

Teacher Appraisal Policy

This document applies to Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, and is advisory for Foundation and Voluntary Aided Schools.

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TEACHER APPRAISAL POLICY

PURPOSE

The appraisal policy is designed to ensure that all teachers have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively. Appraisal will help to ensure that teachers are able to continue to develop and improve their professional practice, to improve outcomes for pupils. Appraisal will link to pay progression in accordance with the STPCD (School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document) and School Pay Policy.

This policy sets out the framework for clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of teachers, within the context of the school's approach to improving educational provision and performance, and the standards expected of teachers. The appraisal process will be used also to address any concerns that are raised about a teacher's performance. If concerns are such that they cannot be resolved through the appraisal process, there will be consideration of whether to commence the capability procedure.

Principles

This policy applies to the Head Teacher and to all teachers employed at the school except those on contracts of less than one term; those undergoing induction (i.e., ECTs; or teachers on capability procedures).

The appraisal period will run for 12 months, normally from September to August. 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.

Where a teacher starts their employment at the school part-way through the appraisal period, the Head Teacher or, in the case where the employee is the Head Teacher, the Governing Body shall determine the length of the first cycle for that teacher, with a view to bringing the appraisal process into line with the appraisal period for other teachers as soon as possible. Where a teacher transfers to a new post within the school part-way through the appraisal period, the Head Teacher or, in the case where the employee is the Head Teacher, the Governing Body shall determine whether the period shall begin again and whether to change the appraiser.

APPOINTING APPRAISERS

All appraisers of teachers, other than those appraising Head Teachers, will be teachers and will be suitably trained. The Head Teacher will be appraised by the Governing Body, supported by a suitably skilled and/or experienced external adviser who has been appointed by the Governing Body for that purpose. The task of appraising the Head Teacher, including the setting of objectives, will be delegated to a sub-group consisting of normally three members of the Governing Body.

Where a Head Teacher is of the opinion that any of the governors appointed by the Governing Body is unsuitable to act as their appraiser, they may submit a written request for that governor to be replaced, stating the reasons for the request. The Governing Body will consider the request, taking into account what is reasonable, however; ultimately the decision rests with the Governing Body.

The choice of appraiser for teachers is made by the Head Teacher. Where teachers have an objection to the Head Teacher's choice, their concerns will be carefully considered, taking into account what is reasonable, however; ultimately the decision rests with the Head Teacher.

All appraisers appointed by the Head Teacher will be qualified teachers and will have current or recent teaching experience. Where it becomes apparent that the appraiser appointed by the Head Teacher will be absent for the majority of the appraisal cycle, the Head Teacher may perform those duties themselves or delegate those duties to another teacher for the duration of that absence.

If the Head Teacher appoints an appraiser who is not the teacher's line 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.

Where a teacher is experiencing difficulties that relate to performance concerns and the Head Teacher is not the appraiser, the Head Teacher 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 **Teachers Experiencing Difficulties**.

SETTING OBJECTIVES

The Head Teacher's objectives will be set by the appraisal sub-group of the Governing Body after consultation with the external adviser and the Head Teacher.

Objectives for teachers and the Head Teacher will be set before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period. The objectives set will be appropriate to the teacher's role and level of experience. 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.

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 teachers with similar experience and levels of responsibility. Should the objectives not be agreed, the final decision on allocation of objectives rests with the Head Teacher.

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 teacher works.

Setting more than three objectives, or, for example, using sub-targets, can lead to teachers experiencing unreasonable workload and pressure, making the objectives more difficult to achieve; however, it may be appropriate for those teachers who have additional responsibilities in line with STPCD to have more than three objectives set.

The objectives set for each teacher 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 teacher. 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 re-adjust to their working environment.

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. Teachers will be assessed against the appropriate set of standards contained in the document Teachers' Standards, published in July 2011. The Head Teacher or Governing Body (as appropriate) will need to consider whether certain teachers should be assessed against other sets of standards published by the Secretary of State or other body that are relevant to them. For QTLS holders, that may include the overarching professional standards for teachers in the lifelong learning sector, held by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service.

PAY PROGRESSION

Where teachers are eligible for pay progression, the recommendation made by the appraiser will be based on the assessment of their performance against the agreed objectives. The decision made by the relevant decision-making body will be based on the statutory criteria and guidance set out in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) and the relevant teacher standards.

The Governing Body has agreed the pay policy of the school and has considered the implications of the appraisal policy with respect to the arrangements relating to teachers' pay in accordance with the STPCD. The Governing Body will ensure that decisions on pay progression are made by 31 December for Head Teachers and by 31 October for other teachers.

All schools have an obligation to ensure that individuals are not subject to discrimination. Staff who have been absent on maternity leave, long term sickness absence and disability-related absence should not unduly have their incremental progression withheld as a result of their absence.

REVIEWING PERFORMANCE

Observation

The effective and efficient operation of the appraisal process requires lesson observation to take place, and for it to be a confidential process of constructive engagement within an atmosphere of support and co-operation. Accordingly, observations will be carried out in a supportive fashion, with professionalism, integrity and courtesy, and will be evaluated objectively and reported accurately and fairly.

Wherever possible, at least 5 working days' notice of the date and time of the observation will be given and verbal feedback provided by at least the end of the next school day and written feedback within 5 working days. Classroom observation will be carried out by qualified teachers.

For the purposes of appraisal, teachers' performance will be observed on an appropriate and reasonable number of occasions and will, as far as possible, be agreed by the appraiser with the appraisee, based on the individual circumstances of the teacher and the overall needs of the school. The number and duration of appraisal observations will be in accordance with the school's observation protocol, which includes provision for exceptional circumstances where concerns have been raised about a teacher's performance, or where the teacher requests additional observation visits.

Head Teachers or other leaders with responsibility for learning and teaching standards may 'drop in' or undertake other observations to evaluate the standards of teaching and learning and to ensure that high standards of professional performance are established and maintained. The length and frequency of 'drop in' or other observations, and the notice to be given, will vary depending on specific circumstances but will be in accordance with any school policy on this.

For the purpose of professional development, feedback about lesson observations should be developmental, not simply a judgement using Ofsted grades.

This school will use the findings of each observation, including appraisal observations, for other management requirements (for example subject area reviews), thereby seeking to minimise the total number of occasions on which teachers are observed. Teachers (including the Head Teacher) whose posts have responsibilities outside the classroom should also expect to have their performance of those responsibilities observed and assessed.

Development & Support

The appraisal process is a supportive one, which is 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, for example, through peer observation.

Professional development will be linked to school improvement priorities and to the on-going professional development needs and priorities of individual teachers. The school's CPD programme will be informed by the training and development needs identified as part of the appraisal process.

The Governing Body will ensure in the budget planning that, as far as possible, resources are made available in the school budget for appropriate training, and support agreed for appraisees, maintaining access on an equitable basis. An account of the training and development needs of teachers including the instances where it did not prove possible to provide any agreed CPD, will form a part of the Head Teacher's annual report to the Governing Body about the operation of the appraisal process in the school.

With regard to the provision of CPD in the case of competing demands on the school budget, a decision on relative priority will be taken with regard to the extent to which:

- (a) the training and support will help the school to achieve its priorities; and
- (b) the CPD identified is essential for an appraisee to meet their objectives.

Account will be taken in a review meeting of where it has not been possible for teachers to fully meet their performance criteria because the support recorded in the planning statement has not been provided.

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT

Each teacher's performance will be formally assessed in respect of each appraisal period. In assessing the performance of the Head Teacher, the Governing Body will consult the external adviser.

The teacher will receive as soon as practicable following the end of each appraisal period – and have the opportunity to comment on, a written appraisal report. The appraisal report will include:

- 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 against 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;
- a recommendation on pay where that is relevant **Note:** pay recommendations for teachers need to be made by 31 October each year; and pay recommendations for Head Teachers to be made by 31 December each year).
- a space for the teacher's own comments.

A review meeting will take place to discuss the content of the report and any further action required and to inform objective setting for the next cycle. In some circumstances an interim review meeting may be appropriate. The assessment of performance and of training and development needs will inform the planning process for the following appraisal period.

TEACHERS EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES

When dealing with a teacher experiencing difficulties, the objective is to provide support and guidance through the appraisal process in such a way that the teacher's performance improves and the problem is, therefore, resolved. Where it is apparent that a teacher's personal circumstances are leading to difficulties at school, support will be offered as soon as possible, without waiting for the formal annual assessment.

If an appraiser identifies through the appraisal process, or via other sources of information, for example parental complaints, that the difficulties experienced by a teacher are such that, if not rectified, could lead to capability procedures the appraiser, the Head Teacher, or a member of the leadership team, will, as part of the appraisal process meet the teacher to:

- give clear written feedback to the teacher about the nature and seriousness of the concerns;
- give the teacher the opportunity to comment on and discuss the concerns;
- give the teacher at least 5 working days' notice that a meeting will be held to discuss targets for improvement alongside a programme of support;
- in consultation with the teacher at the above meeting, an action plan with support will be established (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.

The teacher's progress will continue to be monitored as part of the appraisal process and a reasonable time given for the teacher's performance to improve. This will depend upon the circumstances but will be for a minimum period of 4 working 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 teacher will be given regular feedback on progress and arrangements will be made to modify the support programme if appropriate. If sufficient progress is made such that the teacher is performing at a level that indicates there is no longer a possibility of capability procedures being invoked the teacher should be informed of this at a formal meeting with the appraiser or Head Teacher. Following this meeting the appraisal process will continue as normal.

If no, or insufficient, improvement has been made over this period, the teacher will be invited to a **transition** meeting to determine whether formal capability proceedings need to be commenced or the appraisal process remains in place. The teacher may be accompanied by a trade union representative or official, or work colleague, and will have at least 5 working days' notice of the meeting.

Appeals

Appraisees have a right of appeal against any of the entries in the written appraisal report that have resulted in an impact on pay progression in line with the School's Pay Policy. Details of the appeals process are available from the Head Teacher or from the school Governing Body.

Where the Head Teacher has not been recommended for pay progression, they will be informed by the appropriate governor. The Head Teacher will notify any teacher who has not been recommended for pay progression of the date when the Governing Body meets to consider pay recommendations, following which the teacher (and Head Teacher when the head has not been recommended for pay progression) may exercise the right of appeal, assisted by a companion who may be a colleague, a trade union official or a trade union representative.

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

If a teacher undergoing monitoring or a formal capability procedure is on long term absence, referral to occupational health will take place to assess the appropriateness or otherwise of continuing with monitoring or formal procedures.

Confidentiality and Professional Relationships

The appraisal and capability processes will be treated with confidentiality. Only the appraiser's line manager or, where there is more than one manager, each manager, will be provided with access to the appraisees development plan and appraisal. This will be done upon request and only where this is necessary to enable the manager to discharge their management responsibilities. Appraisees will be consulted on requests for access in the context of this policy.

The process of gathering evidence for performance review will not compromise normal professional relationships between teachers. 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 appraisee. 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. The Head Teacher or appropriate colleague might, for example, review all teachers' objectives and written appraisal records personally – to check consistency of approach and expectation between different appraisers. The Head Teacher would also normally be advised of any pay recommendations that have been made.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Governing Body and Head Teacher will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the school's appraisal arrangements. The Head Teacher will provide the Governing Body with a written report on the operation of the school's appraisal and capability policies annually. The report will not identify any individual by name. The report will include an assessment of the impact of these policies on:

- Race
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Disability
- Religion and Beliefs
- Age
- Part-time Status
- Maternity and Pregnancy
- Marriage and Civil Partnership

The Head Teacher will report on whether there have been any appeals or representations on an individual or collective basis on the grounds of alleged discrimination.

Document Retention

The Governing Body and Head Teacher will ensure that all written appraisal records are retained in a secure place for six years and then destroyed in line with Data Protection legislation.