



The Athelstan Trust

Probationary Period Policy (Support staff)

Date of Review	Approved by	Date of Approval	Next Review Date	Website
March 2022	Board	31/3/2022	March 2025	Y

Introduction

It is the Trust's policy to operate probationary periods for all new support staff employees.

This policy is intended to allow both the employee and the Trust to assess objectively whether or not the employee is suitable for the role. The Trust believes that the use of probationary periods increases the likelihood that new employees will perform effectively in their employment.

The line manager is responsible under this policy for ensuring that all new support staff employees are properly monitored during their probationary period. If any problems arise, the line manager should address these promptly. This will ensure that the employee is aware that some aspect of their performance or conduct is unsatisfactory and prevent the problem from escalating.

Length of probation

The Trust's standard period of probation is six months.

Extending probationary periods

The Trust reserves the right to extend an employee's period of probation at its discretion. 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 during probation has not been entirely satisfactory but it is thought likely that an extension to the probationary period may lead to an improvement, or where the employee or the line manager has been absent from the workplace for an extended period during probation.

Before extending an employee's probationary period, the line manager must consult with the HR advisor. If an extension to the probationary period is agreed, the Trust 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 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 will be terminated.



The Athelstan Trust

Probationary Period Policy (Support staff)

Terms of employment during the probationary period

During the probationary period, employees will be subject to all the terms and conditions of their contracts of employment.

Once the probationary period has been completed, the notice periods will be as defined in the employee's contract of employment.

Line managers' responsibilities

Under this policy, the line manager has responsibility for monitoring a new employee's performance and progress during the probationary period. The line manager must ensure that the employee is properly informed at the start of their employment about what is expected of them during probation, for example the required job outputs or standards of performance.

Reviews during probation

The line manager should review and assess the employee's performance, capability and suitability for the role on at 12,16 and 20 weeks during the employee's probation, and again at the end of the probationary period. A clear record should be made of each review meeting. A copy of the record should be passed to the employee and the original forwarded to the HR co-ordinator.

During an employee's probation, the line manager should provide regular feedback to the employee about their performance and progress, and, should there be any problem areas, raise these with the employee as soon as possible with a view to resolving them. The line manager is also responsible for providing guidance and support and for identifying and arranging any necessary training or coaching.

Irregularities discovered during the probationary period

If, during an employee's probation, it is suspected or established that the employee does not have the qualifications, experience or knowledge that they claimed to have at the time of recruitment, the matter will be discussed with the employee to establish the facts. If the evidence suggests that the employee misrepresented their abilities in any way, the Trust will terminate the employment giving one week's pay in lieu of notice.

End of probation

At the end of the probationary period, the line manager should conduct a final review of the employee's performance and suitability for the job. This will involve a meeting with the employee to discuss their performance and progress throughout the period of probation. The review must be conducted on or shortly before the date on which the employee's probationary period comes to an end. If the employee's performance is satisfactory, the line manager should notify the HR co-ordinator to issue a letter of confirmation of appointment to the employee.



The Athelstan Trust

Probationary Period Policy (Support staff)

If the employee's performance has not met the standards required by the Trust, the line manager should discuss the matter with the HR co-ordinator before any decision is made to terminate the employee's employment.

Termination of employment

If an employee's performance while on probation has been unsatisfactory (despite support from the line manager), or if their conduct has fallen short of expectations, 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.

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 come up to 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 line manager should consult the HR advisor with a view to terminating the employee's contract early.

Where a decision is taken to terminate the employee's employment, the employee must be interviewed and informed of the reason for the termination. The Trust will write to the employee confirming the termination and the reason for it. The employee will be given an opportunity to appeal the decision.



The Athelstan Trust

Probationary Period Policy (Support staff)

PROBATIONARY RECORD

Appendix 1

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

NAME:	POST TITLE:
--------------	--------------------

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:



The Athelstan Trust

Probationary Period Policy (Support staff)

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:



The Athelstan Trust

Probationary Period Policy (Support staff)

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



The Athelstan Trust

Probationary Period Policy (Support staff)

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 your appointment is confirmed from *(insert date)*

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

Yours sincerely

Headteacher



The Athelstan Trust

Probationary Period Policy (Support staff)

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), I have concerns that your standard of performance [and / or conduct] indicate that you may not be suitable for the role of [add details]

Before a decision is made whether or not to confirm your appointment, you are invited to attend a probationary assessment meeting. This will take place at (time) on (date) in (location) to consider any evidence or information you want to present before I make a decision. If you wish to submit written information you should let me have it by (insert date).

Enclosed with this letter is a copy of the probationary reviews to date. 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

[Line Manager] Cc File