

## Teacher Appraisal Policy

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## **Introduction**

The Synaptic Academy Trust Board of Trustees has agreed this Policy and as such, it applies to all Academies within the Trust.

The policy applies to the Headteacher and to all teachers employed by the Trust, except those on contracts of less than one term, those undergoing induction (ie NQTs) and those subject to the formal capability process.

This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of teachers, including the Headteacher, and for supporting their development within the context of the school's plan for improving educational provision and performance, and the standards expected of teachers.

## **The appraisal period**

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

Teachers 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.

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

## **Appointing appraisers**

The Headteacher will be appraised by the Governing Body, supported by a suitably skilled and/or experienced member of the Trust, usually the CEO. In each Academy, the task of appraising the Headteacher, including the setting of objectives, will be delegated to a sub-group of governors.

The Headteacher will decide who will appraise other teachers. Normally the appraiser will be the Headteacher or line manager. Account will be taken of the number of staff any one person appraises. A teacher may request an alternative appraiser and the Headteacher will consider the request and decide whether to agree to it. The decision of the Headteacher will be final.

At the end of the performance year, it will be the responsibility of the appraiser to make a pay recommendation for consideration by the Governing Body.

## **Pay Progression based on Performance**

The criteria for pay progression based on performance are set out in the Appendix of the Trust's Pay Policy.

## **Setting Objectives**

The Headteacher's objectives will be set by the appropriate committee of the Governing Body after consultation with the CEO or her equivalent and Headteacher.

Objectives for each teacher will be set before or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period. The objectives set for each teacher, will be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound and will be appropriate to the teacher's role and level of experience. The appraiser and teacher will seek to agree the objectives but, if that is not possible, the appraiser will determine the objectives. They will take into account individual career aspirations including the assessment of threshold standards. The number of objectives must be reasonable and there should be consistency within the school. In most cases there will be 3, and a maximum of 6 objectives. Objectives may be revised if there is a significant change in circumstances, eg change of job role, long term sickness, maternity leave or if a teacher requires more support to meet the Teachers' Standards.

The objectives set for each teacher will, if achieved, contribute to the Academy's plans for improving the Academy's educational provision and performance and improving the education of pupils at that Academy. This will be ensured by quality assuring all objectives against the Academy Improvement Plan.

## **Teachers' Standards**

Before, or as soon as practicable after the start of each appraisal period, each teacher will be informed of the standards against which that teacher's performance in that appraisal period will be assessed. All teachers should be assessed against the set of standards contained in the document called "Teachers' Standards". The Headteacher 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 e.g. the standards used to pass through the threshold.

## **Reviewing performance**

### **Development and support**

Appraisal is a supportive process which will be used to inform continuing professional development. The Trust wishes to encourage a culture in which all teachers take responsibility for improving their teaching through appropriate professional development. Professional development will be linked to Academy improvement priorities and to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of individual teachers.

## **Observation**

The Trust believes that observation of classroom practice and other responsibilities is important both as a way of assessing teachers' 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. All observation will be carried out in a supportive fashion. The classroom observation protocol is set out in appendix 1.

Teachers (including the head teacher) who have responsibilities outside the classroom should also expect to have their performance of those responsibilities observed and assessed.

## **Feedback**

Teachers will receive constructive feedback on their performance throughout the year, and as soon as practicable after observation has taken place or other evidence has come to light with written feedback provided within 5 working days of a performance management observation. Feedback will highlight particular areas of strength as well as any areas that need attention.

Teachers will be made aware of their progress towards meeting the criteria for pay progression. In the event that a teacher is unlikely to meet the criteria for pay progression they can expect to be alerted to this and given support to improve their performance.

Where there are concerns about any aspects of the teacher's performance the appraiser will meet the teacher formally to:

- give clear feedback to the teacher about the nature and seriousness of the concerns;
- give the teacher the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns;
- if the concerns are sufficiently serious that, if not addressed, they could lead to formal capability procedures the teacher will be invited to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or work-based colleague at the above meeting and any subsequent review meeting. Meetings will not be delayed if a companion is not available;
- agree any support (eg coaching, mentoring, structured observations), that will be provided to help address those specific concerns. As part of the support it may be agreed that additional classroom observations are needed in excess of those referred to in the Classroom Observation Protocol;
- 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 is up to the school but should reflect the seriousness of the concerns. If the concerns are very serious or linked to weaknesses with senior leadership then this should be no more than 4 weeks);
- written confirmation of the support that is to be offered, and the timescales for improvement will be provided within 5 working days of the meeting;
- Explain that if no – or insufficient -improvement is made then there will be no pay progression;

- explain that if no – or insufficient – improvement is made then the matter could move to the formal capability procedure.

The intention of this process is that it should be supportive and is designed to bring about an improvement in performance.

At the end of the support process, progress will be reviewed. If the appraiser is satisfied that the teacher (or Headteacher) 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. If progress has been insufficient, the teacher (or Headteacher) will be advised and will be invited to a formal meeting using the process described earlier. The teacher (or Headteacher) should be aware that this could have been a possibility if they have not made sufficient progress during the support process.

### **Transition to capability**

If the appraiser is not satisfied with progress, 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.

### **Annual assessment**

Each teacher's performance will be formally assessed in respect of each appraisal period. In assessing the performance of the head teacher, the Governing Body must include the CEO or her equivalent in the annual appraisal and mid-year review.

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.

The teacher will receive as soon as practicable following the end of each appraisal period – and have the opportunity to comment in writing on - a written appraisal report. In each Academy, teachers will receive their written appraisal reports during the autumn term. Any agreed pay enhancement will be back dated to 1<sup>st</sup> September.

The Headteacher's appraisal will occur first. The appraisal will reference the new academic year self-evaluation form (SEF), current strategic plan, national performance information e.g ISDR, quality of teaching evidence and any external evidence such as the most recent Ofsted report. The Headteacher's appraisal will direct the work of the school for the forthcoming year, linked to the strategic plan. All other staff appraisal will reference the school and Trust current core priorities linked to the Headteacher's objectives for improvement. The Headteacher's appraisal will be completed by October.

The appraisal report will include:

- details of the teacher's objectives for the appraisal period in question;
- an assessment of the teacher's performance

- an assessment of the teacher's training and development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them;
- a recommendation on pay (NB – pay recommendations need to be made by **December for Headteachers and by October for other teachers**);

The assessment of performance and of training and development needs will inform the planning process for the following appraisal period.

### **General principles underlying the policy**

#### **Confidentiality**

The appraisal process will be treated with confidentiality. However, the desire for confidentiality does not override the need for the Headteacher and Governing Body to quality-assure the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal system.

#### **Definitions**

Unless indicated otherwise, all references to “teacher” include the Headteacher.

#### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Governing Body and Headteacher will monitor the operation and effectiveness of each Academy's appraisal arrangements.

#### **Retention**

The Governing Body and Headteacher will ensure that all written appraisal records are retained in a secure place for six years and then destroyed.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Classroom observation protocol**

This protocol is designed to support individual teachers to develop their professional skills. It also takes into account the context of the Ofsted framework in particular the emphasis on teaching and learning and the major contribution this judgement makes to the overall grade for the Academy.

Classroom observation should be viewed as a 'right' and an opportunity for all teachers. If not, it will be seen as a burden that will defeat its prime objective - namely to develop professional potential.

A Headteacher has a duty to evaluate the standards of teaching and learning. He/she has a right to drop in to the classroom to inform their monitoring of the quality of learning and ensure that high standards of professional performance are established and maintained. In large schools they may delegate drop in to appropriate members of the leadership group. Where the Headteacher genuinely operates a 'drop in' of a few minutes which does not involve formal observation of teaching but focuses on pupils learning that would not be covered by this guidance. However, if the Headteacher (or senior leader) focuses on the quality of teaching or makes notes on the teacher's performance then these visits would be classed as observation. If the Headteacher (or senior leader) observes anything that gives him/her cause for concern during the drop in or on learning walk eg quality of teaching, health and safety matter, safeguarding issue then she/he will take appropriate action.

Classroom observations for performance management, school improvement or any other 'professional' purpose should be undertaken by a trained observer with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

It is recognised that these guidelines cover a range of different types of observation and will need to be interpreted accordingly. In addition, they will need to be read alongside schools' and others' own policies on monitoring and observation and the Teacher appraisal regulations.

The Trust recognises that there are many ways to evaluate teaching and learning and leadership, observations in class is but one strategy. The Trust and school monitoring and evaluation strategy will be transparent and it will reference the school strategic plan.