



**HIGH WELL SCHOOL**  
Preparing for Positive Futures

# New Employee Probationary Period Policy & Procedure

<b>Policy Lead:</b>	HR Manager
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<b>Signed by Chair of Governors:</b>	<i>Margaret Turner</i>
<b>Date:</b>	13.07.2021

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### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the process for managing a probationary period.

### 2. The use of probationary periods

At High Well School, all new starters will have a probationary period written into their contract of employment. The length of this probationary period will depend on the nature of their work, but it is likely to be six months in length.

The purpose of the probationary period is to allow time for senior leadership to assess the work of the employee and to determine if the employee has a long-term future with the school and local authority.

### 3. Managing the probationary period

As part of the induction process, all line managers should ensure that any employee who is part of their reporting line is aware of the probationary procedure, period and its expectations.

The HR Manager will be responsible for ensuring that the probationary period is included in all job-related information including advertising, offer of employment and the contract of employment.

The line manager should discuss his or her expectations of the employee during the induction process. The line manager should set a date with the employee for a review of performance – this should be roughly halfway through the set probationary period. The purpose of this review will be for the line manager to inform the employee of any concerns, and to indicate whether the probationary period is proceeding successfully or not.

The probationary review meeting does not form part of any other supervision period and should be carried out separately.

#### 4. The 3 Steps

Step	Who	What
Establish expectations	Line Manager	1. Establish how the post will work and agree relevant steps with the employee to make their contribution successful
Mid-probationary review	Line Manager and HR Manager	2. Discuss how the probationary period is progressing 3. Re-establish any targets that must be achieved to be successful 4. Termination of employment if it is unlikely the probationary period will be successful
End of probation period review	Line Manager and HR Manager	5. Confirmation of successful completion of the probation period 6. Termination of employment 7. Extension of probation period

#### 5. Concerns during the probationary period

Although a review date will be set during the induction process, it is important that any concerns are brought to the attention of the employee when they arise so that the employee has an opportunity to address those concerns

If a line manager has concerns about a new employee's performance s/he should arrange a meeting with the employee to express those concerns. The meeting should be held in private and notes should be made of the discussion and sent to the HR Manager who will maintain a clear record of all confidential documentation within the HR server/HR Files.

If targets or actions are agreed because of the meeting these should be confirmed in writing to the employee and added to the employee's HR file by the HR Manager.

#### 6. Support during the probationary period

All new employees need help and support as they settle into the new job. The line manager is responsible for ensuring that all required training is provided as soon as possible. The line manager is also responsible for ensuring that the employee is made aware of relevant High Well School procedures and are issued the Staff Handbook and is introduced to all members of the school team and Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

It is important to emphasise that the school wants probationary periods to be completed successfully, and appropriate support should be given to ensure that this happens.

### **7. Terminating the employment before completion of probationary period**

It will be usual for employees to complete the full probationary period. The length of time has been set to allow employees to settle into the school, to learn the new job and to receive any required training.

However, in some circumstances it might become apparent that the employee has some fundamental difficulties with the work. On speaking to the employee, it might become apparent that the employee is not going to be able to meet the required standards and expectations established within their job profile.

In such a situation the line manager should contact the HR Manager to discuss the possibility of terminating the probationary period early, or it may be decided to consider other interventions that might encourage rapid and sustained progress.

No decision to terminate should be communicated to the employee before the HR Manager and Head Teacher has agreed to this decision. Where the concern relates to the probationary period of a member of the SLT, a decision to terminate the probationary period must include consultation with the Chair of Governors.

### **8. Terminating the employment at the end of the probationary period**

Employees should always be made aware that there are concerns about standards of performance before the probationary period ends. As a minimum, this should happen at the review meeting which is planned during the induction process but may also be discussed at supervision and support meetings.

If the employee has not met the required standards of performance, despite all the help and support that has been offered, a decision will be taken to terminate the probationary period. This decision must be made before the probationary period has ended.

Any line manager who thinks that it will be necessary to terminate an employee's contract at the end of the probationary period should alert the HR Manager at least two weeks before the probationary period is due to end to enable enough time for an appropriate review to take place of all collated information.

Where a probationary period will be terminated early, there is an agreed extension, or it has been unsuccessful, the line manager and HR Manager will meet with the employee. The HR Manager will be responsible for communicating the decision to the employee in writing no later than 5 working days after a decision has been reached.

## 9. Confirming successful completion of the probationary period

It is important that employees are made aware if they have successfully completed the probationary period. The line manager is responsible for informing the employee that they have successfully completed the probationary period, and this will be communicated at a Probationary Review Meeting.

The HR Manager reserves the right to sit in attendance and would ordinarily attend this type of meeting. The HR Manager will write to the employee to confirm the outcome within 5 working days.

## 10. Terminating employment after the probationary period has expired

If the employment has not been terminated at the end of the probationary period, then any subsequent decision that the employee is not performing at the required standards will need to be managed through the school's capability process. This will involve the issuing of warnings, leading to dismissal if there are no improvements. Line managers must consult with the HR Manager to instigate a planned capability process.

## 11. Discovery of irregularities during the probationary period

On some occasions it might become apparent that the employee has not been honest about his or her previous experience or qualifications when applying for a position. If the employee has been dishonest this is likely to be a potential breach of contract, which could result in immediate termination of the contract of employment.

If a line manager does discover that there are some irregularities, then he or she should inform the HR Manager and Head Teacher immediately and an appropriate course of action will be discussed and taken forward.

## 12. Range of problems during the probationary period

It should be noted that 'successful performance' does not just mean the outputs from the job. A probationary period can be unsuccessful for other reasons – such as persistent lateness, persistent absenteeism, unacceptable behaviour etc.

In some cases, it will be possible to extend the probationary period to allow an employee further time to demonstrate their success. Line Managers must note that only one extension of up to 3 months will be agreed. Possible and recommended extensions to the probationary period will be

discussed between the line manager and HR Manager prior to any formal decision being made or communicated to an employee.

### **13. Disabled Employees**

It should be noted that additional support must be given to any employees who meet the definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010. Reasonable adjustments must be made to accommodate their difficulties. If an employee is disabled, the situation must be discussed with the HR Manager to ensure that appropriate adjustments are being made.

## Appendix 1 - Line Manager's Toolkit (SLT only)

1. *Invite to a probationary meeting*
2. *Letters outlining the outcome of a probationary meeting including extending, unsuccessful and successful outcomes*
3. *Order of events for a probationary meeting*

## INVITATION TO A PROBATIONARY REVIEW MEETING

### TO BE issued on letterhead only by a Line Manager / HR Manager

Dear \*\*\*\*\*

Your probationary period review meeting has been arranged for \*\*\*\*\* on \*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*. The meeting will be chaired by \*\*\*\*\* , and \*\*\*\*\* will also be in attendance.

The purpose of probationary period review meeting is to:

- review, measure and give constructive feedback on performance
- recommend whether to confirm in post or if alternative action should be taken.

In accordance with our probationary period policy, there are several possible outcomes of a review meeting, including the following:

- confirmation that the probationary period has been successful
- extension of the probationary period and provision of further support as necessary
- confirmation that the probationary period has been unsuccessful, and that employment will be terminated.

If you have any queries regarding the meeting please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

**Head Teacher / HR Manager / Chair of**

**Governors**Copies to: HR Manager  
HR File

## OUTCOME OF A PROBATIONARY Meeting unsuccessful outcome

### TO BE issued on letterhead by HR Manager

Dear \*\*\*\*\*

I am writing to confirm the discussion which we had on \*\*\*\*\*

As you are aware, your employment with the school was subject to a probationary period. Unfortunately, your performance has not reached a satisfactory standard during your probationary period. Your probationary period ends on \*\*\*\*\* and it has been decided to terminate your employment at this point.

When leaving the school you must ensure that you return all property belonging to High Well School ***[list items – e.g. books, laptop, mobile phone, security pass]***.

I am sorry that we have had to reach this conclusion, and I wish you every success in the future.Yours

sincerely,

**Head Teacher / HR Manager / Chair of Governors**

**Copies to:** HR Manager  
HR File

## OUTCOME OF A PROBATIONARY Meeting - Extending probationary period outcome

### TO BE issued on letterhead only by HR Manager

Dear \*\*\*\*\*

#### Probationary period extension

As you are aware from our recent meeting, your probationary period is due to end on \*\*\*\*\*. Unfortunately, your performance has not yet reached a satisfactory standard in the following areas: **[insert details regarding the required standard of behaviours and/or competencies and describe the shortfall in the employee's performance].**

The decision has been taken to extend your probationary period for a period of [insert timescale, e.g. three months] and it will now end on \*\*\*\*\*.

I would like to give you the opportunity to focus on improvements in the areas outlined above and we will meet (insert frequency, e.g. 'monthly' to review progress). I have also arranged for additional support/training to be provided to you in the following areas:

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

If you have any queries regarding this decision, please do not hesitate to contact me. Yours

sincerely,

**Head Teacher / HR Manager / Chair of Governors**

**Copies to:** HR Manager  
HR File

## **OUTCOME OF A PROBATIONARY Meeting - Successful probationary period outcome**

### **TO BE issued on letterhead by HR Manager**

Dear \*\*\*\*\*,

#### **Re: Employment as XXXXX**

As you are aware, your appointment with High Well School was subject to a probationary period of 6-months.

I am delighted to inform you that you have successfully completed this probationary period and your employment will now continue with the school.

Your probationary period counts towards your continuous service with the school and the local authority will update their records.

I look forward to working with you over the coming months and years. Yours sincerely,

**Head Teacher / HR Manager / Chair of Governors**

**Copies to:** HR Manager

## PROBATIONARY REVIEW MEETING AGENDA

Step	Comments
1. Welcome and Introductions	
2. Chair of meeting explains process for the review	
3. Line Manager offers feedback on employee performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="197 584 927 651">▪ May include supervision notes, action plans or other performance documentation</li></ul>	
4. Employee offers feedback on personal performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="197 976 735 1043">▪ May include supervision notes, action plans or other documentation</li></ul>	
5. Consideration of next steps, options include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="197 1335 954 1402">▪ Confirmation of successful completion of the probation period</li><li data-bbox="197 1402 608 1435">▪ Termination of employment</li><li data-bbox="197 1435 632 1469">▪ Extension of probation period</li></ul>	
6. Decision announced and confirmed in writing within 5 working days by HR Manager	