# PROBATION POLICY

Setting expectations. Supporting development.
Confirming suitability.



## RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL

INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

This policy forms part of the Riverside Bridge School Policy Framework
and should be read alongside any related policies, procedures and guidance.

RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL
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## OUR COMMITMENT

At Riverside Bridge School, every policy reflects our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive and ambitious school community in which every pupil is valued, every voice matters and every family is respected and supported.

Our policies translate our values into consistent practice. They support high expectations, clear responsibilities, effective partnership and informed decision-making, ensuring that the needs, rights, wellbeing and future outcomes of our pupils remain at the heart of our work.

We work collaboratively, act with integrity and continually reflect upon and improve our practice to achieve the best possible outcomes for every pupil.

## POLICY PRINCIPLES

Our Policy Principles underpin how we work together and guide the decisions and actions we take to support every pupil and their families.




## POLICY PURPOSE & FRAMEWORK

Riverside Bridge School policies set out the expectations, responsibilities and approaches that support safe, consistent and high-quality practice across the school. They translate our values, statutory responsibilities and professional expectations into clear guidance for everyday decision-making and practice.

Each policy forms part of the Riverside Bridge School Policy Framework and should be read alongside any related policies, procedures, statutory guidance and school frameworks referenced within the document.

Policies apply to the members of the school community identified within each document, including staff, governors, parents and carers, volunteers, contractors and other professionals where relevant. Everyone is expected to understand and apply the requirements appropriate to their role and to seek further guidance where clarification is required.

## CURRICULUM DRIVERS




Our Drivers provide a shared golden thread across curriculum, school life, policy and leadership, helping ensure that our decisions and practice remain focused on the experiences and futures we want for every pupil.

# STATEMENT OF INTENT

This policy sets out Riverside Bridge School's approach to probation for newly appointed support staff. It explains the principles, expectations, responsibilities and arrangements through which employees are supported to establish themselves within their role and demonstrate the standards of performance, attendance, conduct and professionalism required for continued employment.

Riverside Bridge School is committed to recruiting, developing and retaining a skilled, professional and motivated workforce capable of providing consistently high-quality education, care and support for our pupils.

The probationary period provides a structured transition into employment at Riverside Bridge School. It enables newly appointed support staff to develop their understanding of the school, their role and our expectations while providing an appropriate period in which their suitability for the post can be assessed.

Probation is a two-way process. The school has a responsibility to provide effective induction, clear expectations, appropriate support and regular feedback. Employees have a corresponding responsibility to engage with induction and development, undertake their duties to the required standard, respond constructively to feedback and demonstrate the professional expectations associated with their role.

Our approach recognises that employees may require time, guidance and experience to become fully confident within a new role, particularly within the specialist context of Riverside Bridge School. Probation should therefore be developmental and supportive, with strengths recognised and areas requiring further development identified at an early stage.

Where concerns arise, these should not be left until the end of the probationary period. Managers should explain concerns clearly, identify the standard required and, wherever appropriate, provide reasonable support, training, coaching, guidance or workplace adjustments to enable improvement.

At the same time, successful completion of probation is not automatic. The school must be satisfied that the employee has demonstrated the performance, attendance, conduct, professionalism and overall suitability required to continue within their role. Where the required standards are not achieved despite appropriate support, or where sufficiently serious concerns arise, the school may extend probation or consider whether employment should continue in accordance with this policy.

Decisions relating to probation will be evidence-informed, proportionate and fair. Relevant individual circumstances will be considered, including the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the requirement to consider reasonable adjustments where applicable.

Successful completion of probation confirms that the employee has demonstrated the standards required for their appointment to be confirmed. It also marks the transition from initial induction and probation into the school's ongoing arrangements for professional development, supervision and, where applicable, appraisal.

**Our responsibility to staff and the school community**

Riverside Bridge School has a responsibility to ensure that probation provides a fair and structured process through which new support staff can develop within their role and demonstrate their suitability for continued employment.

In fulfilling this responsibility, we will:

- provide appropriate induction into the school and the employee's role;
- communicate expectations and required standards clearly from the outset;
- provide regular supervision, feedback and appropriate developmental support;
- recognise strengths and identify concerns or development needs promptly;
- provide reasonable opportunities for improvement where concerns can appropriately be addressed;
- consider relevant training, coaching, guidance and workplace adjustments;
- undertake and record probation reviews at appropriate stages;
- ensure employees understand any concerns, required improvements, timescales and potential outcomes;
- make decisions based upon relevant evidence and individual circumstances;
- apply probation arrangements fairly, consistently and in accordance with employment law and the school's equality duties;
- confirm the outcome of probation clearly and in writing.

Through these commitments, we aim to ensure that probation supports successful appointments while maintaining the professional standards required to provide safe, consistent and high-quality provision for Riverside Bridge School pupils.

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**APPROVED BY:** Governing Board

**APPROVED ON:** September 2026

**REVIEWED DUE ON:** September 2027

Section 01

# PURPOSE

Defining the process. Supporting success. Maintaining standards.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a fair, transparent and supportive framework for managing the probationary period of newly appointed support staff at Riverside Bridge School.

The probationary period enables both the employee and the school to determine whether the appointment is successful by assessing the employee's performance, attendance, conduct and overall suitability for the role. It also provides an opportunity for employees to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence through structured induction, regular feedback and appropriate support.

This policy aims to:

- provide a consistent approach to managing probationary periods;
- ensure all new support staff receive appropriate induction, guidance and supervision;
- establish clear expectations and performance standards from the outset;
- identify any concerns at an early stage and provide appropriate support and opportunities for improvement;
- confirm appointments where the required standards have been achieved;
- provide a fair and transparent process where an employee does not successfully complete their probationary period.

The school expects that most employees will successfully complete their probationary period. Where concerns arise, these will normally be addressed promptly through clear feedback, appropriate support and regular review before formal action is considered, unless the seriousness of the concern makes this inappropriate. However, where the required standards cannot be achieved despite appropriate support, the school may decide not to confirm the appointment in accordance with the procedures set out within this policy.

Section 02

# SCOPE

Clarifying application. Defining boundaries.

This policy applies to all newly appointed support staff employed by Riverside Bridge School on permanent or fixed-term contracts. The policy applies from the employee's first day of employment and remains in force throughout the probationary period.

This policy does not apply to:

- teachers employed under the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD);
- employees undertaking temporary promotions, acting-up arrangements or secondments;
- agency workers, contractors or volunteers.

The school reserves the right to adapt timescales where this is reasonable and appropriate, for example where an employee has experienced significant absence during their probationary period.

Section 03

## LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Meeting duties. Applying requirements.

This policy has been developed with reference to:

- Employment Rights Act 1996;
- Equality Act 2010;
- ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures (where applicable);
- Data Protection Act 2018;
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Section 04

## PRINCIPLES OF PROBATION

Setting expectations. Providing support. Assessing fairly.

The probationary period is intended to support new employees in becoming effective members of the Riverside Bridge School team.

The school recognises that successful probation relies upon a partnership between the employee, their line manager and the wider leadership team. Throughout the probationary period, employees will receive appropriate guidance, supervision, coaching and opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills required for their role.

The probationary process is based upon the following principles:

- employees will receive a structured induction to the school and their role;
- expectations and performance standards will be communicated clearly;
- progress will be reviewed regularly through formal and informal discussions;

- concerns will be raised promptly rather than being left until formal review meetings;
- appropriate support, training, guidance and development will be provided where improvement is required;
- decisions will be evidence-based, fair and consistent;
- employees will have opportunities to discuss any difficulties they are experiencing and identify support that may assist them.

Whilst the school expects the majority of employees to successfully complete probation, confirmation of appointment is dependent upon the employee demonstrating satisfactory standards of:

- performance;
- attendance;
- conduct;
- professionalism;
- compliance with school policies and procedures;
- the ability to fulfil the responsibilities of their role.

Section 05

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Sharing responsibility. Supporting progress. Maintaining accountability.

Successful probation requires shared responsibility between the employee, their line manager and the school.

**Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that:

- this policy is implemented consistently and fairly;
- managers are supported in applying the probationary process;
- formal decisions regarding extensions, probation hearings and confirmation of employment are made appropriately;
- employment decisions are taken in accordance with employment legislation and school procedures.

**Line managers and relevant leaders**

Leaders play the primary role in supporting employees throughout probation and are responsible for:

- providing an effective induction;
- ensuring employees understand their role and expected standards;
- providing regular supervision, coaching and feedback;

- identifying strengths and development needs;
- arranging and recording probation review meetings;
- addressing concerns promptly;
- agreeing clear objectives and monitoring progress;
- identifying appropriate training and support;
- making recommendations regarding successful completion, extension or formal action where appropriate.

**Employees**

Employees are expected to:

- actively participate in their induction programme;
- familiarise themselves with school policies and procedures;
- perform their duties to the required standards;
- maintain satisfactory attendance and conduct;
- seek support where difficulties arise;
- engage positively with feedback and agreed development activities;
- attend probation review meetings;
- work collaboratively with colleagues and contribute positively to the school community.

**Governing Board**

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- approving and reviewing this policy;
- hearing appeals where required under this policy;
- ensuring that probationary processes are applied fairly and consistently.

Section 06

# INDUCTION AND SUPPORT

Building understanding. Developing confidence. Supporting success.

A successful probationary period begins with a comprehensive induction programme designed to help employees become confident and effective in their role.

All new employees will receive an induction appropriate to their role, which will normally include:

- an introduction to Riverside Bridge School's vision, values and culture;
- safeguarding, health and safety and statutory training;
- familiarisation with school policies and procedures;

- role-specific training;
- introductions to colleagues and key contacts;
- explanation of performance expectations;
- arrangements for supervision and probation review meetings.

Throughout probation, employees will receive regular support from their line manager through supervision, coaching and day-to-day guidance.

Where additional support is required, this may include:

- further training;
- mentoring or coaching;
- increased supervision;
- shadowing opportunities;
- regular review of objectives.

The school recognises that early support and constructive feedback are essential to helping employees achieve success and will seek to address concerns at the earliest opportunity rather than allowing issues to remain unresolved.

Induction provided during probation will operate in accordance with the school's Induction Policy and Staff Induction Framework.

Section 07

## PROBATIONARY PERIOD

Providing time. Reviewing progress. Demonstrating suitability.

All newly appointed support staff will normally be subject to a probationary period of six months, commencing on their first day of employment.

The purpose of the probationary period is to enable the school to assess whether the employee has demonstrated the standards of performance, attendance, conduct and professionalism required for their role.

Throughout the probationary period, employees will receive appropriate supervision, coaching and feedback to support their successful integration into the school.

Confirmation of employment is not automatic and will be dependent upon the employee demonstrating that they have successfully met the required standards.

In exceptional circumstances, where it has not been possible to fairly assess an employee's suitability within the original probationary period, the probation may be extended in accordance with Section 10 of this policy. Nothing within this policy prevents managers from addressing concerns informally as they arise. Managers should not wait until a formal probation review meeting if performance, attendance or conduct concerns require earlier discussion.

Section 08

# PROBATION REVIEW MEETINGS

Reviewing progress. Addressing concerns. Agreeing next steps.

Formal probation review meetings will normally take place during the probationary period at approximately:

- two months
- four months
- six months

These timescales may be adjusted where necessary due to school closure periods, employee absence or operational circumstances.

Probation review meetings provide an opportunity to:

- review the employee's progress;
- discuss achievements and strengths;
- assess performance against agreed expectations;
- review attendance and conduct;
- identify any concerns at an early stage;
- agree objectives for the next review period;
- identify any training, coaching or additional support required.

Each review meeting will be recorded using the school's Probation Review Form. A copy will be provided to the employee and retained on their personnel file. Where concerns are identified, these will be discussed openly with the employee. Managers will clearly explain:

- the areas requiring improvement;
- the standards expected;
- the support available;
- any objectives to be achieved;
- the timescale for improvement;
- the potential consequences if satisfactory improvement is not achieved.

The school is committed to supporting employees to succeed wherever reasonably possible and will seek to resolve concerns through guidance, development and appropriate support before considering formal action.

Section 09

# SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF PROBATION

Confirming standards. Continuing employment. Supporting development.

Where an employee has successfully demonstrated the required standards of performance, attendance and conduct throughout the probationary period, their appointment will be confirmed in writing.

Successful completion of probation confirms that:

- the employee has satisfactorily met the requirements of their role;
- employment will continue under the terms of their contract of employment;
- the school's ongoing arrangements for professional support, continuing professional development and, where applicable, appraisal.

Confirmation of probation does not prevent the school from managing future performance, attendance or conduct issues under the appropriate employment policies should these arise after probation has been completed.

Section 10

# EXTENSION OF PROBATION

Allowing further time. Targeting support. Reaching a decision.

In some circumstances, the Headteacher may decide that an extension of the probationary period is appropriate rather than confirming the appointment or commencing formal action.

A probationary period will normally only be extended where:

- there is evidence that improvement is being made but the required standards have not yet been fully achieved;
- additional time is required to fairly assess performance due to significant periods of absence, including sickness absence or school closure;
- additional training or support is required before a final decision can reasonably be made;
- reasonable adjustments are being implemented or considered in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Any extension will normally be for no more than three months.

Where probation is extended, the employee will receive written confirmation setting out:

- the reasons for the extension;
- the length of the extension;

- the standards expected;
- the support and training that will be provided;
- the objectives that must be achieved;
- the review arrangements;
- the possible outcomes at the end of the extension.

The possible outcomes following an extended probationary period are:

- confirmation of appointment;
- a further review where exceptional circumstances justify this;
- progression to a Probation Hearing where the required standards have not been achieved.

## Section 11

# UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE, ATTENDANCE OR CONDUCT

Identifying concerns. Supporting improvement. Taking appropriate action.

Where concerns arise regarding an employee's performance, attendance or conduct during probation, managers will address concerns promptly through clear feedback, appropriate management support and regular review.

The school will seek to understand any factors affecting performance and, where appropriate, provide reasonable support, guidance, training or workplace adjustments to help the employee achieve the required standards.

Examples of concerns may include:

- failure to meet the expected standards of performance;
- unsatisfactory attendance;
- inappropriate conduct or behaviour;
- failure to follow school policies or procedures;
- inability to carry out the duties of the role to the required standard.

Where concerns remain despite appropriate support, or where serious concerns arise during the probationary period, the Headteacher may determine that a Probation Hearing should be convened.

A Probation Hearing may take place:

- before the end of the probationary period where there are serious concerns and it is unlikely that satisfactory improvement will be achieved;
- at the conclusion of the probationary period where the required standards have not been met;

- following an extension to the probationary period where sufficient improvement has not been demonstrated.

Before any Probation Hearing is arranged, the employee will normally have been informed of the concerns, given appropriate support and provided with a reasonable opportunity to improve, unless the seriousness of the concerns makes this inappropriate.

Section 12

# PROBATION HEARING

Considering evidence. Ensuring fairness. Determining outcomes.

Where the required standards of performance, attendance or conduct have not been achieved, or where serious concerns arise during the probationary period, the employee may be invited to attend a Probation Hearing. The purpose of the hearing is to consider whether:

- the employee has successfully completed their probationary period;
- a further extension to the probationary period is justified in exceptional circumstances;
- the employee's employment should be terminated due to unsuccessful completion of probation.

The employee will normally receive at least 10 working days' written notice of the hearing.

The notification will include:

- the date, time and location of the hearing;
- details of the concerns being considered;
- copies of the documentation to be relied upon;
- confirmation of the employee's right to be accompanied by a recognised trade union representative or workplace colleague;
- confirmation that dismissal is a possible outcome.

The employee must normally provide any documentation they intend to rely upon, together with details of any witnesses, at least five working days before the hearing.

The hearing will normally be chaired by the Headteacher, supported by an appropriate adviser where required. Having considered all the evidence presented, the Headteacher may decide to:

- confirm the employee's appointment;
- extend the probationary period in exceptional circumstances;
- dismiss the employee on the grounds of unsuccessful completion of probation.

The decision will normally be confirmed in writing within five working days of the hearing.

Where dismissal is the outcome, the written confirmation will include:

- the reasons for the decision;
- the employee's contractual notice arrangements;
- the right of appeal.

Section 13

# APPEALS

Reviewing decisions. Ensuring procedural fairness.

Employees have the right to appeal against a decision to dismiss following a Probation Hearing.

Any appeal must be submitted in writing to the Chair of Governors within 10 working days of receiving written confirmation of the decision.

The appeal should clearly state:

- the grounds of appeal;
- any supporting evidence;
- the outcome the employee is seeking.

An Appeal Hearing will normally be heard by a panel of governors who have had no previous involvement in the case.

The employee will normally receive at least 10 working days' notice of the appeal hearing and may be accompanied by a recognised trade union representative or workplace colleague.

The Appeal Panel will consider whether:

- the probationary process was followed fairly;
- the evidence supported the original decision;
- any new information materially affects the outcome.

The Appeal Panel may:

- uphold the original decision;
- overturn the decision and reinstate the employee;
- overturn the decision and extend the probationary period where appropriate.

The outcome of the appeal will normally be confirmed in writing within five working days of the hearing.

The decision of the Appeal Panel is final.

Section 14

# EQUALITY, MONITORING AND REVIEW

Ensuring fairness. Monitoring application. Reviewing effectiveness.

**Equality**

Riverside Bridge School is committed to ensuring that this policy is implemented fairly, consistently and without unlawful discrimination.

The probationary process will be applied in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Employees will not be treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Where an employee has a disability or other circumstance that requires reasonable adjustments, the school will give appropriate consideration to its duties under the Equality Act 2010 throughout the probationary period. This may include adjustments to working arrangements, additional support, amended review arrangements or, where appropriate, an extension to the probationary period.

**Monitoring and Review**

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented consistently across the school and that probationary arrangements are managed fairly, objectively and in accordance with employment legislation.

The Governing Body will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through periodic review and ensure that it continues to reflect current legislation, best practice and the operational needs of the school.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where changes in legislation, employment practice or organisational requirements make this necessary.

Section 15

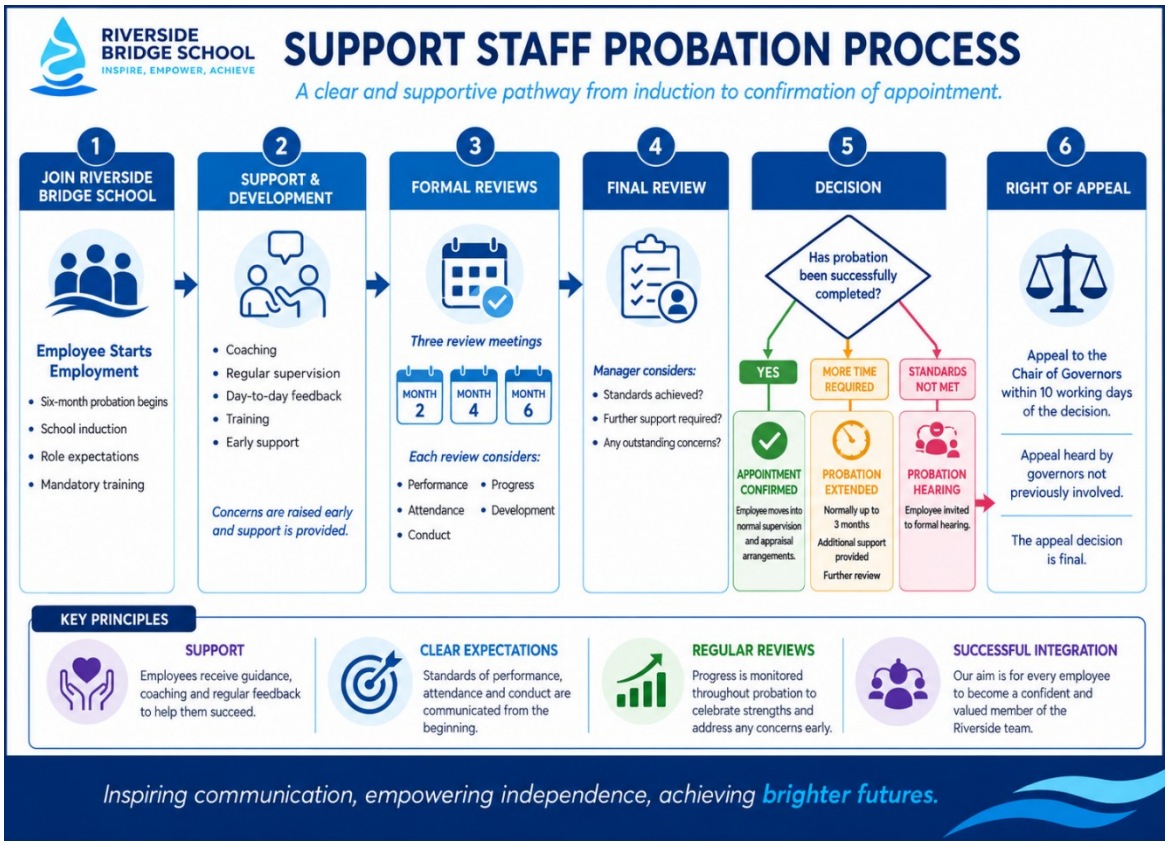
# RELATED POLICIES & FRAMEWORKS

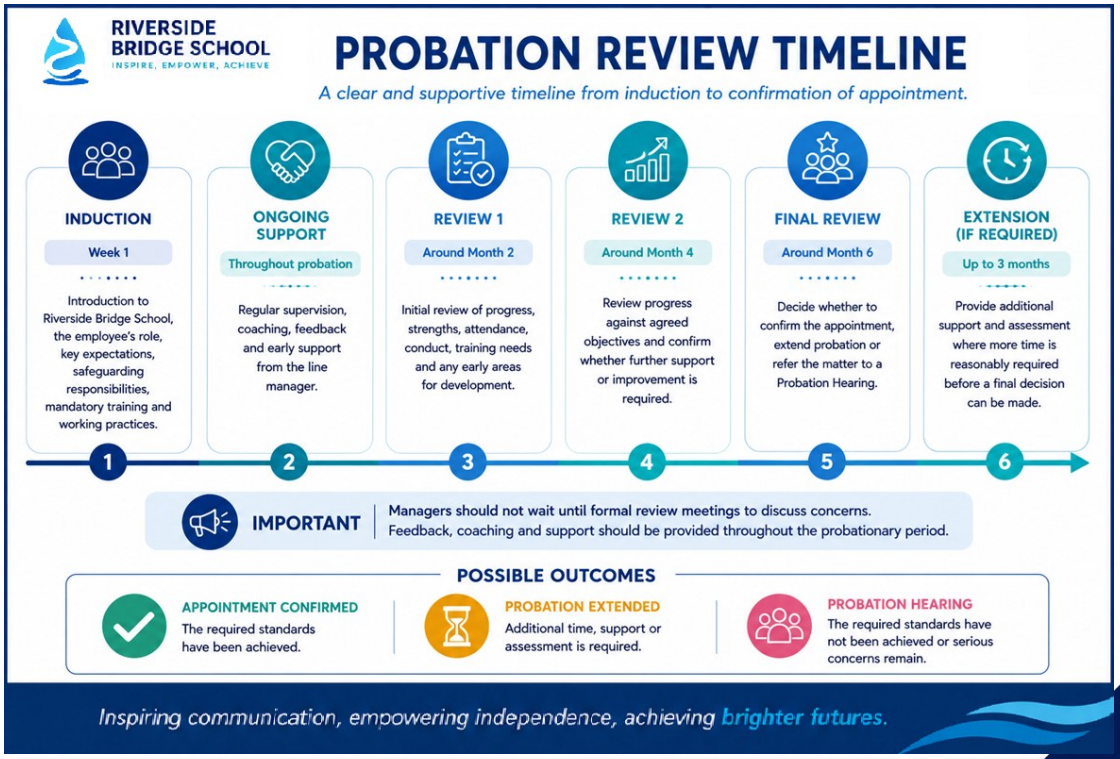
Connecting practice. Strengthening consistency.

This policy should be read alongside the following Riverside Bridge School policies:

- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Induction Policy
- Staff Induction Framework and Checklist
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Attendance Management Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Equality, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy
- Appraisal Policy
- Continuing Professional Development and Coaching Policy

# APPENDICES


RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL
INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE
SUPPORT STAFF PROBATION PROCESS
A clear and supportive pathway from induction to confirmation of appointment.
1
JOIN RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL
Employee Starts Employment
Six-month probation begins
School induction
Role expectations
Mandatory training
2
SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT
Coaching
Regular supervision
Day-to-day feedback
Training
Early support
Concerns are raised early and support is provided.
3
FORMAL REVIEWS
Three review meetings
MONTH 2
MONTH 4
MONTH 6
Each review considers:
Performance
Progress
Attendance
Development
Conduct
4
FINAL REVIEW
Manager considers:
Standards achieved?
Further support required?
Any outstanding concerns?
5
DECISION
Has probation been successfully completed?
YES
MORE TIME REQUIRED
STANDARDS NOT MET
APPOINTMENT CONFIRMED
Employee moves into normal supervision and appraisal arrangements.
PROBATION EXTENDED
Normally up to 3 months
Additional support provided
Further review
PROBATION HEARING
Employee invited to formal hearing.
6
RIGHT OF APPEAL
Appeal to the Chair of Governors within 10 working days of the decision.
Appeal heard by governors not previously involved.
The appeal decision is final.
KEY PRINCIPLES
SUPPORT
Employees receive guidance, coaching and regular feedback to help them succeed.
CLEAR EXPECTATIONS
Standards of performance, attendance and conduct are communicated from the beginning.
REGULAR REVIEWS
Progress is monitored throughout probation to celebrate strengths and address any concerns early.
SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION
Our aim is for every employee to become a confident and valued member of the Riverside team.
Inspiring communication, empowering independence, achieving brighter futures.


RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL
INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE
PROBATION REVIEW TIMELINE
A clear and supportive timeline from induction to confirmation of appointment.
INDUCTION
Week 1
Introduction to Riverside Bridge School, the employee's role, key expectations, safeguarding responsibilities, mandatory training and working practices.
1
ONGOING SUPPORT
Throughout probation
Regular supervision, coaching, feedback and early support from the line manager.
2
REVIEW 1
Around Month 2
Initial review of progress, strengths, attendance, conduct, training needs and any early areas for development.
3
REVIEW 2
Around Month 4
Review progress against agreed objectives and confirm whether further support or improvement is required.
4
FINAL REVIEW
Around Month 6
Decide whether to confirm the appointment, extend probation or refer the matter to a Probation Hearing.
5
EXTENSION (IF REQUIRED)
Up to 3 months
Provide additional support and assessment where more time is reasonably required before a final decision can be made.
6
IMPORTANT
Managers should not wait until formal review meetings to discuss concerns. Feedback, coaching and support should be provided throughout the probationary period.
POSSIBLE OUTCOMES
APPOINTMENT CONFIRMED
The required standards have been achieved.
PROBATION EXTENDED
Additional time, support or assessment is required.
PROBATION HEARING
The required standards have not been achieved or serious concerns remain.
Inspiring communication, empowering independence, achieving brighter futures.