

January 2020

The *Active Learning* Trust

Policy for Appraisal & Capability. All Staff

In the development of this policy consideration has been given to the impact on protected characteristics under the Equality Act and the work life balance of employees.

Last Revised January 2020.

Policy for Appraising Performance and Dealing with Capability Issues for All School Staff

This policy applies to all teachers and the Head teacher, and all support staff employed at the school to whom Active Learning Trust policies apply and as defined in paragraph 1 below.

This Policy does not form any part of any employees contract of employment and may be amended at any time following consultation with recognised Trade Unions

1. Definitions

- 1.1 The term “Head teacher” also refers, where appropriate, to any other title used to identify the Head teacher.
- 1.2 The term “employee” refers to any member of the school staff employed to work solely at the school.
- 1.3 The term “senior manager” refers to any senior leader who is a member of the Leadership Group as defined by the School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document, or a senior support employee in cases involving support staff, delegated by the Headteacher to deal with an appraisal and/or capability matter under these procedures. A senior manager may only make a decision to issue a sanction up to and including a final written warning.
- 1.4 If the Headteacher, following consultation with the Chair of Governors, considers that there is no senior manager to whom they can reasonably delegate a specific capability matter then the Headteacher will take the role of the senior manager for that specific case and the role of the “Headteacher” under this procedure will be performed by a Committee of the Local Governing Body consisting of not less than 3 governors, none of whom will have had previous involvement in the case.
- 1.5 The role of the Head teacher will be taken by appropriate governors and/or officers of the Active Learning Trust as indicated where the appraisal and or capability being reviewed is that of the Headteacher.
- 1.6 “Lack of capability” is defined as a situation in which an employee fails consistently to perform his/her duties to a wholly satisfactory standard of performance over a period of time.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of employees covered by the appraisal policy and for supporting their development within the context of the school’s plan for improving educational provision and performance, and the standards expected of employees in their respective roles. It also sets out the arrangements that will apply when employees fall below the levels of competence that are expected of them.
- 2.2 This policy does not form part of any employee’s contract of employment and it may be amended at any time following consultation with the recognised Trade Unions. We may also vary any parts of this procedure, including any time limits, as the Trust deems appropriate in any case.

3. **Application of the policy**

The policy is in two separate sections.

Part A of the policy, which covers appraisal, applies to the Headteacher and to all teachers and support staff employed by the school, except those on contracts of less than one term, those teachers undergoing induction (*i.e.* *NQTs*), those support staff subject to a probationary period and those have been transferred to Part B of the policy.

Part B of the policy, which sets out the formal capability procedure, applies to all employees of the school (including the Headteacher). Concerns about the employee's performance will have been identified by the appraisal process and which it has been unable to address.

Part A - Appraisal

The appraisal policy in this school will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all employees identified by the policy have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively. It will help to ensure that all employees are able to continue to improve their professional/employment practice and to develop in their respective roles. It is intended to foster professional dialogue between colleagues.

1. The appraisal period

- 1.1 The appraisal period will run for twelve months. There will be flexibility used at the appraiser's discretion to have a shorter appraisal period when employees begin or end employment with the school part way through an appraisal year.
- 1.2 Employees who are employed on a fixed term contract of less than one year will have their performance managed in accordance with the principles underpinning this policy. The length of the review period will be determined by the duration of their contract.
- 1.3 Employees will not normally be dismissed for performance reasons without previous warnings. However, in cases of gross negligence, or in any case involving an employee who has not yet completed their probationary period, dismissal without previous warnings may be appropriate subject to the consideration of use of the disciplinary or capability procedures.
- 1.4 Appraisal meetings for teachers will take place within directed time but not within a teachers PPA time, unless by mutual agreement.

2. Appointing appraisers

- 2.1 The performance management of the Headteacher will be the responsibility of the Chief Executive of the Trust (CEO) or their delegated officer alone in the first full year of operation as an academy and he/she will report the outcomes to the Trust Board. Following the first full year of operation, the review of objectives and salary of the Headteacher and the setting and management of subsequent objectives will be by the CEO working with an appointed governor from the Local Governing Body.
- 2.2 The Headteacher will decide who will appraise other employees covered by the policy. This will be notified to staff annually. Any objection to a particular choice of appraiser will be carefully considered, however the Headteachers determination is final.

3. Setting objectives

- 3.1 The Headteacher objectives will be set by the CEO of the Trust (or his/her delegated officer) in the first year of operation as an Academy and thereafter by the CEO (or his/her delegated officer) working with an appointed governor from the Local Governing Body. The CEO/Local Governing Body has a duty to have regard to the work-life balance of the Headteacher and the objectives will reflect this.
- 3.2 Objectives for each employee covered by the policy will be set before or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period. The objectives set will be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound and will be appropriate to the employee's role and level of experience. Objectives will not be based on externally generated data predictions or solely on the assessment data for a single group of pupils. Objectives will be set in relation

to robust assessment data. However these will not be used in isolation and other factors will also be considered. The appraiser and employee will always seek to agree the objectives and it is highly preferable that they do so, but if that is not possible then the appraiser will determine the objectives. The appraiser may record their objections in the appraisal record. Objectives may be revised if circumstances change.

- 3.3 The objectives set for each employee will, if achieved, contribute to the school's plans for improving the school's educational provision and performance and improving the educational opportunities of pupils at that school. This will be ensured by quality assuring all objectives against the school improvement plan.
- 3.4 In setting objectives appraisers will take account of individual circumstances relating to any disability.

4. Overall Performance of Teachers

- 4.1 Before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period, a teacher will be informed of the standards and objectives against which that teacher's performance in that appraisal period will be assessed. Each teacher will be assessed against the set of standards contained in the document called "Teachers' Standards" and any subsequent amendment thereof.
- 4.2 The Headteacher or Local Governing Body (as appropriate) will need to consider whether certain teachers should also be assessed against other sets of standards which may be published by the Secretary of State that are relevant to them.
- 4.3 In assessing performance any assessment that a teacher is not meeting aspects of the Teachers Standards will be based on clear evidence.

5. Reviewing performance

5.1 Observation

- 5.1.1 This school believes that observation of classroom practice and other responsibilities for teachers, and support staff who support teachers in the classroom, is important as a way of assessing performance in order to identify any particular strengths and areas for development they may have, of gaining useful information which can inform school improvement more generally, and to enable colleagues to learn from each other and collaborate.
- 5.1.2 All observation will be carried out in a supportive fashion and not add to teacher workload.
- 5.1.3 Teachers' performance will be regularly observed but the amount and type of classroom observation will depend on the individual circumstances of the employee and the overall needs of the school.
- 5.1.4 Classroom observation of teachers will be carried out by senior or middle leaders with QTS.
- 5.1.5 Employees who have responsibilities outside the classroom should also expect to have their performance of those responsibilities observed and assessed

5.2 Support staff

- 5.2.1 Support staff appraisal will focus on the job description of the employee. The expected standards of performance will be made clear by the appraiser and will be evidence-based (including the use of any criteria or published standards which will aid consistency of judgements across the Trust).
- 5.2.2 Where Job Descriptions do not or no longer appropriately capture the

actual content of the role as a basis for performance appraisal then they should be updated.

6. Drop- Ins

- 6.1 In addition to formal observation, the Headteacher or other leaders with responsibility for teaching standards may “drop in” in order to evaluate the standards of teaching and to check that high standards of professional performance are established and maintained. The length and frequency of “drop in” observations will vary depending on specific circumstances, however the school will ensure that such observation arrangements are proportionate to the need for meaningful performance management and will wherever possible be by prior arrangement.

7. Development and support

- 7.1 Appraisal is a supportive process which will be used to inform continuing professional development. The school wishes to encourage a culture in which all employees take responsibility for improving their performance through appropriate development.
- 7.2 Teachers professional development will be linked to school improvement priorities and to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of individual teachers.
- 7.3 The Trust is committed to making appropriate training available to both teaching and support staff to enable appraises to succeed in meeting their objectives.

8. Feedback

- 8.1 Employees will receive constructive feedback on their performance throughout the year within a reasonable timeframe and as soon as practicable after an observation has taken place or other evidence has come to light. Feedback will highlight particular areas of strength as well as any areas that need attention and may be supported in writing where such notes assist the performance relationship. Feedback may be in the form of one-to-one supervision meetings, and it is good practice to give feedback on any performance issues at points within the year rather than delay.
- 8.2 Where there are concerns about any aspects of the employee's performance the appraiser will meet with the employee to:
 - give clear feedback about the areas of concern;
 - give the employee the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns and establish the likely causes of poor performance and identify any training needs/support needed (e.g. coaching, monitoring, structured observation) ;
 - clarify the required standards and agree any support (e.g. coaching, mentoring, structured observations), that will be provided to help address those specific concerns;
 - make clear how, and by when, the appraiser will review progress;
 - explain the implications and process if no, or insufficient, improvement is made.
- 8.3 if it is appropriate to revise objectives, it will be necessary to allow sufficient time for improvement the amount of time will reflect the seriousness of the concerns; When progress is reviewed, if the appraiser is satisfied that the employee has made, or is making, sufficient improvement, the appraisal process will continue as normal, with any remaining issues continuing to be addressed through that process.
- 8.4 The appraiser will keep a note of any concerns, the support given and the review judgement. A copy of this note will be given to the employee. (See 10.4 below). If required, this will inform any decision on transition to the capability procedure. Any required changes to the employees Job Description will also be reviewed at this time.

9. Transition to capability

- 9.1 If the appraiser is not satisfied with progress, the employee will be notified in writing that the appraisal system will no longer apply and that their performance will be managed under the capability procedure. The employee will be invited to a formal capability meeting at which the employee has the right to be

accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague. The capability procedures will be conducted as in part B of this policy.

10. Annual assessment

- 10.1 The performance of each employee covered by the appraisal policy will be formally assessed in respect of each appraisal period.
- 10.2 In assessing the performance of the Headteacher the CEO will conduct this in the first year as an Academy. Thereafter, the Local Governing Body will be consulted by the CEO of the Trust (or his/her delegated officer).
- 10.3 This assessment is the end point to the annual appraisal process, but performance and development priorities will be reviewed and addressed on a regular basis throughout the year in interim meetings.
- 10.4 The employee will receive a written appraisal report as soon as practicable following the end of each appraisal period, and have the opportunity to comment on the report in writing in a space for comments by the appraisee.
- 10.5 Teachers will receive their written appraisal reports by 31 October (31 December for the Headteacher) and support staff by the end of the month following their end of year appraisal.
- 10.6 The appraisal report will include:
 - details of the employee's objectives for the appraisal period in question;
 - an assessment of the employee's performance of their role and responsibilities against their objectives and, for teachers, against the relevant standards;
 - an assessment of the employee's training and development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them. The assessment of performance and of training and development needs will inform the planning process for the following appraisal period.
 - a recommendation on pay where that is relevant. Pay recommendations will be made by 31 December for Head teachers, by 31 October for other teachers, and as soon as practicable in line with their performance schedule for support staff.

Where incremental progression is available this will be backdated to the start of the performance year cycle.

Part B - Capability Procedure

1. Formal Capability Meeting

- 1.1 This procedure applies only to employees about whose performance there are serious concerns that the appraisal process has been unable to address. If under Part A above an employee's performance is not wholly satisfactory, the senior manager, or other person with line management responsibility for the employee, will invite the employee to a formal capability meeting to discuss with the employee the identified poor performance as specifically as possible.
- 1.2 The senior manager will write to the employee at least 5 working days in advance to inform him/her about:
- a) the date, time and place of the meeting.
 - b) the basic details of the concerns about the employee's performance
 - c) the employee's right to be accompanied by a representative of his/her trade union or a workplace colleague of his/her choice
 - d) the titles of enclosed copies of any documents to be used at the meeting.
 - e) names of any witnesses to be called
 - f) his/her right to call witnesses on his/her behalf.
 - g) The name and office of any adviser who will accompany the senior manager at the meeting.

An extra copy, together with any enclosures, will be provided for his/her companion.

- 1.3 This meeting is intended to establish the facts. It will be conducted by a senior manager delegated by the Headteacher (or the CEO of the Trust or his/her nominated officer in consultation with the Chair of Governors for the Headteacher). The meeting will allow the employee to respond to concerns about his/her performance and to make any relevant representations. This may provide new information or a different context to the information/evidence already collected.
- 1.4 The senior manager may conclude that there are insufficient grounds for pursuing the capability issue and that it would be more appropriate to continue to address the remaining concerns through the appraisal process. In such cases, the capability procedure will come to an end.
- 1.5 The senior manager may also adjourn the meeting if it is decided that further exploration of the alleged unsatisfactory performance is needed, or that more time is needed in which to consider any additional information. In other cases, the meeting will continue.
- 1.6 During the meeting, or any other meeting which could lead to a formal warning being issued, the senior manager will:
- In the case of a teacher, identify the poor performance, including which of the standards expected of the teacher is not being met;
 - Ensure the employee is given an opportunity to ask questions, present evidence, call witnesses, respond to evidence and make representations;
 - Establish the likely causes of poor performance including any reasons why any measures taken so far have not led to the required improvement;

- Give clear guidance on the improved standard of performance needed to ensure that the employee can be removed from formal capability procedures which may include the setting of new objectives focused on the specific area/s of poor performance that need to be addressed. It will include any success criteria that are appropriate and the evidence that will be used to assess whether or not the necessary improvement has been made;
 - Identify whether there are further measures which may improve performance and explain any support that will be considered and planned to help the employee, e.g. in-service training, visits to other schools, discussion with appropriate colleagues or professionals;
 - Set out the timetable for improvement and explain how performance will be monitored and reviewed.
 - The timetable will depend on the circumstances of the individual case but will be reasonable and proportionate, between four and six weeks in normal circumstances, and will provide sufficient opportunity for improvement to take place. The length of time required will depend on the concerns raised with the employee, the nature of any support and training required, and sufficient time to establish whether performance has improved; and
 - Warn the employee formally that failure to improve within the set period could lead to a final written warning (subject to further process and hearing) which could then lead to his/her dismissal.
 - Inform the employee of the right of appeal
 - Agree with the employee and any companion the date of the formal review meeting
- 1.7 Notes will be taken of formal meetings and a copy sent to the employee and any companion. Where a first warning is issued, the employee will be informed in writing of the matters discussed in 1.6 above. S/he will also be informed in writing that failure to achieve an acceptable standard of performance (within the set timescale), may result in a final written warning which could then lead to dismissal if wholly satisfactory performance is not achieved, together with the time limit for appealing against the first written warning.
- 1.8 If the concerns relate to a lack of capability that poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children, or is likely to result in serious damage to pupils' education, the shorter timescale may be appropriate. In such cases, the senior manager may exceptionally decide to issue a first and final written warning. If to do otherwise would expose students to serious risk in terms of their health, safety, well-being or educational prospects.

2. Sickness absence and the use of this procedure

- 2.1 It is important that sickness absence should not delay or avoid the use of formal capability procedures. It is in the interests of all parties to address concerns about performance without undue delay. Arrangements will normally be made to seek medical advice from an occupational health adviser to assess the employee's health and fitness for continued engagement with the Capability Procedure and continued employment at the school.
- 2.2 Consideration will be given to whether poor performance may be related to a disability and, if so, whether there are reasonable adjustments that could be

made to the employee's working arrangements, including changing the employees duties or providing additional equipment or training. We may also consider making adjustments to this procedure in appropriate cases e.g. moving from this procedure to procedures used by the school to terminate the employment of the employee on the grounds of ill health.

If an employee's medical condition is not serious enough to warrant a consideration of termination of employment on the grounds of ill health, the occupational health adviser will normally be asked to assess whether an employee absent through sickness is fit enough to attend a meeting under this procedure. In the event that the employee is deemed not fit to attend a formal capability meeting, the meeting may be re-arranged, or if the absence is over the long term s/he may present a written submission for consideration and/or be represented by a companion in her/his absence. Where capability is on the grounds of ill health, or ability to attend or take part in the process due to ill health, then dismissal would include a facility for ill health retirement to be considered.

3. Monitoring and review period following a formal capability meeting

- 3.1 A performance monitoring and review period will follow the formal capability meeting. Formal monitoring, evaluation, guidance and support will continue during this period. Following this monitoring and review period, the employee will be invited to a formal review meeting (see paragraph 4 below), unless s/he had been issued with a final written warning, in which case s/he will be invited to a decision meeting (see paragraph 6 below).

4. Formal review meeting

- 4.1 At least 5 working days before the date for the formal review meeting a written reminder will be given to the employee together with details of the meeting as set out in paragraph 1.2 above.
- 4.2 The formal review meeting will follow a similar procedure to that identified for the formal capability meeting as set out in paragraph 1.6 above.
- 4.3 If the senior manager (CEO for the first year of the academy and subsequently the CEO in consultation with the Chair of Governors for the Headteacher) is satisfied that the employee has made sufficient improvement, the formal capability procedure will cease and the appraisal process will re- start where the employee is subject to Part A above.
- 4.4 In cases:
- where some progress has been made and there is confidence that more is likely, it may be appropriate to extend the monitoring and review period;
 - where no, or insufficient improvement has been made during the monitoring and review period, the employee will receive a final written warning.
- 4.5 Notes will be taken at the formal review meeting and a copy will be sent to the employee and any companion.
- 4.6 Where a final warning is issued, the employee will be informed in writing that failure to achieve an acceptable standard of performance (within the set timescale), may result in dismissal and will be given information about the further monitoring and review period and the procedure and time limits for appealing against the final written warning. The date the decision meeting will be agreed with the employee and any companion.

- 4.7 At this stage, rather than refer the matter to a decision meeting, consideration could be given to the employee being given a different range of duties or an alternative post. By agreement, this may include transfer to a post suited to the employee's capabilities. If this post is at a lower salary level, the substantive lower salary would apply.

5. Right of Appeal against a formal written warning – with right to be accompanied

- 5.1 If an employee feels that a decision to issue a first and/or final written warning, is wrong or unjust, they may appeal in writing against the decision
- 5.2 Appeals against a written warning may include considering the reasonableness of the decision made by the senior manager, any relevant new evidence not previously available to the senior manager or any procedural irregularities. A statement giving the reasons for the appeal should be submitted to the Clerk to the Governors within 5 working days of the formal written warning having been received.
- 5.3 All appeal hearings will be held as soon as possible after receipt of the appeal at an agreed time and place.
- 5.4 The appeal will be heard by the Appeals Panel of Governors. The number of governors on the Appeals Panel of Governors will ideally be three but not less than two. The panel may be advised by the CEO of the Trust or their delegated officer not previously involved. The panel can either confirm the warning, reduce a final warning to a warning, or cancel the warning. The employee will be informed in writing of the results of the appeal hearing as soon as possible.
- 5.5 The same arrangements for notification and the right to be accompanied by a companion will apply for an appeal hearing as for the formal capability and review meetings and, as with those meetings, notes will be taken and a copy sent to the employee and any companion.
- 5.6 Pending any appeal the employee will be expected to continue to work in accordance with targets set for the next stage of the procedure and his/her progress towards the achievement of these targets may be monitored during this period.

6. Decision meeting – with right to be accompanied.

- 6.1 At least 5 working days before the date of the decision meeting a reminder will be given in writing together with details of the meeting as in paragraph 1.2 above. The meeting will be conducted by the Headteacher (Governor Panel including the CEO or his/her delegated officer for the Headteacher).
- 6.2 If an acceptable standard of performance has been achieved during the further monitoring and review period, the capability procedure will end and the appraisal process will re-start where the employee is subject to Part A above.
- 6.3 If progress has been made and there is confidence that wholly satisfactory performance will be achieved by a short extension, it may be appropriate to extend the monitoring and review period rather than to dismiss. The final written warning will be extended for a short specified assessment period.
- 6.4 If performance has remained unsatisfactory, a decision will be made that the employee will be dismissed. The employee will be informed in writing as soon as possible of the reasons for the dismissal, the date on which the employment contract will end, the appropriate period of notice and whether

the notice is to be served or there will be pay in lieu of notice, and the right of appeal.

7. Right of Appeal against a decision to dismiss – with right to be accompanied.

- 7.1 The employee has a right of appeal to the Appeals Committee of the Local Governing Body against a decision to dismiss.
- 7.2 The Appeals Committee shall consist of at least 3 governors, none of whom will have had any previous involvement in the case.
- 7.3 The employee's notice of appeal should be sent to the Clerk to the Governors within 10 working days of receipt of the written decision to dismiss, setting out the grounds of appeal.
- 7.4 Appeal hearings should be held as soon as possible after receipt of the appeal and will be conducted in the same way as appeals referred to in paragraph 5 above.

8. Notice of Dismissal

- 8.1 Following a decision to dismiss, the Local Governing Body will notify the employee in writing that the employee is to be dismissed, whether with notice or with pay in lieu of notice in accordance with the decision of the Headteacher (or Committee).
- 8.2 In the event that the Appeal Committee of the Governors decides not to uphold the decision to dismiss the employee shall be informed immediately and the notice of dismissal shall be immediately withdrawn.

9. Grievances arising during the procedure

- 9.1 Where an employee has a grievance against the way the senior manager has conducted the procedure this will normally be dealt with under the appeals process set out above. However, in very exceptional circumstances, where the behaviour of the senior manager is the cause of the grievance, it may be appropriate to suspend this procedure for a short period until the grievance has been considered

10. Trade Union Officials

- 10.1 Although normal performance standards must apply to an employee who is a lay trade union official, no disciplinary action, beyond an informal oral warning will be taken until the circumstances of the case have been discussed with the relevant professional trade union officer.

11. Confidentiality

- 11.1 Our aim is to deal with performance matters sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of any individuals involved. All employees must treat as confidential any information communicated to them in connection with a matter which is subject to this capability procedure.
- 11.2 The employee, and anyone accompanying the employee (including witnesses), must not make electronic recordings of any meetings or hearings conducted under this procedure unless this is accepted by all parties as a reasonable adjustment. Failure to observe confidentiality could be a reason for disciplinary action under the school's disciplinary procedure.