Appraisal policy

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Three Saints Academy Trust (TTSAT) is committed to providing high-quality teaching and learning. Through our workforce we aim to provide opportunities for all of our pupils, whatever their ability. Each employee will therefore be given support to ensure that they are able to develop the skills they need to carry out their role, to help them continually improve their performance and develop to their full potential which will, in turn, help improve outcomes for our young people.

1.2 Having an effective performance management process in place is one of the ways we can support our employees and deal with performance matters as they arise. This involves effective day-to-day supervision, carrying out appraisals, providing development opportunities, and operating a fair and reasonable capability process. Appraisal in this trust will be a supportive and developmental process. It will help ensure that employees are able to continue to improve their professional practice and to develop in their role.

1.3 This appraisal policy has been developed to comply with current legislation, including the Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012 (the Appraisal Regulations) that apply to teachers in all maintained schools. TTSAT has decided to follow the principles of the Appraisal Regulations in developing and implementing this policy, which is informed by the Department for Education's model policy. This policy will also apply to support staff employed within the trust, to ensure consistency in managing performance across all employees.

1.4 This policy has been implemented following consultation with staff and the recognised trade unions.

1.5 The Trust board adopted this policy on September 2026.

1.6 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time following consultation with staff and the recognised trade unions.

2 Scope and purpose of this policy

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of all employees, and for supporting their development within the context of the trust's plan for improving educational provision, performance, and the set standards expected of each employee. The policy links to the capability policy. It also links to the probation policy, see paragraph 3.2.

2.2 This trust regards the Department for Education Teachers' Standards[1] as the baseline of expectations for the professional practice and conduct of teachers from the point of qualification.

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards

2.3 In implementing this policy, the trust will ensure that appraisal is managed in a way that minimises any increase in workload for all parties concerned, for example, reviewing the number and frequency of meetings and observations, and ensuring the process for collecting evidence is always proportionate.

2.4 This policy applies to all employees of the trust, including the headteacher, teachers and support staff, and centrally employed staff within the trust, except those on contracts of less than 1 term, those undergoing statutory induction (i.e. early career teachers (ECTs)) and those who are subject to the trust's capability policy. It does not apply to agency workers, contractors, consultants, or any self-employed individuals.

2.5 Employees within a probationary period are subject to the trust's probationary policy. On successful completion of the probationary period, employees' performance management will be covered by the appraisal policy.

2.6 Where an employee is not covered by this policy as set out in 2.4 and 2.5 above, then performance will be managed through regular supervision, feedback, and any other applicable trust policies.

3 The appraisal period

3.1 The appraisal period will run for 12 months from September to August.

3.2 Employees who are employed on a fixed-term contract of less than 1 year but more than 1 term will have their performance managed in accordance with the principles underpinning this policy. The length of the period and employee's objectives will be determined by the duration of their contract. Employees who are within their probationary period will have their performance managed in accordance with the probationary policy; however, the appraisal principles set out in this policy will still apply.

4 Appointing appraisers

The headteacher will be appraised by the chair of governing body and the CEO. The CEO will be appraised by the Board. This has been delegated to a sub-group of two trustees. In appraising the performance of the CEO the board will consult a suitably skilled and/or experienced external adviser appointed by the board for that purpose.

4.1 The headteacher of the school will decide who will appraise all other employees.

4.2 Employees will be notified of whom their appraiser will be before or as soon as practicable after the start of each appraisal period.

5 Setting objectives

All employees

5.1 Objectives for each employee will be set before or as soon as practicable after the start of each appraisal period. The objectives will be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART), and will be fair, reasonable and appropriate to their role and

level of experience. The appraiser and appraisee will seek to agree the objectives, but if that is not possible, the appraiser will determine the objectives. The headteacher's objectives will be set by the Chair and CEO after consultation with the external adviser. The trust has a duty to have a regard to the work-life balance of all employees and the objectives will reflect this.

5.2 Objectives and performance management discussions for teachers will not be based on teacher-generated data and predictions or solely on the assessment data for a single group of pupils. Objectives can be set in relation to robust assessment data; however, these will not be used in isolation, and other factors will also be considered.

5.3 Objectives should be revised if circumstances change during the appraisal period, such as but not limited to an employee going on maternity leave or undergoing surgery/medical treatment, to take account of the anticipated absence and to allow for the employee to meet reduced and attainable objectives.

5.4 The objectives set for each employee will, if achieved, contribute to the trust's plans for improving educational provision and performance and improving the education of pupils. They should also have a strong focus on professional development to ensure up-to-date methodologies, technologies and educational research are being utilised. The headteacher of the school together with the senior leadership team, will be responsible for quality assuring objectives set across the whole school against the school's improvement plan.

Teachers

5.5 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 published in July 2011.

5.6 For teachers who are qualified teachers by virtue of holding QTLS status, it is for the headteacher to decide which standards are most appropriate.

6 Reviewing performance

Observation

Teachers and teaching assistants

6.1 This trust understands the importance of carrying out observation of classroom practice and other responsibilities of teachers and teaching assistants. Observation assesses performance to identify strengths (so the appraiser can give positive feedback and praise) and areas for development, but also provides a way of gaining useful information which can inform improvements in the trust more generally, and enable teachers to learn from each other and collaborate.

6.2 In this trust, performance will be regularly observed, but the amount and type of classroom observation will depend on the individual circumstances of the employee and the overall

needs of the school. Responsibilities outside the classroom will also be observed and assessed where appropriate. All observations will be carried out in a supportive fashion and not add to teacher and teaching assistant workload. Classroom observations for teachers will be carried out by those with QTS and, for teaching assistants, by those with QTS or a HLTA.

6.3 In addition to formal observation, the headteacher or other leaders with responsibility for teaching standards may "drop in", in order to evaluate the standards of teaching and classroom practice and to check that high standards of professional performance are established and maintained. The length and frequency of "drop-in" observations will vary depending on specific circumstances "Drop in" can be used to provide feedback to teachers as part of the ongoing supportive nature of the appraisal process but are not part of the formal observation process.

Development and support

6.4 Our appraisal process is supportive and, for all employees, to inform and decide continuing professional development which improves performance. The trust encourages a culture in which all employees take responsibility for improving their performance in their role and extending their depth of knowledge through appropriate professional development. Agreed training and professional development will be linked to school improvement priorities and, where possible, to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of individuals. We are committed to supporting appropriate and reasonable development which not only assists the employee in their role but also leads to improvements in performance across the trust.

Feedback

6.5 Within this trust, employees will receive constructive feedback on their performance throughout the year, and as soon as practicable after an observation has taken place (where applicable) or other evidence has come to light. Feedback should highlight particular areas of strength, as well as any areas that require further development; often, this can resolve issues without the need for any formal action.

6.6 Feedback will also be sought from relevant employees within the trust; for example, a teacher may be asked to provide feedback on a teaching assistant who works with them.

6.7 Where there are concerns about any aspects of an employee's performance the appraiser will meet the appraisee to:

6.7.1 Give clear feedback about the nature and seriousness of the concerns.

6.7.2 Give the appraisee the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns.

6.7.3 Find out if there are any issues (both in or outside of work) that are affecting their performance that the appraiser can assist with or provide support.

6.7.4 Set clear objectives for the required improvements and how these can be achieved.

6.7.5 Agree any support (for example, coaching, mentoring, training, structured observations, observing others in a similar role etc.) that will be provided to help address those specific concerns.

6.7.6 Make clear how and by when the appraiser will review progress, either by setting new and clear objectives for required development which will be assessed during the review period or by revising current objectives, allowing sufficient time for improvement; the amount of time for this should reflect the seriousness of the concerns.

6.7.7 Explain the implications and process if no — or insufficient — improvement is made during the informal review period; for example, potential move to formal capability.

6.8 This meeting can happen at any time during the appraisal period. It is designed to be a supportive meeting to address issues early to avoid the matter escalating, giving the employee the opportunity to improve. At the meeting, the appraiser will present evidence collected that indicates that the employee's performance is not up to the required standard. There is no right to be accompanied to this meeting. Although this is part of an informal process, a note of the meeting will be made and a copy given to the employee, so that they are clear about the support they will be given, what improvements need to be made, and the timescales.

6.9 An informal review period will follow this meeting; the length will be determined by the appraiser based on the individual circumstances of the situation, but it should not be unduly long. During the informal review period, regular meetings should take place to ensure progress is being made and the agreed-upon support is being provided.

6.10 At the end of this informal review period, when progress is reviewed, if the appraiser is satisfied that the employee has made or is making sufficient improvement, the appraisal process will continue as normal, with any remaining issues continuing to be addressed through that process. If performance is improving and the appraiser feels that further time is required to monitor improving performance, the appraiser can decide to extend the informal review period, but it should not be unduly long. If no or insufficient improvement is being made, then the process set out below (section 9) should be followed. It will be for the appraiser to decide which procedure will be followed.

7 Evidence

Evidence supports the appraisal process. The range and level of evidence collected for appraisal purposes will always be proportionate and minimise workload.

All employees

7.1 During the appraisal period, each employee has a responsibility for providing and/or identifying evidence of their progress throughout the year in order for them to identify any particular strengths or areas for further development at annual review meetings. The appraiser will then record the discussion on this evidence and make an assessment in the appraisal report.

Teachers

7.2 In addition, a range of evidence should be available to the appraiser on a teacher's performance as part of the school 's quality assurance processes. Evidence may include but is not limited to:

7.2.1 Lesson observations (including "drop ins").

7.2.2 Work scrutiny.

7.2.3 Planning scrutiny.

7.2.4 Learning walks.

7.2.5 Tracking data of pupils' progress.

7.2.6 Progress of individuals/groups.

7.2.7 Evidence of meeting standards.

7.2.8 Assessment of TLR.

8 Annual assessment

8.1 Performance and development priorities will be reviewed and addressed throughout the process, and an interim appraisal meeting may take place at the mid-point of the cycle (April) to review performance and progress towards objectives. Any concerns will be noted, and an appropriate support plan will be put in place for the remainder of the cycle. The support plan will set out what improvement is required and what support will be provided.

8.2 Each employee's performance will be formally assessed in respect of each appraisal period. In assessing the performance of the headteacher, an annual assessment is the end point to the annual appraisal cycle and will formally assess each employee's performance in respect of that cycle. The employee will receive a written appraisal report as soon as practicable afterwards and have the opportunity to comment on it in writing. The appraisal report will be a summary of the performance during the year and set out what the employee's development needs are for the next year. In particular, the report will include:

8.2.1 Details of the objectives for the appraisal period in question.

8.2.2 An assessment of performance of their roles and responsibilities against their objectives and any relevant standards.

8.2.3 A summary of observation findings, if applicable.

8.2.4 An assessment of training and professional development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them.

8.2.5 Details of a discussion on wellbeing and workload and career progression/aspirations.

8.3 The assessment of performance and of professional development needs from each individual appraisal will inform the planning process for the following appraisal period for the whole trust.

9 Transition to capability

Performance management is an ongoing process. If an employee demonstrates underperformance and has not responded to support provided within the appraisal process, the employee will be notified in writing that the appraisal system will no longer apply and that their performance will be managed under the capability policy, and they will be invited to a formal capability meeting.

10 General principles underlying this policy

Confidentiality

10.1 The appraisal process will be treated confidentially. However, the desire for confidentiality does not override the need for the headteacher and governance board to quality assure the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal system. In this trust, the headteacher in conjunction with the senior leadership team, is responsible for reviewing objectives and written appraisal records in order to check consistency of approach and expectation between different appraisers.

Consistency of treatment, fairness and respect

10.2 TTSAT and the governance board are committed to ensuring consistency of treatment, fairness and respect. It will abide by all relevant equality legislation, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees. The governing body is aware of the guidance on the Equality Act 2010 issued by the Department for Education.

10.3 We will not tolerate abusive or insulting behaviour from anyone taking part in the appraisal process, and any such behaviour will be treated as potential misconduct.

Monitoring and evaluation

10.4 The governance board and headteacher will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal arrangements. In developing, applying and evaluating this policy, we will monitor the impact on different groups of people with protected characteristics in line with the trust's equal opportunities policy and our workforce privacy notice. This will ensure that what we do is done fairly.

Retention and data protection

10.5 The governance board and headteacher will ensure that all written appraisal records are retained in a secure place. It is the appraiser's responsibility to ensure HR has a copy of all relevant documents. 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 the UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018) and any implementing laws, regulations and secondary legislation, as amended or updated from time to time. Records will be kept in accordance with our workforce privacy notice, our retention and destruction policy and in line with the requirements of data protection legislation.

11 Review of policy

This policy is reviewed annually by trust in consultation with the recognised trade unions. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.