

Appraisal Policy and Procedure

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Please note that a record of the changes made to the original issue of this document can be found at Schedule 1 after any Appendices to the Policy/Procedure.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Cumbria Education Trust (CET) recognises the importance of staff engagement and the value that an effective appraisal brings to employees to help them to develop and grow in their role. An effective appraisal process acknowledges the contribution of employees, the work that they do and helps them understand how their role contributes to improving outcomes for children/students and to the Trust's overall vision.

Appraisal within CET will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all employees have or fully develop the skills and access to support they need to carry out their role effectively. It will help to ensure that employees are able to continue to improve their professional practice and to develop within their chosen profession.

2. PURPOSE

This policy and procedure sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of employees, including senior leadership. It encompasses the support for individual development within the context of the Trust and School Improvement Plans, with the overall aims of improving educational provision, performance and achieving expected professional standards.

3. PRINICIPLES

The CET performance appraisal process promotes growth by:

- 3.1 Being intrinsically supportive and developmental and conducted within a culture that values openness and fairness.
- 3.2 Offering a supportive and safe environment where employees and their line managers can have open and honest conversations about successes and areas for improvement.
- 3.3 Setting clear expectations, providing clarity to performance expectations and success measures through a clear understanding of roles, objectives and key results.
- 3.4 Aligning with organisational improvement plans and objectives which establishes a direct link with an employee's contribution fostering a sense of purpose and alignment.
- 3.5 Enhancing communication which facilitates regular and ongoing dialogue between employees and their line manager throughout the appraisal cycle to support their development, performance and wellbeing.
- 3.6 Documenting performance and building a foundation for informed decision making providing a record of an employee's achievements, development and aspirations.
- 3.7 Recognising accomplishments reinforcing positive behaviours and fostering a culture of appreciation.
- 3.8 Ensuring evidence is focussed on readily available information and regular discussion which is focused on reducing unnecessary workload.

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4. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

- 4.1 This policy applies to all employees of CET with the except of those on contracts of less than one term, those undergoing a statutory induction process (*i.e. ECTs*) and those subject to capability procedures.
- 4.2 The term 'employee' refers to any member of CET employed to work at one of the academies / schools or in the central team.
- 4.3 References to Headteacher and other appropriate senior managers in this procedure assumes they are not the employee concerned. Where the Headteacher/senior leader is the employee concerned, references to Headteacher should be regarded as referring to the next appropriate level of senior management and references to employee or appraisee should be regarded as referring to the Headteacher.
- 4.4 In adopting this procedure, the Trust Board gives delegated authority for action in accordance with the agreed scheme of delegation.
- 4.5 Separate arrangements for the CE are laid out in the Trust Board terms of reference and articles of governance.

APPRAISAL PROCEDURE

5. THE APPRAISAL CYCLE

- 5.1 The formal appraisal period will run for twelve months normally from 1 October to 30 September.
- 5.2 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 period will be determined by the duration of their contract with any objectives taking into account of the length of contract with due regard to the Induction and Probation Procedure.
- 5.3 Where an employee starts their employment part-way through a cycle, in accordance with the probation procedure the Headteacher or, the appropriate senior manager shall determine appropriate objectives as part of the probation period. Following completion of the probationary period the employee will then be subject to the normal appraisal cycle and requirements.
- 5.4 Where an employee transfers to a new post within the Trust part-way through the cycle, the Headteacher, shall determine whether the exiting objectives remain relevant or whether they should be revised.

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5.5 Key requirements – Cycle Summary

Autumn Term	Spring into Summer Term	Summer into Autumn Term
Appraisal Set (Oct). Finalise and agree appraisal objectives, success measures / evidence and key results. Where agreement not reached set by appraiser. Employee disagreement to be recorded in writing.	Mid-point review (Easter) Progress towards achievement of objectives.	Appraisal Review Held (Sept / Oct). Assessment of achievement of objectives against key results and relevant standards documented and provided to employee. Wider supportive discussion about workload, wellbeing, working hours, flexible working opportunities and career aspirations.

6. PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 Effective performance management must be underpinned by regular and ongoing dialogue between line managers and their employees. Feedback and discussion regarding performance and standards should be embedded in day to day management and not only through formal reviews under the appraisal cycle.
- 6.2 Employee performance will be formally assessed in respect of each appraisal cycle – this will be undertaken at the end point of the appraisal cycle.
- 6.3 A progress review will take place at the mid-point of the cycle where a more formal review of ongoing progress and any barriers and achievements takes place.
- 6.4 The final formal assessment will take the form of an appraisal review meeting and report including:
- Details of the employees objectives for the period in question.
 - An assessment of the employees performance of their role and responsibilities against the objectives and relevant standards.
 - An assessment of the employee's professional development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address the.
 - Details of the wider discussion including wellbeing, workload and career progression / aspirations.
- 6.5 The understanding and assessment of performance, professional development needs and career aspirations will be used to inform the planning process for the following appraisal period.
- 6.6 Emerging issues / concerns about any aspect of performance will be addressed at the earliest opportunity through provision of informal focused support.

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7. APPOINTING APPRAISERS

- 7.1 Appraisers will normally be the direct line manager of the employee concerned.
- 7.2 All appraisers must be suitable skilled and/or trained in the appraisal process.
- 7.3 The choice of appraiser is for the Headteacher to determine. Where an employee has an objection to their appraiser, they may submit a written request to the Headteacher for that appraiser to be replaced, stating the reasons for the request. The Headteacher will consider the request and determine whether or not it is reasonable, giving written confirmation for accepting or rejecting the request.
- 7.4 In the case of Headteachers the appraisal will be conducted by their reporting manager and will also involve the Chair of the LAB responsible for leadership and management.

8. SETTING OBJECTIVES

- 8.1 The objectives set for each employee are intended to contribute to the academy and Trust plans for improving the educational provision, performance and the education of pupils and will take into account the professional aspirations of the employee.
- 8.2 Objectives should be aspirational yet achievable, and based on success criteria with key results which are in the employee's control.
- 8.3 Employees will be set three objectives which will be **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic** and **Time-bound** and appropriate to the employee's role and level of experience.
- 8.4 In setting the objectives, reviewers will have regard to what can reasonably be expected in the context of roles, responsibilities and experience, consistent with the Trust's strategy for achieving a work/life balance for all staff.
- 8.5 The appraiser and appraisee will seek to agree the objectives but, if that is not possible, the appraiser will determine the objectives. The appraisee can record their disagreement and this will be taken into account at the formal appraisal review.
- 8.6 Objectives may be revised if circumstances change to take account of any anticipated absence and to allow the employee to meet reduced and attainable targets.
- 8.7 Objectives and appraisal discussions will not be based on teacher/employee generated data and predictions, or solely on the assessment data for a single group of pupils. Numerical targets should not be set if it is beyond the employee's control to achieve them.
- 8.8 Professional development should form a key component of employee objectives, ensuring professional practice remains up to date with the latest methodologies, technologies and educational research.
- 8.9 The appraiser will take into account the effects of an individual's circumstances, including any

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protected characteristics as stated within the Equality Act, when agreeing objectives. For example, this might include a reasonable adjustment to allow an individual slightly longer to complete a task than might otherwise be the case. When staff return from a period of extended absence, objectives may be adjusted to allow them to readjust to their working environment.

- 8.10 Before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period, each employee will be informed of the relevant standards against which their performance in that appraisal period will be assessed.
- 8.11 The CE, Headteacher or equivalent senior manager (as appropriate) will need to consider whether certain teachers should be assessed against other sets of standards published by the Secretary of State or other body that are relevant to them. For Qualified Teaching Learning Skills ("QTLS") holders, that may include the overarching professional standards for teachers in the lifelong learning sector, held by The Education and Training Foundation.
- 8.12 The Trust will operate a system of moderation to ensure that all appraisers are working to the same standards. Targets will be moderated across an academy to ensure that they are consistent between employees with similar experience and levels of responsibility.

9. REDUCING WORKLOAD

- 9.1 The Trust recognises that due regard should be given to employees to be able to achieve a satisfactory balance between work and the time required to pursue their personal interests outside of work.
- 9.2 It is important that any method of assessing employee performance is managed in a way that avoids increased workloads for all parties concerned.
- 9.3 Wherever possible evidence used should be readily available from day to day practice in school. It should not be necessary for employees to collate large portfolios of evidence for appraisal purposes.

10. REVIEWING PERFORMANCE

- 10.1 Employee's performance is assessed against their objectives and the relevant standards. The appraiser will need to set out what they will take into account when making judgements as to whether employees have met their objectives and the relevant standards.
- 10.2 Evidence used in the appraisal process must relate directly to objectives and should be agreed in advance and be readily available from day to day practice. A range of different methods should be utilised, in a supportive manner, to assess employee's performance. Evidence may include;
- Improvements in specific elements of practice, such as behaviour management, development of pedagogy or providing feedback,
 - Impact on effectiveness of teachers or other staff,
 - Wider contribution to the work of the school / Trust

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The success measures and key results will be agreed alongside the objectives at the beginning of the appraisal process.

- 10.3 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 require further development.

11. OBSERVATION

- 11.1 For the purposes of appraisal, employee performance will be observed on an appropriate and reasonable number of occasions and will, as far as possible, be agreed by the appraiser with the appraisee based on the individual circumstances of the teacher and the overall needs of the academy/Trust. The number and duration of appraisal observations will be in accordance with the circumstances, which includes provision for exceptional circumstances where concerns have been raised about a teacher's performance, or where the teacher requests additional observation visits.
- 11.2 CET retain the right to utilise learning walks and visits to assess performance and the quality of learning. Headteachers or other leaders with responsibility for learning and teaching standards may "drop in" or undertake other observations to evaluate the standards of teaching and learning and to ensure that high standards of professional performance are established and maintained. The length and frequency of "drop in" or other observations, and the notice to be given, will vary depending on specific circumstances.
- 11.3 For the purpose of professional development, feedback about lesson observations should be developmental.
- 11.4 The Trust's academies will use the findings of each observation, including appraisal observations, for other management requirements (for example subject area reviews), thereby seeking to minimise the total number of occasions on which teachers are observed.

12. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 12.1 Appraisal is a supportive process which will be used to inform continuing professional development. CET wishes to encourage a culture in which all employees take responsibility for improving their practice through appropriate professional development.
- 12.2 Professional development will be linked to Trust/Academy improvement priorities and to the on-going professional development needs and priorities of individual employees.
- 12.3 Employees have a responsibility to be proactive in identifying their own needs and utilising all resources and opportunities open to them in meeting these needs.
- 12.4 The individual Academy's Continuous Professional Development ("CPD") programme will be informed by the training and development needs identified as part of the appraisal process. The Trust will ensure in the budget planning that, as far as possible, resources are made

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available in the Academy budget for appropriate training, and support agreed for appraisees, maintaining access on an equitable basis.

13. INFORMAL SUPPORT

13.1 Where it is evidenced that there are performance concerns, support will be offered without waiting for the formal annual assessment. Performance concerns may be for a range of reasons:

- Shortfall in meeting relevant professional standards
- Shortfall in meeting the expected standards as evidenced through observation
- A pattern of underperformance in terms of teaching and learning / professional practice.
- Shortfall in performance of leadership responsibilities
- Parental complaints as part of a wider pattern of dissatisfaction
- Pattern of underperformance in relation to employees job description and/or appraisal objectives.
- The employee's objectives are found not to be met, including management responsibilities where applicable, and/or
- There is concern that the employee is not making sufficient progress towards achieving their objectives or performing at the appropriate level for their career stage.

13.2 In most cases there is an expectation that the employee should be aware of any concerns through regular discussion and feedback from line management. This ensures the employee is clear about expectations of them and alerted to any early warning signs about concerns to do with their performance.

13.3 Except in the most serious cases of persistent failures to meet job expectations and standards, resulting in negative consequences on the pupils and organisation, employees should not ordinarily be placed in capability procedures without first undergoing a period of informal support as part of the appraisal process.

13.4 Where there are concerns about any aspects of the employee's performance the appraiser will arrange an informal review meeting with the employee to discuss the concerns. The employee may bring a Trade Union representative or workplace colleague to this meeting.

13.5 The purpose of the meeting is to:

- inform the employee that they are going to be receiving informal support due to performance concerns;
- give clear and specific feedback to the employee about the nature and seriousness of the concerns;
- give the employee the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns;
- set clear objectives and timescales for required improvement alongside a programme of appropriate support;
- agree any support (e.g. coaching, mentoring, structured observations), that will be provided to help address those specific concerns;

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- make clear how, and by when, the appraiser will review progress (it may be appropriate to revise objectives, and it will be necessary to allow sufficient time for improvement. The amount of time should reflect the seriousness of the concerns);
 - explain the implications and process if no, or insufficient, improvement is made – e.g. commencement of capability procedure.
- 13.6 There should be a clear relationship between the issue, the objectives set, and the planned documented programme of support put in place.
- 13.7 The line manager/appraiser should partner with the employee in a collaborative manner to establish objectives and timelines, taking into account the employee's circumstances. This may include any medical conditions, well-being support needs, or disabilities protected by equality legislation.
- 13.8 Informal support should be provided for a reasonable period to allow for performance improvement. This should be for a minimum of 6 weeks. However, the duration will be determined based on the specific circumstances, with appropriate support in place to facilitate improvement.
- 13.9 The appraiser should meet with the employee regularly to assess progress and ensure the agreed-upon support is being provided. A final review meeting will be arranged at the end of the agreed upon period. There are three possible outcomes from this meeting:
- If the appraiser is satisfied that the employee has made sufficient improvement, the employee will be informed that they have completed the support plan successfully and that the appraisal process will continue as normal.
 - If good progress has been made but the performance of the employee is not yet at a level where they will successfully complete the support plan cycle as there remains some areas to address, the outcome of the review will be to apply an agreed continuing programme of support with a further review to be held. Good progress must be maintained, and the employee will be reviewed again on an agreed date, to determine whether they have successfully addressed the remaining concerns, or whether they should then transition to the capability procedures.
 - If no, or insufficient, improvement has been made over the support period, the appraiser will inform the employee that they have not met the standards of improvement set for them and they will therefore be referred to the capability procedure.
- 13.10 When dealing with any employee who is experiencing difficulties, the objective is to provide support and guidance in such a way that their performance improves and the problem is, therefore, resolved. It is recognised that this may be a difficult time for the employee therefore the appropriate referral should be made to Occupational Health if required at any time during the process.

14. TRANSITION TO CAPABILITY

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- 14.1 If an employee demonstrates serious underperformance or has not responded to support provided within the informal support process, the teacher will be notified in writing that the appraisal system will no longer apply and that their performance will be managed under the capability procedure and will be invited to a formal capability meeting.

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SCHEDULE 1

DOCUMENT CONTROL – RECORD OF CHANGES

Version Number:	Publication Date:	Nature of, and Reason for, Change(s)
003	September 2019	• Review to ensure the model reflects the Local Authority model. • Adjust to ensure correct references to managers and their delegated authority. • Clarify the process for teachers experiencing difficulties. • Separate the pay appeals process from appraisal outcome appeals. Pay determination and appeal correctly sit in the Trust's pay policy. • Clarify the facility to raise a grievance about the appraisal process. • Include an appeal stage in the document – previously missing.
004	October 2022	• Standard annual review. • No amendments to content at this point – to be reviewed in detail following publication of Academy model policy / procedure.
005	November 2024	• Review as result of changes following STRB teachers pay award. • Fundamental review of policy and procedure in light of new DfE Model Procedure • Inclusion of Support Staff.

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