

Guiding Principles and Suggested Process for Appraising School Support Staff

1. Overview

- 1.1 Appraisal should be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all support staff have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively. It will help to ensure that support staff are able to continue to improve and develop their professional practice and foster a professional dialogue between colleagues.
- 1.2 This guidance note sets out a suggested framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of support staff and for supporting their professional development within the context of the school's plan for improving educational provision and performance.

2. The Appraisal Period

- 2.1 The appraisal period should run for twelve months in accordance with the dates agreed. This would usually span an academic year.
- 2.2 Support staff who are employed on a fixed term contract of less than one year (but longer than one term) should have their performance managed in accordance with principles set out here. The length of the period for assessment will be determined by the duration of their contract.
- 2.3 There may be flexibility to have a longer or shorter appraisal period when support staff begin or end employment.
- 2.4 Where a member of support staff starts their employment part way through a cycle, the head teacher may determine the length of the first cycle for that member of staff, with a view to bringing the cycle into line with the cycle for other support staff at the school as soon as possible.
- 2.5 Where a member of support staff transfers to a new post within the school part way through a cycle, the head teacher may determine whether the cycle shall begin again, depending upon the post, responsibility, etc. At the very least, objectives should be reviewed to ensure they remain relevant to the new post.

3. Appointing Appraisers

- 3.1 The head teacher will decide who will appraise members of support staff. However, the designated Appraiser, where possible, should have line management responsibility for the member of support staff they are appraising. Where a member of staff has objections to the appointed Appraiser, these should be put in writing to the head teacher who will give due consideration to these concerns and respond to the member of staff accordingly.

- 3.2 Except in the case of the head teacher being the Appraiser, it is advised that the maximum number of support staff that any Appraiser should be expected to review per cycle, should be no more than 5.

4. Setting Objectives

- 4.1 Objectives for each member of support staff should be set before or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period. The objectives set should be : -
- rigorous,
 - challenging
 - achievable
 - time-bound
 - and objectively measurable.
- All objectives should be fair and equitable in relation to support staff with similar roles / responsibilities and experience.
Any training needs should be considered and discussed at this point.
- 4.2 The appraiser and the member of support staff should seek to agree the objectives together but, if that is not possible, the Appraiser will determine the objectives in line with the requirements set out in paragraph 4.1. Objectives may be revised if circumstances change. Due consideration should always be given to the need to maintain a healthy work life balance for both Appraiser and the member of support staff.
- 4.3 Any member of support staff wishing to raise a formal objection to the objectives may do so via the school's grievance procedure. However, as Appraisal is a positive process, it should be expected that the majority of objections will be adequately dealt with at the lowest level.
- 4.2 Other than in exceptional circumstances no member of support staff should have more than 3 objectives and will not necessarily have the same number of objectives as other support staff.
- 4.3 The objectives set for each member of support staff should contribute toward the wider school priorities particularly in respect of: -
- improving the school's educational provision and performance
 - improving the education and attainment of pupils
- 4.4 Although the appraisal process is an assessment of overall performance of support staff, objectives cannot cover the full range of support staff roles/responsibilities. Objectives will therefore, focus on both school and individual priorities.
- 4.5 Every effort should be made to meet objectives in full. However, an Appraiser may conclude that significant progress has been made towards achieving objectives and in these instances the member of support staff may be assessed favourably.

5. Reviewing Performance

There are a number of ways in which support staff performance can be reviewed and evaluated. Any process should be carried out in a positive and supportive manner.

These include:

5.1 Classroom Observation for class based Support Staff

5.1.1 This allows the Appraiser to observe classroom practice in order to identify any particular strengths and areas for development, and for gaining useful information which can inform school improvement more generally. All observations should be carried out in a supportive fashion and appropriate verbal and written feedback (when appropriate) should be provided.

5.1.2 The timing and frequency of any classroom observations should be discussed and agreed by the appraiser and the member of support staff during the appraisal meeting. Observations for appraisal purposes will not exceed 3 hours or 3 separate observations.

5.1.3 Oral feedback should be given as soon as possible after an observation and within 24 hours if at all possible. Written feedback (where agreed) should be provided within 5 working days of the observation taking place.

5.2 Drop-ins (class based Staff)

5.2.1 In addition to formal observation, the head teacher or other leaders with responsibility for school standards may “drop in”, in order to evaluate the standards and to check that high standards of professional performance are established and maintained.

5.3 Informal Review Meetings

5.3.1 Regular, informal review meetings should take place throughout the appraisal cycle and arrangements for these should be agreed at the initial appraisal meeting. These provide an opportunity for professional dialogue between the appraiser and the member of support staff regarding progress, concerns and feedback.

5.3.2 A record of any meeting should be made and shared with the member of staff.

6. Development and Support

6.1 Appraisal is a supportive process which is used to inform continuing professional development. The process should encourage a culture in which all support staff take responsibility for improving within their role

through appropriate professional development. Professional development should be linked to school improvement priorities and to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of individuals.

7. Feedback

- 7.1 Support staff should receive constructive feedback on their performance throughout the year and as soon as practicable in the event that concerns come to light. Feedback will highlight particular areas of strength as well as any areas that need further development and will inform future training needs and requirements.
- 7.2 Feedback should also be given during any review meetings and recorded as per para 5.3.2.

8. Annual assessment

- 8.1 Each member of support staff's performance should be assessed in respect of each appraisal period.
- 8.2 This assessment is the end point to the annual appraisal process, but performance and development priorities should be reviewed and addressed on a regular basis throughout the year in the agreed review meetings.
- 8.3 The member of support staff will receive, as soon as practicable following the end of each appraisal period and will have the opportunity to comment in writing on, a written appraisal report. It can be beneficial to agree a date by which such written reports will be shared.
- 8.4 The appraisal report should include:
 - details of the support staff's objectives for the appraisal period in question;
 - an assessment of the support staff's performance of their role and responsibilities against their objectives;
 - an assessment of the support staff's professional development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them;
 - where objectives have not been met in full, but the Appraiser is satisfied that significant progress has been made, the rationale for this decision;
- 8.5 The assessment of performance and of professional development needs will inform the planning process for the following appraisal period.
- 8.6 Any appraisal process should be confidential to the head teacher, appraiser and member of support staff. However, this does not override the need for the head teacher and governing body to quality assure the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal system.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

- 9.1 The Appraisal Process should be monitored for effectiveness by the head teacher and governing body.
- 9.2 The head teacher will provide the governing body with a written report on the operation and effectiveness of appraisal systems annually, including compliance with equalities legislation. The report will not identify anyone by name and will include an assessment of the impact of the policy on;
- Race
 - Gender
 - Sexual Orientation
 - Disability
 - Religion and belief
 - Age
 - Part time status
 - Maternity/pregnancy