



**LIGHTHOUSE**  
SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

# PROBATIONARY POLICY

## Non Statutory

|                                                                                           |                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Policy approved by Trust Executive Team                                                   |                       |
| Signed:  | Date: 1 June 2026     |
| Name: Gary Lewis                                                                          | Role: Chief Executive |

This Policy applies to all schools and employees within Lighthouse Schools Partnership

*This policy remains valid, and in operation, until a new or updated policy is published.*

### Document History

| Version | Author/Owner | Drafted    | Comments                                                                                                                             |
|---------|--------------|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.0     | Amy Sutton   | 15.01.2020 | New drafted policy                                                                                                                   |
| 1.1     | Laura Payne  | Aug 2023   | Revision of policy                                                                                                                   |
| 1.2     | Tania Newman | April 2026 | Updated to include employment legislation changes coming into force in 2027. Includes professional standards for pupil facing roles. |

|                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| Review cycle     | Every 3 years    |
| Next Review date | Summer Term 2029 |

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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 role and become integrated and productive at the earliest opportunity.

1.2 This policy aims to assist both new employees and their managers with a clear process for the effective management of the probationary period, probationary assessment and where appropriate the management of unsatisfactory capability (performance and attendance) and/or conduct (behaviour) 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 capability and conduct to determine whether an individual is suitable for the role.

2.2 The purpose of this process 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 3 months , and may be extended by a further 1 month.

## **3. Scope and Principles**

3.1 This policy applies to all new employees (teaching and support) of the Trust (including fixed term employees) during their probationary period.

3.2 Any disciplinary/conduct and capability issues during the probationary period should be addressed under this policy.

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

The School/Trust is responsible for maintaining fair, consistent and objective processes for matters relating to employee probation.

### **4.1 Employees**

The employee is responsible for taking ownership of their own performance and development. During their probation period, they are expected to:

- Comply with the expected standards, including professional standards, of capability (performance and attendance) and conduct (behaviour) required by the Headteacher/Line Manager and the LSP Code of Conduct Policy.
- Inform the Headteacher/Line Manager if they are having any difficulty in meeting these expected standards.
- Undertake training activities, agreed with the Headteacher/Line Manager to support their achievement of the required standards.
- Attend mid-point and end assessment probationary meetings with the Headteacher/Line Manager.

- Perform their duties in accordance with their contractual obligations e.g. complying with School/Trust policies, being honest, trustworthy, co-operative, acting reasonably and treating colleagues, pupils and parents with respect, honesty and dignity.

#### **4.2 Headteacher/Line Manager**

The Headteacher/Line Manager is responsible for monitoring a new employee's performance and progress during their probation period. This includes:

- 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.
- Providing an induction programme and the necessary support to the employee to enhance the opportunity for the probationary period to be successful.
- Providing 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 the relevant probationary assessment paperwork underpinning the probationary process.
- Provide information on the standards expected and set targets.

#### **4.3 Governors/Trustees**

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

#### **4.4 Human Resources**

- Provide timely advice and support to Headteachers/Line Managers and governing bodies on all aspects of the probationary process 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 as well as familiarising themselves with the roles and responsibilities of their role.

5.2 The appointment of every new employee is subject to the successful completion of a formal probationary period. During the probationary period the Headteacher/Line Manager will assess capability (performance and attendance) and conduct (behaviour) to determine whether the employment will be confirmed.

5.3 The probationary period will last 3 months for permanent employees but in certain circumstances may be extended (see section 9) for a further period of up to 1 month. A mid-point assessment will typically take place after 6 weeks. Timings for assessments may be adjusted to consider term times and can take place earlier to accommodate this.

5.4 Appointment of fixed term employees will be subject to a probationary period. The below table details of when assessment should take place. In certain circumstances the probationary period may be extended for a further period of up to 1 month.

| <b>Duration of Fixed Term Contract</b> | <b>Probation Period / Final Assessment</b> | <b>Mid-Point Assessment</b> |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 3 months or less                       | 4 weeks                                    | 2 weeks                     |
| Above 3 months and up to 5 months      | 8 weeks                                    | 4 weeks                     |
| Above 5 months                         | 3 months                                   | 6 weeks                     |

5.5 During the probationary period the School/Trust need to provide one week's notice for the termination of a contract of employment, unless the employee has continuous local government service in which case, where the School/Trust 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 taken place, dismissal will be without notice or payment in lieu of notice. Please see the Disciplinary policy for more details.

5.6 Any capability (performance and attendance) or conduct (behaviour) issues during the probationary period should be addressed under this policy.

5.7 It is expected that most new employees 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 capability and/or conduct and will provide training, support and supervision where appropriate. The Headteacher/Line Manager will ensure that the areas of concern are explained fully, and the employee is given clear objectives to address the capability and/or conduct concerns. 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 capability 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 capability and/or conduct concerns. 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, discussions should be recorded (in writing) and then referred to in the upcoming formal probationary assessment meeting.

5.9 If there are serious concerns about capability and/or conduct at any point during the probationary period and the Headteacher/Line Manager considers that sufficient improvement is unlikely to be made, they 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 LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer), 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. A statutory referral is also required for teachers who have been alleged of serious misconduct to The Teaching Regulation Agency. The Trust's Director 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 processes and performance management objectives.

6.2 The way in which work capability (performance and attendance) and conduct (behaviour) are assessed may vary depending on the responsibilities of each employee's job, grade and work environment and may include:

- Quality & quantity of work (including but not limited to; performance, skill, ability & knowledge)
- Attitudes & motivation (including but not limited to; flexibility, reliability, customer care & initiative)
- Conduct & attendance (including but not limited to; behaviour, professionalism, timekeeping and sickness record)
- Communication & co-operation (including but not limited to; working relationships with other employees and the use of effective communication)

## **7. Probationary Review Assessment Meetings**

7.1 Capability (performance and attendance) and conduct (behaviour) will be formally assessed at mid-point probationary review meetings typically held at 6 weeks and at the end of the probationary period of 3 months 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 and/or targets that are not clear, set improvement objectives, hear an employee's views on what they feel will assist their work capability and/ or conduct, discuss measures that may be taken to assist the employee in reaching the standards required and identify any training or development needs.

7.2 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 along with a copy placed on the employee's personnel file in the School/Trust. 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 capability (performance & attendance) and conduct (behaviour) has been satisfactory their appointment will be confirmed in writing by the Headteacher/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 must be consulted with the Central HR team before the extension is confirmed with the employee and a decision should be made no later than the final probationary assessment meeting (normally three months after appointment). A decision to extend the probationary period for up to a maximum of 1 month, may be made under the following circumstances:

- If the employee's capability (performance and attendance) and/or conduct (behaviour) does not reach the standards required and there is evidence to support this, but the Line 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 capability 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 capability 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 during the probationary assessment meeting and confirmed in writing (see Appendix 4), setting out:

- the reasons why capability and/or conduct have been unsatisfactory;
- the length of the extension;
- any training/other support that will be given;
- areas for improvement and how the relevant targets 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 or 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 Termination Employment before completion of the probationary period

In some circumstances, the Headteacher/Line Manager may identify that the employee is unsuitable for their role and will not reach the required standard with further support before the end of the probationary period.

Where there is sufficient evidence that the required standards are not being met and are unlikely to be met, the employment can be terminated at any stage during the probationary period.

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 they have not satisfactorily completed the probationary period. The outcome of this meeting must be confirmed in writing.

Should the Headteacher/Line Manager wish to do this they must discuss early termination with the Director of HR in advance of the meeting with the employee.

## **10.2 Terminating employment at the end of the probationary period**

If the Headteacher/Line Manager decides based on evidence, in conjunction with the Director of HR, that the capability and/or conduct 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. In Schools, 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. A HR representative must also be present in the final probationary meeting.

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 they have not satisfactorily completed the probationary period. The outcome of this meeting must be confirmed in writing.

Advice must be sought from the Director of HR 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 one Governor or a Trustee, and one SLT Central Team Member, who have not been involved in the case.

11.3 The employee must be given at least five 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 five 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 appeal panel may confirm the termination of the contract or they may overturn of the initial decision and reinstate the employee. The decision will be sent to the employee in writing and will be final.

To be read in conjunction with other LSP Policies including

- Recruitment
- Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding
- As well as relevant professional standards (teachers standards for example)

## Appendix 1 - Probationary Period Process Flowchart

(NB below assessment timings relate to employees on permanent contracts).  
Please see section 5.4 for timings for employees on fixed term contracts.

### Induction & Assessment (First week)

Employees will have an induction to help them to settle into their new environment and learn the responsibilities of their role. The way in which work capability and conduct is assessed will vary depending on the responsibilities of each employee's job, grade and work environment.

### Mid-point Probationary Review Assessment Meeting (at 6 weeks)

The meeting provides an opportunity to assess the employee's progress against the relevant standards and targets, clarify any standards/targets that are not clear and set improvement objectives. If the outcome of the assessment is satisfactory, continue to monitor until the 3 month assessment. If unsatisfactory and standards are unlikely to be met refer to section 10.1 before dismissal meeting.

### Final Probationary Assessment (at 3 months)

If the outcome of the final assessment is satisfactory, confirm appointment in writing using the Successful Completion of Probation Letter (Appendix 3).  
If the outcome of the final assessment is unsatisfactory, agree whether to extend the probationary period and provide further opportunity to improve using the Extension of Probationary Period Letter (Appendix 4) or to terminate the appointment please see section 10.2 of this policy for the process required before dismissal meeting.

### Right of Appeal

Employees have the right to appeal against the decision to dismiss. Any appeal requests must be lodged with the Headteacher in writing, stating the grounds for appeal, within ten working days of receipt of the dismissal letter.

### Appeal Hearing

The appeal will be heard by a panel of at least one Governor or Trustee, and one SLT Central Team member who has not been involved in the case. They will be supported by a member of the Central HR Team.

**Appendix 2 - Probationary Assessment Form (held in a separate document)****Probationary Assessment Form**

This form is to be used to assess and monitor the capability (performance and attendance) and conduct (behaviour) 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 capability and conduct. Each assessment must be discussed with the employee.

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

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Assessment Dates |  |
| After 6 weeks:   |  |
| After 3 months:  |  |

| Performance Indicators                                                                                                                                           | Assessment after |                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                  | 6 weeks          | 3 months         |
| Quality & Quantity of Work:<br>Meeting targets, learning by experience,<br>understanding information & instruction,<br>making judgments.                         | A<br>B<br>C<br>D | A<br>B<br>C<br>D |
| Attitudes & Motivation:<br>Enthusiasm, initiative, showing interest, asking<br>questions, following through on tasks.                                            | A<br>B<br>C<br>D | A<br>B<br>C<br>D |
| Communication & Co-operation:<br>Working with colleagues, dealing with<br>stakeholders (parents/ staff/ pupils), following<br>instructions, willingness to work. | A<br>B<br>C<br>D | A<br>B<br>C<br>D |

|                                                                                                                  |                  |                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Conduct & Attendance:<br>Punctuality, attendance record, dress,<br>demeanour, attitude, sense of responsibility. | A<br>B<br>C<br>D | A<br>B<br>C<br>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.**

Please reference the relevant professional standards for teacher's, headteacher's, and the criteria for support staff in pupil facing roles, as outlined in the appendices.

**Summary of employee's performance (reference professional standards/job description)**

**Areas requiring further improvement/training needs**

**Targets set at first assessment (6 weeks)**

- 
- 
- 

**Assessment of targets (achieved/not achieved) at final assessment (3 months)**

- 
- 
- 

Date of next review: .....

**To be completed at the 3 month assessment:**

My decision is that the:

Employee has successfully completed their probation [ ]

Employee's probationary period be extended [ ]

Employee's employment be terminated. [ ]

If employment is to be terminated, record the reasons why:

If probation is to be extended, summarise the improvement required:

Extended probation period completion date: *[insert date]* .....

Any additional comments:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Headteacher/Line Manager..... Date: .....

Print Name .....

Employee..... Date: .....

Copies of completed form to: School Personnel File

## Appendix - Professional standards and criteria for pupil facing roles

### Assessment:

A= Exceeding expectations/objective met to a very high standard,

C= Meeting expectation sometimes/objective partially met,

B= Always meeting expectations/objective met,

D= Not meeting expectation/objective not met.

| Teacher Standards |                                                                             |                      |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Standard Number   | Teacher Standards                                                           | Assessment (A,B,C,D) |
| Part 1            | Teaching                                                                    |                      |
| TS1               | Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils          |                      |
| TS2               | Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils                                |                      |
| TS3               | Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge                           |                      |
| TS4               | Plan and teach well-structured lessons                                      |                      |
| TS5               | Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils          |                      |
| TS6               | Make accurate and productive use of assessment                              |                      |
| TS7               | Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment |                      |
| TS8               | Fulfil wider professional responsibilities                                  |                      |
| Part 2            | Personal and Professional Conduct                                           |                      |

### Headteacher standards

| Domain   | Headteacher Standards   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Assessment (A,B,C,D) |
|----------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Domain 1 | Qualities and Knowledge | Ethical leadership<br>Values-led leadership<br>Deep and secure knowledge of education policy and practice<br>Expertise in teaching, learning and curriculum<br>Understanding of school improvement and effectiveness |                      |

|                 |                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Domain 2</b> | <b>Pupils and Staff</b>                 | Creating a culture of high expectations<br>Safeguarding and pupil wellbeing<br>Inclusive practice and equality of opportunity<br>Staff development and professional learning<br>Recruitment, retention and deployment of staff |  |
| <b>Domain 3</b> | <b>Systems and Processes</b>            | Strategic planning and school improvement<br>Financial management and resource deployment<br>Governance and accountability<br>Data, assessment and evaluation<br>Compliance with statutory and regulatory frameworks           |  |
| <b>Domain 4</b> | <b>The Self-Improving School System</b> | Working with other schools and organisations<br>Supporting and challenging peers<br>System leadership and collaboration<br>Contribution to local, regional and national education systems                                      |  |

### Standards for support staff - classroom/pupil facing

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Assessment<br/>(A,B,C,D)</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Personal and professional conduct</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be clear about role and responsibilities and how these fit within the wider structure of the school.</li> <li>• operate in a position of trust and are seen by pupils as role models.</li> <li>• maintain proper boundaries with pupils and behaviours should reflect this responsible position.</li> </ul> |                                 |
| <b>Knowledge and understanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sufficient knowledge and skills to support pupils in achieving their maximum potential. .</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                 |
| <b>Teaching and learning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with other staff to ensure the best possible outcomes for all pupils.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                 |
| <b>Working with others</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                 |

- |                                                                                                                                               |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• work with other professionals, parents, carers and outside agencies as well as with pupils.</li></ul> |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

### **Appendix 3 - Successful Completion of Probation Letter (held in a separate document)**

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

**Date**

**Private and Confidential**

**[Employee's name and address]**

Dear

#### **Probationary Period**

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

*[Headteacher/Line 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 (held in a separate document)**

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

**Date**

**Private and Confidential**

**[Employee's name and address]**

Dear

### **Probationary Period**

Further to our meeting on *[date]* at *[location]*, I am writing to confirm that your probationary period will be extended for *[period of time]* until *[date]*.

As confirmed in our meeting, the reason(s) 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 continue not to be met, you may be dismissed from your post.

If you have any other queries, please do not hesitate contact me.

Yours sincerely

**Headteacher/Line Manager**

**cc: Central HR team**