



E19

ESTEEM MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

PROBATION

POLICY

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1 Introduction

1.1 The probationary period is a 6 month period during which the Trust / Academy / School is able to assess the suitability of a new employee for the job role for which they have been employed. Probation is a two-way process that must involve the extent to which the new employee develops into a fully effective employee depending not only their own skills and attributes but also on the assistance and encouragement provided by their line manager and colleagues during the probation period.

2. Purpose

2.1 The policy allows for monitoring, formally reviewing and providing feedback on the performance of new employees in the following areas:

- Quality and quantity of work
- Attitudes and motivation
- Conduct and attendance
- Compliance with policies and procedures
- Leadership and management (where appropriate)

3. Scope

3.1 The policy applies to all new employees employed by the Trust, regardless of fixed term, full or part-time status. Where a 6 month, or less, fixed term contract is issued, the probationary period will run concurrently with the fixed term contract.

3.3 In the case of Early Career Teachers (ECT's), their regular mentoring and reporting of progress to the Academy's induction tutor and the Appropriate Body will take the place of review meetings described in this policy, however, in all other respects ECT's will follow the process in this policy.

3.4 Employees in their probation period will not be subject to formal capability, sickness absence management and disciplinary procedures. Where such issues arise during the probationary period, the probation process will be used to address such matters.

4. Equal opportunities

4.1 The probation policy will be applied fairly and equitably in accordance with legal requirements and the Trust's Equality and Diversity Policy.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 The Trust / Academy / School is responsible for implementing fair, consistent and objective approaches to managing the probation of new employees in accordance with this policy.

5.2 Line managers and School Business Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that new employees are aware of the Probation Policy
- Reviewing the job description and explaining the expected standards of performance, how performance will be monitored and expected standards of conduct in accordance with the Trust's Code of Conduct
- Completing probation reviews at 2 months, 4 months and 6 months using the probation review templates form.
- Notifying the employee of probation review meetings in advance so that both parties have adequate time to prepare
- Identifying where the employee may be failing to meet required standards, advising the employee concerned and liaising with Trust HR, where appropriate
- Ensuring that approaches are in place to support the employee throughout the probation period to ensure that they are able to fulfil the duties and responsibilities of the job role

5.3 Employees are responsible for:

- Ensuring they are familiar with the job description and the standards expected of them
- Actively engaging in probation review meetings
- Undertaking any learning and development agreed with their line manager

6. Timing

6.1 Probation review meetings should be completed within the timescales stated within this policy, however, if there is a valid reason for these to be varied, timescales may be adjusted by exception by the line manager. The employee should be advised accordingly and when a review meeting will be expected.

7. Managing the Probation Period

7.1 The probation period is for 6 months and may, in certain circumstances, be extended by a further 3 or 6 months to allow the employee a full opportunity to successfully complete the probation period.

7.2 During the probation period, the notice period for all new employees is 1 week.

7.3 New employees will be informed at the start of their employment of the purpose of probation and the standards of performance, attendance and conduct expected of them. They should be advised that their progress will be monitored by their line manager and they should be advised to seek help and guidance whenever necessary.

7.4 The review of a new employee during their probation is a continuous process. Line managers should complete regular checks of the employee's work, attendance and conduct and provide

feedback regarding their progress. They should also be prepared to receive feedback from the employee. It is good practice for line managers to hold regular 1 to 1 meetings with the new employee to establish a good working relationship and provide opportunities for feedback.

7.5 The line manager should complete 3 formal probation reviews with a new employee during the 6 month probation period. Probation reviews should be held at the following intervals:

- On completion of 2 months service (first review)
- On completion of 4 months service (second review)
- On completion of 6 months service (final review)

7.6 Should it become apparent that there are concerns regarding an employee's performance and suitability at the 2,4 or 6 month stage, a decision may be made by the line manager or school business manager to extend the probation period.

7.7 The purpose of the review meetings is for the line manager or school business manager to evaluate the employee's performance and to discuss any significant issues. Where improvements in performance, attendance or conduct are required, necessary improvements should be discussed including any support and training required.

7.8 In circumstances where it is likely that the employee will not meet the required standards expected, the employee should be advised that they may not successfully complete their probation period and this would result in dismissal. Line managers should consider the likely outcome of review meetings:

- The employee is making / has made sufficient progress to successfully complete the probation period, or
- The employee will require an extension to their probation period to provide additional time to demonstrate that they are able to meet the required standards, or
- The employee is not making / has not made sufficient progress to successfully complete the probation period and should be dismissed with notice

7.9 Following discussions during the review meeting, outcomes should be agreed and documented using the probation review template form

7.10 At the end of the probation period, the employee will have been either confirmed as suitable for their continued employment or their contract will have been terminated.

8. Extending the Probation Period

8.1 An extension to the probation period may be permitted where there are significant indications that the employee would achieve the standard required given further time. An extension period will be for 3 or 6 months.

8.2 An employee will be advised of any decision to extend their probation period during the review meeting and this will be confirmed in writing. During the review meeting, the employee will be advised of the following:

- The reasons why performance has been unsatisfactory
- The 3 or 6 months duration of the extension to the probation period
- The targets / improvements necessary during the extended probation period
- That they may not successfully complete their probation period and this would result in dismissal

9. Disciplinary, Absence or Capability Issues During Probation

9.1 The Trust's policies for discipline, sickness absence management and capability will not apply to new employees during their probation period.

9.2 The Trust may terminate the employment at any time during the probation period where the employee clearly falls below the standards of performance, attendance or conduct.

9.3 Where at any stage during the probation period, dismissal is a likely outcome, the line manager must consult with the Trust's HR before proceeding with a final review meeting. In more complex cases, an investigation may be considered necessary.

9.4 The employee must be informed in writing of the review meeting providing adequate notice, including:

- The date / time and purpose of the review meeting
- The reasons why performance, attendance or conduct has been unsatisfactory
- That dismissal may be a potential outcome of the review meeting
- That they have the right to be accompanied at the meeting by their trade union representative or a work colleague

9.5 The employee, line manager or school business manager and the Headteacher or a Trust Senior Manager will meet to discuss the issues and decide the outcome of the meeting which may include dismissal. The decision and the right of appeal will be confirmed in writing within 5 days of the review meeting.

9.6 Appeals will be heard in accordance within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal and the appeal must have been sent within 10 working days of receipt of the outcome letter.

9.7 An appeal hearing will be convened as soon as reasonably practicable providing 5 working days' notice of the date / time of the appeal hearing. The purpose of the appeal hearing is to review the decision. The Chair of the hearing will communicate the decision in writing within 5 working days of the appeal hearing. The decision will be final with no further right of appeal.

10. Review of the Policy

10.1 The Trust Board will review the performance management policy as required, but at least every 2 years and this will be ratified at a full Trust Board meeting.

Appendix 1 – Probation Review Form (Support Staff Only)

New Employee Name	
Start Date (Date Probation commenced)	
Post Title	
Line Manager	
Date of this Probation Review	

1. Please ☒ to confirm which review is being conducted:

1.

☐ First Review (prior to 2-month anniversary)

☐ Second Review (prior to 4-month anniversary)

☐ Final Review (prior to 6-month anniversary)

FOR THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS: PLEASE SEE JOB DESCRIPTION / PERSON SPECIFICATION – THIS CAN BE ATTAINED FROM HR AND MUST BE ATTACHED TO PROBATIONARY REVIEW)

2. Details of performance standards required:

3. Describe aspects of performance and/or conduct which are at, or above the required standard:

4. Describe aspects of performance and/or conduct which are below the required standard:

5. Discuss any absence concerns, amount of any type of leave during the probation period and whether it is at an acceptable amount.

6. Give details of any action, support, training planned:

7. Set 2 Targets to work towards during Probation Period (these targets should support continued improvement for their role) *Review these targets throughout probation.*

8. Any additional comments regarding good or poor conduct, attitude, suitability for permanent employment:

FINAL PROBATION REVIEW ONLY

9. Decision regarding transfer to the school's permanent establishment.

- ☐ YES - probationary standards achieved - confirm permanent appointment)
- ☐ NOT YET (a further review to be conducted - date)
- ☐ NO (recommendation to terminate employment due to unsuccessful probation period)

Line Manager Signature	
Date	

Headteacher Signature	
Date	

By signing this document, I confirm that the above issues have been discussed with me at a review meeting and that I have been given a copy of this completed document.

New Employee Signature	
Date	