

Brook Learning Trust

Appraising Support Staff

Performance Policy



At Brook Learning Trust (BLT) we bring together our unique academies in our belief in the power of education to change lives and communities. It is our steadfast purpose to challenge and defy the barriers that constrain the educational progress of any child. We set high aims for aspiration and secure collective responsibility for all our children's achievements. Our work is underpinned by the values of Integrity, Respect, Courage, Optimism, Excellence and Accountability.

1 Purpose

Across our academies we are committed to continually improve outcomes for our students and we believe that effective appraisal will assist our support staff to achieve this through clarity of role and expectations, motivation, development and feedback. Appraisal within BLT will be a developmental process designed to ensure that all staff have the skills and support they need to strive for continuous improvement. The Support Staff Appraisal Cycle includes meeting to agree meaningful objectives which are aligned to wider Trust and academy plans. It includes discussions around resources and training, personal and career development and allows for mid-year reviews, frequent feedback and employee recognition.

2 Application of the Appraisal Policy

This Policy applies to all non-teaching staff except those on contracts of less than six months. Central Trust staff should read the CEO in place of the Principal for Academies.

3 The Appraisal Period

The appraisal period will run for twelve months normally from April to March. Regular check-ins and managerial support will underpin the appraisal cycle through line management meetings.

Support staff who are employed on a fixed term contract of less than one year will have their performance managed in accordance with the principles underpinning this policy. The application of this will be determined by the duration of the contract of employment. Where a member of support staff starts their employment part-way through a cycle, the appraisal process shall be brought into line within the principles outlined in the Pay Policy and within section 6 below.

Where a member of support staff transfers to a new post within the academy part-way through a cycle, the Principal shall determine whether the cycle shall begin again and whether to change the appraiser.

The appraisal cycle should be planned to link with the probation period of new staff.

4 Line Manager / Appraisal responsibility

Line managers are responsible for appraising support staff. Where line management is unclear, decisions about appraisers are for the Principal.

Where it becomes apparent that the appraiser appointed by the Principal will be absent for the majority of the appraisal cycle, the Principal may perform those duties herself / himself or delegate those duties to another suitable member of staff for the duration of that absence.

5 Setting Objectives

- Objectives will be set before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period
- The objectives should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound and will be appropriate to the appraisee's role and level of experience
- Although longer term objectives can be set for a twelve month period it may be beneficial for some support staff to agree a small number of near term objectives or 'agile goals' that they may be working on over the next 1 – 4 months. This is particularly relevant for new staff following completion of their probation period

- In setting the objectives, the line manager will have regard to what can reasonably be expected in the context of roles, responsibilities and experience and will consider training and development to support gaps in knowledge or skills
- The appraiser and appraisee will seek to agree the objectives. Individual performance objectives should relate to the overall objectives of the Trust and academies.
- The CEO of the Trust or Principals for academies may request sight of objectives and may moderate should the objectives not align to wider improvement or business plans or if they are unrealistic
- Significant changes to objectives and action plans should be discussed with the individual employee and confirmed as and when they arise after discussion with the CEO of the Trust or Principal for academies
- The objectives will contain a description of what success may look like and any key action points which will support success and learning
- The number of objectives set would usually range between three and five. Consideration will be given to workload and changes which may affect workload such as new projects, growth or new technology.

6 Pay Progression

Pay progression will take place annually with effect from 1st April. Progression within a pay band will not be automatic and will be dependent on performance and contribution and any specific challenges such as resources or change. Progression can take the form of a half point for partial progress, a full point for good progress and two points for exceptional progress. Where a member of support staff has been absent for some or all of the assessment period, pay decisions will be taken with reference to such information as is available.

All support staff are eligible for pay awards including those who have reached the top of their Kent Scheme Pay range. Please see the BLT Pay Policy for more information on top of the range awards.

In line with the Kent Scheme conditions, members of staff taking up a new appointment or securing a promotion to a new role between 1st April and 30 September will be eligible for a pay review with effect from the following April. Staff taking up a new appointment or securing promotion to a new role after 1st October, will be due for pay progression one year from the following April.

The Trust may also make appropriate use of any merit award or other reward system, both cash and non-cash within the Kent Scheme to recognise the performance and contribution of support staff in a positive and flexible way. The Trust will ensure that any such decision is in accordance with the schemes' provisions.

Mitigating circumstances

There may be occasions where an employee has been unable to achieve an objective due to issues outside of their control not related to their capability or performance. Managers will take this into consideration regarding pay award recommendations.

The Trust Board has agreed the Pay Policy and has considered the implications of the appraisal policy with respect to the arrangements relating to support staff's pay.

7 Reviewing Performance

7.1 Observation

The Trust recognises that for some support staff, particularly those working in the classroom, observation of work practice is important both as a way of assessing staff performance in order to identify any particular strengths and areas for development they may have and of gaining useful information which can inform academy improvement more generally. Any observation will be jointly planned and carried out in a supportive fashion by those with knowledge of the appraisee's work and appropriate and timely oral and / or written feedback will be given.

7.2 Development and Support

Appraisal is a supportive process which will be used to inform continuing professional development. The Trust wishes to encourage a culture in which all staff take responsibility for improving their skills through appropriate professional development, peer observation and coaching. Training and professional development will be linked to school improvement priorities and to the on-going development needs and priorities of individual staff.

Each academy's CPD programme will be informed by the training and development needs identified as part of the appraisal process. The Finance Director will ensure in the budget planning that, as far as possible, resources are made available in the academy budget. In some cases development requests may be met in-house or via mentoring, coaching or on the job training.

An account of the training and development needs of staff including the instances where it did not prove possible to provide any agreed CPD, will form a part of the Principal's report to the Standards Panel.

With regard to the provision of CPD in the case of competing demands on the academy budget, a decision on relative priority will be taken with regard to the extent to which:

- a) The training and support will help the academy to achieve its priorities; and
- b) The CPD identified is essential for an appraisee to meet their objectives.

Account will be taken in a review meeting of where it has not been possible for staff to fully meet their performance criteria because the support recorded in the planning statement has not been provided.

8 Annual Appraisal

Each member of support staff will meet with their line manager to gain feedback and discuss performance and contribution during the previous year. Career and personal development, resources and support will form part of this discussion.

The CEO and Principals of each academy are responsible for ensuring that each member of staff benefits from an appraisal meeting, a mid-year review and regular line management / one to one meetings. Written records of appraisals will be maintained and both the line manager and employee will contribute to the annual assessment documentation. The appraisal report will include:

- Details of the staff's objectives for the appraisal period in question
- An assessment of the staff's performance of their role and responsibilities against their objectives
- An assessment of the staff's training and development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them
- A discussion around career and personal development
- Any wider contribution to the organisation outside of objectives and role responsibilities
- Individual employees' comments on the year's performance including key learning, achievements and challenges

9 Staff Capability Policy

Formal disciplinary and grievance issues do not form part of the performance appraisal process for support staff and will be dealt with separately. If the employee is undergoing informal or formal capability proceedings it is important that issues concerning poor performance at work are recorded in appraisal documentation in order that any formal monitoring of performance (through the Staff Capability Policy and Procedure) is not undermined by contradictory messages being given to the employee.

10 Appeals

Appeals against Support Staff pay recommendations should be made through the appeals process detailed in the Trust's Pay Policy.

11 General Principles Underlying this Policy

We will implement our appraisal arrangements on the following principles:

Equality of opportunity: All staff should be encouraged and supported to achieve their potential through clarity of expectations and job role, regular feedback, performance review and provision of relevant development

Consistency of treatment and fairness: We will take action to ensure the performance appraisal process is fair, non-discriminatory and that staff are treated consistently

High standards: We believe by setting appropriate and challenging standards of performance and providing suitable feedback and development all staff have the potential to continually improve their performance

Reward and recognition: Pay progression for staff should reflect their overall contribution to the Trust and the academies both as individuals and as team members.

11.1 Long term absences including maternity / adoption / parental leave

Where a member of staff has been absent for some or all of the assessment period decisions around pay progression will be taken with reference to such information as is available.

11.2 Confidentiality & Professional Relationships

The appraisal process will be treated with confidentiality. Only the appraiser's line manager or, where s/he had more than one, each of her/his line managers and colleagues involved in the appraisal review chain will be provided with access to the appraisee's plan. Moderation processes will include the confidential sharing of appraisal documentation as outlined below.

The process of gathering evidence for performance review will not compromise normal professional relationships between staff. The Trust Board recognises that the appraiser will consult with, and seek to secure the agreement of, the appraisee before seeking information from other colleagues about the work of the appraisee. However, the desire for confidentiality does not override the need for the Principal and the Pay Committee or Trust Board to quality-assure the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal system. The Principal or appropriate colleague might, for example, review all support staff objectives and written appraisal records personally – to check consistency of approach and expectation between different appraisers.

11.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Trust and Principals will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the Academy's appraisal arrangements.

As part of the usual reporting process data will be collated for Pay Committee on the operation of the Academy's appraisal policies annually. The report will not identify any individual by name. The report will include an assessment of the impact of these policies on:

- Race
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Disability
- Religion and Beliefs
- Age
- Part-time Status
- Maternity and Pregnancy.

The Trust and Principals will report on whether there have been any appeals or representations on an individual or collective basis on the grounds of alleged discrimination.

12 Retention

Heads of Academy Administration and Principals will ensure that all written appraisal records are retained in a secure place and destroyed in line with personnel record retention guidance.

POLICY REVIEW AND RATIFICATION

Policy reviewed annually and ratified by the BLT Board in February/March

This review HR Manager and BLT Executive in February 2020

Ratified by BLT Board in March 2020

There are no changes to the policy

Next review February 2021