



Appraisal & Capability Policy
for non-connected school groups

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Policy for appraising teacher performance and dealing with capability issues

Purpose

This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of teachers, including the head teacher, and for supporting their development within the context of the school's plan for improving educational provision and performance, and the standards expected of teachers. It also sets out the arrangements that will apply when teachers fall below the levels of competence that are expected of them.

Application of the policy

The policy is in two separate sections.

Part A of the policy, which covers appraisal, applies to the head teacher and to all teachers employed by the school except those on contracts of less than one term, those undergoing induction (*i.e.* NQTs) and those who are subject to Part B of the policy.

Part B of the policy, which sets out the formal capability procedure, applies only to teachers (including the head teacher) about whose performance there are serious concerns that the appraisal process has been unable to address.

Part A – Appraisal

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

The appraisal period

The appraisal period will run for 12 months. This will be from September to July for all staff. Teachers 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 teachers begin or end employment with a school or local authority or when unattached teachers change post within the same authority.

Appointing appraisers

The head teacher will be appraised by the Governing Body.

In this school the task of appraising the head teacher, including the setting of objectives, will be delegated to a sub-group consisting of two/three members of the Governing Body including the director.

The head teacher will decide who will appraise other teachers.

Setting objectives

The head teacher's objectives will be set by the Governing Body. The GB may consult an advisor for this purpose.

Objectives for each teacher will be set before or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period. The objectives set for all staff, will be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound and will be appropriate to the teacher's role and level of experience. The appraiser and teacher will seek to agree the objectives but, if that is not possible, the appraiser will determine the objectives. Objectives may be revised if circumstances change.

The objectives set for each teacher will, if achieved, contribute to the school's plans for improving the school's educational provision and performance and improving the education of pupils at the school. This will be ensured by quality assuring all objectives against the school improvement plan.

Before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period, each teacher will be informed of the standards against which that teacher's performance in that appraisal period will be assessed. All teachers should be assessed against the set of standards contained in the document called "Teachers' Standards". The head teacher 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 to them.

Reviewing performance

Observation

This school believes that observation of classroom practice and other responsibilities is important both as a way of assessing teachers' 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. All observation will be carried out in a supportive fashion.

In this school teachers' performance will be regularly observed but the amount and type of classroom observation will depend on the individual circumstances of the teacher and the overall needs of the school. In addition to formal observation, head teachers or other leaders with responsibility for teaching standards may "drop in" in order to evaluate the standards of teaching 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.

Teachers (including the head teacher) who have responsibilities outside the classroom should also expect to have their performance of those responsibilities observed and assessed.

Development and support

Appraisal is a supportive process which will be used to inform continuing professional development. The school wishes to encourage a culture in which all teachers take responsibility for improving their teaching through appropriate professional development. Professional development will be linked to school improvement priorities and to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of individual teachers.

Feedback

Staff will receive constructive feedback on their performance throughout the year and as soon as practicable after observation has taken place or other evidence has come to light. Feedback will highlight particular areas of strength as well as any areas that need attention. Where there are concerns about any aspects of the performance the appraiser will meet the staff formally to:

- give clear feedback about the nature and seriousness of the concerns;
- give 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;

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- make clear how, and by when, the appraiser will review progress (it may be appropriate to revise objectives, and it will be necessary to allow sufficient time for improvement. The amount of time is up to the school but should reflect the seriousness of the concerns);
- explain the implications and process if no or insufficient improvement is made.

When progress is reviewed, if the appraiser is satisfied that the staff 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.

Transition to capability

If the appraiser is not satisfied with progress, the staff will be notified in writing that the appraisal system will no longer apply and that their performance will be managed under the capability procedure, and will be invited to a formal capability meeting. The capability procedures will be conducted as in part B of this policy.

Annual assessment

Each staff's performance will be formally assessed in respect of each appraisal period. In assessing the performance of the head teacher, the Governing Body must consult the 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 once a term).

The staff will receive as soon as practicable following the end of each appraisal period

– and have the opportunity to comment in writing on - **a written appraisal report**. In this school, teachers will receive their written appraisal reports by 31 October.

- details of the teacher's objectives for the appraisal period in question;
- **an assessment of the teacher's performance of their role and responsibilities against their objectives and the relevant standards;**
- **an assessment of the teacher's training and development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them;**

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

Pay Award

Staff will be awarded pay progression/incentives should they successfully achieve the targets set. In the event of not being successful they have a right to appeal to the governing body.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The GB will continue to monitor the Performance Management provision through termly reports from the HT and through an annual overview presented anonymously to the governors.

Part B – Capability Procedure

This procedure applies to staff whose performance there are serious concerns that the appraisal process has been unable to address.

At least five working days' notice will be given of the formal capability meeting. The notification will contain sufficient information about the concerns about performance and their possible consequences to enable the teacher to prepare to answer the case at a formal capability meeting. It will also contain copies of any written evidence; the details of the time and place of the meeting; and will advise the teacher of their right to be accompanied by a companion who may be a colleague, a trade union official, or a trade union representative who has been certified by their union as being competent.

Formal capability meeting

This meeting is intended to establish the facts. It will be conducted by the Chair of Governors (for head teacher capability meetings) or head teacher (for other teachers). The meeting allows the teacher, accompanied by a companion if they wish, to respond to concerns about their performance and to make any relevant representations. This may provide new information or a different context to the information/evidence already collected.

The person conducting the meeting may conclude that there are insufficient grounds for pursuing the capability issue and that it would be more appropriate to continue to address the remaining concerns through the appraisal process. In such cases, the capability procedure will come to an end. The person conducting the meeting may also adjourn the meeting for example if they decide that further investigation is needed, or that more time is needed in which to consider any additional information.

In other cases, the meeting will continue. During the meeting, or any other meeting which could lead to a formal warning being issued, the person conducting the meeting will:

- identify the professional shortcomings, for example which of the standards expected of teachers are not being met;
- give clear guidance on the improved standard of performance needed to ensure that the teacher can be removed from formal capability procedures (this may include the setting of new objectives focused on the specific weaknesses that need to be addressed, any success criteria that might be appropriate and the evidence that will be used to assess whether or not the necessary improvement has been made);
- explain any support that will be available to help the teacher improve their performance;
- set out the timetable for improvement and explain how performance will be monitored and reviewed. The timetable will depend on the circumstances of the individual case but in straightforward cases could be between four and ten weeks. It is for the school to determine the set period. It should be reasonable and proportionate, but not excessively long, and should provide sufficient opportunity for an improvement to take place); and
- warn the teacher formally that failure to improve within the set period could lead to dismissal. In very serious cases, this warning could be a final written warning.

Notes will be taken of formal meetings and a copy sent to the member of staff. Where a warning is issued, the teacher will be informed in writing of the matters covered in the bullet points above and given information about the timing and handling of the review stage and the procedure and time limits for appealing against the warning.

Monitoring and review period following a formal capability meeting

A performance monitoring and review period will follow the formal capability meeting. Formal monitoring, evaluation, guidance and support will continue during this period. The member of staff will be invited to a formal review meeting, unless they were issued with a final written warning, in which case they will be invited to a decision meeting (see below).

Formal review meeting

As with formal capability meetings, at least five working days' notice will be given and the notification will give details of the time and place of the meeting and will advise the teacher of their right to be accompanied by a companion.

If the person conducting the meeting is satisfied that the teacher has made sufficient improvement, the capability procedure will cease and the appraisal process will re-start. In other cases:

- If some progress has been made and there is confidence that more is likely, it may be appropriate to extend the monitoring and review period;
- If no, or insufficient improvement has been made during the monitoring and review period, the staff will receive a final written warning.

As before, notes will be taken of formal meetings and a copy sent to the member of staff. The final written warning will mirror any previous warnings that have been issued. Where a final warning is issued, the member of staff will be informed in writing that failure to achieve an acceptable standard of performance (within the set timescale), may result in dismissal and given information about the handling of the further monitoring and review period and the procedure and time limits for appealing against the final warning. The teacher will be invited to a decision meeting.

Decision meeting

As with formal capability meetings and formal review meetings, at least five working days' notice will be given and the notification will give details of the time and place of the meeting and will advise the teacher of their right to be accompanied by a companion of their choice.

If an acceptable standard of performance has been achieved during the further monitoring and review period, the capability procedure will end and the appraisal process will re-start. If performance remains unsatisfactory, a decision, or recommendation to the Governing Body, will be made that the teacher should be dismissed or required to cease working at the school

The teacher will be informed as soon as possible of the reasons for the dismissal, the date on which the employment contract will end, the appropriate period of notice and their right of appeal.

Decision to dismiss

The power to dismiss staff in this school has been delegated to the Governing Body.

Dismissal

Once the decision to dismiss has been taken, the Governing Body will dismiss the teacher with notice.

Appeal

If a teacher feels that a decision to dismiss them, or other action taken against them, is wrong or unjust, they may appeal in writing against the decision within five days of the decision, setting out at the same time the grounds for appeal. Appeals will be heard without unreasonable delay and, where possible, at an agreed time and place. The same arrangements for notification and right to be accompanied by a companion will apply as with formal capability and review meetings and, as with other formal meetings, notes will be taken and a copy sent to the teacher.

The appeal will be dealt with impartially and, wherever possible, by managers or governors who have not previously been involved in the case. The teacher will be informed in writing of the results of the appeal hearing as soon as possible.

General Principles Underlying This policy

Confidentiality

The appraisal and capability processes will be treated with confidentiality. However, the desire for confidentiality does not override the need for the head teacher and governing body to quality-assure the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal system. Schools to say here how they might achieve this, the head teacher will review all teachers' objectives and written appraisal records in order to check consistency of approach and expectation between different appraisers. The head teacher will be aware of any pay recommendations that have been made.

Consistency of Treatment and Fairness

The Governing Body is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness.

Definitions

Unless indicated otherwise, all references to “teacher” include the head teacher.

Grievances

Where a member of staff raises a grievance during the capability procedure the capability procedure may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance. Where the grievance and capability cases are related it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently.

Sickness

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 absence policy. In some cases, it may be appropriate for monitoring and/or formal procedures to continue during a period of sickness absence.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The governing body and the director will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the school’s appraisal arrangements.

Retention

The governing body will ensure that all written appraisal records are retained in a secure place for six years and then destroyed.