

# Support Staff Appraisal Policy & Procedure

Model Procedure for Schools

September 2021

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## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1. This policy and procedure has been agreed with schools and the relevant trade unions and is primarily intended to support staff whilst enabling schools to undertake assessment of the overall performance of support staff in a way which is fair and adheres to employment and equalities legislation.
- 1.2. This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of support staff and for supporting their development needs within the context of the school's improvement plan and their own professional needs.
- 1.3. Appraisal will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all support staff have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively. The policy will support each employee's development within the context of the school plan for improving educational provision and performance.
- 1.4. If there are any serious concerns raised about an employee's performance that cannot be addressed and resolved through the appraisal process, there will be consideration of whether to commence the capability procedure.

## 2. SCOPE OF THE PROCEDURE

- 2.1. This policy applies to all members of the support staff employed directly by the school. This is with the exception for those on contracts of employment of less than one term and staff who are subject to a 6-month probation period, in accordance with the school's agreed Probation Procedure. The performance appraisal cycle will normally run for 12 months although there may be a need for a shorter period to apply in the case of staff resignations, sickness absence, maternity leave and any other form of long-term absence.
- 2.2. Agency staff are excluded from this process, although agency staff can still be expected to have clear and appropriate targets set and their performance should be regularly monitored.

## 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The Appraisal policy and procedure 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.

## 4. EQUALITIES ISSUES

- 4.1. The Appraisal Policy must always be applied equitably and in accordance with employment law and the school's Equalities policies. The application of this policy will not directly nor indirectly discriminate against members of staff on the grounds of their gender, age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy, maternity status, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, or sexual orientation.
- 4.2. The school is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness. 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 issued by the Department for Education (DfE).
- 4.3. The application of this policy will not directly nor indirectly discriminate against members of staff on the grounds of trade union membership or activities.
- 4.4. The school will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal arrangements and monitor the impact on different groups of people with protected characteristics in line with the Equal Opportunities Policy.

## 5. THE PROCEDURE

### 6. THE APPRAISAL PERIOD

- 6.1. The appraisal period will run for 12 months, normally from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6.2. 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.
- 6.3. Where an individual starts their employment at the school part-way through a cycle, the Headteacher 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 Headteacher shall determine whether the cycle shall begin again and whether to change the appraiser.

## 7. APPOINTING APPRAISERS

- 7.1. All appraisers of support staff will be appropriate members of the staff team and will be suitably trained. The choice of appraiser is for the Headteacher or School Business Manager. Where individuals have an objection to the Headteacher's choice, their concerns will be carefully considered, taking into account what is reasonable, however; ultimately the decision rests with the Headteacher.
- 7.2. Where it becomes apparent that the appraiser appointed by the Headteacher will be absent for the majority of the appraisal cycle, the Headteacher may perform those duties themselves or delegate those duties to another individual for the duration of that absence.
- 7.3. If the Headteacher 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.
- 7.4. Where an individual is experiencing difficulties that relate to performance concerns and the Headteacher is not the appraiser, the Headteacher 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 staff Experiencing Difficulties.
- 7.5. The appraisal structure will be circulated to all staff.
- 7.6. All staff carrying out appraisals will have relevant appraisal training and will be confident in carrying out the role.

## 8. SETTING OBJECTIVES

- 8.1. 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.
- 8.2. 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.

- 8.3. 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 Headteacher.
- 8.4. 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.
- 8.5. 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.
- 8.6. 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.
- 8.7. 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.
- 8.8. 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.
- 8.9. The objectives that are agreed with each employee will be:
  - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound.
  - Appropriate to the employee's role and level of experience.
  - Be fair and equitable. This will be in relation to employees with similar roles/responsibilities.
  - Consistent with each school's strategy for achieving a reasonable work/life balance for all staff.

8.10. Schools will be mindful that resources will need to be made available for the implementation of this policy, particularly in relation to training and accessibility.

8.11. Objectives may be revised and agreed with reasonable adjustments made if there is a significant change in circumstance, e.g. a change of job role, long term sickness, maternity leave, disability, or if an employee requires more support to meet the objectives. If objectives for an individual are changed, then these will need to be referred back to the Appraiser and Appraisee to seek agreement before being implemented.

## 9. PREPARING FOR THE APPRAISAL MEETING

9.1. Before the meeting, appraisees and their appraisers need to ensure that they have reviewed any relevant documentation, including, job descriptions, objectives set during the previous appraisal cycle and evidence available to demonstrate progress, school improvement priorities, any appropriate professional standards, and professional development plan to highlight any areas for development/aspiration.

9.2. Appraisees should reflect on performance over the past appraisal period, what has gone well and what not so well? How has training and development undertaken assisted the individual in their role.

## 10. APPRAISAL MEETING

10.1. During the meeting to agree the objectives, the following should be discussed:

- The agreeing of objectives for the next year should be in collaboration between the appraiser and appraisee through a review of the professional standards; the School Development priorities; professional development documents; and any other relevant documents. If agreement is not possible, the appraiser will agree the objectives based on the above. Rigorous, aspirational and achievable targets need to be set that fit in with the whole school targets.
- What is going well, focusing on agreed evidence between the appraisee and appraiser.
- An objective statement and action plan.
- Plans for observation and review during the appraisal cycle.

- Evidence that will be collected during the cycle and from whom evidence may be sought.

10.2. The meeting should take place in a confidential and quiet location, which is free from interruptions and disturbance. Sufficient time, at least one hour, should be set aside for the meeting. Wherever possible this meeting (and preparation time) will be within normal contracted working hours and will in all circumstances be paid.

10.3. The first part of the meeting if appropriate, will include:

- a reflection on the previous year;
- a review of progress with respect to the objectives set and a discussion about the evidence provided to demonstrate success;
- a discussion about what development has taken place and how this has assisted the individual with their role.

This will be the end of the previous appraisal cycle (see section 16) and a written appraisal report will be produced by the appraiser to reflect this discussion.

10.4. The second part of the meeting should focus on the future. This will include, setting appropriate objectives, identifying any areas for development or improvement and discussing what support, training and development may be required to support the colleague in their role.

10.5. Usually all matters will be dealt with in one meeting however, the review of the last year, and objective setting / development planning for the forthcoming year may be split into two meetings with the agreement of those involved.

10.6. If an individual arrives at the meeting unprepared, then the reviewer may decide that the meeting needs to be rescheduled.

## 11. OBSERVATION

11.1. This school believes that observation of work practice is important both as a way of assessing staff performance in order to identify any particular strengths and areas for development they may have, and of gaining useful information which can inform school improvement more generally.

11.2. All observation will be carried out in a supportive fashion by those with knowledge of the appraisee's work and appropriate and timely oral and written feedback will be given.



## 12. MID-YEAR REVIEW

- 12.1. A formal mid-year review will take place whereby the appraiser will meet the appraisee to discuss progress towards meeting appraisal objectives. The appraisee is encouraged to undertake a self-review, prior to the meeting and should bring to the meeting evidence of any progress made towards meeting the appraisal objectives. This process encourages the appraisee to assess and review their own performance as basis for discussion and action planning at review meetings.
- 12.2. Notes should be added under each objective to summarise progress made towards the objectives. Areas of strength should be identified as well as areas for development.
- 12.3. The mid-year review is an important opportunity for staff to review and monitor their progress in relation to achieving their objectives and thus the mid-year review meeting is strongly recommended.
- 12.4. It is the responsibility of the appraiser to arrange the midway review meeting with the appraisee.
- 12.5. Where there are concerns about any aspects of the appraisee's performance at the mid- year review, this should be addressed with the appraisee. The appraiser will:
- give clear feedback to the appraisee about the nature and seriousness of the concerns;
  - give the appraisee the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns;
  - agree any support (e.g. coaching, mentoring, structured observations), that will be provided to help address those specific concerns;
  - make clear how, and when, the appraiser will review progress;
  - explain the implication and process if no – or insufficient – improvement is made;
  - 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.

## 13. LINE MANAGEMENT/MONITORING MEETINGS

- 13.1. In between the formal mid-year and end of year review meetings, appraisers will have regular meetings with the appraisee. These meetings should be used to check progress is being made against objectives and that the agreed support and resources are in place etc. They are also used to communicate progress towards school improvement objectives, share information and celebrate good practice. Staff should be informed of their progress at the mid and end of year review meetings based on these meetings.

## 14. DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

- 14.1. 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.

## 15. FEEDBACK AND RECORDS

- 15.1. 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 will highlight particular areas of strength and discuss what has gone well and highlight how this can be consolidated through CPD etc. Feedback will also highlight any areas of concern, including areas that require improvement and any support that may be required to assist the employee to achieve the required improvements.
- 15.2. Feedback will be given in a suitable, private environment. Often this can resolve issues without the need for any formal action.
- 15.3. If issues emerged from an observation that were not part of the focus of the observation, these should also be covered in written feedback and the appropriate action discussed with the employee. Other issues relevant to the Appraisal process can also be discussed at this meeting.
- 15.4. The Appraiser will be given sufficient time within the school day to put in written form the conclusions agreed with the appraisee on the outcomes of the classroom observation.

15.5. Support staff will have access to all written accounts of the observation after their lessons and, if they request, copies will be provided.

## 16. SUPPORT STAFF EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES

16.1. If an appraiser identifies through the appraisal process, or via other sources of information, that the difficulties experienced by an employee are such that, if not rectified, could lead to capability procedures, the appraiser, the Headteacher, or a member of the leadership team, will meet the employee as part of the appraisal process. The aim of the meeting will be to:

- give clear written feedback to the employee about the nature and seriousness of the concerns
- give the employee the opportunity to comment on and discuss the concerns
- give the employee at least five working days' notice that a meeting will be held to discuss targets for improvement alongside a programme of support, and inform the employee that they have the right to be assisted by a representative of an independent trade union or workplace colleague, a right that extends to any future meetings where capability will be discussed
- in consultation with the employee, establish an action plan with support (for example coaching, training, in-class support, mentoring, structured observations, visits to other classes or schools, or discussions with advisory teachers), 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.

16.2. The employee's progress will continue to be monitored as part of the appraisal process and a reasonable time given for the employee's performance to improve. This will depend upon the circumstances but will be for a period of \_\_\_\_\_ 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 employee will be given regular feedback on progress and arrangements will be made to modify the support programme if appropriate.

16.3. If long term sickness absence appears to have been triggered by the commencement of monitoring or a formal capability procedure, the case will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Attendance Management policy and procedures. The employee will normally be referred to the Occupational Health service to assess their health and fitness for continued employment and the appropriateness or otherwise of continuing with monitoring or formal procedures.

- 16.4. Where sufficient progress has been made such that the employee is performing at a level that indicates that there is no longer a possibility of capability procedures being invoked, they should be informed of this at a formal meeting with the Appraiser or Headteacher. Following this meeting, the appraisal process will continue as normal. The outcome will be provided in writing to the employee.
- 16.5. If no, or insufficient progress, has been made then the school's Capability procedure should be followed.

## 17. ANNUAL ASSESSMENT

- 17.1. At the end of the appraisal period a formal review meeting will be held where the Appraiser and Appraisee will discuss achievements, any areas for improvement and professional development activities.
- 17.2. The assessment meeting 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 through supervision and at a midway meeting, this is to ensure there are no surprises at the annual assessment meeting.
- 17.3. The annual assessment meeting will be run in accordance with this policy. Appraisers will have attended relevant appraisal training and will have discussed the running of the annual assessment meeting with their Appraisee in advance.
- 17.4. Progress towards the achievement of a challenging objective will be assessed favourably. For the purpose of this policy, this is defined as having met or exceeded those objectives or having made significant progress and impact in achieving challenging objectives. Consideration will be given to mitigating circumstances.
- 17.5. 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.
- 17.6. The assessment of performance and of training and development needs will inform the planning process for the following appraisal period.
- 17.7. The employee will have the opportunity to comment on the appraisal report in writing. There will be space on the report for the Appraisee to record any comments.

## 18. WRITTEN APPRAISAL REPORT

18.1. The written appraisal report should include:

- details of the employee's objectives for the appraisal period in question;
- an assessment of the employee's performance of their role and responsibilities against their objectives and the relevant standards;
- an assessment of the employee's professional development needs/continuing professional development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them;
- a space for the individual's own comments.
- *(schools to add what else, if anything, their appraisal reports will include) - Or remove bullet point.*

## 19. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

19.1. The appraisal 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.

19.2. 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.

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

## 20. APPEALS

20.1. Appraisees have a right of appeal against any of the entries in the written appraisal report or any procedural issues arising from the Appraisal procedure. In the first instance, the appeal should be sent to the HR Manager or School Business Manager. The Grievance Procedure should be used if an employee wishes to exercise their individual right of appeal against the content or misapplication of the Support Staff Appraisal Process and Policy.

## 21. FURTHER INFORMATION

21.1. For further information please contact your HR provider.