

Probation Policy



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Purpose

The line-manager will meet with the employee at the beginning of their employment to confirm that they are in agreement with the job description and person specification issued on appointment through the recruitment process. At this meeting the member of staff / line manager should identify any aspects in which they feel the staff member needs further training / support and these will form the probationary targets in conjunction with the Induction Schedule. The setting of specific probationary targets will not be required if the employee / line manager cannot identify any needs at this stage. If no specific needs are identified then the line manager should set normal performance management / appraisal targets and review progress towards these as part of the probationary and induction period.

1.0 Terms of Reference

1.1 This procedure applies to all employees regardless of their permanent, fixed-term, full or part-time status.

1.2 Definitions:

“Headteacher” also refers to any other title used to identify the Headteacher, where appropriate, or other Senior Manager delegated to deal with the matter by the Headteacher. For centrally employed staff, headteachers and executive headteachers, please read as “Chief Executive Officer”.

“Companion” refers to a person chosen by the employee to accompany them at a Formal Hearing, who shall be a trade union representative or a workplace colleague.

“Probationer” refers to the employee who is serving the probation period.

“Line Manager” refers to the person delegated to manage the probation period. This may be a Senior Manager other than the direct Line Manager.

“Governors’ Disciplinary Committee” may be convened for a Formal Hearing where the Headteacher considers that they must act in the role of Line Manager. In this event substitute ‘Headteacher’ with ‘Governors Disciplinary Committee’ throughout the procedure.

“Governors’ Appeal Committee” may be convened to hear an appeal against a decision to dismiss. Where possible the number of governors on the committee will be equal to, or greater than, the decision maker(s) of the case being appealed.

“Formal Hearing” a meeting at which a recommendation to dismiss the Probationer is considered.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 This procedure is non contractual and for guidance only, although reduced notice of termination provisions by the employer are covered in the contract of employment. The exception to this is substantiated allegations of gross misconduct, as outlined in paragraph 4.3 below, which normally warrants summary dismissal without notice.

2.2 The probation policy should be following alongside and in conjunction with the Induction Policy and Schedule

2.3 It is the responsibility of the Line Manager to implement the procedure and to ensure that the procedure is communicated to Probationers and that it is applied consistently.

2.4 The probation period is for six months from the start date of employment and may be extended by an additional three months, or longer if the extension period includes school holidays (see section 4.8).

2.5 It may also be agreed at the outset of the employment that the probation period will be longer than six months where the Probationer is employed on a term time only contract and the probation period spans the school summer holidays.

2.6 The purpose of the probation period is to enable an assessment to be made regarding a Probationer’s suitability for the job for which they have been employed.

2.7 The probation procedure provides a consistent and fair framework for:

2.71 Monitoring and reviewing the performance of new employees in relation to:

- Quality of work and understanding of role;
- Attitudes and motivation;
- Conduct and attendance;
- Compliance with all policies and procedures particularly those relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people; and
- Health and safety.

2.72 Providing feedback and opportunity for discussion.

2.73 A structured approach to address any concerns linked to 2.61.



2.8 The capability, disciplinary and sickness absence policies and/or procedures do not apply during the probation period. If issues of conduct, poor performance or sickness arise during the probation period, the probation procedure will normally be used to address such matters. Where allegations have been made against a Probationer, a management investigation will be conducted into the matter. In cases of alleged serious misconduct the Headteacher (or person with delegated responsibility for suspension) will normally suspend the Probationer pending an investigation.

2.9 The following employees are excluded from a probationary period:

- When transferring between the Trust's Academies unless they are still within a probationary period;
- Staff who TUPE into the employment of BDMAT where probationary periods did not exist;
- Following an internal transfer (there will be a probation period when there is a change in role);
- Following any variations to the terms and conditions of employment; and

The ECT induction arrangements and the appraisal policy for teachers will run concurrently with the probation period. The Line Manager will normally be the induction tutor/appraiser. Where deemed necessary the probation procedure will take precedence over the appraisal policy.

3.0 Equality and Diversity

3.1 The procedure will be operated in accordance with our Equality and Diversity Policy. We are committed to developing, maintaining and supporting a culture of equality and diversity in employment. The impact of the procedure will be monitored in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

4.0 The Procedure

4.1 The Line Manager is responsible for ensuring that the Probationer is properly monitored during the probation period and meetings and paperwork are completed in a timely manner. The Probationer will be provided with a copy of the procedure and indicative dates for the probation meetings. In the event that the Probationer's standards fall below expectations, the Line Manager is responsible for initiating and taking action in accordance with this procedure.

4.2 The line-manager will meet with the employee at the beginning of their employment to confirm that they are in agreement with the job description and person specification issued on appointment through the recruitment process. At this meeting the member of staff / line manager should identify any aspects in which they feel they need further training / support and these will form the probationary targets. The setting of specific probationary targets will not be

required if the employee cannot identify any needs. If no specific needs are identified then the line manager should set normal performance management / appraisal targets and review progress towards these as part of the probationary period. The process is to be carried out in conjunction with the Induction Policy.

- 4.3 During the probationary period the member of staff may be allocated a mentor to support the line manager. The role of the mentor is to:
- Provide the new worker with support and supervision and help them put policies and procedures into practice;
 - Support member of staff with weak performance as soon as possible, especially if the concerns are about a worker's behaviour in relation to children;
 - Look out for gaps in the worker's knowledge which require further training
 - Report concerns to the line manager regarding any issues re their progress, attitudes or behaviours, in particular in regard to safeguarding children

Where it is not practicable to assign this role to a specific mentor the line manager will be responsible for all of the above.

- 4.4 The Line Manager should, in normal circumstances, conduct three reviews with the Probationer. Reviews should take the form of a confidential meeting between the Line Manager and the Probationer, in which there is opportunity for two-way discussion.

- 4.5 In exceptional circumstances, where there are serious concerns over the suitability of a Probationer, the Line Manager may decide to progress straight to the Final Review and omit the Second Review, or to reduce the time between the review meetings. Such concerns may include substantiated safeguarding or health and safety concerns or substantiated allegations that may constitute gross misconduct during an extended probation period.

- 4.6 The First Review: To be completed within weeks four to six of the Probationer's start date.

The purpose of this meeting is for the Line Manager to evaluate the Probationer's performance and discuss any key issues. If improvements in performance are required, full details should be given, including appropriate management support/training.

Upon completion of this review meeting, the Line Manager should complete the relevant section of the Induction Schedule. This should be signed by the Line Manager and the Probationer. A copy should be given to the Probationer and a copy saved on the personnel file.

- 4.7 The Second Review: On completion of three months service.

The purpose of this meeting is to review the Probationer's performance over the first three months. Where the First Review indicated that improvements in performance were required, the Second Review meeting should be used to consider the extent of any improvement that may or may not have taken place.

Where the Probationer has not met the required standards, they will be informed that continued failure to meet those standards could result in dismissal.

Upon completion of this meeting, the Line Manager should complete the relevant section of the Induction Schedule. This should be signed by the Line Manager and the Probationer, and a copy should be given to the Probationer and a copy saved on the personnel file.

4.8 The Final Review: On completion of five months service.

Prior to the Final Review meeting, which normally takes place after the Probationer has completed five months service, the Line Manager should decide whether:

- The Probationer has passed probation; or
- The probation period is extended due to exceptional circumstances.

Consideration to extend may include the following, but this is not an exhaustive list:

- Performance concerns have not been fully addressed but there is a reasonable expectation that satisfactory performance standards may be met by the end of an extension of the probation period;
- The Probationer has had an extended period of permitted absence and it has not been possible to assess performance; and

Other exceptional circumstances.

- Recommendation from the line manager to the Headteacher at a Formal Hearing that the Probationer is dismissed.
- The Probationer has passed probation

Upon completion of the final review meeting, if the Probationer has passed probation the Line Manager will complete the relevant section of the Induction Schedule. This will be signed by the Line Manager and the Probationer. The form should be placed on the Probationer's personnel file with a copy provided to the employee.

- The Probation period is extended

Where the decision is to extend the probation period, this will normally be limited to one extension and the extension will be no longer than three months unless the extension period includes school holidays, in which case it may be longer.

Before extending the probation period, the Line Manager will normally seek HR advice. The Line Manager will confirm the terms of the extension in writing to the Probationer, including:

- The length of the extension, the date on which the extension will end and dates of review meetings, adjusted according to the extension;
- The reason for the extension and, if the reason is unsatisfactory performance, details of how and why performance has fallen short of the required standards;
- The performance standards or objectives that the employee is required to achieve by the end of the extended period of probation; and
- Any support, for example further training, that will be provided during the extended period of probation and a statement that, if the employee does not fully meet the required standards by the end of the extended period of probation, the employment will be terminated.

There is no right of appeal to the extension of a probation period.

4.9 Formal Hearing

If the Line Manager decides to recommend to the Headteacher / CEO at a Formal Hearing that the Probationer is dismissed then they will write to the Probationer to inform them as soon as practicably possible, normally at least 5 working days in advance, setting out:

- a) The date, time and place of the Formal Hearing.
- b) That the purpose of the Formal Hearing is to recommend dismissal and the reasons why.
- c) The Probationer's right to be accompanied by a Companion.
- d) The titles of enclosed copies of any documents which may be considered.
- e) The name and position of any other person present at the meeting e.g. note taker or HR Adviser.

The Probationer must advise the Line Manager of the following at least 3 working days in advance of the Formal Hearing:

- a) The name and designation of any Companion.
- b) Any written documentation to be considered.

The Probationer, who may be accompanied by a Companion, will have the opportunity to state their case, before a decision is made.

The Headteacher will write to the Probationer confirming the outcome normally within 5 working days of the hearing.

5.0 Right of Appeal

- 5.1 The Probationer has a right of appeal against a decision to dismiss.
- 5.2 An appeal should be made in writing to the clerk to the governors (for headteachers and centrally employed staff this should be to the clerk to the board of governors), stating the grounds for appeal in full, within 10 working days of the date of the written decision.
- 5.3 An appeal will be heard by the Governors' Appeal Committee, none of whom shall have any previous involvement in the case. The Governors' Appeal Committee may have an HR Adviser present. Central staff and headteacher appeals will be heard by a Directors' Appeal Committee.
- 5.4 An appeal hearing will, in normal circumstances, be heard within [10] working days after receipt of the appeal. The clerk to governors/clerk to the board will usually undertake administrative arrangements for any appeal hearing. The outcome will be confirmed in writing as soon as possible and usually within 5 working days of the appeal hearing. There will be no further right of appeal.