

Aspire Learning Trust



Performance Appraisal and Capability Policy

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Signature of Chair	
Print Name	S.Donnachie

POLICY FOR APPRAISING PERFORMANCE AND DEALING WITH CAPABILITY ISSUES FOR ALL SCHOOL STAFF

The Board of Directors for the Aspire Learning Trust adopted this policy and it applies to all teachers, the CEO, the Principal/ Executive Headteacher and all support staff employed at the school as defined in paragraph 1 below.

1. Definitions

- 1.1 The term CEO refers to the educational professional who sits on the Board of Directors.

The term “Head teacher” also refers, where appropriate, to any other title used to identify the Head Teacher, such as Principal and Executive Headteacher.
- 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 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 Head Teacher 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 Head Teacher, following consultation with the Chair of Governors and CEO considers that there is no senior manager to whom s/he can reasonably delegate a specific capability matter, then the Head Teacher will take the role of the senior manager for that specific case and the role of the Headteacher goes to the CEO.
- 1.5 The role of the Head Teacher will be taken by CEO as indicated where the appraisal and or capability being reviewed is that of the Head Teacher.
- 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. 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 the Head Teacher, all teachers and all 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 Head Teacher). 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.

1. The Appraisal Period

- 1.1 The appraisal period will run for twelve months from 1st September to 31st 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.
- 1.4 Employees whose role or responsibilities change significantly with an appraisal period, shall have a second "in year" appraisal period, but ending on 31st August of that year.

There is some flexibility to have a longer or shorter appraisal period when teachers begin or end employment with a school or local authority or when unattached teachers change post within the same authority.

2. Appointing Appraisers

- 2.1 The CEO will be appraised by the Board of Directors, supported by a suitably skilled and/or experienced external adviser who has been appointed by the Board for that purpose.
- 2.2 The task of appraising the CEO, including the setting of objectives, will be delegated to a sub-group consisting of two or three members of the Board.
- 2.3 The Head teacher will be appraised by the CEO, in consultation with the LGB.
The Head Teacher will decide who will appraise other employees covered by the policy. This will be notified to staff annually.

3. Setting Objectives

- 3.1 The CEO objectives will be set by the Board, after consultation with the external adviser.
- 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. 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.

- 3.3 The College operates a system of moderation to ensure that all appraisers are working to the same standards. Objectives will be moderated by the Head Teacher and SLT to ensure that they are consistent between teachers with similar experience and levels of responsibility. Should the objectives not be agreed, the final decision on allocation of objectives rests with the Head Teacher. The teacher may record his/her objection to an objective on the planning statement. Objectives may be revised if circumstance change.
- 3.4 The appraiser will take into account the effects of an individual's circumstances, including any disability, when agreeing objectives. For example, this might include a reasonable adjustment to allow an individual slightly longer to complete a tasks than might otherwise be the case. When staff return from an extended period of absence, objectives may be adjusted to allow them to readjust to their working environment.
- 3.5 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 students at that school. This will be ensured by, for example, quality assuring all objectives against the school improvement 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, for introduction in September 2012" and any subsequent amendment thereof. In addition, post threshold teachers will be assessed using 'professional standards for post threshold teachers'.
- 4.2 The Head Teacher 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 This school 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 in accordance with an observation protocol determined by the Head Teacher following consultation with the staff to whom it applies. The classroom observation protocol, Appendix A.
- 5.1.3 Teachers can expect to be given at least 5 working days' notice of the date and time of the observation and will be provided with verbal feedback no later than the end of the next school day. Other than in exceptional circumstances, teachers can expect to receive written feedback with 5 working days.
- 5.1.4 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.
- 5.1.5 Classroom observation of teachers will be carried out by senior or middle managers with QTS.
- 5.1.6 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 observations, the Head Teacher 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.
- 6.2 All "drop ins" will be carried out in accordance with a protocol determined by the Head Teacher following consultation with the staff to whom it applies. The procedure for "drop ins" is contained within the classroom observation protocol, Appendix A.

Learning Walks

- 6.3 Learning walks may take place in order to collect evidence about teaching and learning, evidence of progress and areas for school development. They are intended to be developmental and constructive rather than judgemental and are a whole school improvement activity. The results of information gained during learning walks and drop-ins are not intended to form part of the appraisal or the capability procedures. (The procedure for learning walks is contained within the classroom observation protocol, Appendix A)

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 school's CPD programme will be informed by the training and development needs identified as part of the appraisal process. In the annual budget planning cycle, the governing body will make the best efforts to ensure that resources are made available for appropriate training and support agreed for appraisees. The Head Teacher will be responsible for ensuring that access to CPD support is provided on an equitable basis.
- 7.4 With regard to the provision of CPD in the case of competing demands on the school budget, a decision on relative priority will be taken with regard to the extent to which:
- a) The training and support will help the school to achieve its priorities; and
 - b) The CPD identified is essential for an appraisee to meet their objectives.

Account will be taken in a review meeting of where it has not been possible for teachers to fully meet their performance criteria because the support recorded in the planning statement has not been provided.

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 formally assessed in respect of each appraisal period.
- 10.2 In assessing the performance of the CEO, the Trust Board must consult the external adviser.
- 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 which will take place at least once a term.
- 10.4 The employee will receive this as soon as practicable following the end of each appraisal period and have the opportunity to comment in writing on a written appraisal report. Ideally the Head Teacher's appraisal will happen as soon as practicable following the end of each appraisal period followed by the SLT team and then middle leaders.
- 10.5 Teachers will receive their written appraisal reports by 31st October (31st December for the CEO and support staff by 21st July).
- 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 31st December for CEO, by 31st October for other teachers and by 21st July for support staff.

Part B ~ Capability Procedure

Purpose

Our Trust aims to deliver high quality teaching and learning for the benefit of all our students. In order to achieve this aim, we need to engage the talents, commitment, skills and energies of all members of the school environment. The Trust values its employees and recognises their competence, effectiveness and ability to perform to expected standards. This policy will apply where, for reasons other than ill health, the performance of a member of staff falls below and acceptable standard over a sustained period.

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 10 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 Head Teacher (or the CEO for the Head Teacher). 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:
 - a) In the case of a teacher, identify the poor performance, including which of the standards expected of the teacher is not being met;
 - b) Ensure the employee is given an opportunity to ask questions, present evidence, call witnesses, respond to evidence and make representations;
 - c) Establish the likely causes of poor performance including any reasons why any measures taken so far have not led to the required improvement;
 - d) 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;
 - e) 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;
 - f) Set out the timetable for improvement and explain how performance will be monitored and reviewed;
 - g) 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
 - h) 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.
 - i) Informed the employee of the right of appeal;
 - j) 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 students' 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 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.
- 2.3 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 (CEO for the Head Teacher) 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

- 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;
 - any procedural irregularities. A statement giving the reasons for the appeal should be submitted to the Clerk to the Governors within 10 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 not be less than two. The panel may be advised by a person engaged for the purpose by the Governing Body. 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 Headteacher (CEO and Board Panel for the Head Teacher).
- 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 by the Headteacher 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 against a decision to dismiss.
- 7.2 The Appeals Committee shall consist of at least three governors (Directors in the case of the Headteacher), none of whom will have had any previous involvement in the case. 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;

- any procedural irregularities. A statement giving the reasons for the appeal should be submitted to the Clerk to the Governors (Board) within 10 working days of the formal written warning having been received.

7.3 The employee's notice of appeal should be sent to the Clerk to the Governors (Board) 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 Governing Body (Board of Directors) 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 Disciplinary 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. Failure to observe confidentiality could be a reason for disciplinary action under the school's disciplinary procedure.