

PROBATION POLICY

Date:	Review:
Date of approval:	By whom:
Status: Statutory or non statutory	Leadership Lead: G Bellamy

PROBATIONARY PROCEDURE

Introduction

The Trust recognises that all new employees need support, encouragement and information to become effective in their role. This procedure is intended to provide guidance to all employees on the aims and objectives of the probationary system used within the Trust, and outlines the responsibilities of all those involved.

This guidance applies to all new permanent, fixed term and actively working sessional employees all of whom will be placed on probation when first appointed to the Trust. It is a condition of appointment that continued employment beyond the end of the probationary period is subject to the satisfactory completion of probation. Upon satisfactory completion of the probationary period, the employee will formally be transferred to the permanent staff of the Trust.

References to staff include the Headteacher / Head of School, teachers and support staff unless indicated otherwise.

Coverage

This policy covers all new employees to the Trust (e.g. management, teaching, support).

Purpose

All new employees should use the probationary period to help settle them into their role within the Trust and establish their suitability for the job. For line managers the objective is to provide encouragement, advice and guidance, including reasonable training to enable the new employee to become familiar with the requirements of the job and to become competent in performing their role. It is also important that they understand the ethos, aims and vision of the Trust and the school they work within, and the role they have in contributing to this. Line managers must also ensure that they continually review and assess the progress and performance of the new employee and provide regular feedback. Throughout the probationary period the line manager should be considering if the new employee is suitable for continued employment.

- Line manager/s should ensure that the Job Description accurately conveys the main purpose and scope of the role together with the main tasks involved
- A local induction programme is provided to allow the new employee to quickly become effective in the role
- The standard of work required is explained and opportunities are provided for managers and colleagues to give suitable guidance
- New employees are aware of the conditions that are attached to the probationary period, and are aware of the consequences of failure to meet the required standard
- To address performance concerns the moment they are identified with the member of staff
- All new employees will have support via the induction process, mentoring and staff development within their school and the wider Trust

Duration

- Staff have a probationary period of 6 months from the date of appointment and are formally assessed by their line manager at the following intervals: 6 weeks, 12 weeks, 18 weeks and 24 weeks, and more frequently if there is cause for concern. There is also the possibility of extending the probation period, ordinarily for three months, if the reviews highlight particular causes for concern, or if there is concern relating to conduct
- The relevant Probationary Period Review Form will be used (i.e. teaching / support staff) and is available from the Trust HR Team. This should be completed for all employees as outlined in the introduction section of this policy
- All teaching staff will have an informal observation undertaken by their Head of Department or Senior Leader within the first term, and if support is required, the line manager can organise mentoring and appropriate support
- These scheduled formal reviews (outlined above) should not prevent either the line manager or the employee seeking to discuss progress and performance more frequently during the probationary period, and other appropriate personnel may become involved to provide support where necessary
- Serious misconduct or unsatisfactory performance will normally result in failure to complete the probationary period satisfactorily, this may result in possible summary dismissal without notice. Warnings will be given for less serious occurrences as part of the probation review meetings
- Where it has not been possible to complete probationary reviews due to sickness absence, consideration will be given to extending the review period, and therefore the probationary period. However, a high level of absence due to frequent short term absence could result in failure to complete the probationary period satisfactorily.
- In both cases, consideration of individual circumstances should be given, and advice must be sought from the Trust HR Team who will ensure the employee receives confirmation of the decision in writing
- Failure to complete the probationary period satisfactorily will result in dismissal and the appropriate period of notice (as per contract) will be given

Roles and Responsibilities

Trust Board Responsibilities

- Have oversight of the Probation Policy across the schools within the Trust
- Have ownership for the Probation Policy and ensure the process is applied consistently and fairly, and is signposted to all employees within the Trust
- Will be advised via a summary report of any employees at risk of being dismissed within their probationary period, and any employees who have had their probation period extended

Trust Human Resources Team Responsibilities

- Implement, review, and report on the Probation Policy when appropriate
- Ensure that probation processes across the Trust are monitored and reviewed, and adherence to the policy is taking place at all levels
- Maintain and monitor a central system which ensures that meetings are taking place within the allotted timescales, and that paperwork is being completed properly and in a timely manner
- A member of the Trust HR team will be present for meetings where there is felt to be a need for specific advice and guidance, and when the meeting will result in either an extension to the probation period, or a dismissal due to not passing the probation period
- Provide training on this policy, and review its implementation recommending any adjustments in light of experience gained
- Provide advice and assistance on individual cases
- Quality assure the review paperwork flagging up any inconsistencies or concerns immediately
- Ensure that job descriptions are fit for purpose, provide clarity on the role, and that all documentation reflects the role they are performing
- Follow up on any non completion of induction
- Regularly review the induction process to ensure that employees are being given all of the important information, so allowing them to succeed
- Produce a summary report for the AIB (anonymised) and the Trust Board in relation to any probationary concerns and subsequent actions for any of the Academies

AIB Responsibilities

- Understand and adopt the Probation Policy
- Maintain oversight of any probation concerns, and in liaison with the Headteacher review the summary provided to them
- Contribute to discussions in relation to any concerns regarding the Headteacher's probationary period
- Ensure that the Headteacher carries out his / her responsibilities in relation to the probation process

Headteacher Responsibilities

- Develop clear arrangements for line managers responsible for implementing the Probation Policy, and consult with the Trust Leadership Team or Trust HR team as appropriate

- Enable the Trust HR team to ensure that the Probation Policy is clearly communicated and accessible to all staff
- Ensure that any concerns about a member of staff still in their probation period are clearly documented and acted upon in a timely manner. Any concerns should be highlighted on the risk register which is sent to the Trust HR Team on a monthly basis
- Provide a report to the Trust Board and AIB (anonymised) outlining the details of probation concerns either those likely to be extended, or those that may be dismissed
- Ensure effective communication is made with the Trust HR Team, in order that they can fully support any employees who are at risk of failing their probation period
- Submit all documentation throughout the year to the Trust HR team according to the timelines set out in the Probation Review Form

Line Manager Responsibilities

- Implementing this procedure within their areas of responsibility
- Ensuring they meet with the employee in accordance with the structured timeline and complete the paperwork fully
- Acting with transparency when concerns are apparent, and highlighting any concerns to the Headteacher
- Supporting staff during their induction and settling in period, making sure they understand the standards and expectations of the Trust and its Academies as well as supporting them to achieve these standards and expectations

Employee Responsibilities

- Engage with the induction programme and ask questions when needed, raise concerns in a timely manner
- Engage with training and all communications
- Share any evidence they consider relevant with their line manager via the appropriate platform
- Raise any issues / concerns with the process including cancellation of probation meetings, lack of 1 to 1 meetings, lack of training, or unfair application of process. Staff should notify the Principal if concerns have not been resolved with their line manager. If appropriate they should escalate their concerns to the Trust HR Team
- Employees are responsible for complying with the requirements of this procedure and for performing their duties to an acceptable standard. Where an employee is suffering from an ill health condition that is affecting their performance at work, they should speak to their line manager as soon as possible
- Attend all scheduled 1 to 1 line management meetings, use this as your opportunity to discuss work flow, concerns, ideas

Process

- The Probationary Review Form will be sent to line managers (please see appendix 1 below). Alternatively the form is available from the staff portal, or the Trust HR Team. Line managers must complete these on appointment of the employee

- Line managers should diarise the probationary meetings with the employee to ensure they discuss progress and performance, and record the outcome of the discussion on the review form. It is the responsibility of the line manager to ensure the probationary review dates are adhered to
- The original documentation should be kept by the individual following each review and the date of the new review should be diarised by the line manager and recorded on the paperwork
- The line manager should ensure a copy of the probationary review form is returned to the Trust HR Team for recording on the HR system. Managers will be held accountable as part of their line management responsibilities, and this may be a leadership objective within the performance management cycle
- The final probationary review should be countersigned by the relevant Headteacher, and the original form returned to the Trust HR Team so that, as appropriate, individuals can be confirmed as permanent employees having passed their probationary period

Once the Trust HR Team has received the completed Probationary Review Form, a letter will be created and sent confirming the outcome of the probation period.

Generally, most new employees settle in quickly and progress well. However, in the event of performance/conduct concerns, line managers are responsible for ensuring that the guiding principles outlined below are followed;

- In cases where concerns are identified, remedial measures (e.g. training and support, informal meeting or formal meeting, if misconduct is a concern, etc.) should be discussed with the employee by the line manager. The standards which are required, an agreed course of action, and a time-scale for any targets set must be clearly identified and recorded
- The necessary action will be taken i.e. training and supervisory support will be provided but, if there is not sufficient improvement at subsequent reviews, the employee should be told of the possible consequences of this i.e. consideration will be given to termination of employment
- The line manager should alert their senior manager and / or Headteacher at an early stage where cause for concern is identified to ensure that timescales are not exceeded or extended without consultation
- The Headteacher must identify any concerns to the Trust HR Team
- Any warning about performance should be confirmed in writing to the employee by letter, and will be sent via the Trust HR Team. If the line manager considers that an adverse report should be written, they should contact the Trust HR Team for advice on how to proceed before any formal discussion with the employee takes place. The written notification must include the following information:
 - Details of the employee's current standard of work, including aspects which are considered satisfactory and those which are unsatisfactory
 - The proposed measures which will be undertaken to secure an improvement. This should include an action plan put together by the line manager providing details of the measures discussed with the employee and any actions required by both parties i.e. training, closer

- supervision, greater attention to detail or work procedures, improvements in timekeeping, conduct, sickness record etc.
- o Timescale for the required improvement to take place
- o The consequences of continued unsatisfactory performance

Further meetings should be arranged, if necessary, before the next review date.

If dismissal is being considered, an interview with the relevant senior manager and the Trust HR Team will be arranged.

End of Probationary period

Provided the employee has satisfied their line manager that they are competent to undertake their role, the line manager should notify the Trust HR Team by returning the final paperwork to them. The probation report will have been sent to the Headteacher who will read and decide whether to sign off the probation period, and this will take place prior to being sent to the Trust HR Team. The employee will then receive written confirmation from the Trust HR Team that their appointment has been confirmed, or in some circumstances the probation period extended. The employee will continue to be on probation until written confirmation has been received.

In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to extend the period of probation where there is some doubt as to the employee suitability, or if a proper assessment of performance has not been possible e.g. due to the employee's absence on ill health grounds, or some progress is evident. Any extension will need to be discussed with the Trust HR Team and is usually only permitted if there is every indication that the employee will reach and be able to sustain the required performance during the extension period.

Where there is every indication that the employee will reach the required standard, an extension to the probationary period may be granted of up to 3 months if that is considered appropriate by the relevant line manager, Principal and the Trust HR Team. Appropriate reviews will be included in this process.

The employee will be informed in writing of the reason for the extension, its duration, and the improvements required before confirmation of permanent appointment can be given.

In circumstances where it is clear that an employee's work performance is not going to improve sufficiently to meet the required standard there is no requirement to wait for the full probationary period to run before taking action. The probationary period can be terminated at any stage and failure to complete the probationary period satisfactorily will result in dismissal, and the appropriate period of notice will be given.

Appendix 1

Confidential

PROBATIONARY PERIOD REVIEW FORM

TEACHING/NON-TEACHING/SUPPORT

Name of Employee:	
Post:	
Line Manager:	
Name of Mentor:	
Appointment Date:	End of Appointment:
	(if temporary)
Probation Ends:	_____

FIRST REVIEW (6 weeks)

Date Review Due:

Please return to Human Resources no later than two weeks after the review date

SECOND REVIEW (12 weeks)

Date Review Due:

Please return to Human Resources no later than two weeks after the review date



THIRD REVIEW (18 weeks)

Date Review Due:

Please return to Human Resources no later than two weeks after the review date

FINAL REVIEW (24 weeks)

And recommendations for renewal of temporary appointment (if applicable)

Date Review Due:

Please return to Human Resources no later than two weeks after the review date

DRAFT

FIRST REVIEW (6 weeks)

Assessment to be indicated with

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Attitude to work				
Application to work				
Standard of work				
Timekeeping				
Relations with others				
<p>Any other points as discussed with member of staff, including training/development needs: (please state)</p>				
Signed: _____		Position: _____		

If any points are unsatisfactory, please state what action has been taken to improve the standard and discuss the matter with the Trust HR Team without delay.

I have discussed this review with my line manager and I confirm that during my first 6 weeks I have been allocated a mentor.

Signed: _____ Position: _____

Date: _____

SECOND REVIEW (12 weeks)

Assessment to be indicated with

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Attitude to work				
Application to work				
Standard of work				
Timekeeping				
Relations with others				
Any other points as discussed with member of staff, including training/development needs: (please state)				
Signed: _____		Position: _____		

If any points are unsatisfactory, please state what action has been taken to improve the standard and discuss the matter with the Trust HR Team without delay.

I have discussed this review with my line manager and I confirm that during my first 13 Weeks I have completed a general induction and had the opportunity to discuss my training and development needs with my line manager.

Signed: _____ Position: _____

Date: _____

THIRD REVIEW (18 weeks)

Assessment to be indicated with

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Attitude to work				
Application to work				
Standard of work				
Timekeeping				
Relations with others				
<p>Any other points as discussed with member of staff, including training/development needs: (please state)</p>				
Signed: _____		Position: _____		

If any points are unsatisfactory, please state what action has been taken to improve the standard and discuss the matter with the Trust HR Team without delay.

Signed: _____ Position: _____

Date: _____

FINAL REVIEW (24 weeks)

Please review the previous meetings and highlight which option you would like to proceed with:

1. This employee has satisfactorily completed his/her probationary period
2. I recommend that the above names employee's temporary contract should be renewed (Terms of which to be discussed with the Trust HR Team)
3. The above named employee has not satisfactorily completed the probationary period (to be discussed with the Trust HR Team)
 - I recommend an extension of months (minimum 3 months, maximum 6 months)
 - I am unable to recommend that his/her appointment is confirmed

(please delete as appropriate)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Position: _____

Final Approval from Headteacher

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Position: _____