



Probation Policy and Procedure

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Description: This document details the School's probation policy and procedure.

OUR SCHOOL AIMS

- ❖ *To be a safe and trusted foundation for our pupils to achieve their individual academic, social and creative potential.*
- ❖ *To cultivate the skills, knowledge, self-awareness and academic credentials our pupils will need to confidently meet the challenges of our rapidly changing world.*
- ❖ *To instil and nurture a strong sense of social responsibility, integrity and environmental awareness so our pupils positively contribute to a sustainable and just society.*
- ❖ *To guide each pupil in the discovery, delight and development of their individual gifts, talents and character.*
- ❖ *To create and sustain an inclusive and contemporary school culture, where diversity, difference and individuality are recognised and celebrated.*
- ❖ *To prioritise physical and emotional wellbeing across every facet of our school community.*

1.0 SCOPE

This policy seeks to provide clarity and consistency, clear pathways and approval processes during the induction and probation period and applies to all new staff.

2.0 PURPOSE

- 2.1 Effective probation is vital both for career development and as a means of assessing a member of staff's competence to do the job to which they are appointed.
- 2.2 Probation must not be viewed simply as a paper exercise, but as a continuing process. It gives the member of staff relevant guidance to develop any necessary skills to carry out their job effectively. At the same time, it enables the School to assess the contribution of a new member of staff and to ensure they fulfil the requirements of the post.
- 2.3 The outcomes of the probation process are to:
 - set objectives in order to clarify what is expected from the member of staff;
 - identify learning needs for the member of staff;



- assess the member of staff's contribution to ensure they are fulfilling the requirements of the role;
- assess the member of staff's competence;
- identify who is involved in supporting these probation objectives;
- provide a link to the induction process;
- set the scene for future PDR review meetings.

3.0 DURATION OF PROBATIONARY PERIOD

- 3.1 The probation period is 12 months for teaching staff and senior managers, with termly reviews.
- 3.2 The probation period is 6 months for support staff with reviews after 2, 4 and 6 months. Where a school holiday falls within a probation period, an extended end date will be agreed.
- 3.3 During the probationary period the member of staff's performance within the role will be regularly monitored to ensure that they meet the requirements of the role.
- 3.4 The School reserves the right to vary the above depending on the circumstances.

4.0 PROCEDURE

- 4.1 The manager will monitor the application of the probation process and ensure that proposals to approve probation are made on an appropriate, considered basis and only where such a recommendation is justified.
- 4.2 The manager will normally be the person who manages the member of staff for the majority of the contract. Where it is more suitable for another member of staff to act as supervisor and mentor to the probationer this should be clearly communicated to all members of staff concerned.
- 4.3 After an initial settling in period the manager (or nominee) will define and agree with the probationer the objectives of the post, specify expected outcomes and agree reasonable and achievable targets in line with the job description.
- 4.4 Following this, a system of regular review will begin with formal review meetings taking place. These formal reviews are necessary in order to provide sufficient information on which a final assessment of performance can be made (via the completion of a final probationary report).
- 4.5 However, in exceptional circumstances, i.e. where there is a detrimental effect on pupils/students, and/or the member of staff is in breach of their contract and/or job description, the School reserves the right to terminate at any time within the probationary period (rather than continuing to the end), giving notice in line with the member of staff's contract of employment.
- 4.6 The review meetings will provide the new member of staff with the opportunity to receive feedback on the work objectives, targets and standards set by the manager and will also provide an opportunity to highlight particular weaknesses, if any exist, giving the member of staff an opportunity to rectify any problems before their next review or the end of their probationary period.
- 4.7 The probation reports should state clearly the objectives for the probationer and plans to help the probationer achieve their objectives (e.g. provision of guidance, developmental opportunities, monitoring and evaluating progress).
- 4.8 The review meetings should also aim to identify and review any training requirements.



- 4.9 HR will remind managers when the probation reviews are due, including the final probationary review (and subsequent report). However, meeting dates should be agreed at prior review meetings and noted on the probation form. At this time there should be a formal meeting between the manager (or nominee) and the probationer to record progress and agree measures to ensure that the set objectives are met.
- 4.10 At the end of the probation process, discussions should be held with the member of staff about their objectives and personal development plan that will form the basis for their continuing development.
- 4.11 If a member of staff is unable to attend the final probationary review for reasons of absence then they will not automatically pass their probation. In these circumstances, the manager should arrange for an interview to occur at the earliest possible opportunity following the probationer's return to work.
- 4.12 The meeting may take place before, on or after the probationary period is over and the probationary period will not be deemed to have been completed until the School has carried out its review and formally confirmed the position in writing to the member of staff.
- 4.13 Specific to teaching staff:

New teachers are formally observed once in their first term by their direct manager and once by the Deputy Head Academic/Director of Studies (Pep School). Teachers are expected to provide the observer with a lesson plan at least 24 hours in advance. Lesson plans can be in any format that suits the teacher. The Lingfield College Lesson Observation Form are completed by the observer and feedback is provided as soon as practicable following each observed lesson. The observations are followed by the first review meeting, where targets (objectives) are agreed and decided. The manager shares their report with the teacher then submits it to the Deputy Head Academic's / Director of Studies (prep School) PA and HR. Prior to the second review meeting, the manager may request an additional lesson observation. This is at the manager's discretion and dependent on targets (objectives) that were previously set. Targets are reviewed and evaluated at the second review meeting.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MANAGER

- 5.1 The main responsibilities of the manager in advising and helping a probationary member of staff are as follows:
- ensuring that the procedure detailed above is adhered to in a timely and fair way;
 - holding of regular review meetings with the probationer about all aspects of performance and progress;
 - timely completion of the probation reports;
 - provision of appropriate on the job training where possible and if required, and encouragement to participate in available training and development events;
 - provision of guidance, support and advice that specifically relates to the areas/targets detailed in the probation plan;
 - where problems have been identified, managers should ensure that the probationer is informed immediately of the cause for concern and is given the opportunity to improve. To ensure that any problems or issues can be rectified successfully, the manager should provide support/guidance/advice etc as required;
 - ensure that HR are informed at the earliest possible opportunity should any problems be identified;



- take any action necessary to ensure equality of opportunity including identification of practical and/or personal support.

5.2 The manager is expected to notify HR if there are any operational reasons that may delay a probation review meeting taking place. The probationer should also be informed. It is the member of staff's obligation to also notify their manager if they consider that the review is due but has not taken place.

6.0 **MATERNITY LEAVE/ADOPTION LEAVE/PROLONGED SICK LEAVE**

Any period of maternity leave, adoption leave or lengthy period of sick leave during a probationary period does not count towards completion of probation.

7.0 **TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

Newly appointed members of staff should expect to receive any appropriate/relevant training available (both during probation and after) including any personal development or health and safety training relating to any risks identified in relation to the nature of their roles and responsibilities, taking into account previous experience. If this has not taken place the member of staff must notify HR.

8.0 **FAILURE TO REACH PROBATIONARY STANDARD**

8.1 If a probationer's performance is giving cause for concern the member of staff should be advised of the problems immediately and what improvement is necessary. At the same time consideration should be given to what help and advice might be provided in order to secure the required improvement. It should be made clear at all meetings with the member of staff that failure to achieve an acceptable level of improvement is likely to result in a recommendation not to confirm the appointment. It should also be indicated on the probation form whether or not the probationer is on track to pass their probation. HR should be involved at each step and any letters will be sent out by HR.

8.2 The review meetings are designed to ensure that unsatisfactory performance is identified early in a person's employment with Lingfield College. This should provide opportunities for the member of staff to modify their conduct and improve performance.

8.3 Providing all appropriate help has been given to assist the achievement of the standards required for the post, a recommendation not to confirm the appointment may be made at any time or for the probation to be extended (as outlined below).

9.0 **RECOMMENDATION NOT TO CONFIRM THE APPOINTMENT**

9.1 Lingfield College will adopt a professional and thorough approach to any problems that arise in relation to the probation period. When a manager at the end of a period of probation wishes to recommend that an appointment should not be confirmed, details must be supplied to HR. The following information should be provided for consideration.

- a copy of the probationary reports;
- a record of the oral and written advice and guidance given to the member of staff concerned. If appropriate, this may include copies of current informal/formal warnings with recommendations for improvement, lesson observations;



- full details of the duties of the member of staff during the probationary period, with an assessment of how they performed against the set objectives detailed in the probation pro forma and/or their job description at the start of their appointment, together with any evidence of constraints, unforeseen difficulties or changes of emphasis which have affected the achievement of any of the objectives;
- the names of the senior members of staff who have been consulted about the recommendation and who concur with it;
- any other information thought to be relevant.

9.2 If the manager makes a recommendation for non-confirmation of probation, the member of staff should be told of this and the reasons for it. It is advised that this is done between 4-6 weeks before the probation is due to expire (where feasible) to allow time for the recommendation to be considered.

9.3 Where it becomes apparent that an member of staff is incapable of reaching the level of competence required to adequately achieve the objectives of the post or any reason (such as attendance, performance, absence, attitude, etc), Lingfield College reserves the right to immediately end the employment during the probationary period without recourse to the full disciplinary procedure.

10.0 EXTENSION OF A PROBATIONARY PERIOD

10.1 Where concern has been expressed over certain aspects of the member of staff's performance, it may be necessary to extend a person's probationary period (excluding any prolonged absence such as maternity leave, adoption leave, prolonged illness etc.) beyond the set probationary period. Such extensions should be made on a three-month basis and regular formal reviews should be conducted (usually fortnightly or monthly). The member of staff should be made aware that failure to achieve the desired improvements could result in dismissal.

10.2 Where a probation period has been extended and progress has not been sufficient, in certain circumstances further extension periods may be applied if it is deemed appropriate. The probationary period must remain within the first two years of service.

10.3 Formal notification of the extension of a probationary period will be sent to the member of staff by HR.

11.0 APPEALS PROCEDURE

11.1 A member of staff who has received a formal warning or who has been dismissed under this procedure may appeal. The member of staff should write to the HR Manager within 10 days of receiving notification of the warning or dismissal requesting an appeal. The member of staff should set out in the letter his/her grounds for appeal. The grounds on which an appeal can be heard are limited to a review of the reasonableness of the decision which is the subject of the appeal, a plea that the penalty imposed is too harsh in the light of mitigating circumstances, or that the correct procedure was not followed. An appeal does not constitute a complete re-hearing of the original case.

11.2 A date will be fixed for the Appeal Hearing and the member of staff will be notified of this in writing. The appeal shall be heard no later than 10 working days of the appeal being lodged.

11.3 If the member of staff or their representative are unable to attend, the hearing will be re-arranged for the next date convenient to all parties, but without unreasonable delay. The member of staff will take all reasonable steps to attend this hearing which should be within 5 days of the original date set.



11.4 The appeal will be heard by a panel of senior managers and/or governors who have not been involved in the dismissal. The decision of the appeal panel is final and will be conveyed in writing to the member of staff.

12.0 **PAY REVIEWS**

During the probationary period, staff are not automatically entitled to any pay increase pending official satisfactory completion of the probationary period.

13.0 **PROMOTION**

If a member of staff applies for and is awarded promotion this will not automatically result in completion of their probation. The probation period will be carried over to the new contract and the appointment will not be confirmed until the original period has been successfully completed.

14.0 **NEW CONTRACTS**

Staff who have fixed term or casual contracts and have completed a probation period for a particular role will not require probation for the same role should the contract become permanent. However, should the member of staff undertake a new role which is fundamentally different, a new probation period will be relevant and the appointment may not be confirmed if probation is unsatisfactory.

15.0 **FURTHER GUIDANCE**

Further guidance on probationary matters can be provided by HR.

Last reviewed January 2024

Next review due January 2025