



Staff Appraisal Policy

Policy in effect from: September 2023

Review Date: September 2025



1. Introduction

This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of all employees at the Trust, including the Head of School and Executive Leader / CEO, and for supporting their development within the context of the school's plan for improving outcomes for pupils; whilst also supporting the morale and continuous professional development of employees.

There is a separate Capability Procedure, which also sets out the formal arrangements that will apply when this policy has not been effective in supporting the employee to improve their performance to the level expected.

Appraisal in this Trust will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all employees fully develop the skills and have access to the support they need to carry out their role effectively. It will help to ensure that all employees are able to continue to improve their professional practice and to develop in their roles.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust's Pay Policy which provides details of the arrangements relating to teacher's pay in accordance with the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.

This policy applies to all employees employed by the school, except those on contracts of less than one term, those undergoing induction (i.e. ECT's) and those who are subject to the formal Capability Procedure.

2. The Appraisal Period

The appraisal period will run for twelve months from 1st September to 31 August.

Those employees who are employed on a fixed term contract of less than one year or who commence employment part-way through the appraisal period, 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 and an employee's objectives should take account of the length of contract.

3. Appointing Appraisers

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

The task of appraising the CEO, including the setting of objectives, will be delegated to a sub-group consisting of three members of the Trust Board.

The CEO will decide who will appraise other employees. Appraisers of teachers will be qualified teachers wherever possible.

The appraisee will have the opportunity to object to their choice of appraiser, this will be reasonably considered and an alternative appraiser will be appointed, if possible or appropriate.

All appraisers will be suitably trained in undertaking appraisals.

4. Setting Objectives

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

The Trust Board has a duty to have regard to the work-life balance of the CEO and objectives will reflect this.

Objectives for each employee will be set before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period. The suggested amount of objectives is three.

The objectives set for each employee, will be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound and will be appropriate to the employees' role and level of experience.

Objectives and performance management discussions will not be solely based on employee's 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, if appropriate, however, these will not be used in isolation and other factors will also be considered when making decisions about pay progression.

The appraiser and employee will seek to agree the objectives but, if that is not possible, the appraiser will determine the objectives. Should this be the case the reason for the objection to these objectives will be recorded on the appraisal form.

Objectives may be revised during the appraisal period if circumstances change. For example, in the case of those employees who have periods of long term absence (maternity/adoption leave, sick leave etc...) or where there are changes to job roles.

Those employees on any period of long-term absence (as set out above), who are pregnant or have an ongoing medical condition or disability during the appraisal period, will not be subject to any detriment in terms of being able to achieve a successful appraisal and any associated pay progression.

The objectives set for each employee will, if achieved, contribute to the Trust's plans for improving the school's educational provision and performance and improving the education of pupils at that school.

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

5. Reviewing Performance

5.1 Observation

We believe that observation of classroom practice and other responsibilities is an important way of assessing employees' performance. It assists us to identify any particular strengths and areas for development they may have, gain useful information which can inform school improvement more generally and enable them to learn from each other and collaborate.

All observation will be carried out in a supportive fashion and not add to workload.

There will be no more than 3 hours of lesson observations during the appraisal period, with a maximum of 3 formal observations, as long as there are no concerns about poor performance.

Wherever possible observations will only be undertaken by qualified teachers in relation to teaching staff.

There may be occasions when school leaders observe practice whilst walking around the school and visiting classrooms as part of their regular routine, however, this activity will not form part of the employee's appraisal process.

5.2 Development and support

Appraisal is a supportive process which will be used to determine decisions on pay progression (for teaching staff only) and inform continuing professional development. We encourage a culture in which all employees take responsibility for improving their teaching/performance through appropriate professional development.

Professional development will be linked to school improvement priorities and to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of individual employees.

5.3 Feedback

Employees will receive constructive feedback on their performance throughout the year and within 5 working days, if possible, following any observation or where other evidence has come to light. Feedback will highlight particular areas of strength as well as any areas that require further development.

There will be at least one appraisal review meeting during the appraisal period.

5.4 Evidence

The range and level of evidence collected for appraisal and pay determination purposes will always be proportionate and minimise workload.

6. Annual Performance Assessment

Each employee's performance will be formally assessed in respect of each appraisal period. This assessment is the end point to the annual appraisal process, however, performance and development priorities will be reviewed and addressed on a regular basis throughout the year in interim meetings which will take place (e.g. once a term). This reviews will be undertaken to ensure that the employee is fully aware of the evidence that is used to assess performance against their objectives and the criteria for a successful appraisal review.

In assessing the performance of the CEO the Trust Board must consult the external adviser.

The employee will receive as soon as practicable following the end of each appraisal period – and have the opportunity to comment on – an appraisal report.

Any employee has the right to appeal any of the entries on this report. They should do this by putting their concerns in writing to the appraiser's line manager within 10 days of the date of the report.

In this Trust, employees will receive their appraisal reports by 31 October (31 December for the Head of School / CEO).

The appraisal report will include:

- details of the objectives for the appraisal period in question;
- an assessment of the employees' performance against their objectives and the relevant standards;
- an assessment of the employees' professional development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them;
- a recommendation on pay for teachers and;
- a section for the employees to make their own comments should they wish

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

7. Informal Performance Concerns

There will be occasions, for a number of reasons, that the performance of employees may not meet the required standard. We are committed to supporting our employees to improve and sustain a level of satisfactory performance through the appraisal process.

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

- give clear feedback to them about the nature and seriousness of the concerns;
- give them the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns;
- set clear objectives for required improvement;
- agree any support, that will be provided to help address those specific concerns, for example:
 - Mentoring
 - Shadowing
 - Targeted on or off the job training

- Discussing relevant professional standards
 - Regular meetings with an experienced colleague to discuss problems
 - Short secondments
 - Access to the counselling service
 - Temporary reduction in hours
 - Temporary amendment in duties
 - Temporary change in working pattern
- make clear how, and by when, the appraiser will review progress and;
 - explain the implications and process if no, or insufficient, improvement is made – e.g., impact on pay progression (teachers only) and potential move to formal capability.

These informal discussions will be documented and a copy provided to the employee within 5 working days.

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.

Clear expectations will be given to the employee regarding the sustained levels of performance and what may happen if their performance either dips again or is not sustained. For example, either a further period of informal support through the appraisal process may be considered or progression to the Capability Procedure, particularly if concerns are of a serious nature.

Although the aim of managing these concerns on an informal basis is to seek sustained good performance through support and it is not normally expected that Trade Union will be present during the initial meetings, we will consider requests from employees should they wish the support of their Trade Union.

8. Transition to Capability

If an employee demonstrates serious underperformance, and has not responded to support provided within the appraisal process, they will be invited to a meeting to discuss the potential for progression to the formal Capability Procedure. Should this be the decision following this meeting they will be notified in writing that the appraisal system will no longer apply and that their performance will be managed under the Capability Procedure.

9. General Principles Underlying this Policy

9.1 Confidentiality

The appraisal processes will be treated with confidentiality. However, the desire for confidentiality does not override the need for the Head of School and Trust Board to quality-assure the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal system.

9.2 Consistency of Treatment and Fairness

The Trust Board 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 Trust Board is aware of the guidance on the Equality Act issued by the Department for Education.

9.3 Delegation

Normal rules apply in respect of the delegation of functions by Governing Bodies, Head of School and Local Authorities.

9.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Trust Board and Head of School will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the school's appraisal arrangements. This will include equality monitoring and ensuring that the arrangements in place for appraisal minimise the impact on workload for all parties involved.

9.5 Retention

The Trust Board and Head of School will ensure that all written appraisal records are retained, stored in a secure place and securely destroyed in line with their relevant policies.