



Staploe Education Trust

Associate Staff Performance Management Policy

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Introduction

Performance and development review is a process to assist all staff in the development of their professional skills; it provides a scheme of feedback on a person's performance, aids with career aspirations, including training and development opportunities. The procedure is a mechanism to support the person and should be used as a positive and helpful process.

The process as outlined is also designed to facilitate the Trust in the achievement of its aims and objectives as set out in the trust's Strategic Objectives and the individual School Improvement Plans. It preserves the principles of monitoring, assessment and continuous improvement in educational standards delivered by the trust.

Scope

This policy applies to all of the trust's associate staff, except those on fixed term contracts of less than one term or those within their six-month probationary period, for whom the probationary procedure will apply until the probationary period has been successfully completed.

Purpose

This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of all members of the trust's associate staff and for supporting their development within the context of the trust's commitment to improving educational provision and performance. It also sets out the arrangements that will apply should a member of staff fall below the levels of competence that are expected.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust Board and the executive headteacher are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy, ensuring that a consistent approach to performance management for associate staff is applied across the trust.

Each headteacher or in the case of the trust's operational team the executive headteacher, are responsible for ensuring that associate staff and managers adhere to this policy and procedures, ensuring performance across the trust is of a high standard and that where performance is consistently unsatisfactory, it is managed in a discreet, supportive and professional way.

The HR Department is responsible for ensuring that all members of staff are aware of this policy and procedures, and that managers apply it fairly and consistently with confidence and skill.

Managers and staff with supervisory or leadership responsibilities must ensure they implement this policy fairly and equitably, seeking guidance, clarification and support as and when required.

All associate staff must actively engage in the review of their performance. They must seek clarification, advice, learning and development support as and when required.

Performance and Development

Performance and development in this trust will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all associate staff have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively. It will help to ensure that staff are able to continue to improve their professional practice and to develop in their respective roles.

Most staff perform to a consistently high standard where continued professional development is encouraged and are expected to share best practice, learning from each other and working collaboratively.

This policy and procedure provides employees and managers with a clear structure for performance management where employees and their managers discuss their recent performance against expectations, their learning and development needs and their future aspirations.

Managers and employees are encouraged to discuss changes in requirements, performance or objectives as they arise. The performance management process encourages regular review and discussion, enabling employees and managers to regularly reflect, plan and seek clarity, advice and support. It also provides managers with regular opportunities to celebrate employee success, acknowledge achievements and ensure objectives and activities continue to align with organisational, team and individual requirements.

Where employees are failing to achieve the required standard, regular review also enables managers to address any performance issues at an early stage. Early intervention enables managers and employees to consider together a plan of action to address any performance issues as they arise, seeking further assistance and advice as required.

Performance and Development Period

The performance management period will normally run for twelve months from 1 January to 31 December.

For learning support staff at Soham Village College, the performance management period will run from 1 June to 31 May to allow for objectives to be set in readiness for the start of the new academic year.

Employees 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 review period will be determined by the duration of their

contract, and an individual's objectives should take account of the length of their contract.

Employees will not normally be dismissed for performance reasons without previous warnings. However, in any case involving an employee who has not yet completed their probationary period, dismissal without previous warnings may be appropriate dependant on the circumstances.

Appointing Reviewers

Each headteacher will be responsible for their respective school and the executive headteacher will be responsible for central services in making certain that these areas adhere to this policy ensuring best practice.

Each headteacher or the executive headteacher will delegate responsibility to undertake staff performance management reviews to the relevant line manager to ensure managers are reviewing the staff they supervise on a regular basis.

They will ensure that line managers responsible for conducting performance management reviews are familiar with the performance management policy and procedures, and have good skills supported by appropriate training in undertaking staff review of performance.

Performance Management Review Meeting

The performance management review meeting takes place in January and completes the previous year's performance cycle and establishes a plan for the following year. Employees should encourage and expect regular feedback throughout the year, reviewing their own performance against the appropriate standards, expectations and their agreed objectives. Feedback should highlight particular strengths, areas for development and associated opportunities alongside the impact the individual has had on their area of responsibility and possibly beyond, where they have exceeded expectations.

The annual review meeting will be a structured discussion between the reviewer and reviewee. The aim is to assess overall job performance during the review period and find ways to improve and extend performance for the benefit of the employee and the Trust.

As part of the review process reviewers will take the opportunity to discuss with the reviewee their general wellbeing and whether support in other ways would assist the employee day to day.

Both colleagues should prepare for the meeting beforehand. Ideally, the date for the review meeting should be set by giving at least two weeks' notice to allow both parties to collate the information and evidence they will need in order to review the employee's performance over the last twelve months.

The context for the annual review meeting will be as follows:

- Sufficient time and notice should be allocated for both parties to prepare and exchange information;
- The discussion should be conducted in a spirit of participation, support and encouragement;
- There should be no surprises, as any problems should have been raised during the review meetings throughout the year;
- Enough time should be allocated to do justice to the discussion;
- The discussion should take place in a private area, where the meeting will not be interrupted;
- The discussion should be open and honest with the individual taking the lead;
- The conclusions and actions for both parties must be documented;
- Both parties must be committed to taking forward the plan for achieving the objectives, including delivering a support plan where relevant.

Most review meetings are likely to last at least an hour but may be longer depending on the performance issues to be addressed. Performance management reviews are most effective when the reviewer and reviewee work together in a positive and mutually supportive way in the best interests of the Trust. The reviewer is responsible for leading the process, while the reviewee's role is to play an active part in the process.

The reviewer will:

- Review past performance against principal areas of accountability and previous objectives;
- Have an opportunity to celebrate success and motivate the employee for the future;
- Gain greater understanding of the employee's potential, needs, strengths and weaknesses;
- Identify obstacles that may be affecting performance;
- Use the opportunity to develop staff by agreeing future objectives;
- Identify training and development needs, particularly those in new or changing circumstances;
- Develop a consistent approach to guidance and encouragement. Ensure that employees know how their contribution will be evaluated in the performance management process;
- Play an active part in planning to assist the reviewee in meeting their objectives;
- Ensure that coaching, training and/or development are provided as appropriate;
- Monitor performance throughout the year, giving regular, objective feedback. Any concerns will be addressed as they arise during the year, so the performance management or review meeting should contain no surprises;
- Agree a plan of action for the future.
- Provide formal opportunities for feedback on work related issues;

Review discussion enables the reviewee to;

- Gain a clear picture of what is expected of them;
- Discuss priorities and be given clear direction;
- Discuss their strengths and weaknesses and to receive feedback on their performance;
- Be heard and respected;
- Be offered constructive guidance on attaining agreed objectives;
- Discuss their future professional development and training needs;
- Identify any areas of difficulty and learn from past experiences;

The Trust will;

- Benefit from improved communication with staff and improved efficiency;
- Benefit from improved standards;
- Benefit from staff with increased job satisfaction and motivation;
- Have an increased ability to assess staffing needs and enhance the development of staff;
- Be able to plan and co-ordinate staff training needs;
- Have a more accurate assessment of individual potential;
- Benefit from an increasingly professional and competent workforce.

All reviewers will be expected to commit their time, energy and skill to the performance management process so that associate staff colleagues are clear about what is involved, how they contribute to the success of the Trust and are committed to their own development. Reviewers will be responsive to staff queries and concerns and will ensure that they take a fair and consistent approach to all performance management meetings.

At the end of the review meeting, the reviewer and reviewee should complete an electronic record of the discussion using this [online form](#). This is best completed on the day of the review but must, in all cases, be completed by no later than two weeks from the date of the annual review meeting. The reviewer and reviewee should also plan a programme of termly review meetings and, where appropriate, work observations, leading up to the next annual review meeting.

A copy of these documents must be provided to the relevant headteacher or in the case of the trust's operation team the executive headteacher for review and to confirm that the objectives and support are appropriate. The headteachers and executive headteacher are responsible for managing and leading the schools and central services, so may sometimes need to adjust the objectives or offer support in a different way. This will always be discussed with the reviewer and reviewee.

A copy of the performance management review documentation will be retained on the employee's HR file.

Setting Objectives

Objectives for each member of associate staff will be set as part of the performance management meetings. The objectives set for each person will be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-Bound (SMART) and will be appropriate to the reviewee's role and level of experience.

The reviewing line manager and member of staff will seek to agree the objectives, but, if that is not possible, the headteachers or in the case of the trust's operational team the executive headteacher will determine the objectives.

Objectives set for each employee will, if achieved, contribute to the Trust and/or each school's plans for improving the educational provision and performance and improving the education of pupils at each school. This will be ensured through a process of linking objectives to the;

- Trust Strategic Priorities (as appropriate);
- Individual School Improvement Plans;
- Any existing work streams or projects; and
- The employee's job description.

It should be noted that both the reviewing manager and reviewee can request a review of the objectives if circumstances within the Trust and/or school significantly change.

Objectives should be stretching enough to support the employee to continue to learn and develop, whilst being realistic.

The number of objectives will vary according to the nature of the job and the level of responsibilities. There should not normally be more than three objectives for the year ahead.

Where an employee does not achieve an objective, the reviewer will be expected to establish the reasons for this, in order to inform future support or other action.

Reviewers will receive training in order to ensure that they understand the performance management process, can set appropriate objectives and agree suitable support plans.

Regular Review Meetings

It is important to see performance management as part of an annual cycle, so that performance can be reviewed and support provided as necessary throughout the year. Review meetings will be held between the reviewer and reviewee on a regular basis to check that the employee's performance is on track and that any previously agreed support is being provided.

Meetings should aim to reinforce successful behavior and encourage change where necessary. We all need to receive feedback, praise and reassurance especially where we have worked hard to support the trust and school, so the

review meetings are an important way to identify and celebrate significant achievements.

For some groups of associate staff, it will be more appropriate to carry out work observation than for others, for example observing a teaching assistant in a classroom setting, or a midday supervisor in the playground is more likely to be helpful in assessing performance than observing a member of the administrative team. Any work observation to be carried out will be discussed in advance with the employee.

Where work observation is appropriate, this will normally only take place on a formal basis once during the performance management cycle. Successful observation requires preparation and training for the assessor, together with a clear understanding on the part of the reviewer and reviewee of the purpose of the observation. When carrying out work observation, the following principles will apply:

- The format of the observation will be appropriate to the job role;
- The reviewer will seek to minimise any disruption to the work the employee is doing, so that work proceeds in as normal an atmosphere as possible;
- Full, constructive and timely feedback will be provided within 48 hours of the observation, giving the reviewer and reviewee an opportunity to discuss what went well and what might be done better or differently next time. When giving feedback, the reviewer will take into account the range of activities carried out by the reviewee and the time spent on each activity.

A brief note of the review meeting and/or work observation outcomes should be retained by the reviewer and reviewee as these will be a helpful reminder for the annual review meeting.

Development and Support

Performance management is a supportive process which will be used to inform continuing professional development (CPD) by encouraging all staff to identify training and/or developmental opportunities. The Trust wishes to encourage a culture in which all staff take responsibility for improving their skills through appropriate development. Development will be linked to the Trust Strategic Priorities and individual schools' improvement priorities, and to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of individuals.

Employees Experiencing Difficulties

Termly review meetings provide the opportunity to discuss any areas where the employee's performance is not meeting the required standard. Discussions of this kind are difficult for both parties but should be conducted in a climate of support and encouragement rather than blame or sanction. We believe that every member of our team wants to do their best for the Trust and we want them to succeed, so our aim is to ensure that an employee whose performance is not at the

appropriate standard is able to improve and, where necessary, receives additional support to do so.

Where the employee's personal circumstances are leading to difficulties within the Trust, appropriate support will be offered as soon as possible, without waiting for the formal annual assessment.

Where there are concerns about any aspects of the employee's performance the reviewer will meet the employee to agree a support plan, which will:

- Give clear feedback about the areas of concern;
- Give the employee the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns and establish the likely causes of poor performance including any outside factors;
- Identify any training needs/support needed (e.g. coaching, mentoring, monitoring, structured observation including peer observation; and observation of good practice);
- Clarify the required standards and agree any support that will be provided to help address those specific concerns;
- Make clear how, and by when, the reviewer will review progress;
- If it is appropriate to revise objectives, sufficient time will be agreed for improvement;
- The amount of time will reflect the seriousness of the concerns and the reviewer will explain the implications and process if no, or insufficient, improvement is made.

The reviewee's progress will continue to be monitored as part of the performance management process and a reasonable time will be given for performance to improve. This will depend upon the circumstances but will normally be for a period of four weeks. The aim is to ensure that the employee can recover and improve their performance with appropriate support as agreed in the support plan.

During the monitoring period the reviewee will be given regular feedback on progress and arrangements will be made to modify the support plan if appropriate. If, at the end of the monitoring period, the reviewer is satisfied that the employee has made, or is making, sufficient improvement, the performance management process will continue as normal, with any remaining issues continuing to be addressed through that process. The reviewer and the reviewee will keep a note of any concerns, the support given and the review judgment.

However, if, after a reasonable period of time, usually four weeks, informal action fails to achieve the required improvements in performance, the matter will be dealt with through the formal capability procedure. If this becomes necessary, the performance management cycle will be suspended until the work performance issues have been resolved.

Links to Pay

The headteachers or executive headteacher will take account of the performance management outcomes in making recommendations on salary in accordance with the trust's pay policy. Specifically, each headteacher will make recommendations in relation to associate staff contracted to their school and the executive headteacher will make recommendations for all central associate staff. This may include recommending the award of an honorarium where the employee's performance exceeds that which could reasonably be expected and the employee has made a sustained and substantial contribution to the Trust. In exceptional circumstances the headteacher or executive headteacher may recommend withholding an increment where the employee's performance has been unsatisfactory. This will only occur where the employee was previously made aware of the trust's concerns and has been given the opportunity and support to improve their performance.

Where an employee is aggrieved about a salary decision they will have the right to appeal in accordance with the trust's pay policy.

Links to Other Policies

Sickness

If long term sickness absence appears to have been triggered by the commencement of monitoring or the formal capability procedure, the case will be dealt with in accordance with the trust's sickness absence policy. The case will normally be referred to the occupational health service to assess the member of staff's health and fitness for continued employment and 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.

Grievance

Where a member of staff raises a grievance during the performance management review process, the headteacher or in the case of the trust's operation team, the executive headteacher will determine whether the process should be suspended for a temporary period in order to deal with the grievance. Where the grievance and any capability issue identified through the performance management process are related it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently.

Confidentiality and Professional Relationships

The performance management review and capability processes will be treated in confidence. Only the reviewer's line manager or, where they have more than one, each of their line managers and the headteacher or in the case of the trust's operation team the executive headteacher will be provided with access to the reviewee's performance review documentation.

The process of gathering evidence for performance management review is not expected to compromise normal professional relationships between members of the team. The reviewer will consult with, and seek to secure the agreement of, the reviewee before seeking information from other colleagues about their work.

Retention of Records

The headteacher or in the case of the trust's operation team the executive headteacher will ensure that all performance management review records are retained in a secure place for six years and then destroyed.

Monitoring and Review

The Trust Board will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the trust's performance management arrangements via the executive headteacher reports to the Trust Review Committee in respect of associate staff. The report will be reflective of the benchmarking exercise undertaken by the headteachers and executive headteacher.

This policy will be reviewed on a 3-year cycle. This review may be brought forward as required by the trust to reflect changes in supporting advice/guidance.