

# **Inspire Partnership Multi Academy Trust**

## **Probationary Periods of Employment for Associate Staff – Policy Guidelines**



**Policy Review Date – September 2021**

**Date of Next Review – August 2024**

**Personnel Responsible – Chief Operating Officer**

# PROBATIONARY PERIODS OF EMPLOYMENT

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Inspire Partnership Multi Academy Trust implements a probationary period of employment for all new associate staff, in line with conditions of service for associate staff.
- 1.2 Under the scheme, every new entrant is subject to a term of probation of 6 months, during which they are expected to demonstrate their suitability for the post. At the end of the probationary period, providing the Headteacher is satisfied with their performance, the individual will be confirmed in post.
- 1.3 The probationary period can be applied to all new entrants and internal promotions (to permanent roles)
- 1.4 The probationary period is applicable to both full time and part time employees. New entrants on fixed term or temporary contracts are also subject to the probationary period, however where the duration of a contract is less than six months, the trust will consider shortening the probationary period.
- 1.5 Where an employee is not subject to the probationary period or they have successfully passed the probationary period and there are concerns regarding conduct or capability these should be dealt with in accordance with the School's Disciplinary or Appraisal/ Capability Procedures.
- 1.6 It is important that a fair and consistent approach is adopted when managing probationary periods. These guidelines are intended to help the appropriate members of staff manage the process fairly and consistently.
- 1.7 The main emphasis in the guidelines covers the procedure for managing employees who are giving cause for concern during the probationary period. It is important however, that all new starters are given an induction, and supported during and after the probationary period and given feedback on a regular basis. They should also be given appropriate support and training. Periodic reviews and appraisals should be undertaken for all staff by their manager, not just those who are giving concern.

## **2. Safer Recruitment & Selection**

- 2.1 It is important that appointments are made on the basis that the selection panel are confident of the likely suitability of the selected candidate. When an offer of appointment is made, the individual should be informed that there is a 6 month probationary period and failure to satisfy the stipulated requirements during this period may lead to termination of the contract. The Statement of Main Terms includes information relating to the probationary period. Please refer to the School's Recruitment & Vetting Policy for more information.
- 2.2 The Headteacher should ensure appropriate training and support is available and given to new employees including an induction programme. Monitoring of performance and the maintenance of records are necessary. It is also important that any concerns are addressed at an early stage.

## **3. Reviewing Probationary periods**

- 3.1 Regular reviews should take place and be recorded in writing during the probationary period. Refer to Appendix A, B & C. These reviews should cover all aspects of the employee's work and performance including time keeping, attendance, conduct and ability to do the job.
- 3.2 The school will use standard forms to review probationary periods to ensure consistency. The form should be signed by both parties and saved in the employee's HR file. The individual should be given a copy of the form for their records. If additional meetings are held, Managers should record the discussions held and provide the individual with a copy.
- 3.3 Where there are concerns it is important that these are recorded in writing and a copy given to the employee. Managers should inform HR of any concerns for advice. At review meetings the employee should be given the opportunity to comment on his/her progress and raise any matters of concern, including any issues impacting on their performance or attendance. The manager should detail any action taken to assist the employee meet the required standard including support and training and the timescale in which an improvement is expected to be achieved. The manager must inform the employee of the potential consequences if they fail to make improvements to the required standard or if further concerns arise; an extension of the probationary period or referral to a formal probationary meeting which could result in the matter being referred to a dismissal hearing.

- 3.4 Where training/ support is identified, the manager must ensure arrangements are made for this to take place during the timescale required.
- 3.5 Where training/ support is identified as a need and not put in place within the timescale required, the manager or employee can request an extension of the probationary period in order that the employee is given an opportunity to partake in training and meet the required standards thereafter.
- 3.6 Where there are no concerns the employee should be informed that their performance is satisfactory and the probationary period is progressing well.
- 3.7 Ongoing reviews will either continue to confirm satisfactory progress or address concerns.

#### **4. Formal Probationary Review Meeting**

- 4.1 If performance and conduct continue to be unsatisfactory following support/ training, a formal probationary review meeting should be arranged with the individual and their manager to discuss the concerns. The individual is entitled to be accompanied by their trade union representative or colleague at this meeting. It is not necessary to wait until the end of the 6 month period before calling this meeting if the concerns/ breaches in performance or conduct are severe enough to warrant this or if improvements have not been made in a reasonable timescale despite support and reasonable opportunities to improve. Individuals must be informed of the potential outcome of the meeting. Refer to appendix D for the invite letter.
- 4.2 At the formal probationary review meeting concerns will be outlined by the manager and the individual and their representative will have the opportunity to state their case and respond. The employee has a right to request an extension to the probationary period which will be considered by the manager. The employee must state the grounds of this request.
- 4.3 If, after consideration of all the points the manager considers that the employee has not successfully completed the probationary period and that an extension of the probationary period would not be appropriate and/or that an extension has already been completed without success they will inform the employee that a dismissal hearing will be called and heard by the Headteacher or a panel of Headteachers, Trustees or Trust Officers (none of

whom have had any prior involvement in the case) Refer to appendix E for the invite letter.

## 5. Gross Misconduct

If an individual is alleged to have committed an act of gross misconduct this will be dealt with in accordance with the School Disciplinary Procedure.

## 6. Disciplinary Hearing



The procedure and timescales to be following at a disciplinary hearing are as outlined in the disciplinary procedure.

## 7. Extension of the Probationary Period

In exceptional circumstances, the probationary period may be extended for a reasonable period of time to allow for support/ training to be provided and improvements to be made. This may be considered if it has not been possible to assess the employee's performance on the full range of duties over the six months. A decision to extend the probationary period should only be used in exceptional circumstances, for example, where the individual has taken maternity leave or extended sick leave during the probationary period, where there has been a circumstance out of the employee's control that has impacted on their performance, such as a bereavement, or where it has not been possible to provide the necessary training. Extensions to the probationary period should not be regarded as an automatic right. An extension to a probationary period will normally be up to a maximum 3 months.

## 8. Successful Completion of Probationary Period

An employee who has successfully completed the probationary period should be informed of the decision verbally by their manager at the end of the six month period.

<b>Signature: CEO</b>	
<b>Signature: Chair of Board</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	<b>6.10.2021</b>



[Name of School]

**Probationary Period Pro Forma: Review after 1<sup>st</sup> month**

**Staff Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Start Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Line Manager:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Meeting Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

The Manager must make notes of discussion for future reference and provide both the employee and Office Manager with signed copies of this form.

<p>1. Have you completed your induction? Get feedback.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Remind to send Induction and Information Checklist to Office Manager with a copy of this form</li></ul> <p>Do you have any questions?</p>
<p>2. Are there any issues accessing the computer network?</p>
<p>3. Are you aware of where to find all required policies? Yes/No</p> <p>Do you understand all school procedures listed on the induction and information checklist, i.e. sickness absence, safeguarding etc? Yes/No</p> <p>Do you understand sickness absence reporting protocols? Yes/No</p> <p>Do you have any questions about these?</p>
<p>4. Have fire procedures been explained? Yes/No</p>
<p>5. Have staff briefings been explained? Yes/No</p>
<p>6. Have Inset Days/Twilight Sessions been explained? (If PT and/or TT plus days - arrange which sessions to attend)</p>

Sessions to attend:

7. Do you have a clear understanding of Performance Management? (Explain the process, if necessary).

Date of first performance management meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Do you have any training issues?

Manager to highlight any training needs identified to date

**9. Please comment on their performance with respect to the following:**

Trustworthiness                      Good/ Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

Reliability                              Good/ Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

Honesty                                 Good/ Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

Punctuality                             Good/ Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

Attendance                             Good/ Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

Performance                          Good/ Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

Attitude to work                      Good/ Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

Manager to feedback and raise any issues regarding any of the above:

10. Are there any issues you would like to discuss that have not been covered?

11. Additional notes of the meeting and points the manager wishes to raise.

**ACTION POINTS**

Action points will be reviewed at the 3 month stage.

Signature of Staff Member \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Line Manager \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Now please arrange the date of your 3 month review: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_**

**Please ensure that a copy of this form is passed to the Office Manager for the personnel file.**





[Name of School]

**Probationary Period Pro Forma: Three Month Review**

**Staff Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Start Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Line Manager:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Meeting Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

The Manager must make notes of discussion for future reference and provide both the employee and Office Manager with signed copies of this form.

1. Recap on any actions agreed at the meeting held after the first month.

2. Manager to feedback and raise any issues regarding

- a) punctuality
- b) attendance
- c) performance
- d) quality of work
- e) attitude to work

If there are concerns: support and training should be agreed and monitor for reasonable time period. Explain to individual the implications of any concerns.

3. Discuss your views regarding their ability to use their initiative where appropriate, follow procedures and work as a member of a team.

Do they possess satisfactory verbal and written communication skills? **YES/ NO**  
If no please give details below:

4. Have there been any particular problems with their time management/ability to meet deadlines? **YES/ NO**  
If yes please give details below:

5. If the employee is a line manager or has supervisory responsibilities, provide your views on their leadership and people management skills.

6. Do you have any new training issues or outstanding training requirements?

Manager to highlight any training needs identified and make arrangements.

7. Are there any issues you would like to discuss? Do you have any questions?

8. Additional notes of the meeting and points the manager wishes to raise.

**ACTION POINTS**

Action points will be reviewed ongoing and discussed at the 5 month stage.

Signature of Staff Member \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Line Manager \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Now please arrange the date of your 5 month review: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_**

**Please ensure that a copy of this form is passed to the Office Manager  
for the personnel file.**



[Name of School]

**Probationary Period Pro Forma: Review after 5 months**

**Date Completed** \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of this review is to confirm that **[Name of employee]** who commenced employment in the position of **[job role]** on **[date of employment]** will have completed their six months probationary period on **[date]**.

As such your comments regarding their performance during this period are required.

**Please comment on their performance with respect to the following:**

- |                  |                                   |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Trustworthiness  | Good/ Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory |
| Reliability      | Good/ Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory |
| Honesty          | Good/ Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory |
| Punctuality      | Good/ Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory |
| Attendance       | Good/ Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory |
| Performance      | Good/ Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory |
| Attitude to work | Good/ Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory |

**Provide explanations for any of the above marked unsatisfactory**

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Re-visit any previous actions agreed:

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Please give your views regarding their ability to use their initiative where appropriate, follow procedures and work as a member of a team.

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Do they possess satisfactory verbal and written communication skills? **YES/NO**

If NO please give details below:

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Have there been any particular problems with their time management/ ability to meet deadlines? **YES/NO**

If YES please give details:

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Are there any areas of the post that they are not able to undertake or having difficulty with? **YES/NO**

If YES please give details:

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If the employee is a line manager or has supervisory responsibilities, provide your views on their leadership and people management skills.

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Please outline below any additional comments that you feel appropriate, regarding their progress, performance and conduct during the probationary period.

(Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

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I confirm that having carefully considered the performance of \*\*\*\*\*, I am **satisfied/ unsatisfied** with his probationary period and would therefore request that you **confirm/ do not confirm** the appointment.

**Signature of Staff Member** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Line Manager** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please ensure that a copy of this form is passed to the Office Manager for the personnel file.**

**Private & Confidential**

Date

Dear,

**FORMAL PROBATIONARY REVIEW MEETING**

I am writing to inform you that, further to recent probationary period review meetings with [manager], you are required to attend a formal probationary review meeting to discuss the concerns previously raised. The meeting will take place on **[day, date, time]** and will be held in the **[venue]** at **[School Name]**.

Both [manager] and a representative from the Trust or the external HR Provider will be present at the meeting.

You have the right of representation by a trade union representative or work colleague at the meeting. Please advise me if you wish to take this course of action.

The purpose of the meeting is to establish the facts relating to the shortfalls in **[performance/conduct/timekeeping/attendance]** during your probationary period.

As stated in your letter of appointment and Statement of Main Terms, your appointment is subject to the satisfactory completion of a six month probationary period. During your probationary period your attendance record, conduct, timekeeping, work performance, together with any other relevant factors, have been assessed.

If you fail to attend the meeting a decision may be made in your absence.

I must advise you that a potential outcome may be that your case may be referred to a dismissal hearing for dismissal to be considered for failing to meet the standards required during your probationary period.

Please confirm your attendance at this meeting and the name of the trade union representative or work colleague if applicable.

Yours sincerely



**Private & Confidential**

Date

Dear,

**ATTENDANCE AT A DISCIPLINARY HEARING**

Further to the formal probationary review meeting I am writing to inform you that you are required to attend a disciplinary hearing on **[day, date, time]** which will be held in the **[venue]** at **[School Name]**.

**At the Disciplinary Hearing you will be required to answer the following allegation[s]:-**

The Disciplinary Hearing will be heard by a panel of Headteachers, Trustees or Trust Officers (none of whom have had any prior involvement in the case) who will be advised by **[name]** Human Resources Advisor:

You have the right of representation by a trade union representative or other School employee at the hearing and I strongly advise you to exercise this right. Please advise me in writing if you wish to take this course of action.

I would be grateful if you could please acknowledge receipt of this letter, including your availability to attend this meeting and the names of any witnesses you intend to call.

I must advise you that if you do not attend the hearing a decision may be taken in your absence.

If the management case is upheld then you will be dismissed from your post at **[School Name]**.

I enclose the management case in which I intend to rely on at the Hearing which has been provided to you five working days in advance and also the procedure that will be followed at the hearing.

You must make your case available at least one clear working day in advance of the hearing, along with any documentary evidence to be presented at the hearing. This should be marked for the attention of the chair of the panel.

If you have any queries concerning the above please contact me .

Yours sincerely

## APPENDIX G

### DATE

Private & Confidential

Name

Address

Dear

### **SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE PROBATIONARY PERIOD**

Further to your recent probationary review meeting with your line manager, I can confirm that you have successfully completed your probationary period as of [date].

I therefore write to confirm your appointment at **[School Name]** and wish you all the success in your role as **[job title]**.

Should you have any queries concerning the above please do not hesitate to contact me or speak to your line manager.

Yours sincerely

Name

Headteacher