



PROBATION POLICY & PROCEDURE FOR SUPPORT STAFF

Date Reviewed	Body	Review Date
Summer Term 2024	Board of Trustees	Summer 2026

1. Policy Statement

Chiltern Learning Trust is committed to providing a smooth and supportive working environment. The procedure within this policy is designed to help and encourage all support staff to achieve and maintain the required standards and expectations within Chiltern Learning Trust and to allow us to objectively assess whether or not an Employee is suitable for the role. We believe the use of probationary periods increases the likelihood that new Employees will perform effectively in their employment.

Whilst an Employee is within their probationary period they are not subject to the Trust's disciplinary, capability or sickness absence procedures. Areas of conduct and concern that require addressing during their probationary period will be addressed through this procedure.

This procedure must be applied fairly and in accordance with employment law and the Trust's Equal Opportunities Policy.

2. Purpose

This policy is intended to support and guide staff and enable managers to manage employee performance and conduct in a way which is fair and consistent.

The Employee's performance will be monitored and supported by the line manager. The Employee is expected to fully contribute to the process and during this period, should be able to:

- Understand the Trust, their allocated School and their own role and how these all fit together
- Understand the expectations, standards, behaviours and job tasks required for their role and how to fulfil these
- Reach a level of performance which is deemed satisfactory to the Trust.

3. Scope

This procedure applies to all permanent and fixed term staff within the Trust. Employees with prior service in other schools, maintained schools and other local government employers will be required to undertake a probationary period with the Trust.

During the probationary period, Employees will be subject to all the terms and conditions of their contract of employment. All staff that are within a probationary period will not be entitled to a salary increment until they have successfully completed their probation.

4. Length of Probation

The standard duration of probation at Chiltern Learning Trust is 9 months and operates in conjunction with the induction and initial training offered to new Employees. The school holiday periods are not included within the probationary period unless the Employee is contracted to work 52 weeks per year.

This procedure is intended to allow both the Employee and the line manager to assess objectively whether the individual is suitable for the role. This includes, and is not restricted to: attendance, performance, conduct and satisfactory pre-employment checks.

Concerns will be addressed at an early stage with support measures put in place. Should the required improvements not be made, the probationary period may be extended or if performance remains unsatisfactory termination of employment may be considered.

Should an Employee's performance and conduct be satisfactory, their employment will be confirmed in writing.

5. Procedure

The probationary form should be completed at every probationary meeting with the Employee. The manager and Employee should both sign the form at the end of each probationary meeting. If the Employee disagrees with the feedback from the probationary meeting, then the Employee may send in a written submission which will be held alongside the probationary form.

If the line manager and/or Employee identify that further additional support and training needs are required to assist the Employee in reaching the standards, the school has a responsibility to provide reasonable additional support and training to the Employee. Training is not required to be an internal or external course and may consist for example, of shadowing or similar on the job training.

It is essential that the Employee is advised in the probationary meetings if there are concerns about their progress or their suitability for the post, that targets are set and a reasonable time allowed to demonstrate improvement prior to a subsequent meeting. The Employee must be clearly advised what improvements are required and that should the school deem them not to be suitable/satisfactory their employment with the Trust will be terminated.

During the 9-month probationary period, a minimum of three formal meetings between the Employee and the Line Manager should take place to discuss the Employee's progress. Consideration should be made to have one soon after the Employee commences in the role, half way through the probationary period and at the end and as such could be the final review assessment to consider the overall performance.

Regular informal meetings between the line manager and Employee are encouraged. The Employee should reflect on their own performance and raise any concerns.

Confirming a Satisfactory Probation Period

Towards the end of the probationary period the final review meeting is to consider the overall performance. Should the Employee's performance be deemed as satisfactory, successful completion of their probationary period will be confirmed in writing

Concerns during the Probationary Period

Where concerns become apparent, they will be raised at the earliest opportunity with the aim of supporting the Employee to improve their performance or conduct.

The Employee should be made aware that should the required improvements not be made their employment may be terminated.

The Line Manager will seek advice from the Trust's HR provider and refer to the Headteacher/CEO.

Extending the Probationary Period

The maximum extension of a probation period is up to a further 3 months, to further enable the Employee to reach the required standard of performance and/or conduct.

The Employee should be made aware that should the required improvements not be made their employment may be terminated.

Towards the end of the extension, a final review meeting will take place. Should performance be deemed satisfactory, the Employee will receive written confirmation of the successful completion of their probationary period.

Terminating Employment during the Probationary Period

To give the Employee the fullest opportunity to meet the required standard the Trust's policy is to allow the Employee to complete the designated period of probation.

If there is clear evidence or information that comes to light that may be so serious as to call into question the Employee's suitability for the role, the Trust may convene a hearing and terminate the employment prior to the end of the probation period.

The Employee will be invited to attend a probationary hearing. The outcome of the hearing will be confirmed in writing to the Employee within a reasonable timeframe.

Right of Appeal

An Employee may appeal against a decision to dismiss and end their employment.

The Employee must clearly set out the grounds of their appeal, in writing, to the HR Manager within five working days of receiving the written confirmation of dismissal via HR@chilternlearningtrust.org. The appeal will be heard as per the scheme of delegation. The decision of this panel is final and there is no further right of appeal.

A letter confirming the decision will be sent to the Employee within a reasonable timeframe.

Right of Representation

An Employee has the right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or workplace colleague at any formal meeting.

If the Employee's workplace colleague or Trade Union representative is unavailable to attend the meeting, the meeting can be deferred by up to five working days from the date of the original meeting.

Should the Employee fail to attend, without sufficient reason, or fail to appoint a representative in their absence, a decision will be made based on the evidence available at the time.

The Employee can provide a written support statement to the panel and send their trade union/professional association representative or work colleague on their behalf.