



Probationary Policy

for school based support staff

Approved on 1.12.21 by the FGB

Probationary Periods

1.0 Introduction

The probation period should be regarded as a period of continuous review, the purpose of which is to enable a manager to objectively assess the conduct, performance and attendance of a new employee to establish suitability or otherwise for appointment to a post.

The probationary period includes a series of one to one meetings to ensure regular two-way communication between the direct manager and the new employee, allowing timely action to be taken on any problems that might arise in the crucial early stages of the employment.

The school has high expectations of employees and where new employees do not meet the expected standard of performance and/or conduct the school may take the necessary action to terminate their employment.

2.0 Scope

All new employees to the school, except those employed as an apprentice, will be subject to a probationary period of 6 months (for term time only staff this will exclude the school's summer break). This includes new employees with an existing entitlement to continuous service.

Throughout the probationary period most disciplinary issues will be addressed through this procedure. Safeguarding and gross misconduct issues may be dealt with under the school's disciplinary policy.

During the probationary period the managing attendance procedure will apply concurrently therefore following a successful probation period any action taken under the managing attendance procedure will remain on record.

3.0 Aim

To ensure all new employees to the school are supported and objectively assessed from commencement so that any problems are resolved within the first 6 months (excluding the summer break if appropriate) and where resolution is not possible employment is terminated.

4.0 Policy

New employees will be made clearly aware about the expected standards of conduct, performance and attendance and given instruction, guidance and reasonable assistance in settling into the role to which they have been appointed.

Performance will be carefully monitored, shortcomings highlighted and the need to improve made clear, if appropriate. This will be supported by full documentation.

The manager will ensure the employee is aware that two way communication must take place throughout the probationary period, not only at the 3 specified review meetings.

Confirmation of appointment is dependent upon the satisfactory completion of the probationary period. If a new employee's conduct, performance, timekeeping or attendance during the probationary period is not satisfactory, the employment may be terminated.

Employment may be terminated at any time during the probationary period in the case of misconduct, unsatisfactory performance or attendance.

5.0 Procedure

During the 6 months probationary period, objective assessments will be conducted after 1, 3 and 5 months. The manager will meet with the employee to discuss the assessments.

- At each of the 3 review meetings the Probation Assessment Form (Appendix A) will be completed in detail.
- Any aspects of conduct, performance or attendance which may need improvement will be highlighted and discussed with the employee.
- Appropriate advice, assistance and any future training requirements should be identified during each of the assessments and arrangements made for these to take place as soon as possible.
- Good performance to date will also be discussed and noted on the assessment form.
- If there are concerns that the employee is unlikely to meet the standards required, or there are other concerns, a formal meeting may be arranged outside of the specified timescales. HR advice may be sought.

5.1 First Review Meeting (1 month)

- The manager will meet with the employee to discuss the progress to date and highlight any areas of work where there appears to be a need for improvement.
- Deadlines, goals and general timescales should be explained and confirmation sought that these are understood by the employee.
- This detail will be recorded on the assessment form.

5.2 Second Review Meeting (3 months)

- If there are serious concerns at this stage a representative from Human Resources may be involved and the employee will be given the right to be accompanied by their trade union representative or a school colleague. The employee will be given 5 working days notice, in writing, of the meeting (example letter LET/Prob1).
- Concerns regarding an employee's performance or attendance will be discussed with the employee, recorded on the assessment form and the employee informed of the consequences if an improvement is not made. This will be confirmed in writing to the employee (example letter LET/Prob2).
- If the period to date is satisfactory, this will be discussed with the employee and recorded on the assessment form.

5.3 Final Review Meeting (5 months)

- If there are concerns at this stage a representative from Human Resources may be involved and the employee will be given the right to be accompanied by their trade union representative or a school colleague. The employee will be given 5 working days notice, in writing, of the meeting (example letter LET/Prob3).
- Having concluded the review the Manager will make recommendations to the Headteacher as to whether or not the employee is confirmed in post, unless it is agreed that the probation period will be extended (see 7.6). (example letters LET/Prob4 and LET/Prob5). If the Headteacher is the manager the recommendations will be referred to the Chair of Governors.
- Where a review is satisfactory this should be communicated directly by the manager to the employee, recorded on the assessment form and confirmed in writing. (example letter LET/Prob6)
- The final review meeting will take place within a timescale which allows for the employee to be given notice in the event of unsatisfactory performance so that employment will end by the sixth month of employment.

5.4 Extension to probationary periods

- There may be occasions when an employee has not been performing satisfactorily but it is considered that a further short period of probation may enable them to reach a satisfactory standard.
- Probation may also be extended where due to exceptional circumstances it has not been possible to properly assess an employee's performance/conduct (eg due to extended absence)
- Any extension to a probationary period will not exceed a period of a further 8 working weeks. A probationary period will only be extended once.
- During an extension period further review meetings with the employee and the manager will take place at least on a fortnightly basis and written records kept. A formal meeting will be held at the mid point and at the end of the extended period.
- The decision to extend the probationary period will be confirmed in writing explaining the reasons for the extension and the date it is until. (example letter LET/Prob5)
- If an employee is due to go on an extended period of leave, before their probation period is complete, consideration will be given to options available with advice taken from HR.

5.5 Outcomes of final review meeting

- Subject to satisfactory reviews, and satisfactory extension where appropriate, the employee will be confirmed in post and notified of such in writing. (example letter LET/Prob6)
- A copy of this confirmation will be retained on the employee's personal file.
- Where an employee's progress is not satisfactory and the Manager is considering taking action to terminate the contract of employment, the following steps will have been followed: -
 - Shortcomings will have been discussed directly with the employee.
 - Suitable instructions/training will have been identified and provided.
 - An opportunity for improvement in performance will have been given.
- The Manager will forward the recommendation to dismiss, to the Headteacher, who will make arrangements to hear the case.
- The Headteacher will arrange a hearing in accordance with the guidance below.

6.0 Probation Hearing

The Headteacher will write to the employee inviting them to a hearing. (example letter LET/Prob7)

This letter will:

- Allow 5 working days notice of the hearing date.
- Inform the employee of the right to be accompanied by their trade union representative or a school colleague.
- Specify the aspects of performance, conduct or attendance which are unsatisfactory.
- Forewarn the employee that the outcome of the hearing may be termination of the employment.

Arrangements will be made for a representative from Human Resources to be present to advise on procedure and also for a note-taker to be present.

The manager will present the information to date and the employee will be given the opportunity to respond.

The Headteacher will adjourn the hearing to consider the information presented.

The hearing will be re-convened and the outcome communicated to all parties. The Headteacher will confirm this in writing, within 5 working days of the hearing and retain a copy on the employee's personal file. (example letter LET/Prob8)

If the Headteacher does not uphold the recommendation to dismiss the options available are – confirmation on post or an extension to the probationary period.

If a decision is made to dismiss the employee they will be given the right to appeal against the decision. This will be communicated at the meeting and included in the letter of confirmation.

Should the employee exercise their right to appeal they must do so in writing, to the Headteacher within 10 working days of the date of the dismissal letter, stating the basis of the appeal.

An appeal panel formed from the Governing Body will hear the appeal.

7.0 Appeal

The Headteacher/Governing Body representative will invite the employee, in writing, to attend an appeal hearing and will inform the employee of his/her right to be accompanied by their Trade Union representative or a school colleague. (example letter LET/Prob9)

The appeal hearing will be arranged as soon as practicable and the employee will receive a minimum of 10 working days' notice. This period may be reduced only by mutual agreement.

The person who made the decision to dismiss will be required to produce a report and to attend the appeal hearing.

The hearing should proceed in accordance with the procedure for appeal hearings (Appendix B).

The Appeal Panel's decision is final, there will be no further right of appeal.

Following the appeal hearing, within five working days, the employee will be written to confirm the outcome. (example letter LET/Prob10)

Probation Period Assessment Form

Name:	Start Date:			
Job Title:	Manager:			
1st Review Meeting (1 month)	Review Date:			
	Improvement Required	Average	Good	Excellent
Quality & accuracy of work				
Efficiency/work rate				
Attendance				
Timekeeping				
Work relationships (comment on team work and interpersonal and communication skills including with children & parents)				
Details of any of the above areas which require improvement (include specific examples):				
Where concerns/issues have been identified, outline plans or training opportunities to address these and improve performance:				
Summarise the employee's performance and progress over this period:				
Outline the employees views on the job, work environment:				
Employee's signature:Date:.....				
Manager's signature:Date:.....				

2nd Review Meeting (3 months)	Review Date:			
	Improvement Required	Average	Good	Excellent
Quality & accuracy of work				
Efficiency/work rate				
Attendance				
Timekeeping				
Work relationships (comment on team work and interpersonal and communication skills including with children & parents)				
Details of any of the above areas which require improvement (include specific examples):				
Where concerns/issues have been identified, outline plans or training opportunities to address these and improve performance:				
Summarise the employee's performance and progress over this period:				
Outline the employees views on the job, work environment:				
Employee's signature:Date:.....				
Manager's signature:Date:.....				

Final Review Meeting (5 months)	Review Date:			
	Improvement Required	Average	Good	Excellent
Quality & accuracy of work				
Efficiency/work rate				
Attendance				
Timekeeping				
Work relationships (comment on team work and interpersonal and communication skills including with children & parents)				
Details of any of the above areas which have not met the required standard (include specific examples):				
Outline the employees views on the job, work environment:				
Summary of employee's progress over this period and overall performance:				
Recommendation - Is the employee to be confirmed in post? (This will be based on the evidence above)			Yes	No

Cont.....

Should the employee's probationary period be extended to allow time for improvement?	Yes	No
If yes, please specify the improvement required and how this will be achieved, including any training to be arranged:		
Extended probation period will be complete on (only complete if applicable):		
Employee's signature:Date:.....		
Manager's signature:Date:.....		

Appeal Procedure

An appeal panel formed from the Governing Body will hear the appeal with advice from a Human Resources representative. This panel should include 3 members of the Governing Body who have had no prior involvement in the matter. It may be necessary to include one or more governors from other schools in some cases.

Papers to be submitted by either party should be sent to the Chair of the appeals panel at least 5 working days prior to the appeal. The Chair of the panel will then ensure all parties receive all documents at least 3 days prior to the hearing.

The procedure for the appeal hearing will be as follows:-

- (a) The employee and/or representative shall state the case.
- (b) The Headteacher may ask questions of the employee and/or representative.
- (c) The Panel may ask questions of the employee and/or representative.
- (d) The Headteacher shall state the case.
- (e) The employee and/or representative may ask questions of the Headteacher.
- (f) The Panel may ask questions of the Headteacher.
- (g) The employee and/or representative to have the opportunity to sum up his/her case if he/she wishes.
- (h) The Headteacher to have the opportunity to sum up his/her case if he/she wishes.
- (i) The employee, employee representative and the Headteacher withdraw.
- (j) The Panel to deliberate, recalling employee and representative and Headteacher only if clarification of evidence already given is required. In such instances both parties should be recalled even though clarification may be required from only one side.
- (k) The Panel shall announce its decision to both sides unless further time for deliberation is needed, in which case both sides will be informed of this and the decision advised in writing. (example letter LET/Prob10)
- (l) The decision of the Panel will be notified to both sides in writing within 5 working days of the appeal hearing. If it is not possible to respond

within this timescale the employee should be given an explanation for the delay and when a response can be expected.

- (m) The decision of the Panel is final.