



The Athelstan Trust

Probationary Policy and Procedure for Support Staff

Date of Review	Approved by	Date of Approval	Next Review	Website
December 2020	Board	11 Feb 2021	February 2024	Yes

1. Introduction and Purpose

An offer of appointment is made in the belief and expectation that the person selected is capable of carrying out the duties of the post satisfactorily and s/he is the most suitable candidate for the job. Similarly it is assumed that the candidate accepting the appointment believes that the job is one s/he can do well and enjoy. A period of probation is normally provided as an opportunity for both the school and the employee to assess whether these expectations are likely to be fulfilled.

Through a series of performance reviews the employee establishes his/her suitability for the post and the structured process ensures that s/he is given the opportunity to clarify any aspects of the role and seek guidance where necessary. It also ensures both the school and the employee have an opportunity to raise any concerns as soon as they arise.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all school staff

3. When the Probationary Period should apply

All new permanent and fixed term support staff appointments are subject to satisfactory completion of a period of probationary service of six months' service with the Academy. During this period the employee's performance will be regularly monitored and reviewed.

4. General Guidelines

The probationary period is normally 6 months in duration. Headteachers may wish to delegate the monitoring of the probationary period to a senior member of staff or the line manager as appropriate (called the probationary reviewer).

It is the duty of the probationary reviewer to take every reasonable action to ensure that the employee receives the training and support that will enable him/her to reach the required standards. For example, a programme of learning may be drawn up to plan the required training and support on a weekly basis.

Reviews of performance will take place in accordance with the process outlined in section 5 below. Probationary reports should be completed by the probationary reviewer and discussed with the individual concerned (see section 5 and Appendix 1).

Where ever possible employees may be accompanied by a trade union representative or colleague at all meetings where formal probationary reviews take place.

Where an employee does not meet the required standards of attendance, performance or conduct during his/her probationary period, the reasons for the shortfall will be discussed with him/her at the earliest opportunity and the employee will be given support and every reasonable opportunity to reach and maintain the required standards. This will ensure that there is as much time as possible for improvement to be achieved and enable the school to give maximum assistance.



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If the employee has failed to meet the required standards by the final formal review meeting at 20 weeks, a formal hearing will be convened and dismissal will be considered. However, The Trust may conduct an early probationary review (before 12 weeks) at its discretion.

Headteachers should consult their Human Resources provider as soon as it is apparent that non-confirmation of an appointment may be considered.

If dismissal is the final outcome of the procedure, there is a right of appeal.

5. Process

5.1 Review Meetings

Three formal reviews should be undertaken at 12, 16, and 20 weeks. Employees are entitled to be accompanied by a colleague or Trade Union representative at these meetings. It is advisable to plan a date and time for each review, giving the employee as much notice as possible. If during the course of such a meeting, the employee considers s/he would prefer representation, the meeting should be adjourned so that the employee can organise this. The reconvened meeting should take place within 7 calendar days.

These formal meetings are a review of the employee's work performance and a summary of progress to date including the employee's attendance, conduct and relationship with others. They also include information on goals and objectives and should give an early indication of whether the targets set for the probationer are likely to be attained.

Examples of unsatisfactory performance should be drawn to the employee's attention as soon as possible. Issues should not be withheld.

5.2 Probationary Record and Probationary Report Form

Each formal review should be recorded on both the Probationary Report Form and the Probationary Record (see Appendix 1).

In addition to the completed report form and any supervision notes, factual notes should be kept of all significant discussions with the employee. They may help to clarify examples of unsatisfactory performance, etc. at a later date.

Both the employee and probationary reviewer should sign the Probationary Record after each review to confirm that the employee is aware of its contents. The employee should be invited to attach a short written statement should s/he wish to do so, explaining any points of disagreement with any of the statements made.

5.3 Outcome

After the third formal review has been completed at 20 weeks, three outcomes are possible:

- a) The employee's performance has reached/exceeded the standard expected and his/her continuing employment can be confirmed by the school (see draft letter at Appendix 2).
- b) The employee's performance has been unsatisfactory, but there is a prospect of an improvement to an acceptable standard and the probationary period is extended (see section 6 below).
- c) The employee's performance has been unsatisfactory and, despite additional guidelines and training, has not improved or has failed to improve sufficiently for there to be a prospect of work performance reaching an acceptable standard in the near future (see section 7).



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6. Extending the Probationary Period

The probationary period can be extended. This is normally for 4 weeks in the first instance and up to a maximum of 12 weeks. Further regular reviews (weekly or fortnightly) should take place during the extended period and a further record of these should be made and signed by both parties.

Employees should be made aware of areas where improvement is required, together with targets and objectives that should be achieved for the appointment to be confirmed.

If, at the end of the extended period the employee's performance reaches an acceptable standard, employment should be confirmed. If this is not the case, the appointment cannot be confirmed and the employee should be dismissed as outlined in section 7.

7. Non Confirmation of Appointment

If it is clear that, despite the best efforts of all concerned, the employee has failed to meet the required standards, a probationary assessment meeting shall be held with the employee, his/her representative and the probationary reviewer. The meeting will be convened in accordance with the governing body's delegated responsibility for dismissals. Advice should be sought from the schools Human Resources provider.

Written notification of the hearing should be given to the employee (example letter at Appendix 3) and should include:

- a) The purpose of the meeting;
- b) The date, time and place of the meeting;
- c) The names of those to be present;
- d) The right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or workplace colleague;
- e) A statement that dismissal may be an outcome;
- f) The right to produce information and the date by which this should be received;
- g) Copies of all documents to be produced at the meeting.

The meeting should consider submissions from both the reviewer and the employee, which will include the records from each of the formal reviews.

If dismissal is the outcome, the employee should be advised of the reasons and given the appropriate notice of termination of employment. A letter should be sent to the employee within 7 calendar days of the meeting to confirm the outcome and to outline the employee's right to appeal.

8. Right of Appeal

An employee may appeal where dismissal is the outcome. Appeals must be made in writing to the Headteacher within 7 calendar days of the letter confirming non-confirmation of employment. Where no appeal is lodged in the timescale the matter will be closed.

When an appeal is lodged, the governing body's Appeal Committee will normally consider the appeal within twenty-eight calendar days of its receipt.



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PROBATIONARY RECORD

Appendix 1

Probationary employees should be formally assessed at 12, 16, and 20 weeks.

NAME:	POST TITLE:
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Both the Probationary Record form and the Probationary Report form should be completed fully at the time of meeting. Both the probationary reviewer and the employee should complete the overall assessment boxes below and sign to agree that the review has taken place.

FIRST PROBATION REVIEW (12 WEEKS)			
	Exceeds standard expected	Achieved required standard	Requires improvement to meet required standard
Overall Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Areas where improvement is required:			
Probationary Reviewer:	Date:	Employee:	Date:

SECOND PROBATION REVIEW (16 WEEKS)			
	Exceeds standard expected	Achieved required standard	Requires improvement to meet required standard
Overall Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Areas where improvement is required:			
Probationary Reviewer:	Date:	Employee:	Date:

THIRD PROBATION REVIEW (20 WEEKS)			
	Exceeds standard expected	Achieved required standard	Requires improvement to meet required standard
Overall Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Areas where improvement is required:			
Probationary Reviewer:	Date:	Employee:	Date:



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PROBATIONARY REPORT FORM

FIRST/ SECOND/ THIRD * PROBATIONARY REVIEW (*Delete as appropriate)

WORK PERFORMANCE

Comment fully on the employee's work performance, assessing them against the Job Description/ Person Specification.

Exceeds standard expected Acceptable standard achieved Requires improvement to meet required standard Unsatisfactory

Overall Assessment:

PERSONAL

Comment on enthusiasm, interest, flexibility, self motivation.

Exceeds standard expected Acceptable standard achieved Requires improvement to meet required standard Unsatisfactory

Overall Assessment:

ATTENDANCE RECORD/ RELIABILITY/ PUNCTUALITY

Comment on these areas specifying number of days absent (excluding accrued annual leave).

Exceeds standard expected Acceptable standard achieved Requires improvement to meet required standard Unsatisfactory

Overall Assessment:

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS

Comment on relationships with other colleagues/ pupils/ parents/ governors. Etc.

Exceeds standard expected Acceptable Standard achieved Requires improvement to meet required standard Unsatisfactory

Overall Assessment:

CONDUCT

Comment on general behaviour

Exceeds standard expected Acceptable Standard achieved Requires improvement to meet required standard Unsatisfactory

Overall Assessment:



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ANY OTHER COMMENTS: include any action, targets, training, etc that may be necessary, potential for development....



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Appendix 2

Example letter to the employee confirming that the probationary period has been successfully completed

Private and Confidential

Name

Address

Date

Dear

I am writing to inform you that your period of probation has been successfully completed and that your appointment is confirmed from *(insert date)*

May I take this opportunity to wish you every success in your new role.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher



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Appendix 3

Example letter inviting the employee to a meeting where non-confirmation of the appointment is to be considered

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Name
Address

Date

Dear

PROBATIONARY ASSESSMENT MEETING

Following your third probationary review on (insert date), your probationary reviewer, (insert name), has indicated that s/he does not consider that you have satisfactorily completed your probationary period, and has recommended that your appointment with the school should not be confirmed.

Before a decision is made about whether or not to accept this recommendation, you are invited to attend a probationary assessment meeting. This will take place at (time) on (date) in (location). (Insert name) will present the case as to why s/he is not recommending confirmation of your appointment. */ a panel of governors/ the Hearings Committee* * (delete as appropriate*) will consider any evidence or information you want to present before making a decision. If you wish to submit written information you should let me have it by (insert date).

You have the right to be accompanied at the meeting by a trade union representative or work colleague. A note taker will be present to take management notes.

Enclosed with this letter is a copy of the management report that has been prepared for consideration, and the probationary guidelines. You should be aware that, regrettably, the outcome of the meeting may be that your appointment cannot be confirmed and that your employment with the school will be terminated.

I do appreciate that this is a very difficult situation for you and if I can help in any way or you have any queries regarding this letter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Cc File