

SLOUGH BAPTIST CHURCH POLICY	Disciplinary Procedure
POLICY NUMBER: SBCP-06	



Primary Responsibility:	Secretary
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DISTRIBUTION

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1. Purpose and Scope

This procedure is designed to help and encourage all employees of Slough Baptist Church to achieve and maintain standards of conduct, attendance and performance in their ministry / work. The aim is to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all. The disciplinary process for Ministers must also follow the directions provided in the Church Constitution, which takes precedence over this procedure.

2. Principles

No disciplinary action will be taken against an employee until the case has been fully investigated.

In normal circumstances, disciplinary action will only be taken by the employee's line manager or the Church Secretary. An independent Church trustee will also be present for any formal meetings under this procedure.

At all stages, the employee will have the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee, church member or trade union official during the disciplinary interview. If the chosen companion will not be available at the time proposed for the hearing, the employee may request that the hearing be postponed to a day not more than five working days after the day proposed by the Employer. If the time proposed is reasonable, the hearing will be postponed until that time. The companion will be allowed to address the hearing to put and sum up the employee's case, respond on behalf of the employee to any views expressed at the meeting and confer with the employee during the hearing. The companion does not, however, have the right to answer questions on the employee's behalf, address the hearing if the employee does not wish it or prevent the Employer from explaining its case.

No employee will be dismissed for a first breach of discipline except in the case of gross misconduct, when the penalty will normally be dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice.

An employee will have the right to appeal against any disciplinary penalty imposed.

The procedure may be implemented at any stage if the employee's alleged misconduct warrants such action.

3. The Procedure

Minor faults will be dealt with informally but where the matter is more serious the following procedure will be used:

Stage 1 - Oral Warning

If conduct or performance does not meet acceptable standards, the employee will normally be given a formal ORAL WARNING. He or she will be advised of the reason for the warning and a review period will be agreed, during which time the employee is expected to improve their conduct or performance. This is the first stage of the disciplinary procedure and of his or her right of appeal. A brief note of the oral warning will be kept, but it will normally be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 6 months, subject to satisfactory conduct and performance.

Stage 2 - Written Warning

If the offence is a serious one, or if a further offence occurs, a WRITTEN WARNING will be given to the employee. This will give details of the complaint, the improvement required and the timescale. It will warn that action under Stage 3 will be considered if there is no satisfactory improvement or if further misconduct occurs and will advise of the right of appeal. A copy of this written warning will normally be kept by the employer, but it will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 12 months, subject to satisfactory conduct and performance.

Stage 3 - Final Written Warning

If there is still a failure to improve and conduct or performance is still unsatisfactory, or if the misconduct is sufficiently serious to warrant only one written warning but insufficiently serious to justify dismissal (in effect both a first and final written warning), a FINAL WRITTEN WARNING will be given to the employee. This will give details of the complaint, will warn that dismissal will result if there is no satisfactory improvement or if further misconduct occurs and will advise of the right of appeal. A copy of this final written warning will be kept by the employer, but it will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 12 months (in exceptional cases the period may be longer), subject to satisfactory conduct and performance.

Stage 4 - Dismissal

If conduct or performance is still unsatisfactory and the employee still fails to reach the prescribed standards, DISMISSAL will normally result. The employee will be provided as soon as reasonably practicable with written reasons for dismissal, the date on which employment will terminate and advise of the right of appeal.

4. Gross Misconduct

The following list is not exhaustive but provides examples of offences which are normally regarded as gross misconduct:

- Verbal, physical, sexual or financial abuse of the congregation of Slough Baptist Church;
- Theft, fraud, or deliberate falsification of records;
- Serious breach of confidentiality;
- Fighting, assault on another person;
- Deliberate damage to the employer's property;
- Serious incapability through alcohol or being under the influence of illegal drugs;
- Serious negligence which causes unacceptable loss, damage or injury;
- Serious act of insubordination.

If an employee is accused of an act of gross misconduct, they may be suspended from work on full pay while the employer investigates the alleged offence and pending the outcome of any disciplinary hearing. If, on completion of the investigation and a subsequent disciplinary hearing, the employer is satisfied that gross misconduct has occurred, the result will normally be summary dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice.

5. Appeals

An employee who wishes to appeal against a disciplinary decision should put their appeal in writing to the Church Secretary within five working days of the date they were first notified of the decision. The appeal shall be heard by a panel of at least three trustees that have not previously been involved with the disciplinary process, whose decision shall be final, subject to any overriding decision of a Slough Baptist Church Members' Meeting.