

## **Bourne Education Trust policy for appraising performance and dealing with capability issues for all school 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.*

Bourne Education Trust adopted this policy on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2019 and it applies to all staff employed within the Trust as defined in paragraph 1 below.

Trustees will review it in 3 years following, where applicable, consultation with the staff to which appraisal applies.

### **1. Definitions**

“Headteacher” also refers to any other title used to identify the Headteacher where appropriate.

“Executive Group member” refers to any member of the Bourne Education Trust Executive Group.

“Employee” refers to any member of the staff employed to work at the Trust.

“Senior Manager” refers to any member of the academy or central team delegated by the Headteacher/Executive Group member, COO or CEO to deal with an appraisal and/or capability matter under this procedure.

If the Headteacher/Executive Group member, following consultation with the Chair of Governors/CEO or COO, considers that there is no senior manager to whom s/he can reasonably delegate a specific capability matter then the Headteacher/Executive Group member will take the role of the senior manager for that specific case and the role of the “Headteacher/Executive Group member” under this procedure will be performed by a “Disciplinary Committee” of the Governing Body/Trustees consisting of not less than 3 governors/trustees, (except in circumstances provided for in the Secretary of State’s guidance on the Staffing Regulations), none of whom will have had previous involvement in the case.

The role of the Headteacher/Executive Group member will be taken by appropriate governors/Executive Team members or Trustees as indicated where the appraisal and or capability being reviewed is that of the Headteacher/Executive Group member.

“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. We may also vary any parts of this procedure, including any time limits, as 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 all staff employed by the Trust, except those on contracts of less than one term, those teachers undergoing induction (ie 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 Trust (including Heateachers/Executive Team members). 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 Bourne Education Trust 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.

### **1. The appraisal period**

- 1.1 The appraisal period will run for twelve months from 1<sup>st</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> August.
- 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 serious 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.

## **2. Appointing appraisers**

- 2.1 The Headteacher will be appraised by the Governing Body supported by the Executive Leader for that cluster.
- 2.2 The Headteacher will decide annually who will appraise other employees covered by this policy (this will be notified to staff annually).
- 2.3 The CEO/Trustees will decide annually who will appraise other employees covered by this policy (this will be notified to staff annually).

## **3. Setting objectives**

- 3.1 The Headteacher's objectives will be set by the Governing Body after consultation with Executive Leader for that cluster.
- 3.2 The objectives for all other staff will be set by the appointed line manager/appraiser.
- 3.3 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. The appraiser and employee will seek to agree the objectives but, if that is not possible, the appraiser will determine the objectives. Objectives may be revised if circumstances change.
- 3.4 The objectives set for each employee will, if achieved, contribute to the Trust's plans for improving the Trust's educational provision and performance and improving the educational opportunities of pupils across the Trust. This will be ensured by quality assuring all objectives against the school/Trust development plan.

## **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 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" published in July 2011 and any subsequent amendment thereof.
- 4.2 The Headteacher/Executive Group member or governing body (as appropriate) will need to consider whether certain teachers should also be assessed against other sets of standards published by the Secretary of State that are relevant to them.

## **5. Reviewing performance**

- 5.1 Observation

- 5.1.1 Bourne Education Trust believes that observation of classroom practice and other responsibilities for teachers, and support staff who support teachers in the classroom, is important both as a way of assessing performance in order to identify any particular strengths and areas for development they may have and of gaining useful information which can inform school improvement more generally.
  - 5.1.2 All observation will be carried out in a supportive fashion.
  - 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 those 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 and the expected standards of performance will be made clear by the appraiser.

## **6. Drop Ins**

- 6.1 In addition to formal observation, the Headteacher/Executive Group member 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.

## **7. Development and support**

- 7.1 Appraisal is a supportive process which will be used to inform continuing professional development. Bourne Education Trust 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.

## **8. Feedback**

- 8.1 Employees will receive constructive feedback on their performance throughout the year 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.

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
- 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; explain the implications and process if no, or insufficient, improvement is made.

8.3 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.

## **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 his/her performance will be managed under the capability procedure. The employee will be invited to a formal capability meeting. 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 assessed in respect of each appraisal period.

10.2 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 which will take place at least once a term.

10.3 The employee will receive as soon as practicable following the end of each appraisal period, and have the opportunity to comment in writing on, a written appraisal report.

10.4 Teachers will receive their written appraisal reports by 31 October (31 December for the Headteacher/Executive Group member) and support staff no later than 10 working days after their appraisal date.

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 Headteacher/Executive Group members, by 31 October for other teachers.

## **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, who is covered by Part A, 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:
  - the date, time and place of the meeting.
  - the basic details of the concerns about the employee's performance
  - the employee's right to be accompanied by a representative of his/her trade union or a workplace colleague of his/her choice
  - the titles of enclosed copies of any documents to be used at the meeting.
  - names of any witnesses to be called
  - his/her right to call witnesses on his/her behalf.
  - The name and office of any adviser who will accompany the senior manager at the meeting.
- 1.3 An extra copy, together with any enclosures, will be provided for his/her companion upon request.

This meeting is intended to establish the facts. It will be conducted by a senior manager delegated by the Headteacher/Executive Group member (or the Chair of Governors/Chair of Trustees for Headteacher/Executive Group member). 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 investigation 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 ten 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 which could then lead to his/her dismissal.
  - informed 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. 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.

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 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 employee's 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 Bourne Education Trust 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 s/he may present a written submission for consideration and/or be represented by a companion in her/his absence.

## **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 (Chair of Governors/Chair of Trustees for the Headteacher/Executive Group member) 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 a 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**

- 5.1 If an employee feels that a decision to issue a first and/or final written warning, is wrong or unjust, s/he may appeal in writing against the decision.
- 5.2 Appeals against a written warning shall be restricted to 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 or Trustees (as appropriate). The number of members on the Appeals Panel will not be less than two. The panel may be advised by a person engaged for the purpose. 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**

- 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 relevant senior leader.
- 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**

- 7.1 The employee has a right of appeal to the Appeals Committee of the Governing Body/Trustees against a decision to dismiss.
- 7.2 The Appeals Committee shall consist of at least 3 members, 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 of the relevant body within 5 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**

Following a decision to dismiss, the Governing Body/Trustees 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 of the panel.

In the event that the Appeal Committee 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**

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 Where action is being considered against an employee who is a trade union representative the normal procedure should be followed. Depending on the circumstances, however, it is advisable to discuss the matter at an early stage with an official employed by the union, after obtaining the employee's agreement.

## **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. Failure to observe confidentiality could be a reason for disciplinary action under the Trust's disciplinary procedure.

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