



# **Holmer Green Senior School**

## **Support Staff Appraisal Policy**

**April 2023**

## **Part A - Support Staff Appraisal**

Headteachers and Governing Bodies are responsible for ensuring that each member of the support staff team within the school is clear about what is expected of them in achieving their personal objectives from the beginning of their employment. Appraisals give individuals and their manager an opportunity to review performance, agree objectives linked to the school improvement plan and learning and development requirements, which will help to achieve those objectives.

### **PURPOSE**

This procedure sets out how Holmer Green Senior School will improve outcomes for children/students and raise the morale of support staff, by motivating support staff to update their skills and improve their performance. The appraisal procedure will be used also to address any concerns that are raised about an individual's performance. If concerns are such that they cannot be resolved through the appraisal process, there will be consideration of whether to commence the capability procedure.

### **APPLICATION OF THE APPRAISAL POLICY**

This policy applies to the support staff team. Appraisal in this school will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all individuals have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively. It will help to ensure that individuals are able to continue to improve their professional practice.

### **THE APPRAISAL PERIOD**

The appraisal period will run **for 12 months**, normally from April to March of the following year. Individuals who are employed on a fixed term contract of less than one year will have their performance managed in accordance with the principles underpinning this policy. The length of the period will be determined by the duration of their contract. Where an individual starts their employment at the school part-way through a cycle their employment will start with a probation period (initially 3 months with an option to extend to 9 months). Once the individual has successfully passed probation they will be set targets to be reviewed in the March.

### **APPOINTING APPRAISERS**

Where it becomes apparent that the appraiser appointed by the Headteacher will be absent for the majority of the appraisal cycle, the Headteacher may perform those duties herself/himself or delegate those duties to another individual for the duration of that absence. If the Headteacher appoints an appraiser who is not the individual's line manager, the appraiser to whom she/he delegates those duties will have an appropriate position in the staffing structure, together with the necessary background knowledge, skills and training to undertake the role.

### **SETTING OBJECTIVES**

Objectives will be set before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period. The objectives set will be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound and will be appropriate to the appraisee's role and level of experience. In setting the objectives, reviewers will have regard to what can reasonably be expected in the context of roles, responsibilities and experience.

The appraiser and appraisee will seek to agree the objectives. Objectives may be revised if circumstances change. The school operates a system of moderation to ensure that all appraisers are working to the same standards. Targets will be moderated across the school to ensure that they are consistent between individuals with similar experience and levels of responsibility. Should the objectives not be agreed, the final decision on allocation of objectives rests with the Headteacher. The agreed objectives will contain a description of what success may look like. Where use of numerical targets is appropriate, these will be reasonable, in the circumstances in which the individual works.

The objectives set for each individual are intended to contribute to the school's plans for improving the school's educational provision and performance and improving the education of pupils at that school and will take into account the professional aspirations of the individual.

The appraiser will take into account the effects of an individual's circumstances, including any disability, when agreeing objectives. For example, this might include a reasonable adjustment to allow an individual slightly longer to complete a task than might otherwise be the case. When staff return from a period of extended absence, objectives may be adjusted to allow them to readjust to their working environment. Before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period, each individual will be informed of the standards against which their performance in that appraisal period will be assessed.

### **REVIEWING PERFORMANCE**

The effective and efficient operation of the appraisal process requires a confidential process of constructive engagement within an atmosphere of support and cooperation.

### **DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT**

Appraisal is a supportive process which will be used to inform continuing professional development. The school wishes to encourage a culture in which all individuals take responsibility for improving their performance through appropriate professional development. Professional development will be linked to school improvement priorities and to the on-going professional development needs and priorities of individuals.

The school's CPD programme will be informed by the training and development needs identified as part of the appraisal process. The Governing Body will ensure in the budget planning that, as far as possible, resources are made available in the school budget for appropriate training, and support agreed for appraisees, maintaining access on an equitable basis.

An account of the training and development needs of individuals including the instances where it did not prove possible to provide any agreed CPD, will form a part of the Headteacher's annual report to the Governing Body about the operation of the appraisal process in the school.

With regard to the provision of CPD in the case of competing demands on the school budget, a decision on relative priority will be taken with regard to the extent to which:

- (a) the training and support will help the school to achieve its priorities; and
- (b) the CPD identified is essential for an appraisee to meet their objectives.

Account will be taken in a review meeting of where it has not been possible for individuals to fully meet their performance criteria because the support recorded in the planning statement has not been provided.

### **ANNUAL ASSESSMENT**

Each individual's performance will be formally assessed in respect of each appraisal period.

The individual will receive as soon as practicable following the end of each appraisal period – and have the opportunity to comment on – a written appraisal report. The appraisal report will include:

- details of the individual's objectives for the appraisal period in question
- an assessment of the individual's performance of their role and responsibilities against their objectives, and against the relevant standards
- an assessment of the individual's training and development needs and
- identification of any action that should be taken to address them
- a space for the individual's own comments

A review meeting will take place to discuss the content of the report and any further action required and to inform objective setting for the next cycle. Ongoing review meetings form part of regular meetings throughout the year. The assessment of performance and of training and development needs will inform the planning process for the following appraisal period.

### **INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES**

When dealing with an individual experiencing difficulties, the objective is to provide support and guidance through the appraisal process in such a way that the individual's performance improves and the problem is, therefore, resolved.

Where it is apparent that an individual's personal circumstances are leading to difficulties at school, support will be offered as soon as possible, without waiting for the formal annual assessment.

If an appraiser identifies through the appraisal process, or via other sources of information, for example parental complaints, that the difficulties experienced by an individual are such that, if not rectified, could lead to capability procedures the appraiser, the Headteacher, or a member of the leadership team, will, as part of the appraisal process meet the individual to:

- give clear written feedback to the individual about the nature and seriousness
- of the concerns;
- give the individual the opportunity to comment on and discuss the concerns;
- give the individual at least 5 working days' notice that a meeting will be held to
- discuss targets for improvement alongside a programme of support;
- in consultation with the individual at the above meeting, an action plan with
- support will be established (for example coaching, training, in-class support,
- mentoring, structured observations, visits to other classes or schools or
- discussions with external advisers), that will help address those specific
- concerns;
- make clear how progress will be monitored and when it will be reviewed;
- explain the implications and process if no – or insufficient – improvement is made.

The individual's progress will continue to be monitored as part of the appraisal process and a reasonable time given for the individual's performance to improve.

This will depend upon the circumstances but generally will be for a set period of weeks, with appropriate support as agreed in the Action Plan, in order that the aim of recovering and improving performance can be achieved. During this monitoring period the individual will be given regular feedback on progress and arrangements will be made to modify the support programme if appropriate.

If sufficient progress is made such that the individual is performing at a level that indicates there is no longer a possibility of capability procedures being invoked the individual should be informed of this at a formal meeting with the appraiser or headteacher. Following this meeting the appraisal process will continue as normal.

If no, or insufficient, improvement has been made over this period, the individual will be invited to a transition meeting to determine whether formal capability proceedings need to be commenced or the appraisal process remains in place. The individual may be assisted by a trade union representative or work colleague and will have at least 5 working days' notice of the meeting.

## **TRANSITION TO CAPABILITY**

If the appraiser is not satisfied with progress, the staff member will be notified in writing that the appraisal system will no longer apply and that their performance will be managed under the capability procedure, and will be invited to a formal capability meeting. The capability procedures will be conducted as in part B of this policy.

### **Part B – Capability Procedure**

This procedure applies only to support staff about whose performance there are serious concerns that the appraisal process has been unable to address.

At least five working days' notice will be given of the formal capability meeting. The notification will contain sufficient information about the concerns about performance and their possible consequences to enable the staff member to prepare to answer the case at a formal capability meeting. It will also contain copies of any written evidence; the details of the time and place of the meeting; and will advise the staff member of their right to be accompanied by a companion who may be a colleague, a trade union official, or a trade union representative who has been certified by their union as being competent.

### **FORMAL CAPABILITY MEETING**

This meeting is intended to establish the facts. It will be conducted by the headteacher. The meeting allows the staff member, accompanied by a companion if they wish, to respond to concerns about their performance and to make any relevant representations. This may provide new information or a different context to the information/evidence already collected.

The person conducting the meeting may conclude that there are insufficient grounds for pursuing the capability issue and that it would be more appropriate to continue to address the remaining concerns through the appraisal process. In such cases, the capability procedure will come to an end. The person conducting the meeting may also adjourn the meeting.

In other cases, the meeting will continue. During the meeting, or any other meeting which could lead to a formal warning being issued, the person conducting the meeting will:

- identify the professional shortcomings, for example which of the standards expected of staff member are not being met;
- give clear guidance on the improved standard of performance needed to ensure that the staff member can be removed from formal capability procedures (*this may include the setting of new objectives focused on the specific weaknesses that need to be addressed, any success criteria that might be appropriate and the evidence that will be used to assess whether or not the necessary improvement has been made*);
- explain any support that will be available to help the staff member improve their performance;
- set out the timetable for improvement and explain how performance will be monitored and reviewed.

The timetable will depend on the circumstances of the individual case but in straightforward cases could be *eg between four to ten weeks to provide sufficient opportunity for an improvement to take place*; and

- warn the staff member formally that failure to improve within the set period could lead to dismissal. In very serious cases, this warning could be a final written warning.

Notes will be taken of formal meetings and a copy sent to the member of staff. Where a warning is issued, the staff member will be informed in writing of the matters covered in the bullet

points above and given information about the timing and handling of the review stage and the procedure and time limits for appealing against the warning.

### **MONITORING AND REVIEW PERIOD FOLLOWING A FORMAL CAPABILITY MEETING**

A performance monitoring and review period will follow the formal capability meeting. Formal monitoring, evaluation, guidance and support will continue during this period. The member of staff will be invited to a formal review meeting, unless they were issued with a final written warning, in which case they will be invited to a decision meeting (see below).

### **FORMAL REVIEW MEETING**

As with formal capability meetings, at least five working days' notice will be given and the notification will give details of the time and place of the meeting and will advise the teacher of their right to be accompanied by a companion who may be a colleague, a trade union official, or a trade union representative who has been certified by their union as being competent.

If the person conducting the meeting is satisfied that the staff member has made sufficient improvement, the capability procedure will cease and the appraisal process will re-start. In other cases:

- If some progress has been made and there is confidence that more is likely, it may be appropriate to extend the monitoring and review period;
- If no, or insufficient improvement has been made during the monitoring and review period, the staff member will receive a final written warning.

As before, notes will be taken of formal meetings and a copy sent to the member of staff. The final written warning will mirror any previous warnings that have been issued. Where a final warning is issued, the member of staff will be informed in writing that failure to achieve an acceptable standard of performance (within the set timescale), may result in dismissal and given information about the handling of the further monitoring and review period and the procedure and time limits for appealing against the final warning. The staff member will be invited to a decision meeting.

### **DECISION MEETING**

As with formal capability meetings and formal review meetings, at least five working days' notice will be given and the notification will give details of the time and place of the meeting and will advise the staff member of their right to be accompanied by a companion who may be a colleague, a trade union official, or a trade union representative who has been certified by their union as being competent.

If an acceptable standard of performance has been achieved during the further monitoring and review period, the capability procedure will end and the appraisal process will re-start. If performance remains unsatisfactory, a decision, or recommendation to the Governing Body, will be made that the staff member should be dismissed or required to cease working at the school.

The staff member will be informed as soon as possible of the reasons for the dismissal, the date on which the employment contract will end, the appropriate period of notice and their right of appeal.

### **DECISION TO DISMISS**

The power to dismiss staff in this school rests with the Governing Body.

### **DISMISSAL**

Once the decision to dismiss has been taken, the Governing Body (Staff Dismissal Committee) will dismiss the staff member with notice.

## **APPEAL**

If a staff member feels that a decision to dismiss them, or other action taken against them, is wrong or unjust, they may appeal in writing against the decision within five days of the decision, setting out at the same time the grounds for appeal. Appeals will be heard without unreasonable delay and, where possible, at an agreed time and place. The same arrangements for notification and right to be accompanied by a companion will apply as with formal capability and review meetings and, as with other formal meetings, notes will be taken and a copy sent to the staff member.

The appeal will be dealt with impartially and, wherever possible, by managers or governors who have not previously been involved in the case.

The staff member will be informed in writing of the results of the appeal hearing as soon as possible.

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THIS POLICY**

### **ACAS Code Of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures**

The conduct of the formal capability stage will be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the *ACAS Code of Practice*.

## **CONSISTENCY OF TREATMENT AND FAIRNESS**

The Governing Body is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness and will abide by all relevant equality legislation.

## **SICKNESS**

If long term sickness absence appears to have been triggered by the commencement of monitoring or a formal capability procedure, the case will be dealt with in accordance with the school's absence policy and will normally be referred to the Occupational Health Service to assess the appropriateness or otherwise of continuing with monitoring or formal procedures. In some cases it may be appropriate for formal procedures to continue during a period of sickness absence. However, the views of the Occupational Health physician will always be taken into account before a decision is reached.

## **GRIEVANCES**

Where a member of staff raises a grievance during the appraisal or capability process, the appraisal or capability process may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance. Where the grievance and appraisal or capability cases are related it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

The appraisal and capability processes will be treated with confidentiality. Only the appraiser's line manager or, where s/he had more than one, each of her/his line managers will be provided with access to the appraisee's plan recorded in her/his statements. This will be done upon request and only where this is necessary to enable the line manager to discharge her/his line management responsibilities.

Appraisees will be consulted on requests for access to statements in the context of this policy. The process of gathering evidence for performance review will not compromise normal professional relationships between staff. The Governing Body recognises that the reviewer will consult with, and seek to secure the agreement of, the reviewee before seeking information from other colleagues about the work of the reviewee. However, the desire for confidentiality does not override the need for the headteacher and Governing Body to quality-assure the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal system. The Headteacher or appropriate colleague might, for example, review all individual's objectives and written appraisal records personally – to check consistency of approach and expectation between different appraisers.



## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The Governing Body and Headteacher will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the school's appraisal arrangements.

The head teacher will provide the Governing Body with a written report on the operation of the school's appraisal and capability policies annually. The report will not identify any individual by name. The report will include an assessment of the impact of these policies on:

- Race
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Disability
- Religion and Beliefs
- Age
- Part-time Status
- Maternity and Pregnancy

The Headteacher will report on whether there have been any appeals or representations on an individual or collective basis on the grounds of alleged discrimination.

## **RETENTION**

The Governing Body and Headteacher will ensure that all written appraisal records are retained in a secure

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