

APPRAISAL POLICY

V3

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1.0 Policy Statement

- 1.1 Beckfoot Trust is committed to providing high quality teaching and learning. Through our workforce we aim to provide opportunities for all our pupils, whatever their starting point. Each employee will therefore be given support to ensure that they have the skills they need to carry out their role, help them continually improve their performance and develop to their full potential which will in turn help improve outcomes for our young people.
- 1.2 Having an effective appraisal process in place is one of the ways we can support our employees and deal with performance matters as they arise. This involves effective day-to-day supervision, carrying out professional growth meetings, providing development opportunities and operating a fair and reasonable capability process.
- 1.3 We are in the process of transitioning our approach to appraisal from a traditional approach, focused on performance management, to a professional growth approach which focuses more on supporting the professional development of the employee to support them to achieve their own professional growth goals. Therefore, this year's policy reflects this transition.
- 1.4 This appraisal policy has been developed to comply with current legislation including the Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012 (the Appraisal Regulations), that apply to teachers in all maintained schools. Beckfoot Trust has decided to follow the principles of these Regulations in developing and implementing this policy. This policy will also apply to support staff employed within our Trust, to ensure consistency across all employees.
- 1.5 This policy has been implemented following consultation with the recognised trade unions. It has been formally adopted by the Trust Board.
- 1.6 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time following consultation.

2.0 Scope and Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of all employees, and for supporting their development within the context of the individual school and whole Trust's plan for improving educational provision and performance, and the set standards expected of each employee. The policy links to the capability policy.
- 2.2 Our Trust regards the Department for Education Teachers' Standards as the baseline of expectations for the professional practice and conduct of teachers, from the point of qualification (Early Career Teacher Policy).
- 2.3 In implementing this policy, we will ensure that appraisal is managed in a way that avoids increased workloads for all parties concerned, for example, reviewing the number and frequency of meetings and observations, and ensuring the process for collecting evidence is always proportionate. The emphasis is on impact not output.
- 2.4 This policy applies to all employees of our Trust, including teachers, support staff, and centrally employed staff except those on contracts of less than one term, those undergoing statutory induction i.e., Early Career Teachers (ECTs) and those who are subject to the Capability Policy. It does not apply to agency workers.
- 2.5 Where an employee is not covered by this policy as set out in 2.4 above, then performance will be managed through regular supervision and feedback.

3.0 Overarching Principles

- 3.1 The appraisal period will run for twelve months from the end of September to August for teachers, educational support staff and operational staff.
- 3.2 Employees who are employed on a fixed term contract of less than one year, but more than one term will have their performance managed in accordance with the principles underpinning this policy. The length of the period and objectives will be determined by the duration of the contract.
- 3.3 Beckfoot Trust and is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness. It will abide by all relevant equality legislation, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees. The Board of Trustees are aware of the guidance on the Equality Act 2010 issued by the Department for Education.
- 3.4 The appraisal process will be treated confidentially. However, the desire for confidentiality does not override the need for the manager to quality-assure the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal system. In our Trust, the headteacher in conjunction with the senior leadership team, is responsible for reviewing professional growth goals and professional growth plans and written appraisal records, to check consistency of approach and expectation between different appraisers.

4.0 Responsibilities and Arrangements

4.1 Appointing appraisers

- 4.1.1 The Headteacher is appraised by the Exec Headteacher (EHT). The EHT is appraised by the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) and the CEO is appraised by the Trust Board. Directors are appraised by a more senior executive leader.
- 4.1.2 The Headteacher of each school will decide who will appraise their employees. Central staff will be appraised by their line-manager. In the case of matrix management, one person conducts the appraisal and others feed in. For senior staff, there should always be an element of 360 feed in.
- 4.1.3 Employees will be notified of who their appraiser will be, before or as soon as practicable after the start of each appraisal period.

4.2 Setting professional growth goals and creating professional growth plans – all employees

- 4.2.1 At the start of the appraisal process, each member of staff will be prompted to reflect on their current performance, team improvement plan priorities and personal ambitions. From this, with their line manager, they will set a professional growth goal which will be set before or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period or by week 10 of Cycle 1. Employees who start employment after the appraisal period has commenced must still set a goal which is achievable within a shorter time frame. The professional growth goal will be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART) and will be fair, reasonable, and appropriate to their role and level of experience. The appraiser and appraisee will seek to agree the goal but, if that is not possible, the appraiser will determine the goal. Managers have a duty to regard the work life balance of all employees, and the goal will reflect this.
- 4.2.2 Once the professional goal is set, the employee, with support from their appraiser, will create a professional growth plan which sets out the steps the employee is going to take to achieve the goal.

To support the creation of the plan, the appraiser will discuss what professional development opportunities the employee needs to achieve the goal, such as, but not limited to: undertaking a professional qualification, shadowing, peer observations, visits to other schools or organisations, undertaking an apprenticeship, for example. The duration of the professional goal and associated plan will depend upon what it is and therefore an employee may have more than one goal and plan in the appraisal period.

- 4.2.3 Professional growth goals and plans should be revised if circumstances change during the appraisal period. Such as, but not limited to, a change of role, an employee going on maternity leave, or undergoing surgery/medical treatment, to take account of the anticipated absence and to allow for the employee to meet a reduced and attainable goal or to change the goal.
- 4.2.4 The professional growth goal set with each employee will, if achieved, contribute to our Trust's plans for improving educational provision and performance and improving the outcomes of pupils. Goals should be mission-aligned and have a strong focus on professional development to ensure up to date methodologies, technologies and educational research is being utilised. The Headteacher of each school, together with the senior leadership team, will be responsible for quality assuring goals and plans set across the whole school against department and school improvement plans. The central team will set goals in line with the corporate strategy five-year plan.
- 4.2.5 The appraisee will meet with their appraiser at least three times in the appraisal period: the first professional growth meeting will be to agree and set the professional growth goal which will help the employee to create their professional growth plan; there will be a further interim professional growth meeting in Cycle 2 where the goal and progress towards the professional growth plan will be reviewed. The final meeting in Cycle 3 will be a review of the year and of the goals and plans that were set in the appraisal period and the appraisee and appraiser will start to consider and discuss goals and plans for the forthcoming appraisal period.
- 4.2.6 The Professional Growth Senior Leader at each school or central team is responsible for reviewing the goals and plans being set to ensure that adequate professional development opportunities, time and resources are available to support staff to achieve their plans.

4.3 Reviewing performance – feedback is a gift

- 4.3.1 The performance of each employee will be assessed against relevant standards, which contribute to our aims and provide a guide for employees in their role. At our Trust, the standards for:
 - Teachers are set out in the Teachers' Standards (2011) and the expectations for teachers on the Upper Pay Range is set by schools.
 - Support staff have professional standards that are applicable to all roles (see Appendix 1).
 - Performance concerns should, where possible, be raised before the next professional growth meeting in a separate line management meeting.
- 4.3.2 Employees will receive constructive feedback on their performance throughout the year and as soon as practicable after an observation or other performance review has taken place (where applicable) or other evidence has come to light. Feedback should highlight areas of strength as well as any areas that require further development. Often this can resolve issues without the need for any formal action. We encourage all staff in all positions to seek feedback from others as standard practice.
- 4.3.3 Feedback will also be sought from relevant employees. For example, a teacher may be asked to provide feedback on a teaching assistant who works with them.

- 4.3.4 Feedback is part of our culture, and everyone can expect to be given 'even better ifs' as part of a culture of continuous improvement. This should not cause alarm.
- 4.3.5 We believe that everyone can improve if they are in the right position and given the right support, we take our duty to support our employees seriously.
- 4.3.6 Where concerns emerge about any aspect of an employee's performance, the appraiser or line manager, will always ensure extra support is provided for a minimum of four weeks as part of the usual expectations of managing performance. Often this is all any employee needs and the more informal and supportive that this is, the better. In this circumstance, an employee's work on their professional growth plan may be suspended to ensure that the employee has time to address performance concerns.
- 4.3.7 If there is no improvement or not enough improvement at all after four weeks, a more structured informal action plan will be put into place. The appraiser or line manager will meet the appraisee to discuss this and construct a plan of support.
- 4.3.8 This meeting can happen at any time during the appraisal period. It is a supportive meeting to address issues early and avoid the matter escalating, giving the employee the opportunity to improve. At the meeting, the appraiser or line manager will present evidence collected that indicates where the employee's performance is not up to the required standard along with noting additional support provided in the previous four weeks. There is no right to be accompanied to this meeting. Although this is part of an informal process, a note of the meeting will be made and a copy given to the employee so that they are clear about the support they will be given, what improvements need to be made and the timescales. A structured action plan will be provided, and this will outline a six-week minimum informal review period.
- 4.3.9 At the meeting and in advance of writing the plan, the appraiser or line manager will:
- give clear feedback about the nature and seriousness of the concerns;
 - give the appraisee the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns;
 - find out if there are any issues (both in or outside of work) that are affecting their performance that the appraiser can assist with or provide support;
 - set clear objectives for the required improvements and how these can be achieved;
 - agree any support (for example coaching, mentoring, training, structured observations, observing others in a similar role etc), that will be provided to help address those specific concerns;
 - make clear how, and by when, the appraiser or line manager will review progress either by setting new and clear objectives for required development which will be assessed during the review period or by revising current objectives, allowing sufficient time for improvement; the amount of time for this should reflect the seriousness of the concerns;
 - explain the implications and process if no, or insufficient improvement is made during the informal review period. For example, potential move to formal capability. An informal action plan will run for at least six weeks (See paragraph 4.3.10).
- 4.3.10 During the informal review period, regular meetings should take place to ensure progress is being made and the agreed upon support is being provided. It may be appropriate to suspend the professional growth plan during this time. If, after four weeks of structured and clear support, no improvement/not enough improvement is made, the employee will be offered the opportunity to discuss and review the action plan, accompanied by a union representative, and set a final review date in two weeks' time.

4.3.11 At the end of the informal review period when progress is reviewed, if the appraiser or line manager is satisfied that the employee 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 performance is improving and the appraiser feels that further time is required to monitor improving performance, the appraiser can decide to extend the informal review period, but it should not be unduly long. If no or insufficient improvement is being made, then the process set out below (transition to capability) should be followed. It will be for the appraiser or line manager to decide which procedure will be followed.

4.4 Observation

4.4.1 The Trust understands the importance of carrying out observation of classroom practice and other responsibilities of teachers and teaching assistants. Observation is a method for assessing performance to identify strengths (so the appraiser can give positive feedback and praise) and areas for development but also provides a way of gaining useful information which can inform improvements in the organisation more generally and enable teachers to learn from each other and collaborate.

4.4.2 In our Trust, performance will be regularly observed but the amount and type of classroom observation will depend on the individual circumstances of the employee and the overall needs of the school. Responsibilities outside the classroom will also be observed and assessed where appropriate. Observation will be in line with teaching and coaching principles which are reviewed annually and available on Trust Matters. All observations will be carried out in a supportive fashion and not add to workload. No individual lessons are graded. Classroom observations for teachers will be carried out by those with QTS and for teaching assistants by those with QTS or a HLTA.

4.4.3 We have a strong belief that everyone can improve and be better tomorrow than they are today, therefore, instructional coaching is an important part of our culture.

4.4.4 In addition to longer observations, leaders with responsibility for teaching standards will "drop in" to evaluate the standards of teaching and classroom practice and to check that high standards of professional performance are established and maintained. The length and frequency of "drop in" observations will vary depending on specific circumstances, "Drop in" can be used to provide feedback to teachers as part of the ongoing supportive nature of the appraisal process.

4.4.5 Observation does not need to be restricted to the classroom, and we would encourage all staff to be 'observed' in a variety of activities and to seek feedback. For example, leading a demonstration, or delivering training, applying a new skill, feedback on a written document or through practice coaching following an activity.

4.5 Evidence / opportunities for feedback

4.5.1 Evidence supports feedback about performance and supports the appraisal process, in particular conversations about an employee's progress towards achieving their professional growth goal. The range and level of evidence collected for appraisal purposes will always be proportionate, minimise workload and should not sit 'outside' of evidence produced to 'do the job'.

4.5.2 During the appraisal period, each employee has a responsibility for gathering evidence of their progress throughout the year towards achieving the professional growth goal in order for them to

identify any strengths or areas for further development at the professional growth meetings. The appraiser will then record the discussion on this evidence.

4.5.3 Teachers

In addition, a range of evidence should be available to the appraiser and line manager on a teacher's performance as part of the quality assurance processes. Evidence may include but is not limited to:

- lesson observations (including "drop ins")
- work scrutiny
- questionnaires (pupil or parent - where obtained)
- planning scrutiny
- learning walks
- pupil feedback (where obtained)
- tracking data of pupil's progress
- progress of individuals/groups
- evidence of meeting Standards
- assessment of TLR.

4.5.4 Support Staff

Evidence for support staff appraisal may come from, but is not limited to:

- shadowing
- peer or manager observation of a task
- feedback/testimonials from peers or others (e.g., 360)
- meeting deadlines (e.g. use of Every)
- evidence of continued professional development accessed in own time/self-directed.

4.6 Professional growth meetings throughout the appraisal period

4.6.1 The initial, interim and final professional growth meeting will be used to discuss and review school, team and role-specific priorities in addition to professional ambitions to help agree goals and plans.

4.6.2 Performance and development priorities will be reviewed and addressed throughout the appraisal period. Performance concerns should, where possible, be raised before a professional growth meeting.

4.6.3 The final professional growth meeting in the appraisal period will review performance and professional development needs to inform the planning process for the following appraisal period.

4.7 Transition to capability

4.7.1 Performance management is an ongoing process. If an employee demonstrates underperformance and has not responded to support provided within the appraisal process, the employee will be notified in writing that the appraisal system will no longer apply as performance will be managed under the Capability Policy and will be invited to a formal capability meeting (see Capability Policy).

5.0 Retention and Data Protection

- 5.1 As part of the application of this policy, the organisation may collect, process and store personal data in accordance with our data protection policy. We will comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Legislation (being (i) the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) (unless and until the GDPR is no longer directly applicable in the UK) and any national implementing laws, regulations and secondary legislation, as amended or updated from time to time, in the UK and then (ii) any successor legislation to the GDPR or the Data Protection Act 1998, including the Data Protection Act 2018). Records will be kept in accordance with our GDPR, Data Protection and FOI policy that includes our Workforce Privacy Notice and our Retention and Destruction procedure and in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Legislation.

6.0 Review of Policy

- 6.1 This policy is reviewed and amended annually by the Executive and in consultation with the recognised trade unions. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.
- 6.2 The Headteacher and Executive will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal arrangements. In developing, applying, and evaluating this policy, we will monitor the impact on diverse groups of people with protected characteristics in line with the Trust's Equality and Diversity policy. This will ensure that what we do is done fairly.

Appendix 1 Beckfoot Trust Professional Standards for Support Staff, Teaching Assistants and High-Level Teaching Assistants (HLTA)

Purpose of the standards

The Beckfoot Trust Professional Standards defines high standards that are applicable to all support roles in a self-improving school system. The main purpose of these standards is to raise the status and professionalism of Trust employees and to position everyone's role within a community of professionals, all working together to improve outcomes for children.

This is a set of standards for Trust employees that:

- are unequivocal, clear and easy to understand and use;
- can be used to inform performance management processes;
- steer the professional development of support staff at all levels;
- are designed to inspire confidence in support staff and ensure that schools utilise skills and expertise to best effect;
- focus primarily on the key elements of their professional relationship with other Trust colleagues to ensure that all schools create remarkable learning environments where learners enjoy, learn, succeed.

The four themes

The Trust Professional Standards are set out in four themes:

1. Personal and professional conduct
2. Knowledge and understanding
3. Working with others
4. Teaching and learning (for Teaching Assistants and HLTAs only).

Personal and professional conduct

Support Staff should uphold public trust in the education profession by:

- Having proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they work as professional members of staff
- Demonstrating positive attitudes, values and behaviours to develop and sustain effective relationships with the school community
- Having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being by following relevant statutory guidance along with school policies and practice
- Upholding values consistent with those required from the Trust by respecting individual differences and cultural diversity
- Committing to improve their own practice through self-evaluation and awareness.

Knowledge and understanding

Support Staff are expected to:

- Share responsibility for ensuring that their own knowledge and understanding is relevant and up to date by reflecting on their own practice, liaising with school leaders, and identifying relevant professional development to improve personal effectiveness

- Take opportunities to acquire the appropriate skills, qualifications, and/or experience required for the support role, with support from the school/employer
- Demonstrate expertise and skills in understanding the impact of your role (including specialist expertise as appropriate) and know how to contribute effectively to the adaptation and delivery of support to meet individual needs
- Demonstrate a level of subject and curriculum knowledge relevant to their role and apply this effectively in supporting teachers and pupils (if applicable).

Working with others

Support Staff are expected to:

- Recognise and respect the role and contribution of other professionals, parents and carers by liaising effectively and working in partnership with them
- Keep other professionals accurately informed of performance and progress or concerns they may have about the pupils they work with (if applicable)
- Understand their responsibility to share knowledge to inform planning and decision-making
- Understand their role in order to be able to work collaboratively with other colleagues, including specialist advisory colleagues
- Communicate their knowledge and understanding of pupils to other school staff and education, health and social care professionals, so that informed decision making can take place on intervention and provision (if applicable).

Teaching and learning (TAs and HLTAs only)

Teaching assistants are expected to:

- Demonstrate an informed and efficient approach to teaching and learning by adopting relevant strategies to support the work of the teacher and increase achievement of all pupils including, where appropriate, those with special educational needs and disabilities
- Promote, support and facilitate inclusion by encouraging participation of all pupils in learning and extracurricular activities
- Use effective behaviour management strategies consistently in line with the school's policy and procedures
- Contribute to effective assessment and planning by supporting the monitoring, recording and reporting of pupil performance and progress as appropriate to the level of the role
- Communicate effectively and sensitively with pupils to adapt to their needs and support their learning
- Maintain a stimulating and safe learning environment by organising and managing physical teaching space and resources

Supporting guidance

Who are the standards for?

The standards are a tool for support staff and line managers and should be used to support performance management. They are also intended to provide guidance when recruiting support staff and defining the job roles of support staff. They are core standards for all support staff working across all phases in mainstream and specialist settings.

What are the standards for?

These core standards are intended to raise the status and professionalism of support staff. They define characteristics that all support staff can demonstrate regardless of their working context. The standards are designed to ensure that the skills and experience demonstrated by support staff help to develop and sustain high performing teams.

Using the standards

The standards can be used:

- For support staff, to shape their own practice and professional development, within and beyond the school.

Self-evaluation in a supportive context is key to the development of all education professionals. These standards can be used by support staff as a focus for reflection on their own practice.

Support staff can use the standards to have a constructive appraisal conversation with their line manager about areas where support is needed for professional development. Support staff should feel empowered to seek such support. Leaders are expected to provide such training and support as may be necessary, within the financial constraints in which they operate.

- For teachers or other line managers, to inform the appraisal of support staff.

There is no mandatory requirement to use the standards for this purpose, but they provide a useful framework for appraisal discussions. These standards should not be used as prescribed objectives. Objectives must be relevant to the context of the individual school and member of staff.

They may be used to support and supplement existing appraisal frameworks but are not designed as a sole tool for performance management.

- For employers to evaluate their induction arrangements and provision of professional development (PD) for Support Staff.

The standards should inform schools' processes for identifying training and development needs. Schools need to have professional development practices which effectively address the needs of the whole workforce and should use their own and external training budgets to this end.