



Probation Policy Support Staff

Our vision is to enable all to flourish.

Status and review cycle: Non-statutory and every two years

Responsible group: Trust Board

Implementation date: September 2024

Next Review Date: August 2026

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1.0 Policy statement

- 1.1 The Trust is an organisation with a Christian foundation. The ethos, values and relationships of the Trust, and its schools, are central to witnessing to the value of the foundation. The Trust recognises the importance of ensuring that its new staff members are performing to at least a satisfactory standard and that they are receiving appropriate support as they settle into their new role.

2.0 Purpose and scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to 'green book' support staff including those with previous continuous local government service. Teaching staff are not subject to a probationary period as they complete an Early Career period.
- 2.2 This policy outlines the Trust's provision regarding probationary periods and informs staff of their rights and expectations during their probationary period. The probationary period is intended to give new employees the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to achieve a satisfactory level of performance, to determine whether the new position meets their expectations and to give the appropriate support to enable them to flourish in their new role.
- 2.3 All new support staff will be appointed subject to satisfactory completion of a probationary period.
- 2.4 This policy includes details of how progress is monitored, the use of extensions and, where necessary, the termination of employment.
- 2.5 A probationary period is a specified amount of time at the beginning of employment or when undertaking a substantially different new role during which the individual's performance, attendance and conduct is assessed. It also provides the employee with the opportunity to become familiar with the main duties of the post and to demonstrate that they meet the required standards of performance, attendance and conduct.
- 2.6 Continued employment will be confirmed in writing if the probationary period is satisfactorily completed.
- 2.7 The headteacher or line manager will share this policy with all new employees embarking on a probationary period.
- 2.8 The employee's wellbeing will be considered throughout the probationary period in line with the school's wellbeing policy.

3.0 Length of the probation period

- 3.1 The probation period is normally the first six months service with the school.
- 3.2 The headteacher or employee's line manager have the discretion to apply a longer period where this is considered appropriate to the requirements of the job following discussion with the head of governance and people.

3.3 The employee's statement of particulars will state the length of the probation period.

4.0 Changing jobs within the same school and the probation period

- 4.1 If an individual is appointed to a new role after applying through the standard recruitment process, and where the nature or requirements of the new role significantly differ from the original role, they will normally have a probationary period applied to the role. This is because the new role is likely to require new skills, particularly if it is a promotion or a move to a new area of working (for example a lunch time supervisor moves to a teaching assistant role, or a teaching assistant moves to an administrative role). The probationary period provides the employee with an additional level of support to enable them to successfully achieve the requirements of the role. If an existing employee with continuous service, has performance concerns during their probationary period, the process must be managed using the school's Performance Management Capability Procedure, Conduct Procedure or Sickness and Absence Procedure. Guidance can be sought from the Head of Governance and People.
- 4.2 If an individual is appointed to a new role as part of a restructure or other change programme and it requires different or new skills and / or experience, the headteacher or line manager have the discretion to extend the statutory trial period of four weeks. This is to provide them with the additional support and training required to enable them to successfully achieve the requirements of the role. The right to a redundancy payment is only preserved if the trial period is extended for training reasons.

5.0 Probation period review intervals

- 5.1 The headteacher or line manager will complete a formal probationary review after three months services. Additional meetings may be held at the discretion of the headteacher or line manager if there are concerns about the individual's performance. These meetings must be identified as part of the probationary period and a record of the meeting made and placed on the employee's personnel file. If the individual's performance, attendance and conduct are satisfactory, a final probationary review will be completed at the six-month point. For each review, the headteacher or line manager should meet with the employee to discuss their performance at work. Probation meetings should be supportive and seek to provide clear and honest feedback to continuously improve the individual's performance.

6.0 Completing the probation period

- 6.1 The headteacher or line manager will complete the final probationary review and confirm it is satisfactory. The employee will receive written confirmation that they have passed their probation period, and a copy will be placed on their personnel file.

- 6.2 Once the probation period is successfully completed, the line manager should commence the performance management cycle as per the Performance Management Policy. Objectives should be set which reflect the time left in the performance management cycle.

7.0 Extending the probation period

- 7.1 The headteacher or line manager can consider extending the probationary period and if so, they will tell the employee in advance of the final review meeting. An individual is entitled to bring a workplace colleague or trade union representative to their final review meeting if an extension to their probation period is a potential outcome. The headteacher or line manager will explain the reasons for the extension. It may be that the employee needs further training or support to meet the required standards of the post and the headteacher or line manager considers the individual will be able to make the necessary improvements within the period of extension.

7.2 The employee will receive written confirmation of the extension, explaining how long the extension is for, the reason and any further support or training to be provided.

8.0 Terminating the employment contract in the probation period

- 8.1 If the headteacher or line manager considers that an extension is not appropriate and the employment cannot continue, they should arrange a meeting with the individual to discuss the situation which may result in termination of the employment. The employee is entitled to be accompanied by a workplace colleague or trade union representative at a meeting where the potential outcome is the termination of their employment.
- 8.2 If the Headteacher is not the line manager, they must be informed of any decision to end a probation period before the final probation meeting. HR guidance must be sought prior to ending a probation period.
- 8.3 Following this meeting, the individual will be notified in writing and given the appropriate notice to end their contract of employment.
- 8.4 If the employee has two years continuous service with the school when they were appointed to the post in which they are now subject to a probationary period and the headteacher or line manager considers that this has not been successful, the individual will be managed through the formal stage of the capability procedure. If the outcome of the capability procedure is dismissal, the Trust may consider opportunities for redeployment within the Trust where possible but there will be no pay protection if the post found for redeployment is at a lower grade. The Head of Governance and People must be informed in such circumstances.

8.5 If the individual started employment before all of the pre-recruitment checks, in particular the DBS clearance, were completed, the progress of the checks will be monitored during the probationary period. During this period the individual will be fully supervised at all times and a risk assessment will be in place until the relevant DBS or other checks including criminal record checks have been cleared. If the individual is considered to be obstructing the progress of such checks or if there is some other substantial reason why these have not been returned as satisfactory, consideration will be given to terminating the employment under the probation policy.

9.0 Appealing the decision to end employment in the probation period

- 9.1 The employee must write to the chair of the local governing board within five school days of the date they received notification to end the contract. The individual must set out in sufficient detail the reason(s) for appeal to enable the school to respond (i.e. detailing why they consider the decision to fail the probationary period to be unreasonable).
- 9.2 An appeal hearing will be arranged with an appeals panel of three local governors that have had no direct involvement in the case already. The individual has the right to be represented at the appeal hearing by a trade union representative or workplace colleague. The meeting will be clerked by the local governing board clerk or a clerk from the central clerking service, This should be arranged with the Head of Governance and People.
- 9.3 The final bundle of paperwork (employer's and employee's) should be with the local governors' panel at least three working days before the hearing.
- 9.4 The appeal can result in one of three decisions:
- To confirm the dismissal on the grounds of failed probation and non-confirmation of appointment.
 - To extend the probationary period for a further agreed period if it is believed that this will result in a successful outcome.
 - To confirm the probationary period has been successfully completed.
- 9.5 The decision of the local governor appeal panel is final, and the individual should receive written confirmation within three working days of the decision.
- 9.6 If the probationary period is extended as a result of the appeal hearing, an action plan should be drawn up between the individual and the headteacher/line manager and it is the responsibility of both parties to ensure it is followed. It may include some specific recommendations from the chair of the appeal hearing.
- 9.7 If, at the end of any agreed extension, the headteacher or line manager still considers that the employee is unsuitable to continue in employment with the school, then a further meeting will be arranged with the employee in line with section seven above. After this meeting there is no further right of appeal.

Appendix one: three-month review meeting template

This document should be shared with the employee ahead of their probation review meeting. They do not have to complete it prior to the meeting but can use it to help them understand what to expect and prepare.

Probation review template: three-month review

Employee name:

Job title:

School name:

Line manager name:

Date of appointment:

Probation period end date:

Role performance

(This section should focus on how the individual has performed their duties and responsibilities in the past three months, providing a comprehensive assessment of the individual's performance. For posts where the individual works with or has responsibility for the welfare of children and young people, this section must cover their performance for safeguarding.)

Consideration should be given to the following. The line manager should be prepared to offer feedback, with clear examples provided.

- Whether there is understanding of the expectations of the role
- If there has been appropriate and expected progress in the role

- Areas of the role where the most progress has been made so far
- Areas of the role where improvements are needed and what support is needed to achieve this

Summary of discussion

Working relationships

(This section should focus on relationships with colleagues, staff the individual is responsible for (if applicable) and internal and external stakeholders and should include comments on team working and communication style and building relationships in line with the Trust and/or school vision)

Consideration should be given to the following. The line manager should be prepared to offer feedback, with clear examples provided.

- How relationships are being established with colleagues
- How relationships are being established with pupils and parents
- How relationships are being established with the Trust family, as relevant to the role
- If there have been any barriers to building relationships so far and what support is needed to remove these

Summary of discussion

Contribution to school and Trust vision *(This section should focus on the individual's contribution to living out the Trust and/or school vision in their role)*

Consideration should be given to the following. The line manager should be prepared to offer feedback, with clear examples provided.

- Whether there is a developing understanding of the Trust and school vision
- Whether there is a developing understanding of how the Trust and school vision can be lived through the role
- If there have been any barriers to developing an understanding or living the Trust and school vision in the role so far and the support needed to remove these

Summary of discussion

Line management or supervisory responsibilities (If applicable to role)

(This section should focus on the individual's performance in carrying out any line management or supervisory responsibilities)

Consideration should be given to the following. The line manager should be prepared to offer feedback, with clear examples provided.

- Whether there is a developing understanding of the line management or supervisory responsibilities within the role
- Whether there is a developing impact through supporting the professional development of individuals line managed
- Whether there is developing evidence of providing others with clear and honest feedback to enable them to flourish in their roles
- Whether there is developing evidence of treating those line managed with dignity and respect
- If there have been any barriers to developing line management and supervisory responsibilities in the role so far and the support needed to remove these

Summary of discussion

Employee evaluation of probation period

(This section should focus on the individual having the opportunity to share their feedback on their probation period)

Consideration should be given to the following. The line manager should be prepared to offer feedback, with clear examples provided.

- If the employee has any feedback on their probation or induction process so far?
- If the employee has identified any further support needed at this stage of your probation period
- What has been the most challenging aspect of the probation period so far and why
- What has been the most successful aspect of the probation period so far and why

Summary of discussion**Line manager summary****Employee summary**

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Agreed actions Record here any actions during the discussion to support the individual to progress in their probation period		
Action	Who is responsible	Completion date

Line manager signature:		Date:	
Employee signature:		Date:	

Appendix two: final review meeting template

This document should be shared with the employee ahead of their probation review meeting. They do not have to complete it prior to the meeting but can use it to help them understand what to expect and prepare.

Probation review template: final review meeting

Employee name:

Job title:

School:

Line manager name:

Date of appointment:

Date of final probation review meeting:

Role performance

(This section should focus on how the individual has performed their duties and responsibilities, providing a comprehensive assessment of the individual's performance. For posts where the individual works with or has responsibility for the welfare of children and young people, this section must cover their performance for safeguarding.)

Consideration should be given to the following. The line manager should be prepared to offer feedback, with clear examples provided.

- Whether the expectations of the role have been met
- Whether the expected progress in the role has been achieved
- What aspects of the role have been most successful during the probation period
- What aspects of the role are still requiring development

Summary of discussion

Working relationships

(This section should focus on relationships with colleagues, staff the individual is responsible for (if applicable) and internal and external stakeholders and should include comments on team working and communication style and building relationships in line with the Trust and/or school vision)

Consideration should be given to the following. The line manager should be prepared to offer feedback, with clear examples provided.

- Whether relationships have been established with colleagues
- Whether relationships have been established with pupils and parents
- Whether relationships have been established with the Trust family, as relevant to the role
- Whether any identified barriers to building relationships have been addressed and removed

Summary of discussion

Contribution to Trust and school vision *(This section should focus on the individual's contribution to living out the Trust and/or school vision in their role)*

Consideration should be given to the following. The line manager should be prepared to offer feedback, with clear examples provided.

- Whether there is a secure understanding of the Trust and school vision
- Whether there is a secure understanding of how the Trust and school vision can be lived through the role
- Whether any identified barriers to living the Trust and school vision in the role have been addressed and removed

Summary of discussion

Line management or supervisory responsibilities (If applicable to role)

(This section should focus on the individual's performance in carrying out any line management or supervisory responsibilities)

Consideration should be given to the following. The line manager should be prepared to offer feedback, with clear examples provided.

- Whether there is a secure understanding of the line management or supervisory responsibilities within the role
- Whether there is secure evidence of impact through supporting the professional development of individuals line managed
- Whether there is secure evidence of providing others with clear and honest feedback to enable them to flourish in their roles
- Whether there is secure evidence of treating those line managed with dignity and respect
- Whether any identified barriers to developing line management and supervisory responsibilities in the role have been addressed and removed

Summary of discussion

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Employee evaluation of probation period

(This section should focus on the individual having the opportunity to share their feedback on their probation period)

Consideration should be given to the following. The line manager should be prepared to offer feedback, with clear examples provided.

- If the employee has any feedback on their probation or induction process
- If the employee has identified any further support needed to continue to develop in their role
- Whether identified challenges of the probation period were addressed and removed
- What has been the most successful aspect of the probation period

Summary of discussion

Line manager summary
Employee summary

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Outcome of probation meeting	
Progress has been satisfactory, and the probation period has been passed.	
Progress is unsatisfactory, and the probation period has not been passed. An extension to the probation period of [insert timescale] is agreed as the employee has not been able to demonstrate fully their ability to carry out the role.	
Progress is unsatisfactory, and the probation period has not been passed.	

Line manager signature:		Date:	
Employee signature:		Date:	