

PROBATION POLICY

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1. Introduction

This policy applies to all new employees in support staff roles. This policy does not apply to employees who have transferred from another setting or another role where the employer is the same.

This policy is intended to allow both the employee and the employee's line manager to assess objectively whether the employee is suitable for the role. The use of probationary periods increases the likelihood that new employees will perform more effectively in their permanent employment, once confirmed.

Line managers are responsible under this policy for ensuring that all new employees are properly monitored during their probationary period. If any problems arise, line managers should address these promptly. This will ensure that the employee is aware that some aspect of their performance or conduct is unsatisfactory and prevent the problem from escalating.

This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time. We may also vary this procedure, including any time limits, as appropriate in any case.

2. Length of probationary period

Our standard period of probation is 26 working weeks. For senior management, professional positions, and roles with complex responsibilities, we may wish to impose a longer probationary period.

3. Terms of employment during the probationary period

During the probationary period, employees will be subject to all the Terms and Conditions of their Contracts of Employment, including their contractual notice period during probation (if applicable).

In the event of a dismissal due to gross misconduct, termination will be summary dismissal, (i.e., dismissal without notice). Where the harm test (as defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education) is or may be met, allegations concerning the safety and welfare of children must be investigated and heard even if an employee has resigned. The employee will be given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make any relevant representations about it.

4. Irregularities discovered during the probationary period

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, then the matter will be discussed with the employee to establish the facts. If the evidence suggests that the employee misrepresented their abilities in any way, we may terminate the employment in line with relevant policies and procedures.

5. Reviews during probation

A line manager or appropriate designee will regularly review and assess an employee's performance, capability, and suitability for the role during an employee's probationary period. A record will be made of each review meeting. A copy of the record will be given to the employee and the original retained by the line manager.

During an employee's probation, line managers should provide regular feedback to the employee about their performance and progress, and should there be any, raise these with the employee as soon as possible with a view to resolving them. The line manager is also responsible for providing guidance and support and for identifying and arranging any necessary training or coaching.

6. Extending probationary periods

The probationary period may be extended in circumstances where an employee has been absent during the probationary period for example ill health or maternity leave, or in exceptional circumstances where a further period is required to determine suitability. This will be done in consultation with the employee and confirmed in writing. An extension of an employee's probationary period will happen no more than once for a period not exceeding three months on the same terms and conditions as the original period.

7. End of probationary period

At the end of the probationary period, the line manager will conduct a final review of an employee's performance and suitability for the job. This will involve a meeting with the employee to discuss their performance and progress throughout the period of probation. The review will be conducted on or shortly before the date on which the employee's probationary period comes to an end. If an employee's performance is satisfactory, the line manager should then issue a letter of confirmation of appointment to the employee.

8. Termination of employment

If an employee's performance while on probation (or extended probation) has been unsatisfactory, and it is thought unlikely that further training or support would lead to a satisfactory level of improvement, the employment may be terminated.

Where a decision is taken to terminate the employee's employment, the employee must be met with and informed of the reason for the termination. The employee has the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a work colleague or professional association/trade union representative. We will write to the employee confirming the termination, the reason for it, and the notice period they are contractually entitled to in accordance with their terms and conditions of employment. The employee will be given an opportunity to appeal the decision.

If an employee's employment is terminated after the expiry of the probationary period, or if the employee is an existing employee who has been promoted into a different role, our normal capability or disciplinary procedure will be followed as applicable.

9. Appeal

An employee has a right of appeal against the termination of their employment whilst in their probationary (or extended) period.

Any appeal should be made to the person named in the formal termination letter, clearly stating the grounds for appeal. This must be done within seven calendar days of receipt of written confirmation of termination.

The appeal will be conducted by at least one member of the governing board as soon as is reasonably practicable following receipt of the appeal.

The outcome of the appeal will be confirmed in writing without unreasonable delay. There is no further right of appeal.