



LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

PROBATIONARY POLICY

Policy Approved by the Board of Trustees

Signed:

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Authorised for Issue

Date 16 March 2020

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This policy applies to all schools and employees within the Lighthouse Schools Partnership.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Lighthouse Schools Partnership recognises the importance of ensuring that new employees are fully supported from the commencement of their employment to enable them to become familiar with their job and become integrated and productive at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.2 This policy aims to assist both new employees and their managers in providing a structure for the effective management of the probationary period, probationary assessment and where appropriate the management of unsatisfactory performance, attendance and/or conduct during the probationary period.

2. Policy Aims

- 2.1 For headteachers/line managers to clarify requirements, set standards and encourage development. During a probationary period headteachers/line managers will make an assessment of performance and behaviour to determine whether an individual will be confirmed in post.
- 2.2 The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that all employees are clear on what to expect during their probationary period and to ensure fairness and consistency in the management of employees during this period. The probationary period is 26 weeks, and may be extended by a further 12 weeks.

3. Scope and Principles

- 3.1 This procedure applies to all new members of staff (teaching and support) of the Trust (including fixed term employees) in their first 6 months of employment.
- 3.2 Any disciplinary and capability issues during the probationary period should be addressed under this policy.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1 Employees
 - Complying with the expected standards of performance, attendance and conduct required by the headteacher/line manager and Code of conduct.
 - Informing the headteacher/line manager if they are having any difficulty in meeting these standards.
 - Undertaking training activities, agreed with the headteacher/line manager to support their achievement of the required standards.
 - Attending mid-point probationary assessment meeting with the headteacher/line manager.
 - Performing their duties in accordance with their contractual obligations e.g. being honest, trustworthy, co-operative and act reasonably, treating colleagues, pupils and parents with respect, honesty and dignity.

4.2 Headteacher/Line Manager

- Ensuring that this policy is applied consistently and in a way which does not discriminate.
- Monitoring the progress of new employees against standards which are clearly communicated to the employee.
- Provide an induction programme and the necessary support to the employee to enhance the opportunity for the probationary period to be successful.
- Provide the employee with regular feedback on their progress throughout their probationary period, ensuring that training and development needs are identified and met.
- Ensuring the employee has the opportunity to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and experience.
- Ensuring the completion of probationary assessment relevant paperwork underpinning the probationary procedure.

4.3 Governors

- Attend appeal hearings as part of a panel and to make a fair decision in relation to a specific case.
- To monitor and review this policy.

4.4 Human Resources

- HR will provide timely advice and support to headteachers/line managers and governing bodies on all aspects of the probationary procedure on request.
- To attend hearings/formal meetings.

5. General Provisions

5.1 All new employees will be provided with an appropriate induction programme, to help them settle into their new environment and team and familiarise themselves with the roles and responsibilities of their job.

5.2 The appointment of every new employee is subject to successful completion of a formal probationary period. During the probationary period the headteacher/line manager will make an assessment of capability (performance and attendance) and conduct (behaviour) to determine whether the employment will be confirmed.

5.3 The probationary period will last 26 weeks but in certain circumstances may be extended (*see section 9*) for a further period of up to 12 weeks.

5.4 Appointment of fixed term employees will be subject to a probationary period as follows:

Fixed term for 3 months or less	4-week probation period
Fixed term up to 6 months	12-week probation period
Fixed term up to 9 months	16-week probation period

5.5 During the probationary period the school/central team and employee only need to give one week's notice for the cessation of a contract of employment unless the employee has continuous local government service in which case, where the school/central team is giving notice to the employee, the notice set out in the employee's contract should be given. Where an act of gross misconduct has been

committed, dismissal will be without notice or payment in lieu of notice. Please see disciplinary policy for more details.

- 5.6 Any performance, attendance or conduct issues during the probationary period should be addressed under this policy.
- 5.7 It is expected that the majority of new staff will progress effectively through their probationary period. However, where an employee is not achieving the standards expected, the headteacher/line manager will seek to establish with the employee whether there are any reasons or mitigating circumstances affecting the employee's performance, attendance and/or conduct and provide training, support and supervision where appropriate. The headteacher/line manager will ensure that the areas of concern are explained and the employee is given clear objectives for performance, attendance and/or conduct. The opportunity to improve within a defined period of time will also be provided. The headteacher/line manager will ensure that the employee understands the standards against which their performance, attendance and/or conduct is being assessed and will explore any support the employee needs to assist them in achieving these standards.
- 5.8 The headteacher/line manager does not need to wait until a formal probationary assessment meeting to raise any performance, attendance and/or conduct concerns; rather these will be discussed with the employee at the earliest opportunity as part of the normal supervisory/management arrangements, if a probationary assessment meeting is not imminent, with any such discussions being recorded and then referred to in formal probationary assessment meetings.
- 5.9 If there are serious concerns about performance, attendance and/or conduct at any point during the probationary period and the headteacher/line manager considers that sufficient improvement is unlikely to be made, the manager may convene a probationary meeting and the employment may be terminated before the end of the probationary period giving the employee their notice.
- 5.10 There is a statutory requirement to refer an individual to the DOFA (Designated Officer for Allegations), for schools in the North Somerset Area or the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer), for schools in the BANES area, where an employee has been dismissed, or who resigns in circumstances which may have led to dismissal or where a disciplinary transfer has occurred on grounds of misconduct which harmed or placed a child at risk of harm. The Trust Head of HR must be notified in these circumstances.

6. Induction and Assessment

- 6.1 Employees will have an induction to help them to settle into their new environment and learn the responsibilities of their role. A copy of the employee's job description and person specification will be provided as part of the induction together with any other key documents for example, relevant school policies and procedures and performance management objectives.
- 6.2 The way in which work performance and behaviour are assessed may vary depending on the responsibilities of each employee's job, grade and work environment and may include:
- Quality of work performance
 - Quantity of work
 - Flexibility

- Customer care
- Attendance, timekeeping and health record
- Reliability
- Relationship with other employees
- Initiative

7. Probationary Review Assessment Meetings

- 7.1 Performance, attendance and conduct will be formally assessed at mid-point probationary review meeting (13 weeks) and at end of probationary (26 weeks). The meetings provide an opportunity for the headteacher/line manager to assess the employee's progress against the relevant standards and targets, clarify any standards/targets that are not clear, set improvement objectives, hear an employee's views on what they feel will assist their work performance, attendance and/ or conduct, discuss measures that may be taken to assist the employee in reaching the standards required and any identify training or development needs.
- 7.2 Where a fixed term employee is subject to a probationary period of less than 26 weeks, the number and frequency of the formal assessment meetings will be adjusted.
- 7.3 The trust's probation assessment form (see Appendix 2) should be used to record the main points of any probationary assessment meeting and a copy should be given to the employee and a copy placed on the employee's personnel file in school. This assessment form will be re-visited at the second probationary assessment meeting.

8. Successful completion of Probationary period

- 8.1 If an employee's performance, attendance and behaviour/conduct has been satisfactory his/her appointment will be confirmed in writing by the school/line manager at the end of the probationary period. (See Appendix 3).

9. Extension of Probationary Period

- 9.1 A decision to extend the probationary period should be made no later than the final probationary assessment meeting (normally five months after appointment). A decision to extend the probationary period must be consulted with the HR team before the extension. A decision to extend the probationary period for up to a maximum of 12 weeks, may be made under the following circumstances:
- If the employee's performance, attendance and/or conduct does not reach the standards required and there is evidence to support this, but the manager decides that there is a good chance of the required improvement being achieved.
 - If it has not been possible to make a fair assessment of the employee's performance, attendance and/or conduct within the probationary period for good reason e.g. the employee has been absent for a substantial part of their probationary period, for example, due to sickness.
 - Where an employee has not met the required standards of performance, attendance and this may be due to a disability. The headteacher/line manager will meet with the

employee and establish whether there are any reasonable adjustments that can be made to assist the employee in achieving the required standards, including an extension to the probationary period.

9.2 Any decision to extend the probationary period must be fully explained to the employee and confirmed in writing (see Appendix 4), setting out:

- the length of the extension;
- identifying any training/other support that will be given;
- areas for improvement and how this will be monitored/measured; and
- what may happen at the end of the extension i.e. where satisfactory improvement is made the employee will be confirmed in post/where there is no or unacceptable improvement their employment will be terminated.

Please contact the central HR team for support with this.

10. Termination of Employment

10.1 If the headteacher/line manager decides based on evidence, in conjunction with the Head of HR, that the performance and/or behaviour of an employee does not reach the standards required at the end of the probationary period, the employee will be asked to attend a final probationary meeting at which their future employment will be discussed and may result in their dismissal. We recommend that, if the headteacher is not the line manager, that they be present at the meeting as it is the headteacher who has the authority to dismiss the employee or to advise the Governors on this course of action. HR representative must also be present.

10.2 The employee is entitled to be accompanied at this meeting by a Trade Union representative or a work colleague. The employee must be told the full reasons why he/she has not satisfactorily completed the probationary period. The outcome of this meeting must be confirmed in writing by the HR team.

10.3 Advice should be sought from the HR team ahead of the termination of employment.

11. Right of Appeal and Appeal Hearing

11.1 Employees have the right to appeal against dismissal. Any appeal requests must be lodged with the headteacher/line manager in writing, stating the grounds for appeal, within ten working days of receipt of the dismissal letter.

11.2 The appeal will be heard by a panel of at least two governors/trustees who have not been involved in the case. The Chair of Trustees will decide the composition of the panel.

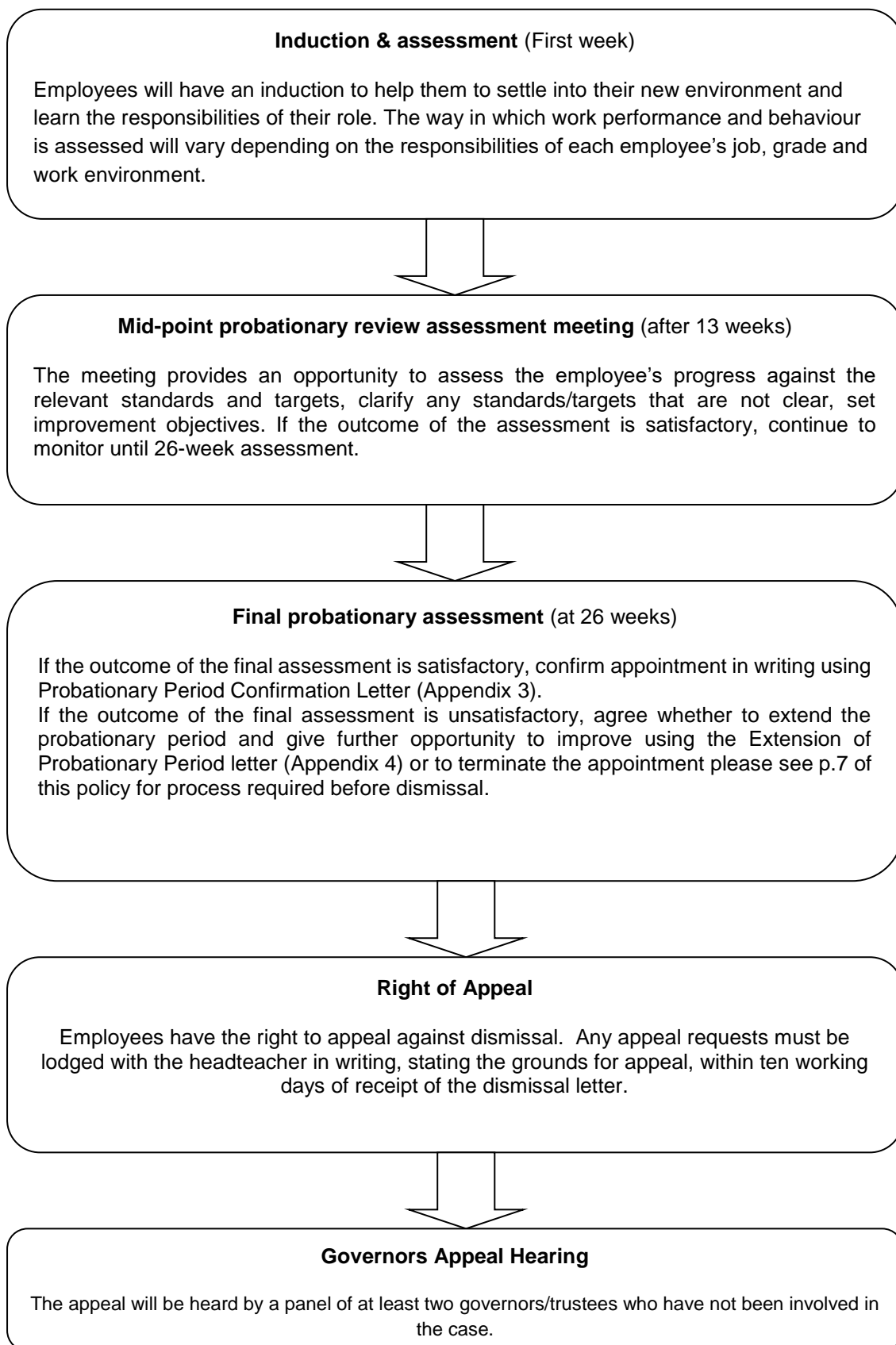
11.3 The employee must be given at least 5 working days' notice of the date and time for the appeal hearing. If the employee gives a valid reason for not being able to attend the hearing one alternative date no more than 5 days after the first suggested date will be arranged.

11.4 At the appeal, the employee must be given an opportunity to state their case and has the right to be accompanied by either a Trade Union representative or a work colleague.

- 11.5 The decision of the governors'/trustees appeal panel may be a confirmation of the termination of the contract or overturn of the initial decision and reinstating the member of staff. The decision will be sent to the employee in writing and will be final.

To be read in conjunction with the Trust recruitment policy and code of conduct.

Appendix 1 – Probationary Period Process Flowchart



Appendix 2 – Probationary Assessment Form

Probationary Assessment Form

This form is to be used to assess and monitor the performance of all new starters during their probationary period. The form should be completed by the headteacher/line manager by ticking the ratings considered appropriate. Assessments should be based on the requirements of the job and the employee's performance. Each assessment must be discussed with the employee.

Post holder's name:	
Start date:	
Post Title:	
School:	

Assessment Dates:	
After 13 weeks	
After 26 weeks	

<u>Performance Indicators</u>	Assessment After	
	13 weeks	26 weeks
Work Performance: Meeting targets, learning by experience, understanding information & instruction, making judgments.	A B C D	A B C D
Motivation: Enthusiasm, initiative, showing interest, asking questions, following through on tasks.	A B C D	A B C D
Co-operation: Working with colleagues, dealing with customers, following instructions, willingness to work.	A B C D	A B C D
Self-Discipline: Punctuality, attendance record, dress, demeanour, attitude, sense of responsibility.	A B C D	A B C D

A= Exceeding expectations/objective met to a very high standard, B= Always meeting expectations/objective met, C= Meeting expectation sometimes/objective partially met, D= Not meeting expectation/objective not met

Action Required
Training Needs
Review Date

Has the employee satisfactorily completed the probationary period?
 YES / NO

If no, reasons why and further action to be taken (for example: extension of probationary period or termination of contract)

.....

.....

.....

.....

Signature of headteacher/line manager.....

Date:

Print Name

Signature of employee..... Date:

Copies of completed form to: Individual School File

Appendix 3 – Successful completion of Probation Letter

Letter to be sent to confirm satisfactory completion of probationary period.

Personal and Confidential
[Employee's name and address]

Dear

Probationary Period

Further to our meeting of [*date of follow up interview*] I am writing to confirm that you have satisfactorily completed your probationary period with effect from [*date*] and your employment is confirmed in the post of [*post title*].

[Headteacher/Manager to insert own sentence in here, for example: I am really pleased that you have fitted into the role and the team so well and look forward to working with you into the future.]

Yours sincerely

Headteacher/Line Manager

Appendix 4 – Extension of Probationary Period Letter

Letter to be sent to confirm the extension of the probationary period.

Personal and Confidential

[Employee's name and address]

Dear

Probationary Period

Further to the meeting on [date] at [location], I am writing to you to confirm that we will be extending your probationary period for [period of time] until [date].

As confirmed in our meeting, the reason for the extension of your probationary period is due to you not meeting the required standards in the following areas:

-
-
-

The following training and support has been identified to enable you to achieve the required standards in the above areas:

-
-
-

At the end of the extension of your probationary period, a further assessment will take place. If the outcome of this review is successful, your appointment will be confirmed. If, following the assessment, standards have not been met you may be dismissed from your post.

If you have any other queries, please do contact me.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher/Line Manager

Cc: HR team