



Performance Development Policy

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Together, pursuing life in all its fullness

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The electronic version is the definitive version of this document.

Associated Documentation

- Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct)
- Capability Policy and Procedure
- Grievance Procedure

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1.0 Introduction

Our vision, based on John 10:10, is for every adult, every child and every academy in the Trust to come together in order to pursue life in all its fullness. The Trust has a vision of building a better future for all within its academies, who in turn will positively impact their communities. In line with the DBE's vision, the Trust continuously strives to use a discipleship model to form a collaborative community of continuous improvement.

The Trusts' approach to continuous improvement is collaborative, concentrated and adaptive, and has the following golden threads:

Equity

Every child, colleague and community in the Trust is entitled to the best possible support and challenge in response to their needs. This does not mean all receiving 'the same,' but rather what each need in order to flourish.

Contextual wisdom

The Trust's work must be rooted in contextual wisdom and therefore responsive to the nuanced and ever-changing demographic, social and economic factors within each of the communities served and the developmental needs and aspirations of each colleague.

Mutual support and challenge

Every colleague in every role is a guardian of the culture of continuous improvement and educating for life in all its fullness. All colleagues must therefore model this commitment to learning; holding themselves and others to account in a climate of mutual support and challenge that is developmental, not judgemental.

Empowering others

High-quality support, knowledge building and professional development opportunities for each and every colleague is fundamental to enabling high-performance, continuous improvement and sustainable growth for individuals, teams, academies and the Trust.

All colleagues have a professional and moral duty to continuously improve, and access to high-quality support and development is an entitlement for each and every colleague.

The Trust is committed to becoming an employer of choice. This includes a commitment to supporting staff workload and well-being, alongside an unwavering commitment to enriching employee capability, supporting professional development and maximising the strengths and performance of each and every colleague in every role. The Trust invests in and prioritises learning and development, providing employees with a range of opportunities aligned to the needs of the organisation and the needs of teams and individuals in a fair, transparent, sustainable way. Jen Barker and Katy Patten (2022) assert that 'professional development is most effective in a culture where the participating individual feels supported, valued and trusted, where the purpose of the professional development is clear and aligns with the individual's goals' and where the academy, trust and leaders have 'thought carefully about how to protect the time needed to engage in professional development'. This CST White Paper, 'Professional Development in School Trusts – capacity, conditions and culture,' is one of several in the Confederation of School Trusts (CST) Bridge to the Future series influencing our approach.

All colleagues must be provided with regular opportunities to review their progress against their goals, celebrating success, recalibrating goals in response to change, and ensuring goals are achieved. Managers and colleagues work together to ensure they have access to learning and development opportunities that align with current and future needs, utilising strengths and building a successful, sustainable organisation.

2.0 Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust Board and the CEO are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy, ensuring that a consistent approach to performance development is applied across the Trust.

Executive Headteachers, Headteachers and Heads of School are responsible for ensuring that staff and managers adhere to this policy and procedure, with each member of staff establishing goals with their line manager which enable them to continue to learn and develop, enriching their working lives and the success and sustainability of the organisation.

The Human Resources (HR) Team is responsible for ensuring that all employees are aware of this policy and procedure and that managers and employees 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. It should be viewed as an opportunity to engage and motivate employees, recognise their strengths and consider with them how we can help them perform at their best.

Employees are encouraged to drive their performance at work, seeking opportunities to continually develop, building on strengths and striving to be the very best they can be, whilst also sharing good practice, ideas and supporting colleagues to help them perform at their best.

3.0 Equality and Diversity

In line with the Church of England Education Office's guidance, the Trust believes that life in all its fullness - full flourishing - is only possible when each and every member of its school communities:

- Experiences true belonging – knowing they are welcome, completely included, valued and celebrated (Genesis 1:26-28)
- Finds every possible avenue of academic and vocational progress and success open to them, without needing to overcome institutional barriers (Revelation 7:9, 16-18)
- Feels totally safe and secure wherever they are, and fully connected with others (Ezeikel 34:28)
- Is able to meaningfully participate in the life of their school and/or team – with their voice heard and their ideas acted upon (1 Corinthians 12:21-26)
- Believes that a hope-filled future can and will be theirs, because they see themselves represented in all aspects of school life, particularly in leadership (Galatians 3:28)

The Trust will not discriminate because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and

ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. It will not discriminate because of any other irrelevant factor and will build a culture that values meritocracy, openness, fairness and transparency. We ensure that these commitments apply to all policies and practices.

4.0 Principles of Performance Development

Performance is not linked to pay.

Colleagues are involved in setting their own performance goals and the process is focussed on continuous improvement and development more than judgement and monitoring.

Line managers will normally undertake performance development reviews with the colleagues they directly manage. Managers must ensure they have read and understand this policy and procedure and that they are confident, skilled and able to undertake effective performance development reviews with their staff. They should seek advice, clarification and appropriate training in line with their own levels of knowledge, skill and expertise in relation to the application of this policy and procedure.

At the start of each academic year, employees are encouraged to consider, with their line managers, the contribution they will make to support the team and the organisation in achieving its goals.

As performance is reviewed throughout the year, with employees and their managers triangulating information from a range of sources (e.g. feedback, progress and outcomes, observed behaviours and actions), there should be no surprises when employees meet with their managers at the end of the performance development cycle, to review the previous year's performance and to establish goals for the year ahead. The majority of staff either meet or exceed expectations at work, achieving their goals, supporting each other, acting with integrity and professionalism with the core purpose of the Trust, its vision and values sitting at the heart of everything they do. The majority of performance discussions are positive, celebratory and focused on how we continue to develop and move forward. Regular, honest and transparent performance discussions enable effective support and intervention, with the aim of helping staff achieve their goals.

Working in a dynamic and evolving educational landscape, it is crucial that each and every colleague establishes a goal or goals they intend to deliver to contribute to the sustainable success of the organisation and they must regularly review their progress against their goals. There may be times where goals need to change or be refined (e.g. due to external changes) or where additional learning and development is necessary to enable employees to perform at their best.

Most employees are likely to establish one goal, and those with leadership responsibilities are likely to establish two. Colleagues can establish more than one or two goals, but it is not a requirement of the performance development process. Employees are encouraged to review their progress, their strengths and how best to maximise them, their learning and development needs and opportunities for further growth, with their line managers. Managers may be able to offer advice, support employees in overcoming challenges and review goals where changes are required.

The Trust's performance development process provides a structure for honest, supportive performance discussions to take place, with employees having space to reflect on their performance, consider their goals, acknowledge the contributions they have made to the

success of the organisation and consider the next steps in their development journey. The performance development process encourages employees and managers to reflect, recognise times where employees have experienced peak performance, plan and seek clarity, advice and support. It provides managers with opportunities to celebrate employee success, acknowledge achievements and ensure goals and activities continue to align with organisational and departmental goals.

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

5.0 The Performance Development Cycle

The performance development cycle starts in the autumn term, with all teachers having met with their line manager to review the previous year and plan the year ahead by 31st October, and all colleagues in all roles having met with their line manager to review the previous year and plan the year ahead by 31st December.

Employees are encouraged to regularly review their progress against their goals to ensure they remain on track and flag any unforeseen challenges or changes throughout the year.

Managers must prepare prior to meeting with employees for a performance development review. (See further guidance in appendices.)

Before the end of the performance development cycle, the employee will meet with their line manager to complete a performance development review. The review summary will include:

- confirmation of the employee's goals for the completed performance development cycle
- a summary review of the employee's performance of their role and responsibilities and the learning they have gained since September the previous year
- the employee's learning and development goal or goals for the coming year

Staff employed on a fixed term basis of less than one year will have their performance managed in accordance with the principles underpinning this policy and the length of the cycle will be determined by the duration of their contract.

Where an employee commences mid-way through a performance cycle, where they have a probationary period in place, they must complete their probationary period prior to accessing this policy and procedure. Performance is not linked to pay and this process allows employees to settle into their role before establishing goals. Following successful completion of the probationary period, there will be a mini-performance development cycle, concluding at the end of the trust cycle (31st October for teachers; 31st December for all staff).

Where an employee moves into a new post within the Trust partway through a performance development cycle, the previous manager should conduct a mini-performance development review focusing on the employee's performance in their previous role, achievement of objectives and achievement against their development plan. The employee should share this documentation with their new manager and the new manager must conduct a mini-performance development review, ensuring the employee is clear about their new role, their duties and responsibilities, their strengths and how they can be utilised in their new role.

They must also discuss development and resource needs (some may have been raised within the recruitment and selection process).

Where an employee leaves part-way through a cycle, they are encouraged to meet with their line manager for a performance development review discussion, ensuring their exit is managed effectively and their performance is reviewed prior to leaving. This is in addition to any exit interviews. It is recommended that the key points of the discussion are recorded and retained by the employee and the Trust (records may help with future reference requests).

Where an employee has more than one line manager, it is crucial that only one person leads the performance development cycle, but that all those contributing to line management e.g. through matrix management, are consulted with and contribute to the process prior to all meetings.

6.0 Establishing Goals

Goals should be agreed in the first performance discussion of the academic year. Line managers are encouraged to share the vision and values of the organisation, considering the way in which their team can contribute to the achievement of the organisational vision and strategic plan.

Individual goals should detail the unique individual contribution to the academy and/or team's vision and improvement priorities, utilising and building on the strengths of that individual and goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, time-bound, fair and equitable in relation to the employee's responsibilities, strengths and expertise.

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

Managers and employees are encouraged to establish review points, enabling progress towards the goal or goals to be discussed, ensuring employees are able to seek advice, support and guidance when they need it.

The Trust does not specify a required amount of goals, and employees and line managers might establish only one (one for colleagues with no additional responsibilities and possibly two goals for those with leadership responsibilities). Goals should focus on enabling the employee to continually learn and develop, to enable them to improve year on year.

Managers and employees are encouraged to broadly assess the methodology and time required to achieve the goal, ensuring goals are achievable and that they don't over-stretch employees.

7.0 Reviewing Performance

The final performance discussion of the academic year should take place towards the end of the performance development cycle, completing the performance development cycle and establishing a plan for the following year. Employees should view themselves as drivers of their own performance and are therefore encouraged to consider how they can best contribute to the organisational and team goals, utilising their strengths, continuing to learn, develop and flourish. They should self-assess their performance and progress against their established goal or goals throughout the year and establish review points whereby they can assess their progress towards their goal(s). 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 (e.g. where they have exceeded expectations).

If a manager has concerns regarding any aspect of an employee's performance, they should address those concerns with the employee, sensitively and supportively, as they arise in order to:

- Develop a greater understanding of the employee's view of their performance and any challenges they face in achieving their goals
- Provide the employee with clear feedback about the nature of their concerns
- Provide the employee with the opportunity to respond and discuss the concerns and any mitigation
- Clarify expectations and determine when the manager will review progress against objectives, agreeing any specific support interventions the manager can provide or facilitate to assist the employee in achieving their goals/required standards
- Consider any learning and development opportunities which the employee may benefit from to help them perform at their best
- Consider any temporary adjustments depending on the circumstances, seeking advice from the HR Team before agreement is reached
- Explain the potential implications and process if satisfactory improvements are not achieved within the agreed timescale
- Employees are encouraged to contact their trade unions for advice and support if they feel their performance is below the required standard

Where satisfactory progress is achieved before the end of the performance cycle, the performance development process will continue in the usual way. However, if the employee does not progress satisfactorily, their line manager should seek further advice from the HR Team regarding the potential and appropriate use of the Capability Policy and Procedure. The employee must be notified verbally and in writing if they approach a pre-capability stage, and they will be provided with a copy of the Capability Policy and Procedure. Employees are encouraged to seek trade union support and advice should they have any concerns regarding their performance.

8.0 Appeals

If an employee feels aggrieved about the way in which their performance discussions have been undertaken and/or the content of their reviews, they may wish to access the Trust's Grievance Procedure.

9.0 Monitoring

Effectiveness and compliance of this Policy will be monitored on an annual basis by the HR Team and reported to the People and Pay Committee (PPC) of the Board.

10.0 Review

This Policy and Procedure will be initially reviewed within one year of the date of implementation with trade unions via the Trust's JCC, the policy working party and the People and Pay Committee (PPC) of the Board.

Appendix 1 - Guidance for Performance Development Reviews

Questions Line Managers May Find Useful in Performance Development Conversations

Understanding the expectations of the colleague's role

Tell me about the aspects of your job you most look forward to.

What inspires you to come to work each day?

What do you need to feel engaged and motivated?

What strategies have you used to manage your workload, and take care of your well-being?

Tools and resources to do the job

What tools and resources have been most helpful to you?

What additional tools or resources do you need to be successful?

Are there tools or resources you have that you no longer need?

Opportunities to flourish

What recent accomplishments are you most proud of?

What caused things to work out well?

What has allowed you to do your best work?

Recognition for good work

Tell me about the last time you were recognised or praised for doing a good job.

What form of recognition or praise do you most value?

Caring for colleagues as people

How do you maintain a healthy work-life balance? How can we support you?

Tell me something about yourself that we may not know.

Encouragement

As your manager, what would be the most important thing for me to do or say to support you in achieving your goals?

Feedback and decisions

If you had a magic wand and could have, any three wishes granted to heighten the health and vitality of our team what would they be?

Making a difference

Tell me about a time when you felt you did something that made a profound difference. How do your accomplishments benefit or enhance the lives of others?

Commitment

Tell me about a time when you were inspired or impressed by a co-worker.

Teamwork

Tell me about a time when you asked a co-worker for help, or a co-worker offered help to you. What happened?

How did that experience change your relationship?

Opportunities to learn and flourish.

To become even more successful in your work, what do you want to continue to do, do more of, do better or do differently?

Of all these possibilities, which are the ones you really want to focus on?

Appendix 2 - Preparing for Performance Development Reviews

Managers must prepare prior to meeting with employees for a performance development review. Ensure the performance development discussion allows you to help your employee reflect on their performance, impact and learning this year. Help them establish a goal or goals for the coming year, which meet the needs of their students/staff/role and help them continue to improve and develop.

Have a look at the previous performance review and consider the following prior to meeting with your employees:

- Does their job description accurately reflect their role? If it doesn't, have a chat with your HR Team prior to the meeting.
- When did the employee perform at their best this year? What were the circumstances around their peak performance?
- Are there any foreseeable changes expected that are likely to impact on the role/team/department?
- What goals were established at the previous performance review and have they been achieved?
- What impact has the employee had over the last 6-12 months? How do you know this?
- In terms of ethical leadership and competencies (the way they do things) how have they performed? Some job descriptions and person specifications provide additional clarity regarding expected/required competencies and the ethical leadership framework (e.g. leadership, decision making, persuasive and influencing skills).
- How have they performed on a day-to-day basis?
- Is there anything that may have affected their ability to achieve their objectives/role?
- Requirements (e.g. prolonged leave/sickness absence/changes in requirements partway through the year)?
- What do you really value in this employee?
- What have you experienced/observed as key strengths and areas for development?
- Has the employee met, exceeded or failed to meet expectations and why? Are they aware? Consider previous discussions you have had with the employee regarding their performance and development.
- What does the employee's students/staff/customers need next year and how can they best meet those needs? Help the employee establish a goal, which meets those needs and is measurable, aspirational, achievable and timely.
- Where does the employee wish to be in the future (e.g. career aspirations/work-life aspirations)?
- How might the employee further develop to ensure they continue to get better at their job and position themselves well for the future?
- Are there any gaps in knowledge, skill, expertise, competencies requiring further development and if so, how might they be addressed and by when? Who might be able to support them in their development?
- Have there been any blockers/barriers to achievement?
- Is their statutory/mandatory training up-to-date?
- If they have learning and development needs, what are the priorities and why?
- When will you review their performance again?
- Ensure you prepare well prior to the meeting and that you feel comfortable sharing feedback with the employee. You should include examples that illustrate the points you wish to make (e.g. times you have seen strength/development needs).

- There shouldn't be any surprises at the performance development review, as you should be discussing any issues with the employee regarding their performance as they arise.

Ensure the employee is given at least one week's notice prior to the meeting to enable them to fully prepare. If you don't have an office that is suitable, book a room that allows for a confidential, honest performance development discussion to take place without interruption, discreetly and professionally.

Feedback must be evidence-based so ensure you have examples to share with the employee that you have directly experienced/observed. Review the level of achievement against objectives and determine the reasons for any performance deviations.

If you have not managed the employee for the full review period, you may wish to seek input from their previous manager where appropriate and feasible.

If your employee is matrix managed (for example Academy/Cluster Business Partners) you should seek input from the relevant senior leader (in the case of Academy Business Partners this is the Head of HR, Head of Finance and Head of Operations and Compliance, in the case of Cluster Business Partners this is the Head of Operations and Compliance).

Remember to:

- Listen and encourage the employee to share their views, perceptions, evidence with you
- Celebrate success and consider with the employee how development needs might be addressed, when and what the expected outcome would be
- Use a coaching style and approach, with a belief in the employee and a high level of professional trust and respect, supporting their learning and development journey
- Encourage the employee to fully engage in the discussion, giving them time to think, reflect, respond and initiate
- Ensure the discussion remains supportive, inclusive, constructive, open and honest
- Review performance over the performance cycle. Has anything changed?
- Identify with the employee their learning and development needs and goals
- Agree and record a goal or goals via the performance development form – appendix 3
- Consider future aspirations, plans and any concerns the employee may have
- Discuss with the employee how strengths can be even further developed and utilised
- Make it a constructive discussion about the future, not a critical review of the past
- Adopt a joint problem solving and coaching attitude, using skilled questioning techniques to open up the employee and actively listen
- Be open, honest, respectful and sensitive
- Don't evade difficult issues – address them clearly and constructively
- Be clear about actions (e.g. who is doing what, why, when and how) and establish when and how progress against actions will be reviewed.

Following the meeting, colleagues must submit their performance development review via the performance development review form (appendix 3) and both the employee and their line manager should sign it as a true record of the meeting.

Review progress against the plan with the employee at least mid-year, but ideally more frequently, allowing for clarification and/or early intervention as appropriate.

Appendix 3 - Forms

Performance Development Review Form available from
Information Hub/Firms, Policies and Templates/Central Forms/HR