



Wessex
Learning Trust
We Learn Together!

Staff Probation Policy

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Review Date: September 2022

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Wessex Learning Trust

Staff Probation Policy

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees every three years.

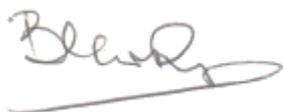


Signature:

Name: Mr Gavin Ball

Position: Executive Headteacher

Date: 20/01/20



Signature:

Name: Mr Brian Kirkup

Position: Chair of the Board

Date: 20/01/20

1.0 Introduction

1.1 It is the Wessex Learning Trust's policy to operate a probationary period of six months for all new Trust employees. As part of this policy, following an introductory meeting to set aims, new staff will meet with their line manager after one, three and six months to discuss their progress and to address any issues which may arise.

1.2 This policy allows both the employee and the Trust to assess objectively whether the employee is suitable for the role. The probationary period provides the opportunity to help staff to settle into their new role and offers the appropriate framework to give employees the necessary support to meet the agreed performance objectives and the Trust's expectations (e.g. conduct, attendance, timekeeping).

1.3 The line manager is responsible for ensuring that all new employees are properly monitored during their probationary period. If any problems arise, the line manager should address these promptly and in accordance with this policy, and not wait until the probation review meeting. The employee should be made aware if some aspects of their performance or conduct are unsatisfactory so that changes can be made.

1.4 The decision whether their employment is confirmed or terminated, or their probationary period is extended rests with the Head Teacher. Where the employee is the Head Teacher, the Chief Executive shall be responsible for managing the probation process and determining whether their employment is confirmed, terminated or the probationary period extended. Where the employee is the Chief Executive, the Board of Trustees shall be responsible for managing the probation process and determining whether their employment is confirmed, terminated or their probationary period extended.

1.5 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time following consultation.

2.0 Terms of Employment during the Probation Period

2.1 During the probationary period, employees will be subject to all the terms and conditions of their contracts of employment. However, during the probationary period, attendance, conduct and capability issues will be managed under this policy rather than the standard Trust policies. The Trust's Capability Policy shall not apply during the probationary period.

2.2 No employment with a previous employer counts towards the employee's period of continuous employment with the Trust for the purposes of their probationary period. See 3.1 for internal moves/promotions.

2.3 The amount of notice that either party must give to terminate employment during the probationary period is one month.

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

3.0 Internal Moves

3.1. The probationary period does not apply to an existing member of staff who has already completed their probation and is transferred or promoted to another post within the trust. These individuals are subject to the appraisal process. Line managers should provide an induction programme for the employee and agree objectives with the employee for the period between the commencement of the new post and the new appraisal cycle. For staff whose performance falls short of the requirements, the relevant Trust policies will apply.

3.2. Should an employee change roles during their probationary period, this will not interrupt the operation of this procedure. Any change during probation will require explicit approval from the Trust HR Manager or Chief Operating Officer to confirm the internal move to a new role.

4.0 Implementation of the Policy

4.1. The probation period for all staff starts on their first day of employment. New employees will have an initial meeting with their line manager within the first few days of employment to set out their aims for the probation period. These should be recorded on the probation pro forma (Appendix 2, Part 1).

4.2. A date should be agreed between the employee and their line manager for a probation review meeting one month after the start of their employment. In this meeting the employee's performance should be reviewed and recorded (Appendix 2, Part 2). Where there are areas which require improvement, these should be noted and a plan put in place to deal with the issues by the next review meeting. The employee must be made aware of the seriousness of the issues highlighted, especially if these could result in the extension of the probationary period or the termination of employment.

4.3. The second probation review meeting should be scheduled for three months after the start of employment. Again, the employee's performance should be reviewed and recorded (Appendix 2, Part 3), with particular reference to any areas which were identified as requiring improvement in the previous meeting. Where there are remaining areas which require improvement, these should be noted and plan put in place to deal with the issues by the final review meeting.

4.4. The final probation review meeting should take place six months after the commencement of employment. This meeting should include a final discussion on how the probation period has gone with particular reference to any areas which were identified as requiring improvement in the previous meeting. Based on the overall performance of the employee during the six month period the line manager, in discussion with the appropriate senior manager, should decide whether the employee should be confirmed in post, an extension to the probation period given, or the contract terminated. The above decision should be communicated to the employee by letter (see Appendix 3) and their right to appeal the decision noted (where applicable).

4.5. If an extension is granted to the probation period (see 5.0), a further meeting should be organised to review performance and decide if adequate progress has been made to confirm the employee.

4.6. During the probationary period, line managers should provide an induction and ensure that the new member of staff is equipped with the necessary information to fulfil the role. The line manager should ensure that the employee is properly informed at the start of their employment about what is expected of them during the probation period.

4.7. The line manager should raise any concerns with the employee as soon as they arise and not wait until the next review meeting. The line manager should provide continuous support throughout the probationary period.

4.8. In the event that the employee has concerns in relation to how their probation period is managed and the issues raised by the line manager, they should address these in the first instance at their probation review meetings. If this does not resolve the matter, the Grievance procedure should be followed.

4.9. The annual appraisal document does not form part of the probationary period and must not be used in any of the review meetings. However, the line manager needs to agree the appraisal objectives for the employee as part of the probationary period and then transfer these onto the appraisal form for the period between the end of probation and the new appraisal cycle.

5.0 Extending Probationary Periods

5.1. Six months should be an adequate period of time to effectively assess an employee's suitability for the role. However, in exceptional circumstances, the Trust may decide to extend an employee's probationary period once for up to two months. The total period of probation will normally be no longer than eight months. This might be extended in cases of substantial long-term sickness absence or maternity leave.

5.2. An extension may be implemented in circumstances where the employee's performance, capability, conduct, attendance, timekeeping and suitability for the role have not been satisfactory, but some improvement has taken place and it is thought likely that an extension to the probationary period may lead to satisfactory improvement.

5.3. Line managers must ensure the necessary review form (Appendix 2) is completed prior to the six-month probationary review.

5.4. Before extending an employee's probationary period, the line manager must consult with the Head Teacher/Chief Executive/Board of Trustees as required. If an extension of the probationary period is agreed, a letter will be issued (within five working days) confirming the terms of the extension to the employee, including:

- the length of the extension and the date on which the extended period of probation will be reviewed and when it 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.

6.0 Termination of Employment

6.1. Ordinarily, 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 achieve the required standards. If, however, the employee is wholly unsuitable for the role, the employment may be terminated early.

6.2. If an employee's performance, capability, conduct, attendance, timekeeping and suitability for the role has not met the required standards during probation, and it is thought unlikely that further training or support would lead to a satisfactory level of improvement, the employee will not be confirmed in post.

6.3. The decision to dismiss/not to confirm in post must be authorised by the Head Teacher/Chief Executive/Board of Trustees depending on the seniority of the employee in question

6.4. If an employee is at risk to be dismissed during the probationary period, the following process must be followed:

- An appropriate senior manager must set out in writing to the employee the reasons for possible dismissal and invite the employee to a meeting to discuss the matter. The notification to the employee must contain sufficient detail in order to allow the employee to formulate a detailed response. A HR representative and the line manager will be present at this meeting.

- The senior manager must hold the meeting with the employee to discuss the reasons for the possible dismissal and consider the employee's response. The employee must have a minimum of 5 working days' notice prior to the arranged meeting date in order to prepare. They are entitled to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.
- After the meeting, the senior manager must, within five working days or as soon as reasonably practicable, inform the employee in writing of the decision and the employee's right of appeal. If the decision is made not to confirm the employee in post, the amount of notice that either party must give to terminate employment during the probationary period is one month and the employee will not be expected to work their notice. Payment in lieu of notice will be made.

6.5. At any point where the decision to terminate employment is made, the school has a responsibility to seek appropriate legal or expert advice in advance of giving notice of termination. A record of advice being sought should be recorded on Part 4 of the Probationary Review Pro Forma (Appendix 2).

7.0 Irregularities discovered during the Probationary Period

7.1. 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.

7.2. The meeting must be chaired by the appropriate senior manager. The same three step process must be followed as set out in paragraph 6.4. If the evidence suggests that the employee misrepresented their qualifications and experience in any way, the Trust will terminate their employment with immediate effect and without notice.

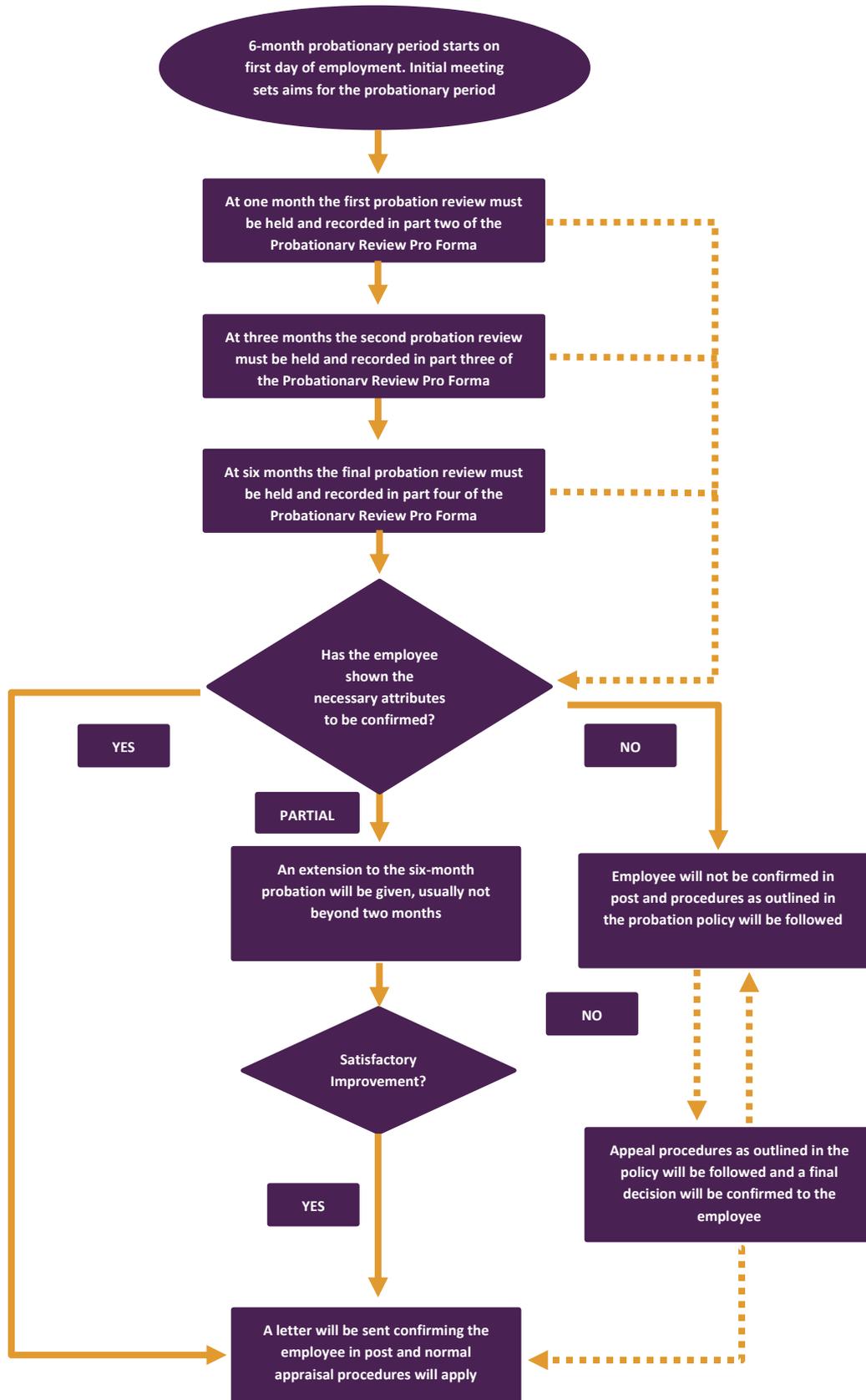
8.0 Appeals

8.1. If an employee wishes to appeal against dismissal, they must write to the HR Manager/Chief Operating Officer within five working days after receiving the dismissal letter. The appeal letter must state the grounds of their appeal in full.

8.2. An appeal meeting will be arranged with the Chief Executive (if not involved in the original decision to dismiss) within 15 working days or as soon as reasonably practicable upon receipt of the grounds of appeal. The individual responsible for the original decision to dismiss will also attend to present their case at the appeal hearing as well as a HR representative (not previously involved in the original decision to dismiss). The employee is entitled to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.

8.3. The outcome of the appeal meeting will be confirmed in writing within five working days. The decision is final and will mark the end of the internal process. If there is a delay for any reason, the employee must be notified in writing of the delay and the reason for the delay within five working days of the hearing and given a likely timescale for the decision to be reached.

Flow Chart of Probation Policy



Probationary Review Pro Forma



Employee Name:		
Job Title:		
Department/Location:		
School:		
Post Start Date:		
Line Manager:		
Meeting Timetable		
	Date Due:	Completed?
Initial Meeting:		
One Month Review:		
Three Month Review:		
Six Month Review:		
Space for Additional Meetings (e.g. in the case of an extension):		

Probationary Review Pro Forma

PART 1: Initial Meeting

This section should be completed by the line manager and employee as soon as possible after starting in post

Section A: **Expectations and Objectives:** The line manager should identify specific expectations and objectives to be achieved during the probationary period.

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Section B: **Development Plan:** To support the employee in achieving these objectives, the line manager should identify any training and development needs and specify how and when these needs will be addressed during the probationary period.

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Employee's Signature:	
Line Manager's Signature:	
Date:	

Probationary Review Pro Forma

PART 2: One Month Review

This section should be completed by the line manager in discussion with the employee

(tick as appropriate)	Improvement Required	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Quality and Accuracy of Work				
Efficiency				
Attendance				
Time Keeping				
Work Relationships (teamwork and interpersonal communication skills)				
Competency in the Role				
Other Role Specific attributes (to be specified)				
If any areas of performance, conduct or attendance require improvement please provide details below				
Where concerns have been identified, please summarise how these will be addressed during the remaining period of probation				
Summarise the employee's performance and progress over the period				
Have the objectives identified for this period of the probation been met?	YES / NO	If no, what further action is required?	Review Date:	
Have the training / development needs identified for this period of the probation been addressed?	YES / NO	If no, what further action is required?	Review Date:	

Probationary Review Pro Forma

Employee's Signature:	
Line Manager's Signature:	
Date:	

Probationary Review Pro Forma

PART 3: Three Month Review

This section should be completed by the line manager in discussion with the Employee

(tick as appropriate)	Improvement Required	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Quality and Accuracy of Work				
Efficiency				
Attendance				
Time Keeping				
Work Relationships (teamwork and interpersonal communication skills)				
Competency in the Role				
Other Role Specific attributes (to be specified)				
If any areas of performance, conduct or attendance require improvement please provide details below				
Where concerns have been identified, please summarise how these will be addressed during the remaining period of probation				
Summarise the employee's performance and progress over the period				
Have the objectives identified for this period of the probation been met?	YES / NO	If no, what further action is required?	Review Date:	
Have the training / development needs identified for this period of the probation been addressed?	YES / NO	If no, what further action is required?	Review Date:	

Probationary Review Pro Forma

Employee's Signature:	
Line Manager's Signature:	
Date:	

Probationary Review Pro Forma

PART 4: Six Month Final Review

This section should be completed by the line manager in discussion with the Employee

(tick as appropriate)	Improvement Required	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Quality and Accuracy of Work				
Efficiency				
Attendance				
Time Keeping				
Work Relationships (teamwork and interpersonal communication skills)				
Competency in the Role				
Other Role Specific attributes (to be specified)				
Have the objectives identified for the probationary period been met?	YES / NO	If no, please provide details		
Have the training / development needs identified for the probationary period been addressed?	YES / NO	If no, please provide details		
Summarise the Employee's performance and progress over the period				
Is the employee's appointment to be confirmed?			YES / NO	
If NO, please provide reasons below and summarise what action has been taken to address any difficulties which have arisen during the probationary period.				
Date legal/expert advice was sought:				
WLT employee who obtained the advice:				
Space for the employee to provide comments about their experience of the probationary process:				

Probationary Review Pro Forma

Should the employee's probationary period be extended?	YES / NO
If yes, please provide reasons and, where appropriate, specify any areas of improvement required and how these will be monitored.	
Length of Extension (up to 2 months)	
New Probation Period Completion Date	
Employee's Signature:	
Line Manager's Signature:	
Date:	
Date letter issued to employee to confirm probation outcome:	

Template Letters Confirming Conclusion of Probation Period

<insert school letter head>

<date>

Private and Confidential

<employee's name and address>

RE. Successful Completion of Six-Month Probation Period

Dear <name>,

I am writing to confirm that following your final Probation Review meeting on <date> we can confirm the successful completion of your probation period at <school name>. We are therefore delighted to confirm your employment within the Trust.

Your performance will now be discussed and monitored as part of the Trust's standard appraisal policy, and the terms and conditions of employment set out in your original <contract/letter of engagement> dated <insert date> will continue to apply.

We are very pleased to welcome you to the Trust and look forward to continuing to work with you in the future.

Yours sincerely,

<name>

<position>

Template Letters Confirming Conclusion of Probation Period

<insert school letter head>

<date>

Private and Confidential

<employee's name and address>

RE. Unsuccessful Completion of Six-Month Probation Period

Dear <name>,

I am writing to confirm that following your final Probation Review meeting on <date> you have unfortunately not proved to be of the standard required for fulfilling your role within <school name>, and thus we have taken the decision not to confirm your position within the Trust.

It was decided that due to <insert issues identified in final probation review meeting> we were unable to confirm your employment at this time.

This letter marks your one month's notice of dismissal in which you will not be expected to work. Payment will be made to you in lieu of notice.

If you wish to appeal this decision we require you to write to the <HR Manager/Chief Operating Officer> within five working days of this letter, stating the grounds of your appeal. Following this we will be in contact to arrange an appeal meeting with the Chief Executive, usually within 15 days of receiving your letter. You will be entitled to be accompanied by a trade union representative or colleague at this meeting.

We thank you for efforts over the last six-months of employment and wish you all the best with your future.

Yours sincerely,

<name>

<position>

Template Letters Confirming Conclusion of Probation Period

<insert school letter head>

<date>

Private and Confidential

<employee's name and address>

RE. Extension of Six-Month Probation Period

Dear <name>,

I am writing to confirm that following your final Probation Review meeting on <date>, due to <circumstances e.g. absence, or lack of adequate improvement> we feel unable to confirm your role within the <insert school name>. We do however feel that given additional time, training and support you would be able to meet the required standard to fulfil your role, and thus we have decided to extend your probationary period for a further <X months>, until the <date>.

In this time we expect you to continue to regularly meet with your line manager so as to set aims for the extension, as well as to put in place a plan to help you to meet these goals. Unfortunately, if progress is not adequate by the end of this extension the potential outcome could be dismissal from your post.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any queries regarding this letter, your next steps or if there is any further help or assistance we could provide.

I very much hope that I may be able to write to confirm you in post in the near future, and wish you all the best over the coming time.

Yours sincerely,

<name>

<position>