

# Mason Moor Primary School



# Probation Policy

## Probation Policy

Approved by: Governing Body

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Approvers signature: Chair of Governors

## Mason Moor Primary School's mission statement:

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At Mason Moor Primary School, no child is left behind. **Where you live, and your current personal circumstances, do not dictate your destiny.** Every member of staff is aligned to our three core values; drivers for everything we do. Central to our philosophy on improving life-chances, is the relentless pursuit of the value 'nurture' – a continuous focus on positive regard for all.

## Our values:

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### Nurture

We demonstrate and live this value through building unconditional positive praise for all who work at Mason Moor.

*"No significant learning can occur without a significant relationship" (James Comer)*



### Grow

We demonstrate and live this value through opportunities to grow – for example through our Character Development Curriculum and wider enrichment enabling all pupils to grow as confident, articulate individuals.



### Achieve

We ensure that there are no perceived (or real) ceiling limits placed on a child's potential. To this end, we expect staff to be every child's champion. Children here are developed to feel self-worth, to know their place in the world and to know they matter.

Every child deserves a champion. An adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and who insists that they become the best they can possibly be.

## 1. Policy Statement

One of the most important periods during an individual's employment is the first few months in a new job. It is during this time that the employee must become fully acquainted with the School and its' pupils, the key functions of the job, and the most effective and appropriate ways of accomplishing the desired objectives.

A probation period ensures that a new employee's performance can be monitored and the required support can be provided. Progress will be discussed at assessment meetings and the headteacher or delegated manager (hereafter referred to as headteacher) will encourage and assist the new employee to improve and develop.

It is important that all newly appointed employees have their performance monitored and assessed during their probationary period. Confirmation of appointment is subject to satisfactory completion of the probationary period.

## 2. This Applies to:

All newly appointed support staff will be subject to a probationary period.

All aspects of suitability such as performance, conduct, attitude, commitment and attendance. Where necessary, employment will be terminated with notice prior to the completion of the full probationary period, except in cases of gross misconduct which will lead to summary dismissal (i.e. dismissal without notice).

## 3. Roles & Responsibilities

### Headteachers must:

- Manage and monitor the probation period.
- Set expectations of the individual in line with their job description and person specification.
- Ensure any necessary support, guidance and development is provided.
- Record assessment meetings/outcomes.
- Make themselves available and respond to any questions and concerns raised by new employees in a timely fashion.

### Employees must:

- Raise any questions or concerns about their role or the probation process as soon as they arise.
- Actively participate in assessment meetings and any development activity provided.

#### **4. Timescales**

Employees in permanent posts and fixed term appointments of one year or more are subject to a probationary period of 6 months (or 26 school weeks for term time only employees). This can be reduced if the job is relatively straightforward or extended by a maximum of a further 6 months (or 26 weeks) if the employee's performance/conduct warrants this.

Employees on fixed term appointments of less than one year are subject to a 3 month probationary period (13 schools weeks for term time only employees), which can be extended by a maximum of a further 3 months (or 13 weeks) where necessary.

For new employees on term time only contracts, probation timescales exclude school holiday periods as these are non-working periods.

#### **5. Right to be Accompanied**

Employees have a right to be accompanied at the final assessment meeting. The chosen companion can be a work colleague, a trade union representative, or an official employed by a trade union. The employee must notify the headteacher in advance of their wish to be accompanied, giving details of who that person is. It is the employee's responsibility to make arrangements for their chosen representative to attend the final assessment meeting.

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# PROBATION PROCEDURE FOR SCHOOLS

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## 6. Initial Activity

The headteacher should discuss the job description and person specification with the employee, as well as setting out their expectations and the criteria against which performance will be measured. The new employee should be encouraged to ask for assistance at any stage if they have any concerns or difficulties.

Besides being inducted in School health and safety and fire procedures, the new employee must be shown where to access and gain familiarity with key School and HR policies and procedures as well as IT usage guidelines and safeguarding policies and practices.

## 7. Assessment Meetings

Headteachers must inform new job holders in writing of the probationary review period and set up a programme of assessment meetings. As a standard, it is recommended that assessment meetings take place in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> month of employment, with the final assessment at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> month. In some circumstances, assessment meetings may be required on a more frequent basis. It is good practice to set the dates of the assessment meetings when employment commences.

Managers should retain detailed records of each assessment meeting. A template Probation Assessment Form is available in the forms library on the Young Southampton website (an exemplar is attached in Appendix 1). The review of an employee's progress at an assessment meeting should be treated as confidential.

As a matter of good practice:

- A suitable time should be arranged so that meetings are not hurried but are private and free from interruption.
- The employee should be told in advance the time and date of the meeting and asked to think about their performance and any questions they wish to raise.
- The Probation Assessment Form should be part completed by the headteacher and given to the employee a few days prior to the meeting.
- The headteacher should make sure that they have clearly defined the points that they wish to raise and that these can be substantiated.
- The headteacher should monitor, record and regularly discuss performance with the employee concerned, and be prepared to suggest ways, if necessary, of improving performance.

- At the Assessment Meetings the headteacher should:
  - Explore both positive and negative aspects of performance and expand and explain comments made on the Assessment Form.
  - Reinforce areas of strength where the employee is doing well.
  - Discuss and seek the employee's views and comments and record them as part of the assessment.
  - Suggest and discuss ways of improving performance if appropriate. This might include extra training/coaching or closer supervision. This could also be an appropriate time to give encouragement.

After the assessment meeting a copy of the Assessment Record should be given to the employee.

Where performance has not yet reached a satisfactory level:

- It is important to be open and honest with the employee about areas of concern, giving specific examples as well as expectations of performance level.
- Ensure the employee understands the degree of progress required and that successful completion of the probationary period is dependent upon it.
- Warn the employee that if this standard is not reached their employment with the School may be terminated.

If the employee is experiencing problems at any stage during their probationary period the headteacher should discuss these with the employee and not wait until the next scheduled review meeting.

Where a headteacher is considering extending the probationary period, or terminating the employment, guidance must be sought from their HR Provider.

## **8. Final Assessment Meeting**

The final assessment meeting should be held one month before the end of the probationary period. The headteacher should complete the last sections of the Probation Assessment Form (shown at Appendix 1) giving an overall assessment of the employee's performance during probation and indicate whether they are confirmed into their permanent/fixed term post. It is important that the overall assessment should include all relevant factors such as conduct, attendance record, commitment, attitude, working relationships, performance in the role etc.

The employee should be invited to the meeting in writing, giving at least 5 working days' notice, and including a copy of the Probation Assessment Form. The employee has a right to be accompanied at the final review meeting as per section 5. The employee must notify the manager in advance of the meeting of their wish to be accompanied, giving details of who that person is.

Where the final assessment recommends that the employee is confirmed into their permanent/fixed term post:

- This decision will be conveyed at the meeting and confirmed in writing afterwards.
- The meeting may also clarify any future development or training planned for the employee and set objectives that will be reviewed as part of the on-going appraisal process.

Where the final assessment is that an employee's period on probation should be extended:

- The letter arranging the meeting should make this clear, together with the reasons, and inform the employee of their right to be accompanied.
- The meeting will explore both positive and negative aspects of the assessment, and seek the employee's views and comments.
- The outcome will normally be conveyed to the employee at the end of the meeting and confirmed in writing. The letter will set out the extension period and the nature/level of improvement required, along with details of any additional support that has been agreed, along with the interim review meeting dates.
- The letter will advise that dismissal is a potential outcome if the satisfactory level of performance is not reached.
- The date of the final assessment meeting should be stated and again should be scheduled for one month before the end of the extension period

Where termination of the employment is a possible outcome of the final assessment meeting:

- The letter arranging the meeting should make this clear, together with the reasons, and inform the employee of their right to be accompanied.
- The meeting invite must be issued at least 10 working days before the meeting.
- The meeting will follow the arrangements for a hearing that could lead to dismissal, as outlined in the School Dismissal & Appeal Policy and must be led by the headteacher, as only the head has authority to dismiss. Notification of the outcome will also be in line with the Dismissal & Appeal Policy.

- Advice should be sought beforehand from the HR Provider.

Assessment records and copies of any formal letters should be placed on the employee's personal file.

## **9. Appeal**

An employee has a right of appeal against dismissal. The employee must submit the appeal in writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body within 10 working days of receiving confirmation of dismissal, setting out the grounds for the appeal.

The appeal procedure will be as set out in the School's Dismissal & Appeal Policy.