



St John's Church of England Primary School

Nurturing Potential within a Christian Ethos

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me, Philippians 4:13

Main Road, Lacey Green, Princes Risborough, HP27 0PL

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PROBATION POLICY

ODBST Level 1 Statutory Policy:	ALL Schools require this policy with no changes allowed to core text. No changes are necessary to personalise this with school name and branding, as this is a Trust level policy for use, without change, by all schools, except where a school contact is required as identified in the content of the policy. LGBs will note adoption in LGB meetings. Review will take place at Trust level, and schools will be notified of updates and review dates as necessary.
Other related ODBST policies and procedures:	ODBST Appraisal Policies ODBST Code of Conduct for Staff ODBST Disciplinary Policies
Committee responsible:	FRAPP
Approved by:	FRAPP
Date Approved:	24 th September 2024
Review Date:	Autumn term 2027

In reviewing this policy the Trust Board has had regards to the Equality act 2010 and carried out an equality impact assement. It is satisfied that no group with a protected charecteristic will be unfairly disadvantaged

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set a clear process for Headteachers and line managers to manage the performance and conduct of employees during their probationary period. It is the Trust's policy to operate a six month probationary period for all staff and this explained within the contract of employment.

Probationary periods will be used constructively to help the new employee integrate effectively into the Trust and allow the line manager to assess whether the employee is suitable for the role. The line manager will ensure that the job description and person specification for the role used at recruitment is reviewed with the new employee with a view to agreeing any areas or aspects where the employee feels that they need further training and support. These will inform the probationary targets together with any other performance/appraisal targets.

2. Scope

This policy is applicable to all employees (permanent or fixed term), both in schools and employed centrally, regardless of previous continuous service with other organisations and irrespective of contracted hours.

A probationary period would not normally apply where an employee has moved from one role to another within the Trust, however there may be occasions when a probationary period is appropriate in such circumstances for example where the role is significantly different in terms of scope or grade. Please refer to ODBST HR for guidance on whether a probationary period would be appropriate for any transfers between roles in ODBST. If the employee is an existing employee who has been transferred or promoted into a different role, the Trust's normal capability / disciplinary / sickness absence /dismissal procedure must be followed.

This policy does not apply to ECTs who will complete the ECT induction programme.

3. General Principles

The probationary period is intended as a constructive process to:

- Enable line managers and/or Headteachers to manage and assess performance including:
 - Quality of work and understanding of their role
 - Attitudes and motivation
 - Conduct and attendance
- Assist the employee to settle into the Trust and perform their job role effectively
- Develop the employee's understanding of the vision, values, expectations and behaviours of the Trust/School
- Identify the employee's training and development needs
- To ensure that employee are compliant with all Trust and school led policies and procedures particularly those relating to the safeguarding of children in our schools and health and safety

4. Providing Support During Probation

The line manager is responsible for providing all reasonable guidance and support to the new employee during the probationary period. The level of support required will differ depending on the individual employee.

The line manager should ensure the employee receives appropriate training at the start of the probationary period. An induction and training plan should be set in place to assist with the employee's development and introduction to the Trust. The induction plan must cover all statutory policies and procedures including safeguarding, behaviour and child protection requirements, and part one of the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance. All relevant School/Trust documentation should be made available to the employee at the earliest date.

4 Addressing Concerns During the Probation

During the probationary period, the line manager will continually assess the suitability of the employee.

When concerns are raised, the line manager should arrange a formal meeting with the employee to discuss these. Failing to address these concerns in a timely manner could lead to the employee failing to complete their probationary period. Notes of the meeting should be made and a record of any agreed actions or additional support should be made in writing and provided to the employee.

Whilst this procedure below outlines three meetings (start, middle and end), during a probationary period the line manager or employee may decide to request additional meetings to support the process.

5. Managing the Probationary Period

5.1 Induction: As part of the employee's induction to the Trust/school, the line manager should explain the vision and values of the organisation along with behaviours and expectations of the employee. This will include a review of the job description and person specification to identify any areas where the employee feels that they will need support.

5.2 Objective Setting: No later than 4 weeks after the start date, the line manager will meet with the employee to set performance objectives for the employee to work towards during their probationary period. These will include any specific training that has been highlighted from the job and person specifications as well as general performance measures. Any objectives set should fulfil the ODBST's requirements for smart objectives:

- S – specific
- M – measurable
- A – achievable
- R - realistic
- T – timebound

5.3 Mid-Point Review (at 3 months): A mid-point probationary review meeting should be held with the employee after approximately 3 months in role. This meeting will be used to discuss how the employee has settled into the Trust and assess how the employee is progressing against the objectives set. Any concerns or improvements needed will be discussed and any additional support agreed to provide the employee with the best chance of successfully completing their probationary period.

5.4 Additional Review (if required): Where concerns have been raised by the employee or line manager or improvements have been highlighted in the mid-point review, a further review point should be scheduled to allow feedback on progress ahead of the final review meeting. This should take place approximately 4-6 weeks after the mid-point review. Where the employee continues not to meet the required standards the support and training offered should be revisited with the employee. Employees should be reminded that at the end of the probationary period, the Trust may be required to extend the probationary period or may take the decision not to continue with their employment if suitability for the role is not effectively evidenced.

5.5 End of Probation Period Review (at 5-6 months): A final review meeting will be held shortly before the 6 month point to determine whether or not the employee has met the requirements for the role and any performance objectives that were set.

Prior to the meeting, the line manager/Headteacher should decide whether:

1. The employee has successfully completed (passed) their probationary period. This should be confirmed in a letter to the employee. Once the probationary period has been completed the employee will move onto the school/Trust's appraisal cycle. The line manager should set objectives with the employee for the remainder of the current cycle.
2. The probationary period should be extended. This could be for reasons (but is not limited to):
 - a. Performance concerns raised earlier in the process have not been fully addressed but there is a reasonable expectation that satisfactory standards will be met by the end of an extended probationary period
 - b. The employee has had an extended period of permitted absence and therefore it has not been fully possible to assess performance within the role
3. The employee has not successfully completed their probationary period.

Where the decision is to extend the probation period, this will normally be limited to one extension and the extension will be no longer than three months unless the extension period includes school holidays, in which case it may be longer.

Before extending the probation period, the Headteacher/line manager should seek support/advice from ODBST HR. Any extension to the probation period must be confirmed in writing to the employee following a meeting. The letter should include:

- The length of the extension, the date on which the extension will end and dates of review meetings, adjusted according to the extension
- 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 fully meet the required standards by the end of the extended period of probation, the employment will be terminated.

There is no right of appeal to the extension of a probation period.

The review and preparation forms for the employee and the line manager are appended. The employee should complete the employee preparation form and submit to the line manager at least 48 hours ahead of the scheduled review meetings.

6 Terminating employment during or at the end of the Probationary Period

Most employees will remain employed by the Trust until the end date of their probationary period. In some circumstances, the line manager may identify that the new employee is unsuitable for their role and will not reach the required standard with further support before the end of the probationary period.

Where there is sufficient evidence that the required standards are not being met and are unlikely to be met, the employment can be terminated at any stage during the probationary period. The line manager should discuss early termination and termination at the end of the probationary period with the ODBST HR Team.

The employee should be formally invited in writing to a meeting with a minimum of 5 days notice. The letter should set out:

- The date, time and place of the meeting
- That the purpose of the meeting is to recommend dismissal and the reasons why
- That the employee will have the opportunity to state their case before a final decision is made
- The employee's right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or work colleague
- The titles of enclosed copies of any documents which may be considered (including probation review documents)
- The name and position of any other person present at the meeting e.g. note taker or HR

The employee must advise the headteacher/line manager of the following at least 3 working days in advance of the meeting:

- The name and designation of any accompanying individual
- Any written documentation to be considered

Following the meeting, the line manager/Headteacher must write to the employee confirming the outcome normally within 5 working days of the hearing.

7 Appeals

Where a decision is made to terminate employment, the employee has the right to appeal this decision. The employee should write to the ODBST Director of HR, within 5 days of receipt of the letter confirming the decision to terminate employment, outlining their reasons for appeal.

8 Providing Support for Disabled Employees

As required by the Equality Act 2010, line managers may be required to provide additional support to disabled employees to ensure they are not subject to unlawful or less favourable treatment during their probationary period. Reasonable adjustments should be made to remove any barriers the employee faces at work. The employee should inform their line manager of any support that they require at the commencement of employment.

The line manager should discuss the support offered to disabled employees with a member of the ODBST HR team.

PROBATION REVIEW FORM

Employee Name	
School	
Start Date	
Role	
Line Manager Name	

Checklist

At commencement of employment:

	Completed (date and initials of employee)	Completed (date and initials of line manager)
Employee has had an induction to the school/Trust and is aware of the vision and values of the organisation along with behaviours and expectations.		
Employee has been provided with a copy of the job description and personal specification for the role and has been given an opportunity to highlight any areas where they will need support		

Probation objective setting (within the first 4 weeks of employment):

	Completed (date and initials of employee)	Completed (date and initials of line manager)
Meeting has been held and SMART objectives have been agreed to be achieved in the probationary period		
Discussion has been held regarding any support that will be required, including any reasonable adjustments		
Copy of the objectives has been provided to the employee and placed on the employees file (or in Bromcom)		
Mid-probation review date has been booked		

Mid-Point Review (approx. 3 months after role commencement):

	Completed (date and initials of employee)	Completed (date and initials of line manager)
Meeting has been held to review progress against probationary objectives		
Discussions have been held between the employee and the line manager regarding any concerns that could impact the probationary period (from either employee or line manager)		
Additional review meeting has been arranged (if required)		
End of probation review meeting has been diarised		
Copy of the review form has been provided to the employee and placed on the employees file (or in Bromcom)		

End of Probationary Review (approx. 5-6 months after role commencement):

	Completed (date and initials of employee)	Completed (date and initials of line manager)
Meeting has been held to confirm probationary outcome		
Completed paperwork for probation has been provided to the employee and placed on the employee file (or in Bromcom)		

PROBATION REVIEW FORM

Employee Name	Role	School	Line Manager/Headteacher

Date of Induction	Date of Objective Setting	Date of Mid-Point Review	Date of End of Probation Review

Objectives:

Probation Objective	Mid-Point Review	End of Probation Review	Completed Satisfactorily?

Training/Support Required:

Training/Support Required	Mid-Point Review	End of Probation Review	Has training/support been provided?

General Comments:

General Comments	Employee comments	Line manager/Headteacher comments
Mid-Point Review		
End of Probation Review		
<i>Signed</i>		
<i>Dated</i>		

End of Probationary Period:

Employee has passed their probationary period <input type="checkbox"/>	Probationary period will be extended <input type="checkbox"/> (Liaise with ODBST HR)	Probationary period has not been successful <input type="checkbox"/> (Liaise with ODBST HR)
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