



Staff Appraisal Policy

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Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 Confidentiality

1.2 Consistency of Treatment and Fairness

1.3 Quality Assurance / Moderation

1.4 Delegation

1.5 Absence

1.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

1.7 Retention and data protection

2. Appraisal

2.1 Purpose

2.2 Application of the policy

2.3 The appraisal period

2.4 Appointing appraisers

2.5 The appraisal meeting

2.6 Annual assessment

2.7 Setting objectives

2.8 Revising objectives mid cycle

2.9 Development and support

2.10 Reviewing performance / feedback

2.11 Observation

2.12 If performance concerns arise during the appraisal cycle

2.13 Period of improvement

2.14 Notice to improve

2.15 Improvement period review

2.16 Transition to Employee Performance Improvement Procedure.

1 Introduction

This policy combines statutory requirements, recommendations from the DfE's model policy and elements from the previous performance management policy, which was agreed in consultation with Head teachers and trade unions in 2006.

The Trust must stay within the legal framework set out in the Appraisal Regulations and in other relevant legislation that affects all employers (for example legislation on equality, employment protection and data protection).

This appraisal policy is linked to the Employee Performance Improvement Procedure, which is the mechanism used to manage under-performance of staff.

From 1 September 2012 this policy supersedes the previous performance management model policy and guidance adopted by the Trust, which had been designed to support the 2006 Regulations.

This procedure has been assessed for workload impact.

1.1 Confidentiality

The appraisal process will be treated with confidentiality. The desire for confidentiality, however, does not override the need for the CEO and Directors to quality-assure the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal system.

Although confidentiality underpins the entire appraisal process, the appraisee's records may be shared with Directors and other key members of staff / relevant external bodies for a variety of reasons, which include:

- planning continuing professional development
- making efficient use of aggregated lesson observation information for a variety of Trust leadership purposes
- quality assurance
- overall monitoring of the system and its effectiveness
- school inspections/reviews

1.2 Consistency of Treatment and Fairness

The Trust is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness and will abide by all relevant equality legislation.

The Head teacher, or appropriate senior leader, may moderate staff objectives, written appraisal records and, if applicable, pay recommendations to ensure consistency of approach and expectation between appraisers.

Employees have a contractual responsibility to maintain an acceptable level of performance and should be given help and encouragement to achieve this. Head Teachers and managers are responsible for setting realistic and achievable standards and making sure employees understand what is required.

The following principles should be observed when the employee commences work with the organisation:

- the standard of work required should be explained and employees left in no doubt as to what is expected of them.
- job descriptions should accurately convey the main purpose and scope of each job and the tasks involved
- the consequences of any failure to meet the required standards should be explained

These standards can be communicated in the following ways:

- Induction
- Appraisal
- One to one discussions
- Team Meetings
- Policies and Procedures
- Written guidance/ practices and standard operating procedures
- Training
- Job descriptions
- Relevant standards, national and local

1.3 Quality Assurance / Moderation

To achieve consistency of approach, fairness and equity in the operation of the Appraisal Policy the Head Teacher will moderate the appraisal process. This will involve ensuring;

- that appraisal underpins and supports the Trust/school's overall development plan and any associated targets;
- consistency between those members of staff who have a similar level of responsibility within the Trust;
- compliance with the Trust's appraisal policy, the regulations and the requirements of equality legislation.

Objectives may be revised during the appraisal period as a result of moderation and reviewed by the Head or senior leaders. This will follow consultation with the individual member of staff.

The assessment of objectives that have changed mid cycle should take into account the timing of the change and the ability for the individual to meet those objectives within that appraisal cycle in their role/post.

1.4 Delegation

Normal rules apply in respect of the delegation of functions by Directors and Head Teachers. It is recognised that if concerns or issues of under-performance arise, the Head will have the discretion to nominate a senior member of staff to address these concerns within this procedure.

1.5 Absence

Sickness will be dealt with via the Trust's sickness and absence policy. The impact of sickness on appraisal linked to pay progression will be considered in accordance with the Trust's pay policy.

Where any absence (e.g. sickness, maternity) has had a significant impact on the individual's ability to meet objectives, this will be taken into consideration both during the appraisal cycle and at the point of assessment.

In terms of pay progression, if the appraiser / Head has any queries relating to significant absence they may take advice from Human Resources.

Where performance concerns have arisen within the appraisal process it may be appropriate for monitoring and review to continue. Each case will be considered individually.

1.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Directors and CEO will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the Trust's appraisal arrangements. The CEO will report annually to Directors regarding the operation and effectiveness of appraisal.

1.7 Retention and data protection

The Directors, CEO & Headteachers will ensure that all written appraisal records are retained securely and are then destroyed in line with the Trust's Retention Policy. As part of the application of this policy, the Trust may collect, process and store personal data in accordance with our data protection policy. We will comply with the requirements of Data Protection Legislation (being (i) the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) (unless and until the GDPR is no longer directly applicable in the UK) and any national implementing laws, regulations and secondary legislation, as amended or updated from time to time, in the UK and then (ii) any successor legislation to the GDPR or the Data Protection Act 1998, including the Data Protection Act 2018). Records will be kept in accordance with our Workforce Privacy Notice, our Retention Policy and in line with the requirements of Data Protection Legislation.

2. Appraisal

2.1 Purpose

This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of all members of staff, including the CEO and Head Teachers and for supporting their development within the context of the Trust's plan for improving educational provision and performance. Where teachers are eligible for pay progression, the assessment of overall performance throughout the cycle will be the basis on which the recommendation is made. The appraisal process will not be used as a basis for pay decisions for staff not employed under Teachers Pay & Conditions. Performance will be assessed against the objectives set and the relevant professional standards, national and local.

This policy also sets out the arrangements for feedback and support if there are concerns regarding performance and provides the link to the Employee Performance Improvement Procedure where concerns remain.

Effective appraisal should enhance pupils' attainment, support school improvement, deliver improvement in motivation and morale and support career progression.

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

The annual assessment meeting should ideally be dual purpose and could then set the objectives, training support and development for the following year.

2.2 Application of the policy

Whilst appraisal for teachers is covered by statute, there are no such arrangements for support staff in schools. This appraisal policy, however, will apply to all staff, including support staff employed at the Trust.

Appraisal in this Trust will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all members of staff have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively. It will help to ensure that each individual member of staff continues to improve their professional practice. The appraisal process aims to foster professional dialogue between colleagues.

All activities linked to appraisal should take place within directed time.

Exceptions

This policy does not apply to those on contracts of less than one term, those undergoing induction (i.e. NQTs) and those who are subject to the Employee Performance Improvement Procedure.

2.3 The appraisal period

The appraisal period will run for twelve months from September to August.

Staff 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.

There is flexibility to have a longer or shorter appraisal period when staff begin or end employment with the Trust.

Where a member of staff starts their employment at the Trust part way through a cycle, the Head Teacher (or in the case of the Heads or CEO), the Directors shall determine the length of the first cycle.

Where a member of staff transfers to a new post within the Trust part way through a cycle, the Head (or, in the case of the Head or CEO), the Directors shall determine whether the cycle shall begin again, whether to change the reviewer and/or whether to review the objectives. (see 2.8 Revising Objectives Mid Cycle)

2.4 Appointing appraisers

The CEO will be appraised by the Directors, supported by a suitably skilled and/or experienced external adviser who has been appointed by the Directors for that purpose.

The Headteachers will be appraised by the CEO & Chair of Governors.

The appraisal of the CEO, including the setting of objectives, will be delegated to a sub-committee consisting of no less than two Directors. This group will be known as the Appointed Directors.

The Head Teacher will decide who will appraise staff. The appraiser will normally have line management responsibility and in any event will be more senior to the appraisee.

Where a member of staff is of the opinion that the person to whom the Head has delegated the appraisers duties is unsuitable for professional reasons, s/he may submit a written request to the CEO for that appraiser to be replaced, stating the reasons.

The reasons will be carefully considered and, if the CEO (in the case of the CEO, the Directors) considers these concerns to be valid, an alternative appraiser will be offered.

Where it becomes apparent that the appraiser will be absent for a significant period of the cycle, or is unsuitable for professional reasons, the Head may perform the duties or delegate them to another member of staff.

The appraisal cycle will not necessarily begin again in the event of the appraiser being changed, however objectives may need to be reviewed in some circumstances (see 2.8 Revising Objectives Mid Cycle).

Appraisers for Teachers must have Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). All line managers to whom the Head has delegated the role of appraiser will receive appropriate preparation and training.

2.5 The appraisal meeting

This meeting provides the opportunity for the appraiser and the appraisee to have a two-way discussion. On the basis that the annual assessment meeting is combined with the setting of the following year's objectives it is likely that this discussion will cover the following:

- A review of last year's overall performance set against the national and local standards;

- Performance against the set objectives as determined by the Trust;
- Overall Trust/school priorities for the coming year;
- How the individual will be expected to contribute to the priorities including specific personal objectives;
- Confirm the relevant professional standards which provide context for the appraisal process;
- Continuous professional development priorities and opportunities, including career advancement aspirations;
- Self evaluation against standards to inform the continuous improvement in professional practice;
- How overall performance against specific objectives will be measured, including classroom observations.

Employees are expected to play an active role in their appraisal and professional development including taking the actions agreed within their appraisal.

The objectives set, and any training support and development agreed and an outline of appraisal lesson observations, will be provided in writing.

The appraisee can submit any issues in writing to highlight areas that they do not agree with.

Sufficient time should be set aside for the meeting within directed time.

2.6 Annual assessment

Annual assessments may be combined with the following year's appraisal meeting to set objectives.

A successful annual assessment will reflect both progress against the objectives set and overall performance against the appropriate standards applicable to the individual role.

Each member of staff's performance will be formally assessed in respect of each appraisal period. In assessing the performance of the CEO, the Appointed Directors must consult an external adviser.

This assessment is the end point to the annual appraisal process, but performance and development priorities will be reviewed and addressed on a regular basis throughout the year in interim meetings which will take place as required.

The member of staff will receive as soon as practicable following the end of each appraisal period a written appraisal report and will be given the opportunity to comment in writing. Members of staff will receive their written appraisal reports by 31 December. The appraisal report will include:

- details of the objectives for the appraisal period in question;
- an assessment of the performance of their role and responsibilities against their objectives and the relevant standards;
- an assessment of the professional development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them will be taken forward to the next appraisal period;
- for those on Teachers Pay and Conditions, where relevant, a recommendation on pay progression (NB – pay recommendations need to be made by 31 December).

2.7 Setting objectives

The CEO's objectives will be set by the Appointed Directors after consultation with the external adviser.

It is assumed that all members of staff are working in accordance with the relevant professional standards appropriate to their role.

For non-teaching members of staff these expectations will be predominantly laid down in the job description. Any other relevant standards against which they will be assessed will be made clear via the appraisal process.

Objectives for each member of staff will be set before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period. The objectives set, will be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound and will be challenging, rigorous and appropriate to the role and responsibilities. The appraiser and appraisee will seek to agree the objectives but, if this is not possible, the appraiser will determine the objectives. Objectives may be revised if circumstances change.

The objectives set will, if achieved, contribute to the Trust's plans for improving the quality of educational provision and performance.

Before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period, each member of staff will be informed of the standards against which their performance in that appraisal period will be assessed. With the exception of those who are qualified teachers by virtue of holding and maintaining Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status, all teachers must be assessed against the set of standards contained in the document called "Teachers' Standards" effective from 01 September 2012. The Headteacher or Directors (as appropriate) will need to consider whether certain teachers should also be assessed against other sets of standards published by the Secretary of State that are relevant.

For teachers who are qualified teachers by virtue of holding QTLS status, it is for the Directors or Head to decide which standards are most appropriate. Such teachers may be assessed against Teachers' Standards, against any other sets of standards issued by the Secretary of State, against any other professional standards relevant to their performance or any combination of the three.

Equally it is for the Trust to decide what standards support staff will be assessed against. Any such standards will be reasonable and appropriate to need.

All members of staff, including the CEO & Headteachers, will have between 3 and 5 objectives, proportionate to need and subject to Trust moderation.

2.8 Revising objectives mid cycle

Objectives may be revised during the appraisal period by the Head / Senior Leader as a result of moderation and review or change of role of member of staff. This will be communicated effectively to relevant staff. Any revised objectives must be appropriate and realistic given the time available within the appraisal cycle (see also Quality Assurance/Moderation)

2.9 Development and support

Appraisal is a supportive process, of which continuing professional development (CPD) is an integral element. The Trust wishes to encourage a culture in which all members of staff take responsibility for improving their performance through appropriate professional development, linked to the Trust/school improvement priorities and the ongoing aspirations of individual staff where possible.

The Trust's continuing professional development (CPD) programme will be informed by the training and development needs identified via appraisal.

The Directors will ensure through budget planning that, as far as possible, appropriate resources are made available for any training and support agreed in the appraisal process. An account of the training and development needs of teachers in general, including instances where it is not possible to provide the identified CPD, will form part of the CEO annual report to the Directors regarding the operation and effectiveness of appraisal.

With regard to the provision of CPD, in the case of competing demands on the Trust budget, a decision on relative priority will be taken with regard to the extent to which: (a) the CPD identified is essential for an appraisee to meet their objectives; and (b) the extent to which the training and support will help the Trust to achieve its priorities. Where training and support have been identified as essential to enable the member of staff to meet objectives, if this support has not been fully provided this should be considered when reviewing their performance.

All appraisers will be provided with training where required to enable them to discharge all aspects of their role appropriately and effectively, including the conduct of appraisal reviews, objective setting, classroom observation, and providing quality feedback to appraisees.

2.10 Reviewing performance / feedback

Members of staff will receive constructive feedback on their performance throughout the year. Feedback will highlight particular areas of strength as well as any areas that need attention.

Reviewing performance can be undertaken throughout the year in a number of ways including:

- the analysis of assessment information,
- lesson observations & work scrutiny
- one to one discussions / feedback
- compliance with the Trust's policy and procedures assessment of pupils' work
- progress towards objectives
- departmental or whole school reviews and observation.

The general review of performance should be a supportive process, which informs the progress of both the Trust's and the individual's objectives and aspirations. One key aim is to identify under-performance at its earliest possible stage to prevent the escalation of a more serious performance issue.

As part of the two way dialogue the appraisee is responsible for making sure that, during the appraisal cycle, the appraiser is made aware of anything they consider has been helpful and has impacted positively on their personal performance.

Similarly, appraisees should make the appraiser aware, as soon as possible, if they have any concerns about the quality of professional development and/or other support being provided and of any changes in circumstances that might impact on their performance.

The appraiser is responsible for making sure that, if concerns arise, these are discussed with the individual in an appropriate and timely manner.

Performance expectations are not limited to the objectives set under the appraisal policy and will include the overall performance of the individual.

2.11 Observation

Some classroom observation will be carried out each year.

Any classroom observation may be multi-purpose, in accordance with the Trust's commitment to streamlining data collection and minimising bureaucracy and workload burdens on staff.

The information gathered during classroom observations will be used, where appropriate, for a variety of purposes. This could include, for example, school self-evaluation, departmental review and professional development. Any good practice observed or any concerns identified will be used to inform the appraisal process.

Classroom observation will assist in evaluating the standards of performance, teaching and learning and ensuring that proper standards of professional performance are established and maintained within the Trust.

Classroom observation is an essential element of teacher appraisal. The Trust believes that observation of classroom practice and other responsibilities is important both as a way of assessing performance to identify strengths and areas for development, and gain useful information which can inform school improvement more generally.

Classroom observation also helps Trust leaders to ensure that appropriate standards are being maintained within the Trust. Headteachers have a statutory responsibility to monitor and evaluate performance.

Classroom observation of teachers will be conducted by those with QTS. Support staff may be observed by colleagues without QTS. Those involved in the process will:

- Carry out the role with professionalism, integrity and courtesy;
- Evaluate objectively;
- Report accurately, fairly and within a reasonable timescale;
- Respect the confidentiality of the information gained;
- Provide feedback that is supportive and developmental;
- Deliver verbal feedback wherever possible by the end of the next working day, and within directed time;
- Provide written feedback normally within 5 working days.

Observation as part of the Appraisal Process

Observation as part of the appraisal process will normally be for no more than 3 hours per year. However there is no requirement to use all of the 3 hours. The agreed outline of observations will be recorded in the documentation agreed at the conclusion of the appraisal meeting.

The timing and focus of observation will be discussed between the observer and appraisee and an appropriate period of notice will be given.

Additional Observations

Additional observations may be undertaken for a variety of reasons. Examples of this (not an exhaustive list) are:

- Where there are concerns about a teacher's classroom practice
- When the school is in an Ofsted category of concern
- Significant relative underperformance has been identified, for example within a department or key stage or even the whole school;
- For the purposes of monitoring and self-evaluation.

2.12 If performance concerns arise during the appraisal cycle

It is part of the day-to-day activities of managers to monitor employees' performance and provide feedback. Where an employee's performance is falling below the required standard this must be evidenced.

A clear distinction must be drawn between poor performance due to capability (what someone cannot do even when trying their best) and poor performance due to a wilful refusal or disinclination to work (what someone will not do) or deliberately not doing work as directed. The former is a matter of competence and is to be dealt with under this procedure and, where concerns continue, the Employee Performance Improvement Procedure, whilst the latter examples will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

The Trust should seek advice from Human Resources at this stage, and the employee may wish to discuss the issue with their Trade Union representative.

In circumstances where the poor performance is considered a matter of capability, the appraiser (or if applicable, Senior Leader / manager) should then invite the employee to meet to discuss this, to explore reasons for the underperformance, giving the employee an opportunity to respond and improve.

This meeting must be conducted between the manager and employee. At the start of the meeting the manager will:

Explain the problem - why the work performance is not currently acceptable

Be constructive - point out the shortcomings but explain how these can be put right

Give clear guidance on the improved standard of performance needed

Outline what support and training has been provided

Give the employee the chance to explain or reply and listen to their ideas on how to resolve the problem and what support they think is needed

It is important that attempts are made to ensure that the employee recognises and accepts there is a problem and feels that they have an opportunity to indicate how it is to be addressed.

If it emerges that the employee's problems with performance may be health related then a referral to Occupational Health should be made. If there are matters relating to disability then reasonable adjustments must be considered in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

During the meeting an action plan will be discussed. The plan will include:

A clear outline of the current standard of work and what the expectation is, identifying improvements to be made

An outline of what other support is to be provided or continued

What needs to be done, by whom and by when - this includes setting targets and outcomes expected, support, coaching and training required

The provision of any aids or equipment, where these are required, reasonable and appropriate

How the manager will review performance including monitoring and review dates

2.13 Period of improvement

The meeting will set a time scale of **6 weeks** for improvement to occur (unless this is a case of serious concern, when the timescale will be set at **4 weeks**). The manager will inform the employee that if improvement is not achieved more serious action may be taken and the potential for the individual to be transferred from the appraisal process into the Employee Performance Improvement Procedure.

2.14 Notice to improve

The above details should be recorded on a template. This, along with a Notice to Improve letter detailing the areas of concern, support provided, employee's response, the outcomes from the meeting and explaining what can happen if the employee does not meet and maintain the standards with the improvement period will be provided to the employee. This should be provided to the employee within five working days.

2.15 Improvement period review

Within the period of improvement a fortnightly review should take place between the employee and the manager where feedback will be given to the employee. A contact for support/mentoring may be provided.

A written record should be kept of the fortnightly review sessions including support and advice provided/offered.

Following the period of improvement the manager will take a decision regarding transition to the Employee Performance Improvement Procedure. The employee can take advice from their trade union when issues of performance have been raised.

If the manager is satisfied with progress, the individual will remain in the appraisal process and performance will continue to be monitored accordingly and they will be informed of this in writing.

2.16 Transition to Employee Performance Improvement Procedure

If the manager is not satisfied with progress, the member of staff will be notified in writing that they are required to attend a formal meeting under the Employee Performance Improvement

Procedure. This process is outlined in Employee Performance Improvement Procedure. The individual will be removed from the Appraisal process.