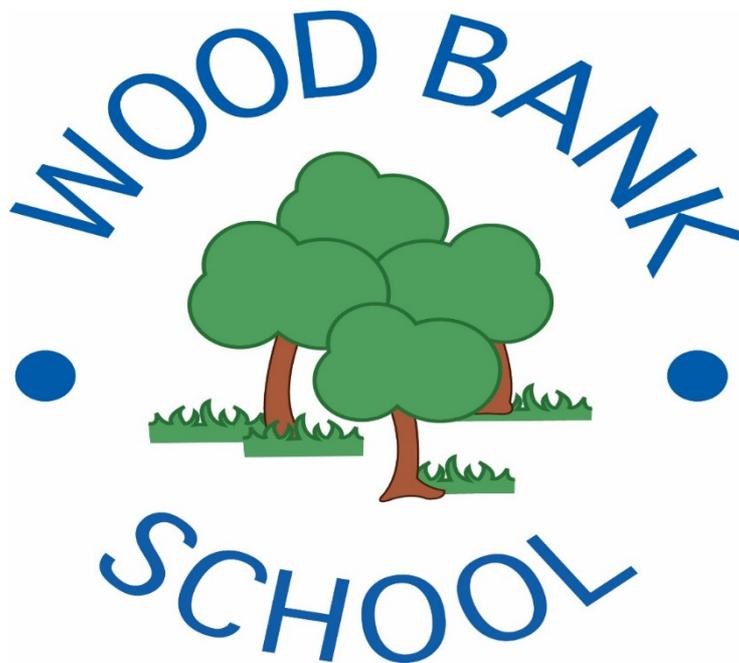


# WOOD BANK SCHOOL



## PROBATION POLICY

<b>Policy Ratification</b>	<b>April 2018</b>
<b>Review Date</b>	<b>April 2021</b>
<b>Signed (Headteacher)</b>	
<b>Signed (Chair of Governors)</b>	

# Model Probation Policy for Support Staff in Schools

September 2017

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## **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

This policy explains the procedure for managing probation periods for support staff in Schools.

All new support staff entrants to a school where the Council is the employer are subject to a 6 month probation period. Confirmation of an employee's appointment will be subject to satisfactory completion of a period of probationary service.

Probation periods give the School the opportunity to assess a new employee's suitability in the role they have been appointed to and for the employee to demonstrate their ability to effectively perform their duties, have the opportunity to become familiar with the main duties and tasks of their post and demonstrate the standard of performance, attendance and conduct expected of them.

It is imperative that Schools ensure that appropriate procedures and mechanisms are in operation to deal with probation periods efficiently and effectively. To this extent it is recommended that new employees are reviewed on a monthly basis to monitor progress being made.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

To ensure both managers and employees within their probation period understand the purpose of the probation period.

To guide and advise managers on managing probation periods and how to proceed where the employee's performance falls short of the expected standards.

## **3. SCOPE**

The policy applies to all support staff who are new entrants in community, community special and voluntary controlled schools including temporary or fixed term appointments for 6 months or more.

The policy applies to support staff who have moved from a community, community special and voluntary controlled school to a School with a different employer (other than the Council) who have chosen not to honour continuous service for the purpose of probation.

Existing employees who have already completed a probation period in a School where the Council are the employer and are moving to a new position in a school where the Council is the employer are not subject to any further probation period.

In the case of fixed term employees with a contract that is shorter than the length of the probation period the probation process will be followed for the duration of the contract.

## **4. THE POLICY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

- 4.1.1 The Probation Policy should be explained briefly to any potential new employees at the recruitment stage.
- 4.1.2 The Probation Policy should be explained to the new employee at an initial meeting and as part of their individual induction programme. Within the first week of commencing employment, the manager should explain the responsibilities of the role, arrange for any necessary training to take place and set objectives for the first 6 months in the role.
- 4.1.3 The manager should advise the new employee that there will be regular probation review meetings during the 6 month probation period.
- 4.1.4 The date of the first probation review meeting should be set as part of the induction process.
- 4.1.5 It is expected that managers will deal with any concerns regarding performance, conduct or attendance as they arise and not wait until the probation review meetings. Dealing with problems at an early stage often means that they are more likely to be dealt with successfully.

### **4.2 Probation Review Meetings**

- 4.2.1 If a probation period is to be of any value it must be properly managed.
- 4.2.2 The purpose of probation review meetings is to review performance, conduct and attendance. Constructive feedback should be given to the employee highlighting both achievements and any areas where there are concerns. Examples/evidence must always be provided.
- 4.2.3 Where there are no concerns with the employee's performance, conduct or attendance, then the manager should inform the employee of this fact in writing and set a date for the remainder of the review meetings.
- 4.2.4 Where there are concerns regarding any aspect of performance, conduct or attendance, the manager must:
- Discuss the areas of concern.
  - Explain the levels/standards required.
  - Agree what will be required as evidence of improvement.
  - Set a timescale for improvement.
  - Identify any additional support, training or guidance.
  - Advise that failure to meet the required levels/standards may result in a recommendation requesting dismissal.

4.2.5 The manager should produce an improvement plan outlining all the areas in 4.2.4 above and go through the improvement plan with the employee. Both parties should sign the improvement plan.

4.2.6 At the point whereby any concerns are raised the employee should be given the opportunity to be represented at further meetings by a Trade Union Representative or a work colleague.

### **4.3 Final Probation Review Meeting**

4.3.1 The final probation review meeting must be held towards the end of month 5 of employment, or sooner if appropriate (see paragraph 4.4). The purpose of the meeting is to review performance, conduct and attendance. Constructive feedback should be given to the employee highlighting both achievements and any areas of concern. Examples/evidence must always be provided.

4.3.2 If at this meeting it is evident that the employees performance, conduct or attendance is still causing concern, the manager must advise the employee that they will be invited to attend a meeting to consider a recommendation of dismissal or an extension to the probation period.

4.3.3 Any support or assistance identified will continue to be offered during the whole of the probation period up to the date of confirmation in post or decision to dismiss.

### **4.4 Early Dismissal During the Probation Period**

4.4.1 An employee should be invited to a meeting where a recommendation of dismissal is to be considered early in the following cases:

- It can be demonstrated that, in submitting their application, the employee purposely misled or provided false information to the School for example concerning their qualifications, skills, level of experience, declaration of health or criminal background.
- If during the probation period their performance, conduct or attendance is likely to cause a safeguarding concern.
- If, during the probation period, it is considered that an employee's performance, conduct or attendance is unsatisfactory despite being given appropriate support.

4.4.2 Where early recommendation of dismissal is being considered the manager should contact their HR Advisor.

## **4.5 Possible Outcomes at End of Probation Period**

4.5.1 At the end of the 6 month probation period there are three options:

- Confirm the appointment.
- Extend the probation period.
- Recommend Dismissal to someone with the authority to dismiss (usually the Head Teacher or Governing Body Staffing Committee).

## **4.6 Confirmation of the Appointment**

4.6.1 If the employee demonstrates that all aspects of their performance are satisfactory the line manager should write and confirm their appointment at or about the 6 month date following their appointment.

## **4.7 Extending the Probation Period**

4.7.1 In some circumstances it may be necessary to extend the probation period beyond the 6 months. These circumstances may include:

- Where it has not been possible to fully assess performance due to the employee's sickness or other authorised absence.
- There have been concerns regarding performance but the manager has evidence to suggest that this is likely to improve and be sustained with an extension to the probation period.

4.7.2 Probation periods may be extended for 1 to 3 months beyond the 6 month probation period, but must not be extended by more than 3 months. Any decision to extend the probation period should be made by the manager in a meeting with the employee. The manager should seek advice from a HR Advisor before extending a probation period and will need to inform their Head Teacher.

4.7.3 Where an employee is absent for a substantial part of their probation period, for example due to sickness, the manager may consider recommending an extension to the probation period for up to 3 months. This will enable the employee's actual work performance in the role to be assessed over a reasonable length of time.

4.7.4 In circumstances where the probation period is extended the employee must be advised in writing of the extension and that if performance fails to meet the required standard at the end of this period, dismissal will be recommended. The outcome must be confirmed in writing.

## **4.8 Dismissing an Employee**

4.8.1 Where the employee's performance, conduct or attendance is unsatisfactory and the manager does not consider that an extension to the probation period would be beneficial, the employee should be invited to attend a meeting with a

manager with delegated authority to dismiss (usually the Head Teacher or the Staffing Committee of the Governing Body) to consider dismissal from their employment. The purpose of the meeting will be to explain the reasons for the proposed dismissal and the employee will have the opportunity to respond if they wish.

4.8.2 The employee has the right to be represented at this meeting by a Trade Union Representative or appropriate workplace colleague.

4.8.3 It is recommended to contact your HR Advisor who could make arrangements to be present at this meeting to advise the decision maker.

4.8.4 The decision to dismiss must be confirmed in writing and the employee should be given one week's notice.

#### **4.9 Appeals Against Dismissal**

4.9.1 Employees who are given notice of dismissal can appeal the decision by writing to the Chair of Governors outlining the reasons for their appeal within 5 working days of receipt of the letter confirming the decision to dismiss.

4.9.2 An appeal hearing will be heard by the Governing Body Appeals Committee whose decision is final.

4.9.3 The decision maker at the Dismissal Hearing will attend the appeal to present the reasons why they came to the decision to dismiss and the employee will get an opportunity to respond.

4.9.4 The employee has the right to be represented at this meeting by a Trade Union Representative or appropriate workplace colleague.