



West Norfolk
Academies Trust

Probation Policy

Formally adopted by the Trustees of: -	West Norfolk Academies Trust
On: -	November 2024
Chair of Governors/Trustees: -	Roger Livesey
Last updated: -	November 2024
Date of next review: -	November 2027
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Contents

1. Introduction and Scope	3
2. Equalities and Support	3
3. Employees Covered by the Policy	3-4
4. Performance During the Probationary Period	4
5. Disciplinary Issues Arising Within the Probationary Period	4
6. Extension of Probationary Period	4
7. Appeal	5
8. Data Protection	5
Appendix A – Probation Evaluation Form	6-8

We, the Trustees of West Norfolk Academies trust, have adopted this policy and procedure.

1. Introduction and Scope

- 1.1 This policy forms part of our overall commitment to providing a structured and supportive environment for the professional development and integration of new employees. By establishing clear expectations, objectives, and support mechanisms during the probationary period, we aim to facilitate a smooth transition into the role and ensure that new employees have the necessary resources and guidance to succeed.

All new non-teaching employees to the school are subject to a six-month probationary period.

- 1.2 The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that all new employees undergo a fair and structured probationary period upon commencement of their employment. This period serves to assess their suitability for the role, provide feedback on performance, and facilitate their integration into the place of work. This will enable all employees to perform to their full potential in the workplace.
- 1.3 This policy and procedure supports our obligation to work in line with current legislation, ACAS best practice, contractual requirements and national/local terms and conditions relevant to this area of employment practice.

2. Equalities and Support

- 2.1 The Headteacher will ensure that all reasonable adjustments or supportive measures are considered to allow equality of access and opportunity regardless of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation.
- 2.2 Through the implementation of this policy, the Trust will be mindful of their obligation to seek to maintain and protect the mental health and wellbeing of all employees as far as is reasonably practicable.
- 2.3 According to ACAS it is estimated one in seven people are neurodivergent, meaning that the brain functions, learns and processes information uniquely. Where an employee discloses neurodiversity, the Governing Board/Trust understands the employee may require extra support in relation to the application of this policy. Where reasonable adjustments are necessary and can be accommodated, the Headteacher will support these.

3. Employees Covered by The Policy

- 3.1 All new non-teaching employees are covered by this agreement, regardless of previous continuous service with other organisations and irrespective of contracted hours, unless they move directly from a similar role within the Trust.
- 3.2 Employees appointed to short-term temporary posts are not normally required to undergo a formal probationary period. If a longer-term post (including permanent) is offered, they must undergo a probationary period, unless exceptionally they have already done so under their short-term employment. In general, therefore, existing temporary staff appointed to permanent or long-term temporary posts will be subject to a probationary period unless: -
- they have already been subject to a formal probationary period,

- they have already satisfactorily completed a period of regular performance monitoring and review,
- the role is the same or similar to that which the post holder has already undertaken for a reasonable period and their performance is deemed satisfactory by the Headteacher.

3.3 This policy is not to be applied to teaching staff.

4. Performance During the Probationary Period

4.1 The performance of the employee must be monitored throughout the probationary period. Where concerns arise, these must be raised with the employee without delay with support and guidance being put in place. Any concerns identified and discussed with the employee should be recorded. Concerns must be shared at the time they arise so that the maximum time for improvement is allowed. Concerns should not be saved for discussion at the end of the probationary period.

5. Disciplinary Issues Arising Within the Probationary Period

5.1 It is anticipated that any disciplinary issues which might arise during the period will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. If disciplinary action is taken, this will be taken into account at the final assessment.

5.2 If a serious disciplinary issue arises which requires suspension and is not likely to be resolved during the period, then an extension of up to a maximum of three months may be made to assist with the completion of investigation and resolution of the matter. If the issue remains unresolved at this stage, then no further extension will be made and the employment will be terminated in accordance with normal procedures.

5.3 Every effort must be made to resolve disciplinary matters within the probationary period.

6. Extension of Probationary Period

6.1 A six-month period should normally give ample opportunity for the Line Manager/Headteacher to assess whether an employee has reached an acceptable standard of performance and a management decision should be taken during this period. The formal review process and completion of Probation evaluation form F113 assists this process (available at the end of this policy).

6.2 However, in exceptional circumstances, for example sickness absence of the employee or in some disciplinary situations (see paragraph 4), a probationary period may be extended by a period of up to three months, but this is the maximum extension.

6.3 During the extension the general principles of the probationary period still apply.

6.4 Any extension must be authorised by the Headteacher.

7. Appeal

- 7.1 If the final probationary performance review is likely to lead to termination*, the case should be reviewed by the Executive Headteacher and advice sought from our HR provider.
- 7.2 Following this, the employee will have the right to appeal against the decision to terminate their employment to the Trustees. The appeal should be submitted in writing within five working days of receipt of the decision to terminate employment, to the Clerk to the Trustees. An Appeal Committee of three Trustees should meet with the employee, and their Trade Union representative, where appropriate within ten working days to hear the appeal. This decision will be final.
- 7.3 The employee does not have a right of formal appeal beyond the provisions in paragraph 7.2 above if their employment is not confirmed at the end of the probationary period.

(*NB. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or colleague, to any formal meeting which might lead to their termination.)

8. Data Protection

- 8.1 Personal data collected and processed for the purpose of this policy will be handled in accordance with the data protection policy and applicable statutory obligations. Any personal data collected is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of employee management or to comply with statutory reporting obligations. Inappropriate access to, or disclosure of, employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported without delay, in accordance with the data protection policy. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence in which case it would be dealt with under the disciplinary policy and procedure.

Appendix A - Probation Evaluation Form

Headteacher action: Please refer to the *Probation model procedure P113a* or *Performance management policy and procedure* before completing this form.

If the appointment is not confirmed, then the form is to be returned to Payroll & HR by emailing a copy to both payroll@westnorfolkacademiustrust.co.uk & HR@westnorfolkacademiustrust.co.uk with a copy to be retained by the line manager/Headteacher on the employees staff personnel file.

If the appointment is confirmed, it needs to be authorised by the Headteacher.

Employee personal details	
Mr <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Ms <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/>	Full Name:
Post title:	Payroll number:
Department:	Date appointed: / /

Assessment – Parts A & B		
Details of work areas:	Part A: Mid-term review comments	Part B: Final review comments
1. Knowledge of work/routine		
2. Ability to organise work and time		
3. Ability to set priorities		
4. Ability to liaise and co-operate with colleagues		
5. Rapport and empathy with clients/customers		

Assessment – Parts A & B		
Details of work areas:	Part A: Mid-term review comments	Part B: Final review comments
6. Ability to use appropriate resources		
7. Understanding of the role of the department/school		
8. Details of sick leave since appointment (include reasons for absence)		
9. Punctuality		
10. Other(s) as applicable (please state)		

Part A (Three months) Summary of assessment (to be completed by Line manager/Headteacher)	
Action points (as applicable):	Timescales for improvement:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • 	
Line manager/Headteacher name:	Date: / /
Signature:	

Part A (Three months) Employee's comments	
Employee signature:	Date: / /

Part B (Final review within 6 months) Summary of assessment (to be completed by Line manager/Headteacher)	
Action points (as applicable):	Timescales for improvement:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • 	
Line manager/Headteacher/Principal name:	Date: / /
Signature:	

Part B (Final review) Employee's comments	
Employee signature:	Date: / /

Part C Decision	
I confirm that (name) has reached an acceptable standard during their probationary period and their employment can be confirmed.	
Line manager/Headteacher name:	Date: / /
Signature:	
OR	
I confirm that (name) has not reached an acceptable standard during their probationary period and that their employment cannot be confirmed for the following reasons:	
Line manager/Headteacher name:	Date: / /
Signature:	