATER PARISH COUNCIL

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY



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INDEX

Contents

1. Zero Tolerance Policy Statement	2
2. Action Against Perpetrators	3
3. Online and Digital Abuse	3
4. Internal Reporting and Investigation Process	3

1. Zero Tolerance Policy Statement

- 1.1. Southwater Parish Council operates a zero tolerance policy and any abusive, threatening, or violent behaviour towards our staff will be investigated and action taken in line with Council policies and relevant legislation.
- 1.2. Southwater Parish Council is committed to the creation of a culture and environment within which employees, in the delivery of the Council's services are able to carry out those services with the least possible fear of abuse or violence either physical or verbal.
- 1.3. This policy aligns with the Council's Dignity at Work Policy, which promotes respect, civility, and courtesy in all interactions.
- 1.4. The Council is committed to:
 - Ownership and responsibility for staff safety.
 - Introducing preventative measures to minimise the risk to staff.
 - Ensuring that all staff are appropriately trained.
 - Reporting and monitoring all incidents.
 - Communicating with staff to promote and ensure awareness of policy and procedures, and level of incidents.
 - Providing all possible support to staff including appropriate support in taking legal action.
 - Promoting and maintaining public awareness of our Zero Tolerance Policy Statement.
 - Working with the relevant authorities to ensure appropriate action against perpetrators.
- 1.5. All staff have a vital role to play in protecting themselves, including participation in appropriate training, reporting of incidents and taking appropriate action against perpetrators of abuse or violence. Southwater Parish Council has a responsibility to ensure that appropriate support is given to staff in such instances.
- 1.6. We operate a zero tolerance policy and empower all staff to report, as necessary, any incidents of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence. Any incidents of physical or verbal abuse will be recorded and may be reported to the police.
- 1.7. We will take action if we believe that our employees have been subjected to physical or verbal abuse and these incidents will be reported to the Police.

2. Action Against Perpetrators

- 2.1. In addition to reporting incidents to the Police, the Council reserves the right to:
 - 2.1.1. Issue written warnings to individuals engaging in abusive or threatening behaviour.
 - 2.1.2. Ban individuals from Council premises and events if necessary.
 - 2.1.3. Pursue civil or legal action where appropriate.
- 2.2. The Council will act in a proportionate manner, ensuring that staff safety remains the priority.

3. Online and Digital Abuse

- 3.1. The Council considers online abuse, including harassment, abusive emails, or inappropriate social media communications, to be as serious as in-person abuse.
- 3.2. Any instances of online abuse will be monitored, recorded, and may be reported to the relevant authorities, including the Police.
- 3.3. All online harassment incidents will be handled in accordance with the relevant legislation and consider the Council's Social Media Policy and Dignity at Work Policy.

4. Internal Reporting and Investigation Process

- 4.1. Staff must report all incidents to their line manager or the Executive Officer (or Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council if the incident is impacting the Executive Officer) as soon as possible. All reports will be formally logged, investigated, and reviewed.
- 4.2. The Council will ensure that all complaints are handled confidentially and investigated promptly in line with Council policies and employment law.
- 4.3. Where an incident involves repeated abuse or a serious threat, an immediate risk assessment will be conducted, and additional measures may be put in place to protect staff

The Council will review and update this policy as required to ensure compliance with legislation and best practices.