

# The Auriga Academy Trust

## PROBATIONARY PROCEDURE FOR SUPPORT STAFF

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Please note that all Trust policies are reviewed annually. Should you have any queries regards this policy, note an omission or wish to propose an amendment, please email [sconnor@strathmore.richmond.sch.uk](mailto:sconnor@strathmore.richmond.sch.uk).

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## **1. Scope**

This procedure applies to all support staff employed by The Auriga Academy Trust. It does not apply to teachers.

## **2. Policy and Purpose**

The main purpose of a probationary period is to allow the schools within The Trust to assess the capabilities and conduct of the employee and for the employee to decide whether or not the job and the employer match up to expectations. It is therefore a useful tool for both parties.

Given the continuing pressure on schools to maximise efficiency and the increasing legislative requirements imposing higher standards on employers in the way in which staff are treated, it is more important than ever that probationary periods are used correctly, with the aim of ensuring the successful induction of new support staff into their jobs.

If probationary periods are to be effective, they need the active and positive involvement of the employer (The Trust) and especially the new employee's line manager or supervisor. This involvement is not just about identifying any shortcomings in the new employee's performance. The line manager is also responsible for presenting the employee with opportunities to discuss his or her work concerns and for dealing with these concerns so as to avoid the employee leaving at or before the end of the probationary period.

This procedure is provided to enable the line manager/ Headteacher to identify any shortcomings that are evident in the employee's performance, and to explain and agree a strategy to overcome these deficiencies within a supportive environment. The aim of the process is to ensure that the new employee is performing at the appropriate level of competence and efficiency by the end of the probationary period.

## **3. Probationary Period**

The probationary period is for a period of 6 months from the start date of the employee's contract, with the possibility of extending it up to a maximum period of 12 months.

## **4. The Probationary Process**

At the outset, and prior to the advertisement of the post, it is expected that:

1. The manager would have given serious consideration to the content of the person specification for the job and;
2. The successful candidate would have been assessed against that specification at interview.

In cases where, although the best candidate, the employee is deficient in one or more key areas of the specification, the manager should ensure that the necessary support is provided to the employee to overcome or address the problem. This may take the form of training, additional supervision for a period, structured discussions or whatever is necessary and reasonable to ensure a successful appointment.

The employee should receive a suitable induction (see Induction checklist Appendix 1) and have the tasks and objectives of the job explained within a suitable timeframe and environment. Managers should avoid leaving the new employee to deal with situations which have not been properly explained and the new employee should have one or more contacts to refer to in case of unfamiliar circumstances arising.

As soon as possible after appointment, the manager should agree with the employee an appropriate performance and development plan. This should take account of the need for the employee to familiarise themselves with their new role. Once finalised the

performance and development plan should be sent to the School Administrator and will be held on the employee's personnel file.

#### **4.1 The Probationary Review Meetings**

The line manager with SLT should hold an assessment meeting with the employee at 10 AND 18 weeks. The employee should be given feedback of their progress at these meetings. The relevant Probation Report (Appendices 2 and 3) should be completed following each assessment meeting and a copy of this should be given to the employee with the opportunity to add comments on their copy which they should return to the line manager. A copy of this will be placed on the employee's personnel file. Any comments made by the employee should be considered seriously and acted upon where this is appropriate.

It is important to bear in mind that any concerns about the employee's performance, attendance or conduct should be dealt with as soon as possible after the event and not stored to be discussed at the probationary meeting. Any areas of concerns which are discussed at the probationary meetings should not be a surprise to the employee.

#### **4.2 Extension of the Probationary Period**

In most cases, it would be expected that the employee would be confirmed in their appointment within the six month probationary period. However, there may be occasions that arise where an employee has not reached the appropriate standard at the end of that time, but the manager considers that an extension of the probationary period may result in any identified problems being overcome. Where this situation arises, the employee should be left in no doubt that failure to improve to the standards required is likely to result in dismissal. Assessment meetings should continue to be arranged at intervals of not more than 8 weeks until the action to be taken is clear.

An extension can be made for a further 3 months or less but should be no more than six months in total. Under no circumstances should the probationary period be extended beyond 12 months. Where the period is extended, it is important to set out the terms of the extension in writing (Appendix 4), making clear:

- In what ways the employee's performance has fallen short of the standards required
- The length of the extension
- The performance standards that must be met within the set period
- The outcome if the performance fails to reach the standards required i.e., dismissal

Where the employee has a disability which falls within the definition of the Equality Act, the manager will be required to make any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary in making any final assessment as to the suitability of the employee for the post. Where necessary, advice from Occupational Health should be obtained to identify these reasonable adjustments.

Managers should be aware that there is a requirement to provide paid notice to terminate employment and that employment protection rights in respect of unfair dismissal are available once an employee has completed one year's continuous service. It is important therefore that where a manager recognises there are issues with an employee's performance or attendance, and measures of support which have been put in place have not brought about an acceptable level of improvement in standards, any action as indicated under 4.4 below is instigated at the 18 week assessment meeting i.e., extension of the probationary period or final review meeting to consider termination of contract. Managers are advised to seek advice from the Trust HR Manager.

#### **4.3 Successful Completion of the Probationary Period**

Where the employee has successfully completed the probation period, the manager should confirm this at the 18 week assessment and complete the Probation Report to indicate the same.

#### **4.4 Failure to Complete the Probationary Period**

##### **a) External Appointments**

In the event that an employee does not successfully complete their probationary period, the guidelines for dealing with dismissals set out below will be applied. In cases of poor attendance due to sickness absence, it will be expected that the Managing Attendance Policy will be applied, but managers are not expected to have exhausted that procedure before dismissal on these grounds has taken place.

##### **b) Internal Appointments**

Where an internally appointed staff has more than two years' continuous service with the school and/or The Trust, then the manager should apply the Capability and Managing Attendance procedures as appropriate to deal with issues of performance and sickness absence respectively. In such cases, the guidelines below will not apply.

##### **c) Final Review Meeting**

Where the manager is of the view that the employee has not met the required standards and/or attendance, despite reasonable efforts having been made to correct the problem, a final review meeting will be arranged. The Trust HR Manager must be informed and supplied with all supporting documentation. The Trust HR Manager will issue the employee written notice of at least 5 working days of the final review meeting and the individual will be advised that dismissal will be considered as a possible outcome of that meeting. The employee will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work colleague to the meeting. Where the employee is not a member of a trade union and is unable to find a suitable work colleague to support them, they can make a request to the school to bring a friend.

The Headteacher who has the delegated authority to dismiss should meet with the employee and the employee's representative, also in attendance will be the Trust HR Manager. If the line manager is anyone other than the Headteacher, then they will be in attendance to present the case.

The Headteacher should review the employee's performance and attendance record and the employee should be given the opportunity to respond to any questions of poor attendance, incapability or misconduct, before any decision is made to extend the probationary period or dismiss the employee.

The decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing within 5 working days of the meeting. Where the decision is to dismiss, the letter will inform the employee of their right to appeal against the decision.

##### **d) Appeal**

If the employee wishes to appeal against the decision to dismiss, they must submit the appeal in writing to the Trust HR Manager within 10 working days of receiving the letter notifying of the decision to dismiss.

The Trust HR Manager will set up an appeal meeting as soon as possible after receiving notification of the appeal letter from the employee. The employee will be given 5 working days' notice of the meeting and they will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work colleague. Where the employee is not a member of a trade union and is unable to find a suitable work colleague to support them, they can make a request to the school to bring a friend.

The appeal should be heard by a panel consisting of at least two governors who have not been previously involved in the case and a Trustee (i.e. chair or vice-chair of the local governing body). The Headteacher is responsible for presenting the case. In the papers for the consideration of the panel, the Headteacher will include a management report indicating the history of the case and detail what means of support have been put in place to address the issues, dates of the probationary assessment meetings with the assessment reports and rationale for the decision to dismiss. This paperwork should be sent to the employee with the letter notifying them of the Appeal Meeting.

The outcome of the Appeal Meeting should be confirmed to the employee within 5 working days of the meeting.

**Induction Checklist for Permanent Staff**

**Guidance:**

The induction checklist documents the induction process for a new starter and should be completed with management. The checklist needs to be kept centrally so both parties can access it.

It is the responsibility of both management and the new starter to ensure the checklist is kept up to date and all items are reviewed.

Completed induction checklists should be sent to School Administrator after the 18 week probation review meeting. These will be held on the individuals personnel file.

<b>Name of Employee:</b>	
<b>Job Title:</b>	
<b>Name of Line Manager:</b>	
<b>Date Induction Complete:</b>	/ /

First day	Carried out by	Date	Notes
Welcomed by:		/ /	
Provide Key Information Safeguarding, staff handbook, school day, term dates & data protection ( <i>handling of sensitive information</i> )		/ /	
Show new starter where they will be working		/ /	
Introductions line manager, team, other colleagues and senior managers		/ /	
Show new starter rest of organisation including facilities		/ /	
Deal with any key HR Matters HR forms, DBS, ID documents, P45 & general questions		/ /	
Outline health & safety fire escape routes & general H&S		/ /	
First week	Carried out by	Date	Notes

**Introduction to the school:**

School ethos and pupil needs.		/ /	
Future plans and developments		/ /	
<b>New Starter's Job:</b>			
Explain role fully and how it fits in the organisation. Include work practices		/ /	
Training relevant to role Explain statutory training for role		/ /	
Go through terms and conditions of employment Working hours, contract, pay day, holiday information & salary		/ /	
Details of probationary period		/ /	
Pension information		/ /	
Periods of notice		/ /	
Campus Details Parking, start/ end times, smoking, refreshment facilities and facilities for people with disabilities.		/ /	
<b>Policies and Procedures:</b>			
<p>Policies and Procedures: *Give employee full policy &amp; procedures list. Explain where they can access.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code of conduct &amp; Dress Code</li> <li>• Behaviour Support</li> <li>• Safeguarding</li> <li>• Complaints against staff</li> <li>• Equal Opportunities</li> <li>• Managing Health and Attendance</li> <li>• Special Leave</li> <li>• Whistleblowing</li> <li>• Discipline</li> <li>• Using ICT</li> <li>• Data Protection</li> <li>• Privacy Notice</li> </ul>		/ /	
<p>Health and Safety: *Explain importance of H&amp;S</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and safety policy</li> <li>• Accident and Incident reporting</li> <li>• Bite procedure</li> <li>• Evacuation explained</li> </ul>		/ /	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk Assessment if relevant</li> <li>• First Aid arrangements</li> </ul>			
First month	Carried out by	Date	Notes
Employee Representation Trade union membership information		/ /	
Towards the end of four weeks an informal meeting with the line manager to assess how the new starter is adjusting to their role.		/ /	
At 10 weeks	Carried out by	Date	Notes
Assessment meeting held with SLT in conjunction with the line manager. Discuss overall performance. Identify any development needs or areas for improvement.		/ /	
At 18 weeks	Carried out by	Date	Notes
Assessment meeting held with SLT in conjunction with the line manager. Discuss overall performance and review progress. Identify further training needs, concerns and set targets to be reviewed.		/ /	

At six months	Carried out by	Date	Notes
Decide if new starter has successfully passed the probation period. <b>If not</b> inform employee that their probation period has been extended and therefore they're still on probation.  If they're staying on probation the line manager needs to look to the next six months. Create work objectives, identify training needs and targets. Employee to be informed of the above and the expected improvements. Set final review date meeting.		/ /	
At 12 months	Carried out by	Date	Notes
If relevant decide if new starter has successfully passed the extended probation period. <b>If not</b> then initiate dismissal procedures		/ /	

Ask the employee for feedback on their induction.			
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Probation Report- 10 Week Report

**PROBATION REPORT: 10 WEEK REPORT - CONFIDENTIAL**

<b>Name of School:</b>	
<b>Name of Employee:</b>	
<b>Job Title:</b>	
<b>Start Date:</b>	

<b>1.</b>	Your comments on performance in each of areas listed below should be stated in full and discussed with the member of staff concerned. Areas of weaknesses which are not merely indicative of inexperience should be specified.
a)	UNDERSTANDING/KNOWLEDGE OF JOB AND CAPACITY TO LEARN <i>How has this developed?</i>
b)	INTEREST IN WORK AND DETERMINATION TO SEE THINGS THROUGH
c)	RELIABILITY AND ACCURACY IN CARRYING OUT WORK
d)	ABILITY TO ORGANISE HIS OR HER WORK AND MEET PLANNED WORK DEADLINES
e)	DOES HE/SHE ACHIEVE A SATISFACTORY LEVEL OF WORK OUTPUT
f)	WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE JOB
g)	EFFECTIVENESS OF WORKING RELATIONSHIPS EG. WITH WORKING COLLEAGUES, CLIENTS OR THE PUBLIC AS APPLICABLE

**TO BE COMPLETED ONLY WHERE MEMBER OF STAFF BEING APPRAISED IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING AND SUPERVISING A GROUP OF STAFF**

h) ABILITY TO LEAD, SUPPORT AND MOTIVATE OTHERS

i) COMMUNICATIONS WITH STAFF

j) ABILITY TO DELEGATE WORK

k) WORK PLANNING OF THE GROUP AND USE OF TIME EFFECTIVELY BY THE GROUP

**2. WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE FOR PERIOD UNDER REVIEW**

- At required standard in all matters
- At a satisfactory standard generally, but with some areas where improvement should be sought
- Below standard in an important matter or matters and not giving general satisfaction

**3. WHAT ARE SPECIFIC AREAS IN WHICH FURTHER IN JOB TRAINING AND GUIDANCE WILL BE GIVEN TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE**  
*(Details of specific areas and action to be taken must be discussed with the member of staff)*

**4. DO YOU RECOMMEND THAT HIS/HER EMPLOYMENT SHOULD CONTINUE**

- Yes  
For a further review at 18 weeks
- No  
Recommend the matter be considered at a Final Probationary Review Meeting

**5. WHAT ARE THE COMMENTS OF THE MEMBER OF STAFF ON THE WAY IN WHICH THE FORM HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND YOUR OVERALL ASSESSMENT**

**Date of Interview:**

I have seen and discussed this probation with my Supervisor

Signature of Staff Member:

Date: / /

Signature of Supervisor:

Date: / /

**COUNTERSIGNED BY HEAD TEACHER**

Signed:

Date: / /

If you have any queries relating to the completion of this form please contact Annushka St Paul, Academy Trust HR Manager.

Probation Report- 18 Week Report

**PROBATION REPORT: 18 WEEK REPORT - CONFIDENTIAL**

<b>Name of School:</b>	
<b>Name of Employee:</b>	
<b>Job Title:</b>	
<b>Start Date:</b>	

<b>6.</b>	Your comments on performance in each of areas listed below should be stated in full and discussed with the member of staff concerned. Areas of weaknesses which are not merely indicative of inexperience should be specified.
l)	UNDERSTANDING/KNOWLEDGE OF JOB AND CAPACITY TO LEARN <i>How has this developed?</i>
m)	INTEREST IN WORK AND DETERMINATION TO SEE THINGS THROUGH
n)	RELIABILITY AND ACCURACY IN CARRYING OUT WORK
o)	ABILITY TO ORGANISE HIS OR HER WORK AND MEET PLANNED WORK DEADLINES
p)	DOES HE/SHE ACHIEVE A SATISFACTORY LEVEL OF WORK OUTPUT
q)	WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE JOB
r)	EFFECTIVENESS OF WORKING RELATIONSHIPS EG. WITH WORKING COLLEAGUES, CLIENTS OR THE PUBLIC AS APPLICABLE

**TO BE COMPLETED ONLY WHERE MEMBER OF STAFF BEING APPRAISED IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING AND SUPERVISING A GROUP OF STAFF**

s) ABILITY TO LEAD, SUPPORT AND MOTIVATE OTHERS

t) COMMUNICATIONS WITH STAFF

u) ABILITY TO DELEGATE WORK

v) WORK PLANNING OF THE GROUP AND USE OF TIME EFFECTIVELY BY THE GROUP

**7. WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE FOR PERIOD UNDER REVIEW**

- At required standard in all matters
- At a satisfactory standard generally, but with some areas where improvement should be sought
- Below standard in an important matter or matters and not giving general satisfaction

**8. WHAT ARE SPECIFIC AREAS IN WHICH FURTHER IN JOB TRAINING AND GUIDANCE WILL BE GIVEN TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE**  
*(Details of specific areas and action to be taken must be discussed with the member of staff)*

**9. DO YOU RECOMMEND THAT HIS/HER EMPLOYMENT SHOULD CONTINUE**

- Yes
  - a) Satisfactory completion of the probationary period and appointment confirmed.
  - b) With an extension to the probationary review period of ..... to end on .....  
***(insert period of extension which can be up to 6 months)***
- No

Recommend the matter be considered at a Final Probationary Review Meeting

**10. WHAT ARE THE COMMENTS OF THE MEMBER OF STAFF ON THE WAY IN WHICH THE FORM HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND YOUR OVERALL ASSESSMENT**

**Date of Interview:**

**I have seen and discussed this probation with my Supervisor**

Signature of Staff Member:

Date: / /

Signature of Supervisor:

Date: / /

**COUNTERSIGNED BY HEAD TEACHER**

Signed:

Date: / /

If you have any queries relating to the completion of this form please contact Annushka St Paul,  
Academy Trust HR Manager.



**Extension of Probation Period**

**Staff Name**

Staff Address

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

Date

Dear ,

**EXTENSION OF PROBATION PERIOD**

I refer to your 18 week probationary meeting on (date of meeting).

As discussed at the meeting I was unable to confirm your appointment as (job title) due to reasons given below:-

*(State areas where standards are not being met)*

With a view to giving you more time to achieve the level of standards required in the areas mentioned above, I would like to extend your probationary period for a further (period of extension) to end on (date). During this time your performance will continue to be monitored.

I must inform you that if at the end of this period you fail to meet the required standard consideration will be given to your dismissal on the grounds of failed probation.

If you would like to access additional support, The Auriga Academy Trust provides all employees with access to the Workplace Options Employee Assistance Programme. It is a free, confidential and independent resource to support you at any time. You can contact them on their free phone number; 0800 243 458.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

**Notification of Final Review Meeting**

**Staff Name**

Staff Address

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

Date

Dear XXX,

**Notification of Final Review Meeting**

I refer to your 10/18 week probationary meeting on (date of meeting).

As discussed at the meeting I was unable to confirm your appointment as (job title) due to reasons given below:-

*(State areas where standards are not being met)*

This is despite the measures of support put in place to help you achieve the required standard.

This has been as follows:-

*(State what has been done over the period to help the employee to reach the required standard)*

In the circumstances I would like you to attend a Final Review Meeting on (date), at (time) at (venue) with (Headteacher) who will review your performance and/or attendance record. Also in attendance will be (line manager- *if relevant*) and Trust HR Manager.

During the meeting you will have the opportunity to respond to any questions of poor attendance and/or incapability. You are entitled to be accompanied to this meeting by a trade union representative or a work colleague.

I must inform you that following the review, dismissal will be considered as a possible outcome of the meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Trust HR Manager

Dismissal Following Unsatisfactory Probation

Staff Name

Staff Address

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

Date

Dear XXX,

**DISMISSAL FOLLOWING UNSATISFACTORY PROBATION**

Further to our meeting on (date), I am writing to confirm that having reviewed your situation I have no option but to confirm that you have not satisfactorily completed your probation period and that we are unable to continue your employment with the school with effect from (date).

In making my decision, I took into account the following points:-  
*(State the facts of the case and the reason for the decision)*

If you wish to appeal against this decision you must submit your appeal in writing to the Trust HR Manager within 10 working days of receiving this letter. It is your choice whether you would like your appeal to be heard through a further meeting or through the submission of a statement. You will have the right to be accompanied to this meeting by a trade union representative or a work colleague.

In line with your Contract of Employment, you are entitled to receive one month's paid notice and this will be paid in lieu of notice and will be credited to your bank account in the normal way.

I would like to thank you for choosing to work for (School) as part of The Auriga Academy Trust and your efforts since joining us and wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher