

# Probation Policy

Audience:	All REACH2 Employees Local Governing Bodies
Ratified:	Reach2 HR Committee Trustees 12 May 2020
Other related policies:	Code of Conduct
Policy owner:	Sue Northend, HR Director, Reach2 Academy Trust
Review frequency:	Every 2 years

Reviewed Summer 24 no changes. Review Summer 25

# Reach2 Probation Policy



At REAch2, our actions and our intentions as school leaders are guided by our Touchstones.

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Integrity</b>      | We recognise that we lead by example and if we want children to grow up to behave appropriately and with integrity then we must model this behaviour            |
| <b>Responsibility</b> | We act judiciously with sensitivity and care. We don't make excuses, but mindfully answer for actions and continually seek to make improvements                 |
| <b>Inclusion</b>      | We acknowledge and celebrate that all people are different and can play a role in the REAch2 family whatever their background or learning style                 |
| <b>Enjoyment</b>      | Providing learning that is relevant, motivating and engaging releases a child's curiosity and fun, so that a task can be tackled and their goals achieved       |
| <b>Inspiration</b>    | Inspiration breathes life into our schools. Introducing children to influential experiences of people and place, motivates them to live their lives to the full |
| <b>Learning</b>       | Children and adults will flourish in their learning and through learning discover a future that is worth pursuing   |
| <b>Leadership</b>     | REAch2 aspires for high quality leadership by seeking out talent, developing potential and spotting the possible in people as well as the actual                |

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## 1. Policy Overview

### 1.1 Overarching Principles

The purpose of the probationary period is to ensure that new staff receive support and induction in their new role and to provide a period post appointment to demonstrate that they fully meet the Academy's and the Trust's performance standards and the requirements of the job. This policy provides a formal mechanism for reviewing performance.

### 1.2 Intended Impact

This policy is intended to support staff and is an important opportunity for performance and conduct to be assessed to determine whether the employee can be confirmed in post.

### 1.3 Roles and Responsibilities

#### Employee's responsibilities

- Understanding the purpose of probation and the standards of performance expected of them
- Clarification from their line manager on all aspects of their role
- Meeting agreed objectives (as set at the induction) within set deadlines
- Ensuring they are fully aware of, and understand, the rules of conduct as set out in the Academy's Code of Conduct
- Raising with their line manager any issues or concerns they may be experiencing
- Raising with their line manager the training, guidance and support they consider is necessary to help them achieve the expected standard of performance
- Ensuring that any input in, or dispute about, the probation assessment report is raised with the line manager and included in the probation assessment report.
- Completing the probation period successfully and demonstrating that they have reached and maintained the expected standard of performance.

#### Line manager's responsibilities

- During the employee's induction the line manager is responsible for clarifying the duties and responsibilities of the employee in line with their job description, including:
  - key aspects of the role, structure of the unit/academy and how it fits within the academy
  - required skills and competencies
  - expected standard of performance (including conduct, timekeeping and attendance)
  - deadlines to be met
  - effective communication and team working with other colleagues
  - working environment
  - responding effectively to supervision and instruction
  - policies and procedures e.g. sickness absence reporting, safeguarding
  - discuss/agree any training and development needs
- Explaining how objectives will be monitored and measured and how frequently this will be done

- Ensuring the employee understands what is meant by probation service, including:
  - How performance is to be assessed
  - The expected standard of performance
  
- Identifying relevant training and development needs.
- Providing relevant training and encouraging and supporting development.
- Agreeing and setting dates for formal and informal review meetings.
- Providing adequate support, instruction and guidance to ensure that they understand their role and the expected standard of performance.
- Setting and monitoring expected standards of performance, including the setting of SMART objectives at the induction stage for the probation period and providing constructive feedback on a regular basis in one-to-one meetings to assist the employee to achieve and maintain expected standards of performance.
- Providing feedback throughout the probation period and formally reviewing progress with the employee promptly at the monthly review points.
- Ensuring, if necessary, that any issues, concerns, or areas for improvement relating to the probationer are communicated to them and that advice is sought from the HR Business Partner.
- If performance is not to the expected standard, that their appointment will not be confirmed and will lead to the termination of their employment.
- Ensuring the probation assessment report has been signed by both the line manager and employee.
- Informing the employee whether or not their probation has been successfully completed.

## Policy in Detail

Probation is a two-way process of positive benefit to both the Academy and employee. It provides an opportunity:

- for the employee to settle effectively into their new post
- to clarify the duties and responsibilities of the employee
- to set standards
- to explain how objectives will be monitored and measured and how frequently this will be done
- to identify and provide relevant training and development needs
- to encourage and support development
- to make an assessment of performance, conduct, attendance and timekeeping (“performance”) using agreed SMART objectives i.e. objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound (probation target setting form [appendix 1](#))
- to conduct the probation process in accordance with the Trust’s and academy’s policies on equality and diversity
- to ensure that the performance of all new employees is assessed fairly and consistently across the Trust and academies

It is important to support the probationary assessment with a clear induction process as this helps the employee to understand their role in the academy and the standards expected

## 2. Implementation

- 2.1. All new employees appointed to the Academy on a permanent, temporary or fixed term contract are required to serve a satisfactory probationary period of six calendar months before their employment is confirmed / continued.
- 2.2. A probationer who starts maternity leave during their probationary period will have to serve the balance of the six months’ probationary period on their return to work after maternity leave.
- 2.3. The following do not count towards the six months of the probationary period:
  - a) engagement as a consultant
  - b) unpaid special leave
  - c) sick leave or special leave where it exceeds one month
  - d) unauthorised absence.
- 2.4. Formal reviews will take place during probation. These reviews will be used to assess performance and identify any problems, training or development needs as they become apparent.
- 2.5. The employee's performance can be assessed and monitored throughout the probationary period in a variety of ways, for example through one to one supervision sessions, observation,

at team meetings or by shadowing other work colleagues. The job description and person specification are key documents when assessing work performance.

- 2.6. The criteria used to assess an employee's work performance will vary depending on the duties of the post and work environment etc. These may include: quality of performance, quantity of work, time keeping and sickness absence, reliability, responding effectively to supervision and instructions, initiative.
- 2.7. The employee's line manager should complete the probation assessment form ([appendix 2](#)) when conducting probation review meetings with the employee. A signed copy of the form should be sent to the employee and held on their personal file. All forms are available to the manager when the new employee commences employment. It is the manager's responsibility to ensure that the probation assessment meetings take place.
- 2.8. The disciplinary procedure does not normally apply to dismissal during the probationary period.

### **3. Outcome of review**

#### **3.1. Failure to meet required standard**

- a) If the employee's performance (including work performance, conduct and attendance) does not meet the required standards, and the line manager has already informed the employee that performance is not as expected and support provided for improvement, the line manager will meet with the employee and warn them that failure to make a sustained and acceptable improvement may lead to dismissal.
- b) The line manager will agree appropriate steps with the employee to improve their performance i.e. standard setting, close supervision by an experienced supervisor, monitoring, temporary alteration of duties/objectives, additional training and development. A reasonable review period should be set depending on the nature of the standards required.
- c) The meeting must be recorded and confirmed in writing to the employee outlining any warnings given about the consequences of failing to meet the required standards.

#### **3.2. Confirmation in post**

- a) At the end of the 5th month, the manager will consider whether or not the employee's performance (including conduct, performance and attendance) over the whole of the probationary period demonstrates that the employee fully meets the requirements of the job to which they were appointed and whether or not the employee's employment should be confirmed.
- b) If, at the end of the six months, the employee's conduct and performance has been satisfactory, the appointment will be confirmed and the employee notified in writing by the line manager (appointment confirmation letter appendix 3).
- c) Notification of confirmation in post will be sent by the line manager and a copy placed in the employee's file.

### 3.3. Extension to probation and unsatisfactory performance

- a) If the line manager is unable to make a decision about an employee's probation after five months', it may be appropriate, after seeking advice from HR, to extend the probation period.
- b) Extensions should only be considered in two situations:-
  - i. where the employee has not demonstrated the expected standard of performance, but where there is evidence that with further reasonable training and/or supervision, performance can be improved to the expected standard; or
  - ii. where through the absence of either the employee or the manager there has not been sufficient time to assess performance.
- c) In both cases, in consultation with the employee, the probation period should not be extended for a period longer than three months beyond the initial six-month period and the employee should be advised of any areas for improvement in writing (probation extension letter [appendix 4](#)). A copy of the letter needs to be placed on the employee's file.
- d) At the end of the extended probation period, if performance is to the expected standard, the employee should be informed verbally and receive written confirmation. A copy of the letter will also need to be placed on the employee's file.
- e) If performance remains unsatisfactory then a recommendation to terminate employment should be made following the process below.

### 3.4. Non-confirmation in post

- a) Where performance and/or conduct are unsatisfactory and non-confirmation in post is considered, the matter will be referred to the line manager who has the authority to dismiss under the Trust's / Academy's scheme of delegation. The employee will be invited to a formal probation meeting with their line manager within 10 working days of the review to discuss their performance and/or conduct. The employee should be advised of the reason for the meeting and the right to be represented by a trade union or colleague (intention to dismiss letter [appendix 5](#)).
- b) A meeting to discuss non confirmation would normally take place in the sixth month of the probationary period or at the end of the extension period. However, it may take place at an earlier stage if the employee's performance and/or conduct is so unsatisfactory and warrants termination of the contract of employment. Advice should be sought from the appropriate HR Business Partner in these circumstances.
- c) The line manager will outline the reason(s) why it is not proposed to confirm the employee in post and allow them an opportunity to provide relevant information or evidence before a decision is taken.
- d) Following the formal probation meeting, the line manager will send their recommendations along with all relevant supporting evidence to the senior manager or Headteacher to make the final decision within 5 working days of the formal probation meeting.
- e) The line manager within a school (if not the Headteacher) can only make a recommendation to terminate an employee's contract. Under the Academy's scheme of delegation only a Headteacher can dismiss.



f) A copy of any recommendations from the formal probation meeting is to be sent to the employee by the line manager within 2 days of the meeting and a copy placed on the employee's file.

### 3.5. Dismissal

- a) In the event of gross misconduct, employment may be terminated with immediate effect.
- b) In the event that the decision is made to dismiss, the line manager will advise the employee that their employment is being terminated with the decision to be confirmed in writing. This is usually within the 6-month probation period (confirmation of dismissal letter [appendix 6](#)).
- c) A notice period in line with their contract will apply in the event that a decision to dismiss the employee is made. The notice does not have to be worked and a payment made in lieu.
- d) Once a decision has been made and the employee has been notified in writing, the employee has no right of appeal.

## Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by the REAch2 Academy Trust HR Committee every 2 years as per the REAch2 policy cycle or sooner if required.

## Appendix 1 - Probationary Target Setting Form

<b>Employee Name:</b>	<b>Reviewer:</b>
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Objective	Measure of Achievement	Timescale	Support Required	Outcome
E.g. To ensure that all Safeguarding procedures are followed	E.g. Reports have been completed and the Safeguarding Officer has processed the reports	E.g. Immediately following a safeguarding incident	E.g. Safeguarding training	Describe whether the objective has been met, to what degree and whether the outcome is satisfactory and meets required standards

All objectives should be SMART objectives:

1. Specific – Objectives should specify what they want to achieve.
2. Measurable – You should be able to measure whether they are meeting the objectives or not.
3. Achievable - Are the objectives you set, achievable and attainable?
4. Realistic – Can you realistically achieve the objectives with the resources you have?
5. Time – When do you want to achieve the set objectives?

<b>Proposed Dates of Interim Review Meetings:</b>	1.	2.	3.	4.
<b>Signed Employee:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Signed Reviewer:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	

## Appendix 2 - Probationary Assessment Form

Name of Employee:

Name of Line Manager:

Job Title:

Academy name:

Date of Commencement of employment:

1<sup>st</sup> month

3<sup>rd</sup> month

5<sup>th</sup> month

Please complete the questionnaire below giving a full report on this probationer's progress after 1, 3, and 5 months' service, adding any comments you consider appropriate to assist the assessment. This report should be discussed with the probationer before they sign the report.

Where performance is unsatisfactory, please indicate areas for improvement and/or training needs. The probationer must sign the report to confirm that they have been made aware of any shortcomings. The report should be placed on the individual's personal file.

Timekeeping/ Absence record:

Absence: (no of absences taken within this review period)

Relationship with manager(s):

Relationship with colleagues:

General ability – consideration in line with the competencies of the post as outlined in the person specification:

*(Please provide demonstrable examples)*

Attitude to work (e.g., initiative, interest, output, flexibility, customer care etc.)

Development needs/support required during this review period:

General comments:

**Decision**

	Proceed to next stage of probation (1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> month review)
	Satisfactory performance – Confirmation letter to be sent (5 <sup>th</sup> month review only)
	Decision to extend probation period (5 <sup>th</sup> month review only)
	Recommendation to dismiss (Usually at 5 <sup>th</sup> month review can be earlier in exceptional cases)

Please provide reasons to support decision to extend probation or recommend dismissal:

Headteachers/Manager’s Signature: Date:

Employee’s Signature: Date:  
Employee’s comments:

**Please return completed form to HR or SBM for filing**

## Appendix 3 - Appointment Confirmation Letter

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### Address

NAME

ADDRESS 1

ADDRESS 2

ADDRESS 3

POSTCODE

Dear

#### **RE: CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENT/ TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT**

As stated in your Terms and Conditions that as a new employee of (Academy name) your appointment is subject to a satisfactory probation assessment report within your first six months of service.

Further to your recent probation assessment meeting, I have received your satisfactory probation assessment report and I am pleased to confirm your appointment to **XXX, XXX Services. *(for the remainder of your contract term) – for temporary appointments only delete if necessary.***

All your terms and conditions of employment are as per your contract of employment.

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

Yours sincerely

**NAME**

**Headteacher/Line Manager**

## Appendix 4 – Probation Extension Letter

Academy Trust/Academy letterhead

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### RE: PROBATION EXTENSION LETTER

I am writing in relation to your recent probation assessment, which was held on XXXXX.

It has been decided that your probation period is to be extended for a period of (XXXX *weeks/ months*). This decision has been made on the basis of your performance so far.

As discussed, there are a number of areas that have been identified and need to be improved upon if you are to successfully complete your probation period with the Trust/Academy. The areas that have been highlighted for concern are:

- I. Provide details of area to improve upon***
- II. Provide details of area to improve upon***
- III. Provide details of area to improve upon***

In addition to your regular meetings with me, it has been agreed that we will have extra meetings on a (weekly) basis to ensure that you receive the necessary support, guidance and coaching to help you in your role and with the anticipated outcome of successful completion of your probation period.

***I can also confirm that it has been agreed that you will attend the following training course(s) in order to assist you in your daily work and to achieve the required standard of performance.***

***Course name – date – time – location***

If you feel that you need any further help in order to assist with your performance, which, has not been discussed or mentioned in this letter please ensure you contact me immediately.

I must also remind you that as set out in the Probation Policy and Procedure and your Terms and Conditions of service, should your performance/conduct remain unsatisfactory during your extension period, you will not be confirmed in post and will therefore be dismissed.

If you have any further queries, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

**NAME**  
**Headteacher/Line Manager**

## Appendix 5 – Intention To Dismiss Letter

### Academy Trust/Academy letterhead

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#### Address

NAME

ADDRESS 1

ADDRESS 2

ADDRESS 3

POSTCODE

Dear

**RE: INTENTION TO DISMISS**

Further to your probationary period, I am writing to advise that I am making a recommendation to terminate your employment due to your unsatisfactory performance during your probation period. In line with the Academy's Probation Policy and Procedure, I would like to invite you to a formal probation meeting on **XXXX**.

Prior to the meeting you will be given the opportunity to view all of your probation assessment reports along with any notes from your supervision meetings. The meeting will be attended by me and **XXXX** from **XXXX**. As this is a formal probation meeting you may be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or a colleague and will be able to present any relevant information or evidence before a decision is made.

I would be grateful if you would confirm your attendance and that of your Trade Union representative or colleague.

Should you have any queries please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

**NAME**

**JOB TITLE**

## Appendix 6 – Notice of Dismissal Letter

### Academy Trust/Academy letterhead

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#### Address

NAME

ADDRESS 1

ADDRESS 2

ADDRESS 3

POSTCODE

Dear

#### **RE: NOTICE OF DISMISSAL**

Further to the meeting which took place on XXXXX, I am writing to confirm that you have not passed your probationary period and you will not be confirmed into the post of (JOB TITLE).

The reason why I have come to the decision is (STATE REASON).

The terms and conditions of your Contract of Employment state that during your probation period your employment can be terminated at any stage on giving or being given 1 month's notice.

Therefore, I am writing to confirm that your last day of service will be XXXXX.

I have attached a copy of the Probation Policy and Procedure for your reference.

I would like to wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

**NAME**

**Headteacher/Line Manager**