

Schools Support Staff Appraisal Policy

This document applies to Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, and is advisory for Foundation and Voluntary Aided Schools.

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SCHOOLS SUPPORT STAFF APPRAISAL POLICY

PURPOSE

The appraisal policy is designed to ensure that all support staff have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively. Appraisal will help to ensure that employees are able to continue to develop and improve their performance.

This policy sets out the framework for clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of employees, within the context of the school's approach to improving educational provision and performance. The appraisal process will be used also to address any concerns that are raised about a member of support staff's performance. If concerns are such that they cannot be resolved through the appraisal process, there will be consideration of whether to commence the capability procedure.

Principles

The appraisal period will run for 12 months, normally from April to March.

Individuals who are employed on a fixed term contract of less than one year will have their performance managed in accordance with the principles underpinning this policy. The length of the period will be determined by the duration of their contract.

Where an individual starts their employment at the school part-way through a cycle, the head teacher shall determine the length of the first cycle for that employee, with a view to bringing their cycle into line with the cycle for other employees as soon as possible. Where an individual transfers to a new post within the school part-way through a cycle, the head teacher shall determine whether the cycle shall begin again and whether to change the appraiser.

APPOINTING APPRAISERS

All appraisers of support staff will be an appropriate member of the support staff team and will be suitably trained. The choice of appraiser is for the head teacher. Where individuals have an objection to the head teacher's choice, their concerns will be carefully considered, taking into account what is reasonable, however; ultimately the decision rests with the head teacher.

Where it becomes apparent that the appraiser appointed by the head teacher will be absent for the majority of the appraisal cycle, the head teacher may perform those duties themselves or delegate those duties to another individual for the duration of that absence.

If the head teacher appoints an appraiser who is not the individual's manager, that appraiser will have an appropriate position in the staffing structure, together with the necessary background knowledge, skills and training to undertake the role.

Where an individual is experiencing difficulties that relate to performance concerns and the head teacher is not the appraiser, the head teacher may undertake the role of appraiser. Where these difficulties do not relate to performance concerns (for example, ill health, or

conduct), the appropriate policy will be followed. See also section on **Individual Experiencing Difficulties**.

SETTING OBJECTIVES

Objectives will be set before or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period. The objectives set will be appropriate to the appraisee's role and level of experience.

In setting the objectives, reviewers will have regard to what can reasonably be expected in the context of roles, responsibilities and experience, consistent with the school's strategy for achieving a work/life balance for all staff. Appraisees may at any point append their comments alongside their objectives.

The appraiser and appraisee will seek to agree the objectives. Objectives may be revised if circumstances change. The school operates a system of moderation to ensure that all appraisers are working to the same standards. Targets will be moderated across the school to ensure that they are consistent between individuals with similar experience and levels of responsibility. Should the objectives not be agreed, the final decision on allocation of objectives rests with the head teacher.

The agreed objectives will contain a description of what success may look like. Where use of numerical targets is appropriate, these will be reasonable, in the circumstances in which the individual works.

Setting more than three objectives, or, for example, using sub-targets, can lead to staff experiencing unreasonable workload and pressure, making the objectives more difficult to achieve.

The objectives set for each individual are intended to contribute to the school's plans for improving the school's educational provision and performance and improving the education of pupils at that school and will take into account the professional aspirations of the individual.

The appraiser will take into account the effects of an individual's circumstances, including any disability, when agreeing objectives. For example, this might include a reasonable adjustment to allow an individual slightly longer to complete a task than might otherwise be the case. When staff return from a period of extended absence, objectives may be adjusted to allow them to readjust to their working environment.

Before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period, each individual will be informed of the standards against which their performance in that appraisal period will be assessed.

REVIEWING PERFORMANCE

The effective and efficient operation of the appraisal process requires a confidential process of constructive engagement within an atmosphere of support and co-operation. Accordingly,

observations will be carried out in a supportive fashion, with professionalism, integrity and courtesy will be evaluated objectively and reported accurately and fairly.

Development and Support

Appraisal is a supportive process which will be used to inform continuing professional development. The school wishes to encourage a culture in which all individuals take responsibility for improving their performance through appropriate professional development.

Professional development will be linked to school improvement priorities and to the on-going professional development needs and priorities of individuals.

The school's CPD programme will be informed by the training and development needs identified as part of the appraisal process. The Governing Body will ensure in the budget planning that, as far as possible, resources are made available in the school budget for appropriate training, and support agreed for appraisees, maintaining access on an equitable basis.

An account of the training and development needs of individuals including the instances where it did not prove possible to provide any agreed CPD, will form a part of the head teacher's annual report to the Governing Body about the operation of the appraisal process in the school.

With regard to the provision of CPD in the case of competing demands on the school budget, a decision on relative priority will be taken with regard to the extent to which:

- (a) the training and support will help the school to achieve its priorities; and
- (b) the CPD identified is essential for an appraisee to meet their objectives.

Account will be taken in a review meeting of where it has not been possible for individuals to fully meet their performance criteria because the support recorded in the planning statement has not been provided.

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT

Each individual's performance will be formally assessed in respect of each appraisal period.

The individual will receive as soon as practicable following the end of each appraisal period – and have the opportunity to comment on - a written appraisal report. The appraisal report will include:

- details of the individual's objectives for the appraisal period in question;
- an assessment of the individual's performance of their role and responsibilities against their objectives, and against the relevant standards;
- an assessment of the individual's training and development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them;
- a space for the individual's own comments.

A review meeting will take place to discuss the content of the report and any further action required and to inform objective setting for the next cycle. In some circumstances an interim review meeting may be appropriate.

The assessment of performance and of training and development needs will inform the planning process for the following appraisal period.

INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES

When dealing with an individual experiencing difficulties, the objective is to provide support and guidance through the appraisal process in such a way that the individual's performance improves and the problem is, therefore, resolved.

Where it is apparent that an individual's personal circumstances are leading to difficulties at school, support will be offered as soon as possible, without waiting for the formal annual assessment.

If an appraiser identifies through the appraisal process, or via other sources of information, for example parental complaints, that the difficulties experienced by an individual are such that, if not rectified, could lead to capability procedures the appraiser, the head teacher, or a member of the leadership team, will, as part of the appraisal process meet the individual to:

- give clear written feedback to the individual about the nature and seriousness of the concerns;
- give the individual the opportunity to comment on and discuss the concerns;
- give the individual at least 5 working days' notice that a meeting will be held to discuss targets for improvement alongside a programme of support;
- in consultation with the individual at the above meeting, an action plan with support will be established (for example coaching, training, in-class support, mentoring, structured observations, visits to other classes or schools or discussions with external advisers), that will help address those specific concerns;
- make clear how progress will be monitored and when it will be reviewed;
- explain the implications and process if no – or insufficient – improvement is made.

The individual's progress will continue to be monitored as part of the appraisal process and a reasonable time given for the individual's performance to improve. This will depend upon the circumstances but will be for a minimum period of 4 working weeks, with appropriate support as agreed in the Action Plan, in order that the aim of recovering and improving performance can be achieved.

During this monitoring period the individual will be given regular feedback on progress and arrangements will be made to modify the support programme if appropriate. If sufficient progress is made such that the individual is performing at a level that indicates there is no longer a possibility of capability procedures being invoked the individual should be informed

of this at a formal meeting with the appraiser or head teacher. Following this meeting the appraisal process will continue as normal.

If no, or insufficient, improvement has been made over this period, the individual will be invited to a **transition meeting** to determine whether formal capability proceedings need to be commenced or the appraisal process remains in place. The individual may be accompanied by a trade union representative or official, or work colleague, and will have at least 5 working days' notice of the meeting.

Grievance

Where a member of staff raises a grievance during the appraisal or capability process, the appraisal or capability process may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance. Where the grievance and appraisal or capability cases are related it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently.

Sickness Absence

If a member of support staff undergoing monitoring or a formal capability procedure is on long term absence, referral to occupational health will take place to assess the appropriateness or otherwise of continuing with monitoring or formal procedures.

Confidentiality and Professional Relationships

The appraisal and capability processes will be treated with confidentiality. Only the appraiser's leader or where there is more than one, each of the leaders will be provided with access to the appraisee's plan recorded in their statements. This will be done upon request and only where this is necessary to enable the leader to discharge their management responsibilities. Appraisees will be consulted on requests for access to statements in the context of this policy.

The process of gathering evidence for performance review will not compromise normal professional relationships between support staff and appraisers. The Governing Body recognises that the appraiser will consult with, and seek to secure the agreement of, the appraisee before seeking information from other colleagues about the work of the appraiser.

However, the desire for confidentiality does not override the need for the head teacher and Governing Body to quality-assure the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal system. The head teacher or appropriate colleague may review all individual's objectives and written appraisal records personally – to check consistency of approach and expectation between different appraisers.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Governing Body and head teacher will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the school's appraisal arrangements. The head teacher will provide the Governing Body with a written report on the operation of the school's appraisal and capability policies annually. The

report will not identify any individual by name. The report will include an assessment of the impact of these policies on:

- Race
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Disability
- Religion and Beliefs
- Age
- Part-time Status
- Maternity and Pregnancy

The head teacher will report on whether there have been any appeals or representations on an individual or collective basis on the grounds of alleged discrimination.

Document Retention

The Governing Body and head teacher will ensure that all written appraisal records are retained in a secure place for six years and then destroyed in line with Data Protection legislation.