



THE DIOCESE OF SHEFFIELD ACADEMIES TRUST

Professional Growth and Development Procedure

Approved by	DSAT Trust Board
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1. Introduction

This policy sets out the Trust's framework for managing staff professional development through a consistent Growth and Development process. It establishes clear expectations for goal setting, monitoring, review and support, ensuring a consistent and fair approach across the Trust. This should provide employees with the space to reflect on their performance, consider their agreed goals, acknowledge the contributions they have made, and consider the next steps in their developmental journey.

2. Purpose

The growth and development process encourages all employees and line managers to reflect on the previous academic year and plan for the forthcoming academic year, including discussing agreed professional development, advice and support, and, where appropriate, seeking further clarification. Growth and Development is a supportive process which is used to inform continuing professional development. The Trust wishes to encourage a culture in which all employees take responsibility for and reflect on their continuing professional and development. The Trust is committed to supporting our employees to grow, develop, and support each other and this policy sets out our framework for doing so in a clear, structured, fair and positive way. It aims to:

- Ensure that all staff are able to flourish without limits
- Foster a culture of continuous improvement and reflective practice.
- Make sure all staff have the skills and knowledge they need to fulfil and excel in their roles and provide an excellent education to our pupils
- Support all staff in achieving their full potential.
- Align individual development with school and Trust priorities.
- Minimise the impact on workload and focus on meaningful discussions and honest conversations that nurture professional growth

3. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the Trust including:

- All teaching staff (excluding those undergoing induction or capability procedures).
- All support staff, including administrative, pastoral, office and site teams.

4. Principles

- **Developmental not judgmental:** The process will support professional development while maintaining high expectations
- **Equity and inclusion:** The process will be applied fairly and in line with Equality Act requirements
- **Clarity and transparency:** Goals and expectations are clearly communicated.
- **Wellbeing-focused:** Workload and wellbeing are central considerations.

5. Equality and Fairness

The Trust will ensure this policy is applied fairly and equitably and in accordance with the Equality Act. Consideration will be given to individual circumstances, including disability, working hours, and any protected characteristics at every stage.

6. Growth and Development Period

The growth and development period runs annually from **1st September to 31st August** and should be seen as a continuous process, with professional development conversations occurring throughout the year

Staff who are employed on a fixed-term contract of less than 1 year will have their growth and development process in accordance with the principles underpinning this policy. The length of their growth and development period be determined by the duration of their contract, and an individual employee's goals will take account of the length of their contract. An employee who is absent for part of the growth and development period e.g. for maternity leave or sickness absence will have a shorter period and goal setting and review will be carried out prior to or shortly after the leave period, depending on when in the cycle this falls.

There is flexibility for a member of staff to have a longer or shorter growth and development period when they begin or end their employment during the period

For all employees, goals should be bespoke to their role and/or developmental progress, meet the needs of the relevant School/Trust Development plan and be referenced to the individual.

The annual growth and development period includes:

1. **Goal Setting** (Autumn Term)

- Goals will be agreed between the employee and appraiser and formally recorded
- Aligned with role expectations, school improvement plans, and Trust values.
- Typically 3 goals, including at least one focused on personal development (see Appendix 1)

2. **Mid-Year Review** (Spring Term)

- A reflective conversation to review progress, adjust targets towards goals if needed, and identify coaching and ongoing support.
- Ongoing conversations should occur throughout the year to support growth and development

3. **Annual Review** (Summer Term or at the start of Autumn Term)

- A holistic review of achievements, challenges, and development.
- Agree at the start of the cycle any supporting documents/logs identified with a view to reduce workload
- A report will be jointly (employee and Appraiser) produced and agreed and signed following the review

During the growth and development period appraisers will:

- Review and address the employee's role contribution, strengths and opportunities on a regular basis
- Maintain regular (termly) growth-focused check-ins to support ongoing professional development and wellbeing

7. Professional Development

- All staff will have access to high quality CPD opportunities tailored to their role and aspirations.
- The Trust will oversee succession and workforce planning and regularly obtain feedback through employee surveys and reports from leaders regarding career aspirations
- Development may include coaching, mentoring, training, peer observation, or external courses.
- Opportunities such as secondments and collaborative working practices will be offered where possible to support growth and development
- Staff are encouraged to maintain a Professional Growth Log to reflect on learning. (NB. The Trust is supportive of reducing workload therefore this is a suggestion rather than mandatory, the log can include anything that is already being produced as part of normal teaching/mentoring time and/or CPD logs/certificates)

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Appraisees: will engage actively in the process, reflect on practice, and seek development.

Appraisers: will provide constructive feedback, support growth, and ensure fairness.

The CEO will conduct the headteacher's professional growth and development meeting.

The Executive Headteacher/Headteacher will decide who will appraise employees. Unless there is a good reason not to, this will normally be the Head of School/Headteacher.

All appraisers will be provided with appropriate training.

School Leaders: Monitor consistency and quality of professional growth and development across the school.

Trust Leaders: Provide strategic oversight and ensure alignment with DSAT values.

The Director of People & Culture is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy, ensuring that a consistent approach to Growth and Development is applied across the Trust.

9. Confidentiality and Record-Keeping

Growth and Development records are confidential and stored securely in line with our GDPR Policies.

10. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the [guidance](#) produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

As an academy trust, we are free to determine our own appraisal arrangements. However, where a teacher's contract specifically incorporates conditions from [The Education \(School Teachers' Appraisal\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#), these will continue to apply due to [The Transfer of Undertakings \(Protection of Employment\) \(TUPE\) Regulations 2006](#), which protect employees' terms and conditions when a maintained school becomes an academy.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

11. Definitions

In this policy, the term 'teacher' refers to classroom teachers, middle and senior leaders, and the headteacher.

Where relevant, we have added further detail regarding arrangements for headteachers.

The term 'support staff' includes all non-teaching staff in schools and central trust employees, other than those in the Executive Leadership team

12. Monitoring arrangements

The Trust Executive will review implementation annually to ensure the policy remains effective, inclusive, and aligned with national guidance.

This policy will be reviewed every year or in line with legislation updates i.e. STPCD.

The Trust Board will be responsible for approving this policy.

13. Links with other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with our capability and pay policies.

The **capability policy** will be used where this policy has not been able to address concerns about a teacher's performance. It applies to all staff, not just teaching staff.

The **early career teacher (ECT) induction policy** sets out the appraisal and pay arrangements for ECTs.

The **pay policy** sets out how pay increases will be awarded and the criteria for progression under main pay range (MPR) upper pay range (UPR), and leadership pay ranges.

Appendix 1: Professional Growth and Development Goal Setting and Review

Research shows that effective appraisal systems are most successful when they are focused on the individual's growth and development and when the individual has more autonomy over their own development¹

DSAT prioritises professional development by helping employees to refine their practice through meaningful constructive feedback and tailored CPD opportunities.

Setting Goals

Goals will:

- Contribute to school improvement plans, giving priority to activities that build expertise and positively impact pupil outcomes.
- Be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART)
- Be appropriate to the employee's role and career experience
- Be proportionate and take into consideration work-life balance and workload
- Be agreed together and, where there is disagreement, this is discussed professionally and openly and recorded in writing (if appropriate)
- Have a strong focus on effective professional development to make sure the employee stays up to date with the latest methodologies, technologies and educational research (where appropriate to the role) and identify coaching to support this

NB. Teachers with a TLR and all employees paid on the leadership scale may have an additional goal based on their area of responsibility and this will be agreed with them at the Growth and Development planning meeting.

Standards

For teachers we will assess teachers against the [Teachers' Standards](#). The headteacher, and other school leaders where relevant, will also be assessed against the [Headteachers' Standards](#).

We will also assess teachers' performance against the DSAT career stage expectations that we have developed.

Support staff will be assessed against any relevant standards e.g. HLTA/ISBL and/or job descriptions

Reviewing performance

Appraisers will set out what they will take into account when making judgements as to whether employees have met their goals and relevant standards.

Evidence used in the growth and development process will:

- Directly relate to the goals and be agreed upon in advance
- Be readily available from day-to-day practice

¹ Transforming Teacher Appraisal 2024, The Teacher Development Trust

For teaching staff, this might but does not have to include:

- Improvements in specific elements of practice such as behaviour management, development of pedagogy or providing feedback
- Impact on effectiveness of teachers or other staff
- Wider contributions to the work of our school
- Active participation in professional learning and the positive impact on the teacher's practice

Types of evidence we will consider, in conjunction with pupil outcomes, include:

- Formal and informal lesson observations
- Observations and results from wider school activities, if applicable
- Reviews of planning and marking
- Parent and pupil voice, if applicable
- Quality of CPD courses completed
- Peer observations
- Contributions to staff training or mentoring

For Support Staff this may include but is not limited to;

- Improvements in specific elements of practice such as behaviour management, development of pedagogy or providing feedback
- Wider contributions to the work of our school
- Active participation in professional learning and the positive impact on the employee's practice

Observation protocol (teaching staff)

The Trust understands the importance of carrying out observation of classroom practice and other responsibilities of teachers and teaching assistants. Observation can assist in the assessment of performance against agreed objectives and help identify strengths and areas for development. They can also help to identify how we can best support teachers, and identify areas of good practice that can be shared across the school. All observations will be carried out in a supportive way and written feedback will always be provided following the observation, usually within 5 working days. Where additional support is required, this will be discussed with the employee.

All observations will:

- Be carried out in an objective, fair, professional and supportive manner
- Be carried out by teachers/leaders with Qualified Teacher Status
- Be reported accurately and fairly
- Be reasonable and proportionate
- Be focused on development
- Be followed by constructive feedback
- Remain confidential to those who need to know details as part of their job

Drop-in observations (teaching staff)

Drop-in observations will be informal visits to gauge CPD application and understand teachers' learning needs.

Drop-in observations usually involve the observer/senior leader talking to pupils and looking at their work.

The frequency will depend on the individual teacher and the school's needs at the time.

Generally, the observer will provide verbal feedback the following day.

We will use all reasonable endeavours to provide written feedback within 5 working days.

Please note that we also carry out drop-in observations where fellow teachers observe a lesson for their own professional development. Notice may not be given and we will not use this as evidence as part of the growth and development process.

Formal observations

The purpose of formal observations is to assess a teacher's performance and progress against their goals and the relevant standards.

We will carry out formal observations only if:

- A teacher requests them
- There are concerns that a teacher's performance is not up to standard (this may be triggered by poorly behaved pupils, or any significant concerns arising)
- The teacher is subject to formal capability proceedings

Generally, teachers will receive verbal feedback the following day, highlighting areas of strength and areas that need further development.

We will use all reasonable endeavours to provide written feedback within 5 working days.

We will take into account a teacher's workload and individual circumstances when determining the number of formal observations we carry out over the year. For example, teachers who have less experience or who have recently started at our school will receive more frequent formal observations than more experienced teachers to establish strengths and areas for growth and development.

Teachers will not usually receive more than 3 formal observations over the year.

Appendix 2: Growth & Development Review template

REVIEW					
NAME:					
SCHOOL YEAR:					
Assessment against goals					
Goals 1:					
Fully achieved		Partly achieved		Not achieved	
Comments:					
Goals 2:					
Fully achieved		Partly achieved		Not achieved	
Comments:					
Goals 3:					
Fully achieved		Partly achieved		Not achieved	
Comments:					
Goals 4 (TLR or Leadership)					
Fully achieved		Partly achieved		Not achieved	
Comments					

Assessment against standards
Standards that apply (i.e. the Teachers' Standards/HLTA and any other relevant standards):
Comments:

RECOMMENDATION FOR MOVING THROUGH THRESHOLD TO UPPER PAY SCALE WHERE THE TEACHER HAS APPLIED AND IS ELIGIBLE

Is pay progression from MPR to UPR being recommended?

(Recommendations are subject to the approval of the Trust Executive)

Note that progression within the main pay scale is automatic, unless serious concerns around performance exist

If so, what is the recommended new salary?

Reasons:

Reviewer name and signature:

Reviewee name and signature:

PLANNING

PLANNING FOR THE NEXT SCHOOL YEAR:

New goals

Goal 1:

Steps to achieve and timescales:

Goal 2:

Steps to achieve and timescales:

Goal 3:

Steps to achieve and timescales:

STANDARDS AND TRAINING/DEVELOPMENT

Standards

Standards to focus on:

Evidence to assess progress and timescales:

Training and professional development

Focus:

Action:

Support:

Timescales:

COMMENTS
Reviewer:
Reviewee:
Names and signatures
Reviewer:
Reviewee:
Date:
DATE OF NEXT MEETING: