



# Probation Policy & Procedure

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## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this procedure is to enable new employees to settle into their new job, understand their role, the objectives, and the performance standards required. This procedure supports new members of staff to meet the required standards of performance.

The probationary procedure applies to all new employees of the Trust only, or recently appointed employees who have changed jobs prior to successfully completing their probationary period.

The probationary period is 6 months for both Support and Teaching staff including ECT's as well as non-school based staff. Where the period of employment is less than 6 months the whole period of employment is regarded as the probationary period and the timescales for the first and final review need to be adjusted accordingly.

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. During the probationary period, attendance, conduct and role performance issues will be managed under this policy rather than the Trust's other HR policies.

## 2. Definitions

In the context of this policy Manager means the following:

- Head Teacher or Head of School for all school-based staff
- Centre Manager for all nursery -based staff
- Chief Operating Officer (COO) for all central staff
- Executive Head Teacher for all Head Teachers
- CEO for Chief Operating Officer, Executive Headteachers and Centre Managers
- Chair of the Board for CEO

Managers may not delegate decision making for dismissal to another without consultation with the HR & Operations Director.

The responsibility and authority to dismiss under the Probation Policy and Procedure should remain with either the Headteacher or Head of School for all school-based staff.

For non-school based staff, the responsibility and authority to dismiss should remain with the COO for all central staff.

Any appeals will be chaired by the CEO, Trustees (in the case of the Senior Leadership Team), COO or Executive Headteacher, Primaries.

### **3. Confidentiality**

It is the aim of the Trust to deal with performance matters sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of any individuals involved. All employees must treat as confidential any information communicated to them in connection with managing performance.

Employees, and anyone accompanying them, must not make electronic recordings of any meetings or hearings conducted under this procedure.

### **4. Induction and Initial Target Setting**

Effective induction is critical to a successful probationary process. The Manager will complete an induction checklist and a departmental induction. The induction checklist needs to be completed and signed off by the employee and the Manager (Appendix 1).

As part of the induction process the Manager will complete the initial target setting document (Appendix 2). At this meeting, the Manager will:-

- Check that the induction process has been completed/planned and to take place in the near future.
- Ensure that the employee is aware of the responsibilities and priorities of their new role and how these relate to and impact on the Setting and the Trust as a whole.
- Outline the probationary process including the programme of meetings and scheduled review dates.
- Set out the objectives agreed with the employee for achievement during the probationary period, which will be used to evaluate the employee's performance during the probationary period.
- Discuss and identify jointly any learning and development actions, including mandatory training, needed to carry out their duties and responsibilities successfully.
- Any objectives set should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely (SMART).

### **5. Informal Meetings**

In addition to the formal documented reviews, regular one to one meetings should take place between the Manager and the employee to monitor and check progress. The scheduling and nature of these meetings will depend on the job role and the progress that the member of staff is making. If there are concerns the Manager should talk to the employee as soon as is practicable and not wait for a formal review meeting. Support in

the form of training, development, coaching, and additional supervision should be arranged as appropriate.

Any informal meetings or additional support put into place for a staff member should be documented and a copy given to them.

## **6. First Review Meeting**

The First Review Meeting (Appendix 3) should take place at around 3 months. At the meeting, the Manager will in discussion with the new member of staff:-

- Check that the induction process has been completed.
- Review progress against the objectives which were set at the initial target setting meeting. For Teaching staff this will focus on teaching and learning.
- Review the training and development actions set at the initial target setting meeting.
- Consider any further job objectives which are required for the remainder of the probationary period.
- Consider further support, training and development that may be necessary to support the new member of staff in meeting the standards of performance and achieving the job objectives that have been set.

Before the First Review Meeting, the Manager should complete the overall performance table to aide discussion with the new member of staff.

After the First Review Meeting, the Manager should complete the form and return this to the HR Department. This should reflect the progress against the job objectives, training and development actions set at the initial meeting, before going on to add in any further work objectives and training to be completed during the remainder of the probationary period.

At this stage, the Manager should be assessing if the new member is making satisfactory progress. If there are any concerns regarding the new member of staff's performance, this should be discussed with Human Resources in order that the correct support and advice is put in place.

A copy of the formal review and any support put into place should be issued to the staff member once it has been signed by both parties and regular reviews should take place during the probation period.

## **7. Second Review Meeting**

The second review meeting (Appendix 4) should take place around 6 months.

If there are any concerns about the member of staff's performance, then it would be advisable to contact Human Resources for advice before holding the second review meeting.

At the meeting, the Manager will in discussion with the new member of staff:-

- Review progress against the objectives which were set at the initial target setting and first review meetings.
- Review the training and development actions set at the initial target setting and first review meetings.
- consider further job objectives and training and development for the period until the first annual appraisal, (If it is clear that the new member of staff is going to be confirmed in post).

Before the Second Review Meeting, the Manager should complete the overall performance table to aide discussion with the new member of staff.

After the Second Review Meeting, the Manager should complete the form and return this to the HR Department.

At the conclusion of the second review meeting the Manager will decide to:-

- Confirm the member of staff in their appointment.
- Recommend that the new member of staff has not passed their probation in which case a meeting will be held with the new member of staff.
- Extend the probationary period up to 3 months - in exceptional circumstances only.

## **8. Extending probationary periods**

Six months should be an adequate period to effectively assess an employee's suitability for the role. In exceptional circumstances, the Trust may decide to extend an employee's period of probation. This will be limited to one extension and the total period of probation will be no longer than 9 months.

An extension may be implemented in circumstances where:

- The employee's performance, conduct or attendance during probation has not been entirely satisfactory, where some improvement has taken place and it is thought likely that an extension to the probationary period may lead to satisfactory improvement.
- The employee has been absent from the workplace for an extended period during the probation.

Before extending an employee's probationary period, the Manager should consult with Human Resources. If an extension to the probationary period is agreed, the Manager will confirm the terms of the extension in writing to the employee, including:

- the length of the extension and 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; and
- a statement that, if the employee does not meet fully the required standards by the end of the extended period of probation, their employment may be terminated.

## **9. Termination of employment**

Ordinarily it is the Trust's policy to allow the employee to complete the designated period of probation rather than terminating employment before the probation has come to an end. This is to give the employee a full opportunity to meet 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**

If an employee's performance while on probation has been unsatisfactory (despite support from the 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 period of probation or at an earlier point if appropriate.

### **Conduct**

If an employee's conduct while on probation has been unsatisfactory (despite support from the 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**

If an employee's attendance while on probation has been unsatisfactory (despite support from the Manager), and it is thought unlikely that further or 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.

### **Process - Final Review Hearing**

A final review hearing will be held, whereby a decision will be taken to terminate the employee's employment. The member of staff will be given 5 working days' notice in writing of this meeting. The written notice will include the reasons for the meeting and the right to either a union representative or workplace colleague. Copies of any relevant documentation will also be provided, i.e. copies of review documentation.

The responsibility and authority to dismiss during probation remains with Headteachers or Head of School for school-based staff.

For non-school based staff, the responsibility and authority to dismiss remains with the COO for all centrally based staff.

The Trust will write to the employee confirming the termination, the reason for it, and will be given the right to appeal against this decision within 5 working days.

## **10. Appeal**

If the employee believes that the decision to issue a warning or to dismiss is wrong or unjust, they may appeal. Appeals must be in writing and emailed to the Manager, setting out the grounds for appeal within five working days of the decision.

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 set out in section 8.

The appeal will be dealt with impartially and, wherever possible, by a senior manager, CEO or by panel of trustees who have not previously been involved in the case in line with the Trust's arrangements for appeals as outlined in section 3.

The employee will be informed in writing of the results of the appeal hearing as soon as possible. There is no further right of appeal against the sanction or dismissal within the Trust.

## **11. Review of policy**

This policy is reviewed and amended biennially by the Trust in consultation with the recognised trade unions. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.





Welcome to the Mowbray Education Trust!

We want to provide the best possible start to your career at the Trust, and it is therefore extremely important that we invest the time to ensure a full and effective induction process is delivered for all new employees.

At this point you will have received your Laptop and ID badge. Your Manager will ensure that you have access to all the necessary equipment and information on your first day of employment and will carry out a full departmental induction.

Name:..... Job Role:.....

School:..... Date:.....

## Induction Checklist

For support staff complete column 1 for Teaching complete column 1 and 2

All Staff (including Teaching)	Tick	Teaching staff only	Tick
Introduction and overview, to setting and colleagues/ meeting key contacts.		Outline appraisal process	
Introduction to school's internal procedures.		Talk through timetable and tour of classrooms	
School information to include tour of site, opening hours, canteen, fire evacuation procedure		Review Professional Teaching Standards.	
Complete mandatory National College training, and Safeguarding training with DSL.		Discuss directed time and provide a copy of school's approach.	
Review the information in the Staff Handbook provided by HR.		Explain the tutor programme and pastoral structure, (secondary only).	
Overview of job role and setting/department structure, set initial probation targets		Share student data and profiling to enable the new starter to understand cohorts of students	

Please ensure you have read all the following policies as per our website or the link in the Staff Handbook, please tick the below to confirm:

All Staff	Tick	All Staff	Tick
Probation Policy & Procedure		Keeping Children Safe in Education	
Disciplinary Policy & Procedure		Grievance Procedure	
Leave of Absence Policy and Procedure		Code of Conduct	

Signed by Employee.....Date.....

Signed by Line Manager.....Date.....

**Please return a signed copy to the HR Department**

## Initial Target Setting

## APPENDIX 2

The Initial targets will be set in line with your current job description and should be completed by your line manager during the induction process. These will be reviewed at your 3 month and 6-month probationary period. **Initial probationary review meeting (this should be within a week of the employee joining the School / Trust)**

Employee Name:	
Managers Name:	
School / Job Title:	
Start Date:	
Date of the initial probationary meeting:	
Date planned for 3-month review:	
Date planned for the 6-month review:	

### **Objectives**

The manager should record here the objectives agreed with the employee for achievement during the early stages of the probationary period. It should include how achievement will be measured and timescales for achievement

Key Area of Job Description=

### **Development plan**

To support the employee achieving these objectives, the manager should identify any learning and development needs and specify how and when these needs will be addressed during the probationary period

How to get to stage/ aims set above.

Employee's signature	Date
Manager's signature	Date

**First Review (3 months)**

**APPENDIX 3**

This section should be completed by the manager prior to meeting with the employee, as far as possible, and then used as a discussion tool at the meeting.

Overall performance

Tick one	Improvement required	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Quality and accuracy of work				
Productivity				
Attendance				
Timekeeping				
Behaviours				
Work relationships				

Have the objectives identified for the initial element of the probationary period been met? YES / NO

If NO, what further action is required?

Have the learning and development needs highlighted in the development plan for the initial element of the probationary period been addressed? YES / NO. If NO, what further action is required?

The employee's strengths are:

The employee's areas for development are:

Where areas for development have been identified, summarise how these will be addressed during the remainder of the probationary period

Employee's signature	Date
Manager's signature	Date

**SECOND REVIEW (6 months)**

This section should be completed by the manager prior to meeting with the employee, as far as possible, and then used as a discussion tool at the meeting.

Overall performance

<b>Tick one</b>	<b>Improvement required</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>Quality and accuracy of work</b>				
<b>Productivity</b>				
<b>Attendance</b>				
<b>Timekeeping</b>				
<b>Behaviours</b>				
<b>Work relationships</b>				

Have the objectives identified for the final element of the probationary period been met? YES / NO

If NO, what further action is required?

<p>Have the learning and development needs highlighted for the final element of the probationary period been addressed (Including any cross training highlighted)? YES / NO. If NO, why is this not the case?</p>
<p>Has the employee passed their probationary period successfully? YES / NO.</p> <p>If NO, outline next steps:</p> <p>If YES notify the HR Team who will confirm this to the employee.</p>

Employee's signature	Date
Manager's signature	Date

If there are concerns about an employee's performance at any stage of the probationary process, please contact the HR team for advice. Probationary periods should only be extended in exceptional circumstances, and the HR team should be involved in any extension proposal.



## Log of Changes to Document

Date	Page	Change	Who:
July 2017	Whole document	Original document	Head of HR
May 2020	Whole document	<p>Section 1 - Introduction - wording changed - incorporated section 3 - length of probation and part of Section 5 - terms of employment during the probationary period.</p> <p>Section 3 - Length of Probation - deleted.</p> <p>Section 3 - New section Induction and Initial Target Setting - including old section 6 - Line Managers responsibilities.</p> <p>Section 4 - New section Informal Meetings - including old section 6 Line Managers responsibilities.</p> <p>Section 5 - New Section - First Review Meeting - including old section 7 - reviews during probation.</p> <p>Section 6 - New Section - Second Review Meeting.</p> <p>Appendix 1 - Induction Checklist</p> <p>Appendices 2, 3, and 4 To incorporate probationary review forms.</p>	HR/Operations Director
July-20	Whole Document	Approved	MET Board
June-22	Whole Document	<p>Job titles updates and updated Induction Checklist used.</p> <p>Also updated to stipulate who has 'authority to dismiss', allowing sufficient levels for appeals.</p> <p>Contents page updated</p> <p>Section 3 - Confidentiality paragraph added in</p> <p>Section 10 - Right of Appeal added in</p>	MET Board

		Appendix 4 slightly amended	
August 2023	Appendix forms reviewed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formatting changed into a table on Appendix 1 Induction checklist.</li> <li>- Appendix 1 - Induction checklist reviewed to fit school's requirements, compressed into one page. No procedural changes have been made or changed.</li> <li>- New Logo Added from rebranding of the Trust</li> </ul>	HR/ Sue Beasley