

Probationary Policy

1.0 Policy statement

- 1.1 The Principal and / or employee's line manager is responsible for ensuring that all new staff are fully inducted into the values and mission of the Trust and academy. New employees are properly monitored; in some cases, this is during a formal probationary period. If any problems arise with a new employee, the line manager should address these promptly and in accordance with the policy. The employee should be made aware that some aspect of their performance or conduct is unsatisfactory. This will help prevent the problem from escalating and hopefully lead to sufficient improvement.
- 1.2 The length of the probationary period applicable to an employee will be as set out in the letter of appointment.

2.0 Scope and purpose of this policy

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to allow both the employee and the Trust to assess objectively whether or not the employee is suitable for the role. The Trust believes that the use of probationary periods increases the likelihood that new employees will perform effectively in their employment.
- 2.2 It is the Trust's policy to operate probationary periods for all new operational support staff and newly qualified teachers. Probationary periods may be put in place at the discretion of the Principal or the line manager, and this will be clearly communicated on offer of appointment.

3.0 Extending probationary periods

- 3.1 Six months should be an adequate period of time to assess an employee's suitability for the role effectively. In exceptional circumstances, the academy may decide to extend an employee's period of probation. This will be limited to one extension; the total period of probation will be no longer than 12 months.
- 3.2 An extension may be implemented in circumstances where:
 - the employee's performance, conduct or attendance during the period of probation has not been entirely satisfactory, but some improvement has taken place and it is thought likely that an extension of the probationary period may lead to the necessary improvement
 - the employee has been absent from the workplace for an extended period during the probationary period
- 3.3 Before extending an employee's probationary period, the line manager will consult with the Principal. If an extension to the probationary period is agreed, the academy will confirm the terms of the extension in writing to the employee, including:
 - the length of the extension, including the date on which the extended period of probation will be reviewed and when it will end
 - 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
 - any support—for example, further training—that will be provided during the extended period of probation
 - a statement that, if the employee does not meet the required standards in full by the end of the extended period of probation, their employment will be terminated

4.0 Terms of employment during the probationary period

- 4.1 During the probationary period, employees will be subject to all the terms and conditions of their contracts of employment with the exception of those terms noted below.
- 4.2 Once the probationary period has been completed, the notice periods will be as defined in the employee's contract of employment.

5.0 Line managers' responsibilities

- 5.1 Under this policy, the line manager is responsible for monitoring a new employee's performance, conduct, attendance and progress during the probationary period. The line manager should ensure that the employee is properly informed at the start of their employment about what is expected of them during the probationary period, for example, the required targets or standards of performance, and for putting in place a plan to support a successful start to any new role.

6. Reviews during probation

- 6.1 The line manager should review and assess the employee's performance, capability, conduct, attendance and suitability for the role on at least a monthly basis during the employee's period of probation, and again at the end of the probationary period.
- 6.2 During an employee's period of probation, the line manager should provide regular feedback to the employee about their performance and progress, and, should there be any problem areas, raise these with the employee as soon as possible with a view to resolving them. The line manager is also responsible for providing guidance and support and for identifying and arranging any necessary support, training or coaching that is relevant to the role.

7.0 Irregularities discovered during the probationary period

- 7.1 If, during an employee's probationary period, it is suspected or established that the employee does not have the qualifications, experience or knowledge that they claimed to have at the time of recruitment, the matter will be discussed with the employee to establish the facts. If the evidence suggests that the employee misrepresented their abilities in any way, the Trust will terminate the employment, giving one week's pay in lieu of notice.

8.0 End of probationary period

- 8.1 Shortly before the end of the probationary period (or end of the extension, if applicable), the line manager should conduct a final review of the employee's performance, conduct, attendance and suitability for the job. This will involve a meeting with the employee to discuss their performance and progress throughout the period of probation.
- 8.2 If the employee's performance is satisfactory, the line manager should notify the Principal or the Operations and Business Manager to issue a letter of confirmation of appointment to the employee.

9.0 Termination of employment

- 9.1 Ordinarily, it is the Trust's policy to allow the employee to complete the designated period of probation rather than terminating employment before the probationary period has come to an end. This is to give the employee a full opportunity to come up to the required standards. If, however, there is clear evidence prior to the end of the period of probation that suggests the employee is wholly unsuitable for the role, the employment may be terminated early.

Performance

- 9.2 If an employee's performance while on probation has been unsatisfactory (despite support from the line manager) and it is thought unlikely that further training or support would lead to a satisfactory level of improvement, the employment will be terminated at the end of the period of probation. Where the concerns are considered serious and have not improved despite support, then the employment may be terminated prior to the end of the probationary period if appropriate.

Conduct

- 9.3 If an employee's conduct while on probation has been unsatisfactory (despite support from the line manager) and it is thought unlikely that further training or support would lead to a satisfactory level of improvement, the employment will be terminated at the end of the period of probation or at an earlier point if appropriate.

Attendance

- 9.4 If an employee's attendance while on probation has been unsatisfactory (despite support from the line manager and Operations and Business Manager / HR) and it is thought unlikely that further support or reasonable adjustments would lead to a satisfactory level of improvement, the employment will be terminated at the end of the period of probation or at an earlier point if appropriate.
- 9.5 Where a decision is taken to terminate the employee's employment, a meeting will be held with the employee to inform them of the reason for the termination. The Principal will write to the employee confirming the termination and the reason for it. The employee will be given an opportunity to appeal against the decision.

10.0 Appeals against termination of employment

- 10.1 Should an employee wish to appeal against a decision to terminate their employment, they must write to the Principal within five working days of receipt of the decision to terminate the employment being communicated to them. The employee must state the grounds of their appeal in full. An appeal meeting will then be arranged with either the Principal (if not involved in the original decision to dismiss) or a more senior manager (EPs, CEO) and / or governors. The outcome of an appeal meeting will be confirmed in writing. This will make it clear that there is no further internal right of appeal.

11.0 Review of policy

- 11.1 The Executive will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy on an annual basis to ensure it is working effectively and conforms to current legislation and HR advice. Any revisions will be presented to the Trust board for approval.

