

Swift Academies

Probationary Policy for Support Staff

Accepted by: Board of Trustees October 2018

Approving Body: Board of Directors

Committee: Standards

Review Cycle: 1 year

Last reviewed: July 2023

Date for next review: July 2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Employees have a contractual responsibility to achieve a satisfactory level of performance and should be given help and encouragement to reach it.
- 1.2 The Trust is responsible for setting realistic and achievable standards and making sure employees understand what is required. Standards should be measured in terms of quality, quantity, time and cost.
- 1.3 Any shortfall in performance during the probationary period should be pointed out to the employee concerned immediately, and consideration given as to whether this is due to inadequate instruction, training, supervision, lack of capability or some other issue (e.g. health/personal problems). Careful recruitment, selection and training will minimise the risk of unsatisfactory performance.

2. Scope of Policy

- 2.1 This policy is intended for use for support staff only.

3. Probationary Period

- 3.1 Newly appointed support staff employed are required to serve a probationary period of six months.
- 3.2 The following principles should be observed when the employee commences their employment:
 - The standard of work required and the conditions of the probationary period should be explained by the line manager/Head Teacher/Head of School/CEO. Employees should be clear as to what is expected of them.
 - Job descriptions should accurately convey the main purpose and scope of each job and the tasks involved.
 - The consequences of any failure to meet the required standards should be explained clearly.

4. Training and Supervision

- 4.1. Proper training and supervision are essential to the achievement of satisfactory performance during the probationary period. Regular discussion with employees about

their performance, either formally or informally, will help to identify any problem areas, and allow remedial action to be taken promptly.

5. The Procedure

- 5.1 The line manager/Head of School/Head Teacher/CEO is responsible for ensuring that the Probationer is properly monitored during the probation period and meetings and paperwork are completed in a timely manner. The Probationer will be provided with a copy of the procedure and indicative dates for the probation meetings. In the event that the Probationer's standards fall below expectations, the line manager/Head of School/Head Teacher/CEO is responsible for initiating and taking action in accordance with this procedure.
- 5.2 The line manager/Head of School/Head Teacher/CEO should, in normal circumstances, conduct three reviews with the Probationer. Reviews should take the form of a confidential meeting between the line manager/Head of School/Head Teacher/CEO and the Probationer, in which there is an opportunity for two-way discussion.
- 5.3 In exceptional circumstances, where there are serious concerns over the suitability of a Probationer, the line manager/Head of School/Head Teacher/CEO may decide to progress straight to the Final Review and omit the Second Review, or to reduce the time between the review meetings. Such concerns may include substantiated safeguarding or health and safety concerns or substantiated allegations that may constitute gross misconduct or during an extended probation period.
- 5.4 The **First Review**: To be completed within weeks four to six of the Probationer's start date.
 - The purpose of this meeting is for the line manager/Head of School/Head Teacher/CEO to evaluate the Probationer's performance and discuss any key issues. If improvements in performance are required, full details should be given, including appropriate management support/training.
 - Upon completion of this review meeting, the line manager/Head of School/Head Teacher/CEO should complete the Probation Period Review Form (Appendix 1). This should be signed by the line manager/Head of School/Head Teacher/CEO and the Probationer. A copy should be given to the Probationer and a copy saved on the personnel file.
- 5.5 The **Second Review**: On completion of three months service.
 - The purpose of this meeting is to review the Probationer's performance over the first three months. Where the First Review indicated that improvements in performance were required, the Second Review meeting should be used to consider the extent of any improvement that may or may not have taken place.
 - Where the Probationer has not met the required standards, they will be informed that continued failure to meet those standards could result in dismissal.

- Upon completion of this meeting, line manager/Head of School/Head Teacher/CEO should complete the Probation Period Review Form (Appendix 1). This should be signed by the line manager/Head of School/Head Teacher/CEO and the Probationer, and a copy should be given to the Probationer and a copy saved on the personnel file.

5.6 The **Final Review**: On completion of five months service.

Prior to the Final Review meeting, which normally takes place after the Probationer has completed five months service, the line manager/Head of School/Head Teacher/CEO should decide whether:

5.6.1 The Probationer has passed probation or;

5.6.2 The probation period is extended due to exceptional circumstances. Consideration to extend may include the following, but this is not an exhaustive list:

- Performance concerns have not been fully addressed but there is a reasonable expectation that satisfactory performance standards may be met by the end of an extension of the probation period.
- The Probationer has had an extended period of permitted absence and it has not been possible to assess performance.
- Other exceptional circumstances.

5.7 The **Probationer has passed probation**. Upon completion of the final review meeting, if the Probationer has passed probation, the line manager/Head of School/Head Teacher/CEO will complete the Probation Period Review Form (Appendix 2). This will be signed by the line manager/Head of School/Head Teacher/CEO and the Probationer. The form should be placed on the Probationer's personnel file with a copy provided to the employee.

6 **Extension**

6.1 The probationary period can be extended beyond six months where there remains some doubt as to the employee's suitability for the post.

6.2 In such cases, the situation will be discussed with the employee. Discussions will identify the areas in which improvement is necessary; what extra support or training, if appropriate, will be made available; and the timescale in which improvements are required. Confirmation of these points will be given in writing to the employee.

6.3 Further regular reviews (at least fortnightly) should take place during the extended period. These reviews should be recorded on the Probation Record and made available to both parties.

6.4 The extension period must be confirmed in writing, and this must make clear:

- the reasons for extension

- the improvement required and how this will be monitored/reviewed
- any training or support that will be given during the extension
- the consequences (normally termination of employment) if the improvement is not made and the employee fails to meet the standards expected
- There is no right of appeal to the extension of a probationary period

7 Failure to meet Standards

- 6.1 The employee must be made aware that failure to reach the required standards will result in the offer of appointment being withdrawn. The Head Teacher/Head of School/CEO can make this decision provided there has been full consultation with the employee. Periods of notice during the probationary period will be at the statutory minimum (currently one week).
- 6.2 The employee should be informed formally in writing of any decision made within five working days of the decision.
- 6.3 If the offer of appointment is withdrawn, the employee has the right of appeal against this decision to the CEO/Trust Board. If the employee wishes to appeal, they must put the reason for their appeal in writing to the Trust Policy & Governance Officer five working days from the date of the notification of the decision.
- 6.4 The CEO/panel of the Trust Board would then hear the appeal, with both sides presenting their case.
- 6.5 The CEO/panel of the Trust Board hearing the appeal may decide:
 - to uphold the appeal. In this case the employee will be re-instated. In this case it is expected clear advice will be provided to the reviewer and the employee to ensure that the required standards of probation are achieved.
 - to confirm the original decision.
 - to consider redeployment to another post within the Trust.

7. Representation

- 7.1 At all stages, the employee is entitled to be accompanied to meetings by a Trade Union representative or work colleague.

Appendix 1: Probation Period Review

Review Meeting:	First	Second	Final	Extension
Date:				

This form should be completed by the line manager/Head of School/Head Teacher/CEO after each Review Meeting. This should be signed by the line manager/Head of School/Head Teacher/CEO and the Probationer, and the original placed on the personnel file with a copy to the Probationer.

Probationer's Name:	
Job Title:	
Start Date:	

Reviewer's Name:	
Reviewer's Job Title:	

	Exceeds expectation	As expected	Below expectations
Quality and accuracy of work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Efficiency/work rate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attendance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Timekeeping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work relationships (teamwork and interpersonal communication skills)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Competency in the job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding of the job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Reviewer's comments

Probationer's comments

Objectives for next review

Reviewer's Signature:	 	Date:	
Probationer's Signature:	 	Date:	

Appendix 2: Probation Period Review: For Completion Following Final Review

Probation Passed: ☐

The employee's performance has reached or exceeded the standard expected and the employee will be confirmed in post. The Trust will issue a formal letter of confirmation.

Reviewer's comments

Probation Extended: ☐

If the probation is extended, then an account of the concerns and a support plan for the extension period will be attached to this form.

Reviewer's reasons

Not passed Probation: ☐

The employee's performance has been unsatisfactory and, despite additional guidance and training the employee has not improved or has failed to improve sufficiently for there to be a prospect of the employee reaching the required standards in the near future.

A statement of reasons will be attached to this form.

Reviewer's Signature:		Date:	
Probationer's Signature:		Date:	