

Probation Policy for Support Staff

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Responsible Colleagues

Director of People Strategy

Our Vision



Transforming Lives of our learners

We seek to ensure that all our learners receive a high-quality education from expert staff and aspire to achieve the best they possibly can, no matter their background or ability. Our learners have safe, supportive learning environments in which they develop, grow, and challenge themselves. We are determined that our learners will receive the very best enrichment and opportunities to help them reach their full potential and ensure they are prepared for the future, wherever it might take them.



Transforming Lives of our colleagues

Our colleagues are supported with the very best professional development through our innovative ATT institute, allowing them to stay focused on learning and developing as practitioners whilst they progress in their careers. We share the very best practice across our community of academies to help build systems and processes that really work.



Transforming Lives in the communities we serve

We are committed to actively engaging with and addressing inequality in our local areas. We understand that every one of our academies and their diverse communities are different, so we aim to build a supportive, collaborative, and nurturing relationship with each whilst sharing our key values across our Trust.

Commitment to Education

Transparency and Integrity

Innovation and Improvement

Dedication to Inclusivity

Our Values

Commitment to Education

Our core purpose is to positively impact the lives of all our learners. Education will always be at the heart of everything we do.

Transparency and Integrity

We are proud of our success whilst being open and honest about our areas for improvement. Our actions are always ethical and in the best interests of all our stakeholders.

Innovation and Improvement

We are committed to innovative education- always moving forward and never standing still. Our learners are ambitious and prepared for a future that is constantly changing and developing.

Dedication to Inclusivity

Our learners are all different and all important to us. We aspire to support, challenge, and help each one of them reach their full potential, regardless of their background or level of ability.

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Introduction

This policy is applicable to all new support staff joining ATT. The probationary period allows time for the new employee to adapt to the role and demonstrate through their capability, attendance, time keeping and conduct that they are compatible with the requirements of the role and the aims of the Trust.

The policy aims to

- Support the recruitment and development of an outstanding workforce.
- Provide a clear framework for assessing the capabilities, reliability and suitability of new employees.
- Enable managers to deal with legitimate concerns about the performance, conduct or capability of new employees swiftly, fairly and effectively.
- Guide and challenge new employees to fulfil their potential, to deliver their best.

Evidence shows that probationary periods increase the likelihood of success for new employees.

1 | Legal Framework and Definitions

1.1 This policy has due regard to statutory guidance and legislation, including, but not limited to:

- *The Recruitment and Selection policy*
- *The Capability policy*
- *The Equality Act (2010)*

2 | Scope and Purpose

2.1 This procedure is non-contractual and is for guidance only. It applies to all new support staff regardless of their permanent, fixed-term, full- or part-time status.

2.2 The probationary period is for the first six months from the start date of employment (and may in exceptional circumstances be extended by up to 12 weeks). The purpose of the probationary period is to enable an assessment to be made regarding a probationer's suitability for the job for which they have been employed. This procedure will run in parallel with the *Capability Policy*.

- 2.4 In operating the procedures managers will have regard to:
- The need for new employees to be effective as soon as possible
 - The action to be taken during or at the end of the probationary period where progress appears unsatisfactory (e.g. further training or counselling, extension of the period or non-confirmation of appointment).
 - Employee appeal rights.
- 2.5 The probation procedure provides a consistent and fair framework for monitoring and reviewing the performance of new staff in relation to:
- Quality of work and understanding of role
 - Conduct and attendance
 - Compliance with all policies and procedures, particularly those relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people
 - Health and safety
 - Leadership and management (if appropriate)
 - Providing formal feedback and opportunity for discussion
 - Dealing with inadequate performance and misconduct issues
- 2.6 The objectives of any induction process should be as follows:
- To provide the best possible environment for new employees to learn their job and to prove their suitability for permanent employment
 - To provide a framework within which employees' line managers may judge the suitability of the employees, may discuss shortcomings and agree action needed to remedy any situation
 - To ensure that, where it is not intended to confirm an appointment, termination of employment takes place no later than or as soon as possible after the end of the probationary period (occasionally it may be necessary to terminate an appointment on capability grounds during the probationary period).
 - To ensure that management actions are reasonable and defensible, and that employees have been given an adequate chance to improve, undergo training, etc. Probationers who are within their probation period are not subject to the formal capability and disciplinary procedures and sickness absence procedures. If issues of conduct, poor performance or sickness arise during the probation period, the probation procedure will normally be used to address such matters.

3 | Equal Opportunities

- 3.1 The *Probation Procedure* will be operated in accordance with ATT's *Equal opportunities Policy*.

4 | The Principles of the policy

- 4.1 The principles of this policy are to provide a fair, equal, and consistent approach to probation through effective communication between the Principal/ELT and the employee, ensuring a structured assessment of performance. Whilst the probationary period will offer an opportunity to assess the competence and attitude of the new employee, the Principal/ELT have a personal responsibility to ensure the probationary period focuses on utilising the skills and knowledge the new employee brings to the role.
- 4.2 At the end of the six-month probationary period, the employee should be able to perform their role with minimum or no supervision (depending on the duties and responsibilities of the role). The member of staff should have been assessed in a representative range of tasks appropriate to their position and must be performing at a fully satisfactory standard. The probationary period can, therefore, be viewed as an extension of the employee's planned induction: hence, training needs can be identified, and performance assessed at regular intervals during the first 6 months.

5 | The Procedure

- 5.1 Managers are responsible for:
- Ensuring the employee is aware of this probation policy and procedure.
 - Explaining the expected standard of performance, how performance will be monitored, and expected standards of conduct to the new employee.

- Completing a probation review for the new employee at the first and final probation review stages.
- Ensuring that probation review forms are completed in a timely manner.
- Notifying the employee of the probation review meetings in advance so that both parties have time to prepare.
- Identifying any potential for the employee to fail to meet the standards required and taking appropriate action quickly whilst maintaining liaison with HR if appropriate.
- Ensuring that systems are in place to support and monitor the employee's work throughout the probation period in order that they receive such assistance as is reasonable to fulfil the duties and responsibilities of the post.

5.1 Employees are responsible for:

- Ensuring that they understand the probation policy and procedure.
- Ensuring that they are familiar with the standards and requirements of the job role.
- Ensuring that they take an active part in the probation review meetings.
- Undertaking any learning and development activities agreed with the manager.

5.2 The line manager should, in normal circumstances conduct a total of 2 formal reviews with the probationer. Reviews should take the form of a confidential meeting between the line manager and probationer, in which there is opportunity for two-way discussion.

6 | First review

6.1 Takes place on completion of 3 months service.

6.2 The purpose of this meeting is to review the probationer's performance over the first 3-months. The line manager will evaluate the probationer's performance and discuss any key issues with the probationer. See [Appendix 1](#) for the Colleague Probation Document and [Appendix 2](#) for the Line Manager Probation Document review form.

6.3 If improvements in performance are required the capability monitoring and review programme pro-forma [Appendix 3](#) should be used. There should be a discussion about how to make the necessary improvements, including appropriate management support/training. Where the probationer has not met the required standards, they will be informed that continued failure to meet those standards could result in dismissal. Upon completion of this review meeting, the line manager should complete the form and hand it to the Human Resources Team.

7 | Final Review

- 7.1 This takes place prior to completion of 6 months' service.
- 7.2 The Final Review meeting will take place after the probationer has completed 6 months service; the line manager should consider whether:
- The probationer's appointment should be confirmed.
 - The probationary period should be extended.
 - The probationer will be dismissed with statutory or contractual notice, whichever is the greater.
- Upon completion of the final review meeting, the line manager should complete the Line Manager Probation Document and the employee should complete the Colleague Probation Document. A copy should be given to HR for the file.
- 7.3 If performance is below expected standards, the line manager may make the decision to extend the probationary period at the final review for a period of up to 12 weeks. The capability monitoring and review programme at pro-forma [Appendix 3](#) must be completed.
- 7.4 If the performance is significantly below the expected standards, the line manager may recommend that non-confirmation in post is considered at the final review meeting.
- 7.5 While working for the Trust employees should at all times maintain professional and reasonable standards of conduct. Failure to maintain satisfactory standards of conduct during a probation period will be dealt with under the Probation Policy. The review meetings may be brought forward. Where there are allegations of misconduct relating to safeguarding, the Trust will ensure these are fully investigated in line with our statutory duty under Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- 7.6 If dismissal is a possible outcome, the final review meeting will be held by the Principal/ELT at which the line manager and the probationer, will have the opportunity to state their case before any decision is made by the Principal/ ELT concerning their employment. The following preparation will be undertaken:
- The probationer will be informed in person and written to with details of the date, time and purpose of the review meeting. Rearrangement will be permitted within 5 days of the original meeting date if the employees representative is unavailable.
 - The letter will state the reasons why the performance has been unsatisfactory to date.
 - The letter will include a management statement of case detailing the reviews, training and support offered to the employee during the probationary period.
 - The probationer will be notified in writing of their right to be accompanied at the meeting by a workplace colleague or trade union representative.

- 7.7 The Principal/ELT member will write to the individual confirming the decision. There is a right of appeal against a decision to terminate employment 10 working days after the decision to the HR department. Any appeal will be heard by a panel. The panel will be made up of 3 senior leaders. The probationer will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or workplace colleague.

Appendix 1- Probation Form Employee

Probation Form for Colleagues

(Probation Review Preparation Form)

Please complete each section of this form and bring this with you to your 3-month probation review meeting.

1. Please complete the fields below:

Name	
Position	
Department	
Line Manager	
Start Date	
Which probation review is this for? (3 Month or 6 Month)	

2. Please state either 'yes' or 'no' against the following:

I have been briefed about health and safety, including fire and other emergency evacuation procedures	
I understand the child protection procedures and have received safeguarding training	
I have read and understood 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'	
I have received the ATT Handbook	
I am aware of the ATT Institute and my opportunities to progress	
I have received details of the ATT 'Together' Employee Benefits Platform	
I know where to access policies and procedures	
I have received the necessary ICT equipment to fulfil the duties of my role (Laptop or PC, Mobile phone if applicable etc.)	

3. Please tick either 'Always', 'Sometimes', or 'Never' against each of the following competencies ✓

Competency	Always	Sometimes	Never
I prioritise work well, recognising urgent and important tasks and completing these first			
I meet deadlines and complete work at an acceptable pace			
I manage my diary and my time well			
I complete work to a high standard which meets organisational goals			
I set myself high expectations and take pride in the work I do			
I take initiative, identifying ways to improve working practices and demonstrate proactiveness			
I am effective at solving problems			
I use information communications technology effectively (SharePoint, Outlook, Data, Job Specific Systems and Software)			
I have formed good working relationships with key colleagues and stakeholders			
I am adaptable and flexible where required, promptly responding to urgent and unexpected challenges as they arise			
I am committed to equality, diversity and inclusion, respecting the diverse of needs of staff and stakeholders			
I can be relied on to attend work regularly			
I regularly meet the expectations regarding my working hours			
I have adopted the ATT values in all aspects of my approach: Hard Work, Integrity and Teamwork.			

4. Please outline any training and support which we can provide to help you improve your performance. If you have selected either 'Disagree' or 'Neither agree nor disagree' against any of the above competencies, then you are strongly encouraged to outline further support:

Name	
Date	
Signature	

Once the probation review meeting is finished, please provide this document to your line manager. You are encouraged to keep a copy for your own records.

Appendix 2- Probation Review Line Managers

3 months review form - Probation Review Form for Line Managers

Please bring this form with you to the meeting. The employee will be required to complete a similar form (ATT Probation Review Preparation Form for Employees). The employee will need to complete this beforehand and bring this with them to the meeting.

Please complete the fields below:

Your Name	
Position	
Department	
Name of Employee	
Start Date of Employee	
3 Month Probation Date	
6 Month Probation Date	

As part of their preparation, the employee will have been asked to confirm whether they have received the following. Please ensure they have recorded their responses on their preparation form.

They have been briefed about health and safety, including fire and other emergency evacuation procedures
They understand the child protection procedures and have received safeguarding training
They have read and understood 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
They have received the ATT Handbook
They are aware of the ATT Institute and their opportunities to progress
They have received details of the ATT 'Together' Employee Benefits Platform
They know where to access policies and procedures
They have received the necessary ICT equipment to fulfil the duties of their role (Laptop or PC, Mobile phone if applicable etc.)

Review

Please tick either against each of the following competencies ✓ The employee will have rated themselves against each of the competencies below as part of their preparation. Please consult with the employee to ensure a rich and meaningful assessment against each of the criteria:

Competency	Always	Sometimes	Never
The employee prioritises their work well, recognising urgent and important tasks and completing these first			
The employee meets deadlines and completes work at an acceptable pace			
The employee manages their diary and time well			
The employee completes work to a high standard which meets organisational goals			
The employee sets themselves high expectations and takes pride in the work they do			
The employee takes initiative, identifying ways to improve working practices and demonstrates proactiveness			
The employee is effective at solving problems			
The employee uses information communications technology effectively (SharePoint, Outlook, Data, Job Specific Systems and Software)			
The employee has formed good working relationships with key colleagues and stakeholders			
The employee is adaptable and flexible where required, promptly responding to urgent and unexpected challenges as they arise			
The employee is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion, respecting the diverse of needs of staff and stakeholders			
The employee can be relied on to attend work regularly			
The employee regularly meets the expectations regarding their working hours			
The employee has adopted the ATT values in all aspects of their approach: Hard Work, Integrity and Teamwork			

If as line manager, you tick “Never” in the above areas then the probation period will continue through to the 6-month review stage.



Line Manager

Name	
Date	
Signature	

Employee

Name	
Date	
Signature	

Once the probation review meeting is finished and signed by both you and the employee, please send the form to your Human Resources department.

For 6 Month Review Meeting Only:

HR Authorisation:

Name	
Date	

Appendix 3- Probation Review Line Managers

6 months review form - Probation Review Form for Line Managers

Please bring this form with you to the meeting. The employee will be required to complete a similar form (ATT Probation Review Preparation Form for Employees). The employee will need to complete this beforehand and bring this with them to the meeting.

Please complete the fields below:

Your Name	
Position	
Department	
Name of Employee	
Start Date of Employee	
3 Month Probation Date	
6 Month Probation Date	

As part of their preparation, the employee will have been asked to confirm whether they've received the following. Please ensure they have recorded their responses on their preparation form.

They have been briefed about health and safety, including fire and other emergency evacuation procedures
They understand the child protection procedures and have received safeguarding training
They have read and understood 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
They have received the ATT Handbook
They are aware of the ATT Institute and their opportunities to progress
They have received details of the ATT 'Together' Employee Benefits Platform
They know where to access policies and procedures
They have received the necessary ICT equipment to fulfil the duties of their role (Laptop or PC, Mobile phone if applicable etc.)

Review

Please tick either against each of the following competencies ✓ The employee will have rated themselves against each of the competencies below as part of their preparation. Please consult with the employee to ensure a rich and meaningful assessment against each of the criteria:

Competency	Always	Sometimes	Never
Development areas highlighted in 3 month review			
The employee prioritises their work well, recognising urgent and important tasks and completing these first			
The employee meets deadlines and completes work at an acceptable pace			
The employee manages their diary and time well			
The employee completes work to a high standard which meets organisational goals			
The employee sets themselves high expectations and takes pride in the work they do			
The employee takes initiative, identifying ways to improve working practices and demonstrates proactiveness			
The employee is effective at solving problems			
The employee uses information communications technology effectively (SharePoint, Outlook, Data, Job Specific Systems and Software)			

The employee has formed good working relationships with key colleagues and stakeholders			
The employee is adaptable and flexible where required, promptly responding to urgent and unexpected challenges as they arise			
The employee is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion, respecting the diverse of needs of staff and stakeholders			
The employee can be relied on to attend work regularly			
The employee regularly meets the expectations regarding their working hours			
The employee has adopted the ATT values in all aspects of their approach: Hard Work, Integrity and Teamwork			

Notes of reasons for recommendations competed, extended or terminated

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin blue border, occupying most of the page. It is intended for handwritten or typed notes regarding recommendations that are completed, extended, or terminated.

Line Manager

Name	
Date	
Signature	

Employee

Name	
Date	
Signature	

Once the probation review meeting is finished and signed by both you and the employee, please send the form to your human resources department.

For 6 Month Review Meeting Only:

Line Manager Name	
Decision (6 Month Probation Completed, Extended, Termination)	
Date	
Signature	

HR Authorisation:

Name	
Date	

Appendix 3- Capability Monitoring

Capability Monitoring and Review Programme Pro-forma – Protocols

Confidentiality

The informal support process will be treated confidentially. However, the desire for confidentiality does not override the need for the Principal/ELT to quality-assure the operation and effectiveness of the performance management system. Our Trust colleagues may be asked to provide the quality-assurance.

Consistency of Treatment and Fairness

Academy Transformation Trust (ATT) and its Local Governing Bodies (LGB) are committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness. They will abide by all relevant equality legislation, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff. The LGBs are aware of the guidance on the Equality Act issued by the Department of Education (DfE).

Delegation

Normal rules apply in respect of the delegation of functions by the LGB, Principals and ELT.

Retention

The LGB and Principal/ELT will ensure that all written records relating to the informal support period are retained in a secure place. It is the manager's responsibility to ensure HR has a copy of all relevant documents. All records will be kept no longer than is necessary in accordance with the GDPR. Our Trusts template support plans are within this document and should be used during the informal support period.

Informal Support Meetings

A meeting under the informal support procedure will:

- Identify performance shortcomings
- Allow an employee to respond to those concerns, ask questions and make any relevant representations which may provide new information or a different context to the evidence already collected
- Identify what action (including support provided) has been taken to date and what the outcome was
- Where appropriate, identify and explain a support plan of action that will be available to help the employee improve performance. The employee will be given the opportunity to make an input to this support plan of action.
- Provide the employee with the support plan of action (example overleaf) listing those responsible for ensuring support is provided, targets for improvement, support to be provided and when, and measures of success. It should also detail dates and times for informal review meetings with mentors, observations or other form of intervention activity.
- Where appropriate, warn an employee formally that failure to improve within the set period could lead to more formal action under the Capability Policy.
- Confirm the timescale for the informal support period. This will vary according to the level and nature of improvement needed, however, the standard set review period is normally 8 weeks. In exceptional circumstances it could be appropriate for the review period to fall within the range of 4 to 10 weeks, following discussion and seeking to agree with the staff member.
- The timetable will depend on the circumstances of the individual case but the period will be reasonable and proportionate and should provide sufficient opportunity for an improvement to be made. Monitoring, evaluation, guidance and support will continue during this period.

Informal Support Plan Template

This pro-forma sets out the monitoring and review programme to be followed prior to a decision on whether to proceed to more formal action under the Capability Policy.

Name of employee					
Job Role					
Name of line manager (who has responsibility for oversight of process and providing support)					
Line manager's Job Role					
Date of start of monitoring and review period					
Date of end of monitoring and review period					
Performance concerns - details of the concerns that were identified at the capability hearing and what will be put in place to support the required improvement					
Performance Concern	Relevant Standards to be targeted during support plan	Objective (standard employee is expected to be at)	Success criteria (what will the employee need to do to improve performance to the required standard)	How will this be evidenced?	Support to be provided
Date set for meeting at the end of the monitoring and review period [minimum 4 weeks, maximum 10 weeks]					

Summary and next steps

Employee comments		Employee's signature	
		Date	
Line manager's comments		Line manager's signature	
		Date	
State the implications of failure to meet targets. (e.g. extension of probationary period or dismissal)			

FOLLOW UP [6] WEEK REVIEW

Name of employee						
Job Role						
Name of Line manager						
Line manager's Job Role						
Date of review meeting						
Performance concerns						
Performance Concern	Relevant Standard to be targeted during support plan	Objective (standard employee is expected to be at)	Success criteria (what will the employee need to do to improve performance to the required standard)	How will this be evidenced?	Summary of support provided	Update on progress since start of monitoring and review period
Summary and next steps						
Confirm next steps – options:				Please tick as appropriate		
1	Performance to the required standard – refer back to performance management under appraisal process			<input type="checkbox"/>		
2	Performance shows some improvement - extend informal support period			<input type="checkbox"/>		
3	Performance not to the required standard – move to formal action under the Capability Policy			<input type="checkbox"/>		
You should inform the employee of what will happen next based on what option is selected.						

Employee's comments		Employee's signature	
		Date	
Line manager's comments		Line manager's signature	
		Date	