



London Borough
of Hounslow

Probationary Period Assessment Procedure for Support Staff in Schools

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Governing Board is committed to producing quality education for pupils in school.
- 1.2 The Governing Board will aim to ensure the recruitment of staff with the appropriate skills and abilities to enable this commitment to be fulfilled. This policy is aimed at both new colleagues and their managers. The starting position should be that you expect all new employees to succeed in their probation.
- 1.3 As part of this process the Governing Board has a responsibility to manage the initial period of employment of a new employee. The procedure for Probationary Period Assessment for Support Staff in Schools will provide the formal mechanism for this for all non-teaching support staff that are new entrants to the London Borough of Hounslow's service or the school's service if a Voluntary Aided or Foundation School.
- 1.4 The Governing Board acknowledges that there is statutory provision governing the induction of Early Career Teachers (ECTs). This procedure will not, therefore, apply to any ECT appointments made at the school or any other teaching appointments.
- 1.5 For the purpose of this procedure, employees are as defined in section 230 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 or any substituting or amending legislation.
- 1.6 The probation period is important for new colleagues if they are to fully immerse themselves into the school. It is the role of the line manager to ensure a proper onboarding experience and to monitor performance and progress against probationary goals/objectives. Integral to a successful onboarding and probation experience are:
- ensuring that new staff are welcomed and feel valued
 - providing key information, they will need to do their job
 - recognising that joining a different organisation is challenging and therefore being available to support new staff
 - setting up probationary review meetings
 - agreeing goals and objectives
 - checking in regularly on their wellbeing and supporting their professional and personal development
 - ensuring that concerns are raised immediately, set out a clear process for improvement and provide any necessary training/coaching
- 1.7 The Governing Board and Headteacher will ensure that performance goals/objectives are written following the 5 A's.
- Aligned - means the goal aligns with, and drives, wider team and organisational goals
 - Agile - means that the goal is near-term, and it is reviewed at a frequency that keeps it relevant and meaningful
 - Assessable - means that the goal can be clearly measured so that an employee will know when they have achieved it.
 - Accountable - means the objective is within the employees' control, and they are clear where there is shared ownership.
 - Aspirational - means that the goal is stretching, yet achievable, and delivery would drive high performance

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3. Misconduct during Probationary Assessment Period

- 3.1 Where there are allegations of misconduct during the probationary assessment period, these should be investigated and managed using the school's Disciplinary Policy/Procedure.
- 3.2 Allegations of Gross Misconduct, if found proven, may lead to a decision to terminate the contract of employment with immediate effect.

4. Responsibilities and Continuous Review during the Probationary Assessment Period

- 4.1 During the 26-week probationary period, there is a responsibility on the employee to demonstrate suitability for the post and a responsibility on the school to guide and train the employee, the extent of guidance usually decreasing with increasing seniority of post.
- 4.2 By the end of the Probationary Period the employee must demonstrate capability to work to acceptable standards without requiring an undue level of supervision. A fair appraisal should be undertaken, with good points highlighted as well as discussion of aspects which are unsatisfactory.
- 4.3 We recognise that employees are all individuals, with differing experiences, knowledge, and backgrounds. The school will factor this into the process and tailor arrangements to make the probationary experience the best that it can be. This may mean that individual experiences of the probationary assessment period may differ.
- 4.4 Line managers should schedule check ins/review meetings to:
- set performance goals/objectives
 - review and monitor performance
 - provide feedback on performance and progress
 - raise any concerns as soon as possible with a view to resolving them
 - provide guidance support as necessary
 - identify and arrange training or coaching
- 4.5 Throughout the probationary period, an employee's performance and work record should be the subject of assessment. Significant areas of achievement and concern should be brought to the attention of the employee and discussed.
- 4.6 The new employee and their line manager should have frequent check ins conversations as part of the induction and probation to discuss how they are settling into the role. The line manager will also review performance targets and progress.
- 4.7 Nothing in this procedure shall preclude consideration of dismissal at any stage if the employee is significantly deficient in performance, conduct, or attendance or in the overall work record (see Paragraph 8).
- 4.8 If, at the end of the probationary period, the employee's overall performance is considered at least satisfactory, then this should be recognised and confirmed to the employee in writing as soon as possible after the end of the probationary period and a copy should be retained on the employee's file.

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5. Areas for Consideration during the Probationary Assessment Period

- 5.1 The employment record as a whole should be considered, paying particular attention to any pattern of improvement or deterioration which may give indications for the future.
- 5.2 Performance - Categories under which this is usually considered appear in the "Probationary Period Assessment Form". These include but are not exclusive to: Knowledge & Performance, Adaptability and flexibility and Relationships with others. Serious concerns should be dealt with immediately under Paragraph. 8.
- 5.3 Conduct - Apparent misconduct which results in serious misgivings as to the suitability of the employee for continued employment should be dealt with immediately as in Paragraph 8 or by use of the school's Disciplinary Policy/Procedure.
- 5.4 Attendance Record and Health – Throughout the probationary period, the attendance record should be carefully monitored. As a matter of routine, this should be done in time for the review at Weeks 9, 18 and 26 of the probationary assessment period.
- 5.5 Where the employee is considered to be disabled as defined in the Equalities Act 2010, full consideration should be given to the available medical evidence and to any adjustments to the duties, the working environment or otherwise, which reasonably could be made.
- 5.6 When an employee accumulates 3 or more episodes or 7 or more days of sickness absence during the probationary assessment period, the reasons and circumstances should be carefully considered. The assessment will also consider the effect of this attendance record on the work of the individual and the school.
- 5.7 Should an employee be approaching either of the above triggers, the manager will explain the consequences of further absence. Serious problems should be dealt with immediately under paragraph 7 or via the Absence Management procedure for School Based staff.
- 5.8 The following are examples of unsatisfactory performance, although this list is not exhaustive:
 - Performance/and or conduct falls short of the required standard, but is not considered to be so unsatisfactory that the contract of employment needs to be terminated
 - Absence (for any reason) has impacted on your manager's ability to make a fair assessment
 - Failure to achieve performance objectives set during the probationary period
 - Poor attendance or timekeeping
 - Non-compliance with or breach of School policies
 - Poor standard of interpersonal behaviour

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6. The Probationary Assessment Review Process

Week 1

- 6.1 The line manager should meet with the new employee as soon as possible after the start date to complete induction checklist and to agree goals/objectives for the initial employment period. A copy of the probation calculator should be provided to the line manager along with the Probationary Period Assessment Form to confirm dates of the Review Meetings.
- 6.2 This meeting marks the start of the probationary assessment period. Dates for check in conversations and probationary reviews should be confirmed. The schedule can be amended to reflect performance during the probationary period, i.e., dates added or removed.
- 6.3 Performance goals will be identified, which should link to the Schools Development Plan as well as the job description. These goals should be such as to enable the line manager to assess the ability to undertake the role to a high standard. Knowledge, skills, abilities, and professionalism should also be assessed throughout the probationary assessment period.
- 6.4 New employees are also expected to demonstrate a high standard of conduct in accordance with the school values and to meet high standards of timekeeping and attendance; these are mandatory.

First Probationary Review Meeting

- 6.5 The first review meeting will be held between the Line manager and the employee no later than by the end of **week 9** of employment. A record will be kept of the review meeting using the Probationary Review Report and a copy of the completed form should be signed by the Line Manager, the employee and the Headteacher.
- 6.6 Performance goals and objectives should be agreed with the employee along with any CPD/Training to be undertaken during the probationary review period.
- 6.7 If the employee's performance, work record and attendance has been satisfactory it is good practice for the first probationary review meeting to draw attention to areas of success as well as to any areas which might benefit from further attention
- 6.8 Where the Line Manager considers that the performance of the employee gives cause for concern, the employee should be advised in writing of the deficiencies in performance and warned that immediate improvement in performance is expected. Targets for improvement should be set and any support required to assist with the improvement of performance should be discussed and noted on the review form.
- 6.9 The employee should be advised that a Significant Deficiencies Hearing may be held if the expected improvement was not demonstrated by the Second Probationary Review Meeting; the outcome of which could be that the appointment would not be confirmed, and that the employee's employment may be terminated. (See Paragraphs 7/8).

Second Probationary Review Meeting

- 6.10 This review meeting will be held between the Line Manager and the employee, not later than the end of **week 18** of employment. A record will be kept of the second review meeting using the Probationary Review Report and a copy of the completed form should be signed by the Line Manager, the employee and the Headteacher.

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- 6.11 The performance goals and objectives previously set should be reviewed with the employee along with any CPD/Training to be undertaken during the first probationary review period. If the employee's performance, work record and attendance has been satisfactory it is good practice for the second probationary review meeting to draw attention to areas of success as well as to any areas which might benefit from further attention
- 6.12 Where the Line Manager considers that the performance of the employee continues to give cause for concern, the employee should be warned in writing of the deficiencies in performance, that an immediate improvement in performance is expected and that a Significant Deficiencies Hearing would be held if the expected improvement was not demonstrated by the Third Probationary Review Meeting; the outcome of which could be that the appointment would not be confirmed, and that the employee's employment may be terminated. (See Paragraph 8).

Third Probationary Review Meeting

- 6.13 This review meeting will be held between the Line Manager and the employee, not later than the end of **week 26** of employment. A record will be kept of the third probationary review meeting using the Probationary Review Report and a copy of the completed form should be signed by the Line Manager, the employee and the Headteacher.
- 6.14 If the employee's performance, work record and attendance has been satisfactory it is good practice for the third review to draw attention to areas of success as well as to any areas which might benefit from further attention.
- 6.15 The Line Manager having reviewed the performance of the employee, should, indicate on the Probationary review Assessment Form the recommendation that the employee's appointment should be confirmed or not confirmed or whether the probationary assessment period should be extended.
- 6.16 Where the Line Manager considers that the employee's performance gives cause for serious concern, the employee shall be advised both verbally and in writing that a Significant Deficiencies Hearing will be held with a recommendation that the employee's appointment is not confirmed and that a possible outcome may be the termination of the employment contract. (See Paragraphs 7/8).

7. Extension of Probationary Period

- 7.1 At any time during the probationary period, where there has been significant deficiencies in performance, an unsatisfactory attendance level or the overall work record is poor, a meeting with the Line Manager should be called to discuss the matter with the employee and to determine whether the circumstances warrant consideration of the extension of the probationary period or dismissal via a Significant Deficiencies Hearing.
- 7.2 The Line Manager will also consider all relevant evidence gathered during the probationary assessment period, the action necessary to achieve a satisfactory level in the area(s) of deficiency and the likely timescales within which this could be achieved.
- 7.3 In certain circumstances, the probationary assessment period may be extended beyond the normal 26-week period to allow the employee to demonstrate improvement.
- 7.4 Where an extension is agreed, the employee should be informed in writing specifying the reasons and terms for the extension. No more than a maximum extension period of **three months** should be agreed, and advice should be sought from Human Resources. In exceptional circumstances a probationary period may be extended beyond three months. Any such extension must be the subject of consultation with the **Head of Schools HR Traded Services**.
- 7.5 Extensions to the probationary period will only be made where it is clear that an improvement to a satisfactory level in the area(s) of deficiency could be achieved within the period of the extension.

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- 7.6 Towards the end of the extension period, the line manager should arrange a final review meeting with the employee to discuss their performance. Employees will be given a minimum of **three days' notice** of the meeting. The employee will have the opportunity to respond and will have the right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or a work colleague at this meeting.
- 7.7 After the meeting, the line manager will consider which of the following two options is appropriate:
- The employee has reached the required standards during the extension period. In which case, they will be advised in writing that their appointment will be confirmed.
 - The employee has not reached the required standards. If so, arrangements will be made to convene a Significant Deficiencies Hearing.

8. Significant Deficiencies Hearing

- 8.1 Following the three probationary review meetings, if the performance of the employee remains below the expected level, then a recommendation may be made to convene a Significant Deficiencies Hearing to consider whether the probationary assessment period should be extended or whether the employment contract should be terminated.
- 8.2 The Line Manager will when considering whether to make a recommendation to move to a Hearing, take into account the person specification and job description for the post where relevant.
- 8.3 The Headteacher will conduct the Hearing, unless the Headteacher has been the Line Manager in which case the Hearing will be conducted by a Sub-Committee of the Governing Board constituted to conduct Hearings. Where the Hearing is conducted by the Sub-Committee of the Governing Board, they will take the action identified below for the Headteacher.
- 8.4 The employee should be informed in writing of the date, time and place of the hearing, giving **five** working days' notice stating the nature of the significant deficiency or deficiencies. A copy of the job description and person specification for the post and the details of any probationary reviews which have been undertaken shall be included. The employee shall also be advised of his or her entitlement to be accompanied at the Hearing by a trade union representative or a workplace colleague.
- 8.5 A representative of the Schools Workforce HR & Development Team should be present wherever possible in an advisory capacity to the Headteacher/Governing Board. The school should also arrange for a notetaker to be present.
- 8.6 The circumstances of the case shall be reported orally by the Line Manager in the presence of the employee and any representative/workplace colleague, and witnesses as to the facts may be called.
- 8.7 The Headteacher/Governing Board Panel, employee or his/her representative shall be given the opportunity to ask questions of the Line Manager and of any witnesses. The employee or the representative shall then put his/her case and may call witnesses.
- 8.8 The Line Manager shall be given the opportunity to ask questions of the employee and any representative and of any witnesses.
- 8.9 The Headteacher will ask such questions as are necessary to establish the facts and will also consider all relevant evidence gathered during the probationary assessment period, the action necessary to achieve a satisfactory level in the area(s) of deficiency, any support that the employee may require to achieve a satisfactory level of performance and the likely reasonable timescales within which this could be achieved

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- 8.10 The Line Manager will comment on the overall work record of the employee and sum up. The employee or representative will explain any mitigating circumstances and sum up.
- 8.11 The Headteacher will then adjourn the Hearing to consider the evidence presented and to decide on the action to be taken.
- 8.12 This may be one of the following:
- dismissal from the school’s service on the grounds of failure to satisfactorily complete the probationary assessment period
 - extension to the probationary period.
- 8.13 The Headteacher’s decision shall be confirmed in writing to the employee within **five working days** of the Hearing. The letter shall state the grounds on which the decision is based and inform the employee of his/her right of appeal in the event of the decision being that the probationary period be extended, the employee be dismissed, or any other action. In the event of dismissal, the letter will specify the individual’s last day of service.
- 8.14 The notice period during the probationary assessment period, is one week on either side, unless otherwise specified in the contract of employment.
- 8.15 For Local Authority Maintained schools, if the Headteacher/Sub-Committee of the Governing Board decide that the employee should be dismissed, the Schools Workforce HR & Development Team and the Director of Children’s and Adult Services should be advised of that decision.

9. Appeals against Dismissal or Extension of Probationary Assessment Period

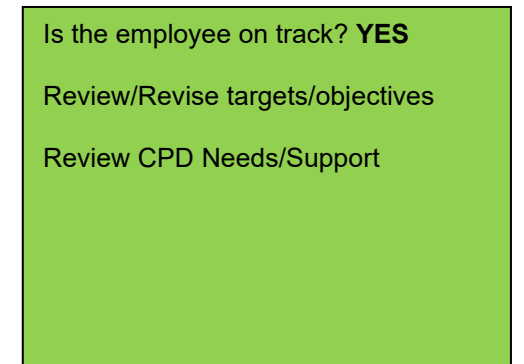
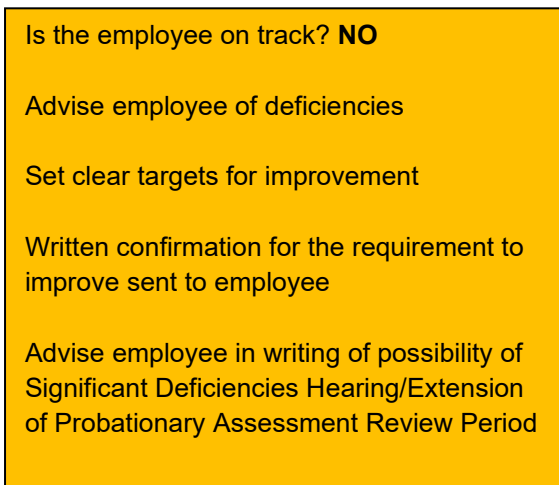
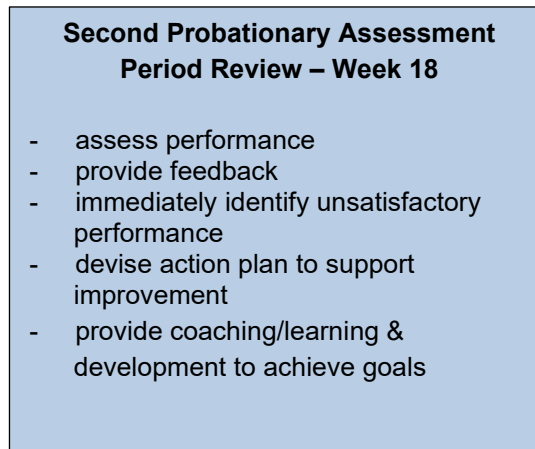
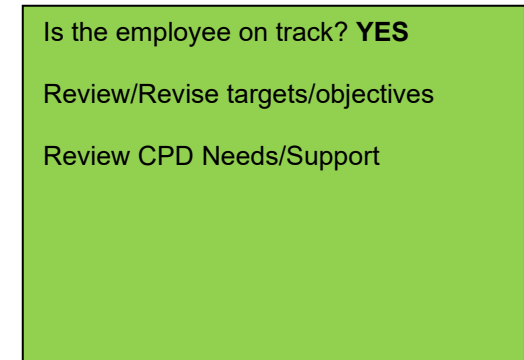
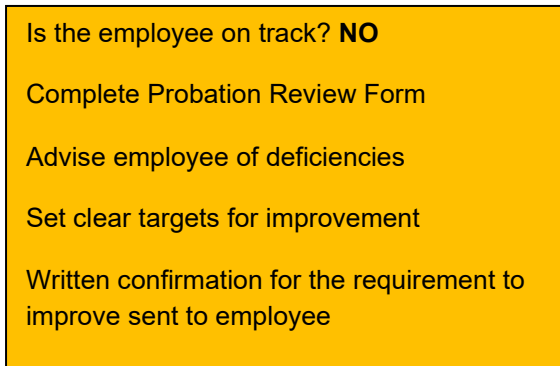
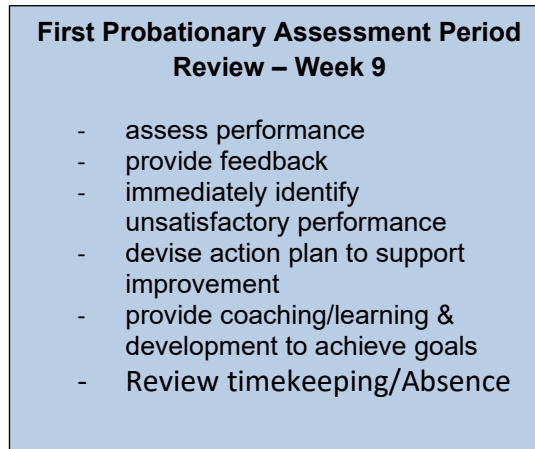
- 9.1 Where an employee wishes to challenge a decision to dismiss or to extend the probationary assessment period, they should do so in writing within **five** working days of receipt of the letter informing of the decision to dismiss or extend the probationary assessment period. The employee should provide clear grounds for the appeal in writing to the Headteacher for consideration by the Governing Board Appeals Panel.
- 9.2 A Hearing to consider the employee’s appeal should be convened within a minimum of **ten working days** of receipt of the letter of appeal from the employee and the decision of the Governing Board Appeal Panel will be final.
- 9.3 The decision of the Governing Board Appeal Panel shall be confirmed to the employee in writing within **five working days** and should state the grounds on which the decision has been based.
- 9.4 A representative of the Schools and Commercial HR Team should be present wherever possible in an advisory capacity to the Governing Board Appeal Panel. The school should also arrange for a notetaker to be present.

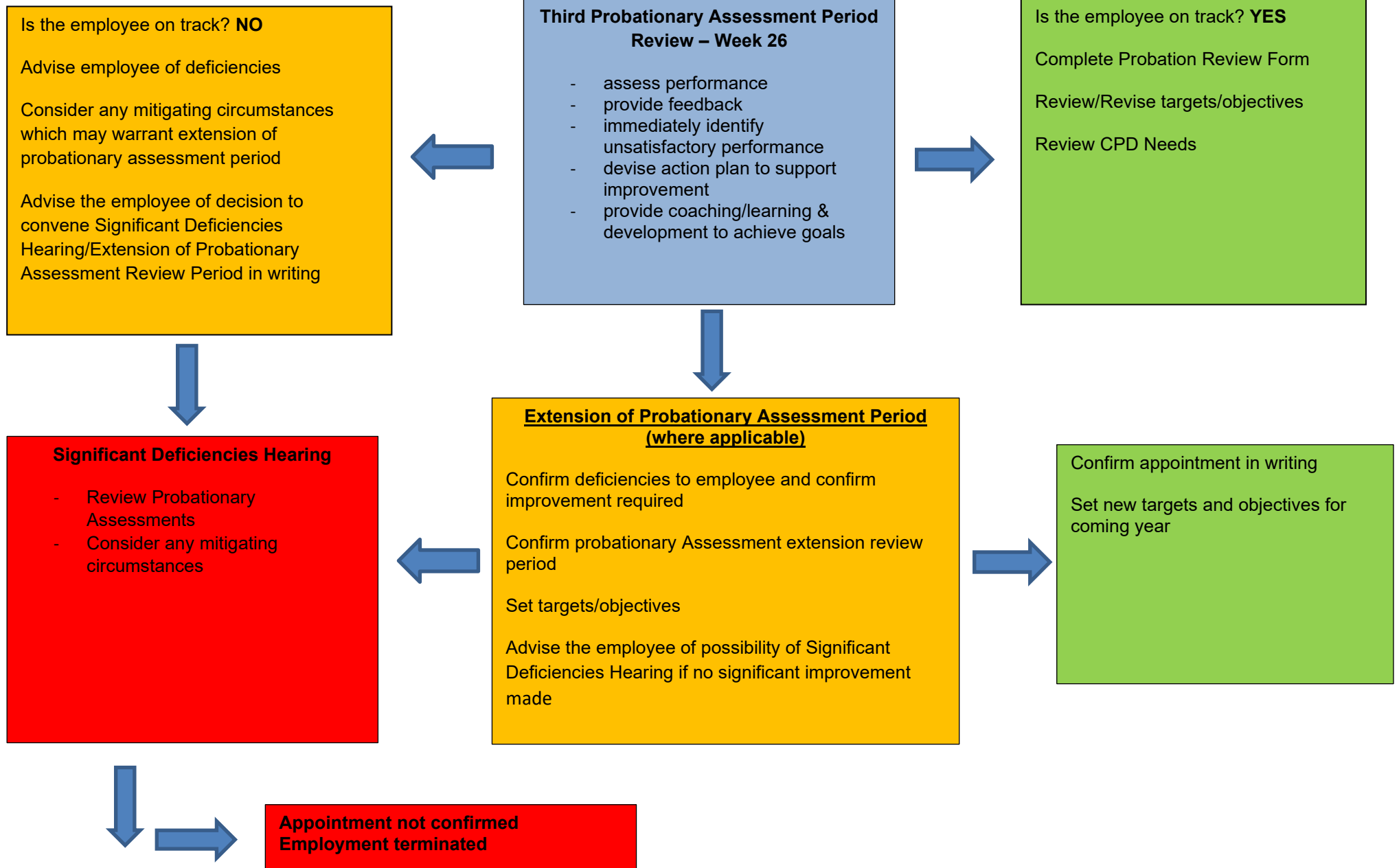
10. Temporary Employees

- 10.1 Temporary employees will also be subject to this procedure.
- 10.2 Where a period of temporary employment is due to end before a 26-week probationary period can be served, probationary reviews should be carried out at suitable intervals under this procedure.
- 10.3 Extensions of temporary employment should only be considered where the employee’s conduct, attendance and work record have been reviewed under this probationary procedure and are satisfactory. Where temporary employment is extended beyond the period initially planned, the 26-week probationary assessment period will continue to apply.

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Appendix 1





Appendix 2

Probationary Period Assessment Form

Probationary period reports are required for all new support staff posts within the school. It is essential that these assessment reports are completed promptly by the new entrant's line manager. Managers should read the Procedure for Probationary Period Assessment for Support Staff in Schools before completing the reports. A copy of the report must be provided to the employee at least **two days** prior to any meeting concerning the review of the probationary assessment period.

This report must be discussed with and signed by the employee who should be given the opportunity to add his/her comments on the matters referred to in the report.

Personal Details

Name of Employee	
School	
Job Title (attach copy of job description & person specification)	
Date of Appointment	
Line Manager	

Probationary Assessment Review Dates– attach copy of probationary review calculator

First report to be completed on (week 9)	
Second report to be completed on (week 18)	
Third report to be completed on (week 26)	

Identified Training Needs

CPD/Training Course Title	Date

Initial Goals/Objectives

(Mandatory Goal): To achieve an excellent standard of conduct that demonstrates the Schools Values	
(Mandatory Goal): To achieve an excellent standard of attendance and timekeeping	

Add two further targets and objectives linked to role and School Development Plan

Induction Checklist – To Be Completed by Line Manager – Week 1

	Date Completed
Introductions	
Headteacher	
Deputy Headteacher	
Colleagues	
Chair of Governors (if appropriate)	
Whole Staff Welcome (if appropriate)	
Administration Team	

	Date Completed
Location Facilities	
Location of work area	
Toilet Facilities	
Tour of Whole School Site	
Refreshment & Meal Facilities	
Staff Facilities	
Fire Exits / Evacuation Procedures (Assembly Point)	
First Aiders & their locations, First Aid Boxes	

	Date Completed
Role & Responsibilities	
Work arrangements (e.g., hours, timetables, daily, weekly, monthly routines)	
Absence procedures	
Accident reporting	
Professional support/development	

	Date Completed
General School Information	
Safeguarding Procedures/Name of DSL	
Staff Handbook if applicable	
ICT login and password	
Payroll arrangements (explain)	

Signed

Position.....

First Probationary Review

Name of employee	
------------------	--

Number of Days sickness absence in monitoring period	[] Days	[] Periods
--	----------	-------------

	Outstanding/Good/Requires Improvement	Comments
Timekeeping/ Reliability		
Health / Attendance		
Job Knowledge & Performance		
Relationship with others		
Conduct		
Communication skills		
Initiative and Problem Solving		
Use of Information and Communications Technology		
Adaptability and flexibility		
Leadership and Management (if applicable)		

CPD/Training Needs: Course Title	Course Date	Successfully Completed Yes/No

Goals/Objectives	Achieved/Not Achieved
(Mandatory Goal): To achieve an excellent standard of conduct that demonstrates the Schools Values	
(Mandatory Goal): To achieve an excellent standard of attendance and timekeeping	

Add two further targets and objectives linked to role and School Development Plan

Targets for Improvement (if applicable)

Second Probationary Review

Name of employee	
------------------	--

Number of Days sickness absence in monitoring period	[] Days	[] Periods
--	----------	-------------

	Outstanding/Good/Requires Improvement	Comments
Timekeeping/ Reliability		
Health / Attendance		
Job Knowledge & Performance		
Relationship with others		
Conduct		
Communication skills		
Initiative and Problem Solving		
Use of Information and Communications Technology		
Adaptability and flexibility		
Leadership and Management (if applicable)		

CPD/Training Needs: Course Title	Course Date	Successfully Completed Yes/No

Goals/Objectives	Achieved/Not Achieved
(Mandatory Goal): To achieve an excellent standard of conduct that demonstrates the Schools Values	
(Mandatory Goal): To achieve an excellent standard of attendance and timekeeping	

Add two further targets and objectives linked to role and School Development Plan

Targets for Improvement (if applicable)

(a) I confirm that **is** on track to satisfactorily complete the probationary review period and that I have discussed all aspects of this report with the employee

or

(b) I confirm that **is not** on track to satisfactorily complete the probationary review period and that I have discussed all aspects of this report with the employee and agreed the targets for improvement as set out below.

Line Manager Comments:	
Line Manager Name:	Date:
Line Manager Job Title and Signature:	

I confirm I have read and reviewed the probationary review report:	
Headteacher Name:	Date:
Headteacher Signature:	

Comments by employee

I confirm that I have understood the above report and have had the opportunity to make my own comments.

Signature of Employee _____ **Date** _____

Third Probationary Review

Name of employee	
------------------	--

Number of Days sickness absence in monitoring period	[] Days	[] Periods
--	----------	-------------

	Outstanding/Good/Requires Improvement	Comments
Timekeeping/ Reliability		
Health / Attendance		
Job Knowledge & Performance		
Relationship with others		
Conduct		
Communication skills		
Initiative and Problem Solving		
Use of Information and Communications Technology		
Adaptability and flexibility		
Leadership and Management (if applicable)		

Goals/Objectives	Achieved/Not Achieved
(Mandatory Goal): To achieve an excellent standard of conduct that demonstrates the Schools Values	
(Mandatory Goal): To achieve an excellent standard of attendance and timekeeping	

CPD/Training: Course Title	Course Date	Successfully Completed Yes/No

Outcome of 26 Week Probationary Review Period

Please complete only one of the three sections numbered 1-3 below, depending on the outcome of the probationary review period

1 Confirmation of Appointment

I confirm thatis competent to undertake the duties of this post and has satisfactorily completed the probationary review period. The appointment should therefore be confirmed.

Line Manager Comments:

Line Manager Name: _____ Date: _____
Line Manager Job Title and Signature: _____

I approve the confirmation of the appointment

Headteacher Name: _____ Date: _____
Headteacher Signature: _____

2 Recommendation to Extend Probationary Period

I confirm that is NOT YET competent to undertake the duties of this post and recommend extension of the probationary review period for the reasons outlined below.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I recommend the probationary review period be extended for the period specified below

4 weeks 6 weeks 3 months Other

Line Manager Name: _____ Date: _____
Line Manager Job Title and Signature: _____

Targets/Objectives for Improvement

I approve extension of the probationary period for [] weeks/months

Headteacher Name: _____ Other _____
Headteacher Signature: _____

3 Recommendation to Dismiss

I confirm that is not on track to satisfactorily complete the probationary review period with School and I recommend that the appointment is NOT confirmed, and the employment terminated under the relevant procedures (*please ensure that appropriate advice has been sought from Human Resources*)

1.

2.

3.

Line Manager Name:**Date:****Line Manager Job Title and Signature:**

I authorise / do not authorise* termination of employment for the reasons set out above (*delete as appropriate)

Further comments (where appropriate)

Headteacher/Chair of Governor's Name:**Date:****Headteacher/Chair of Governor's Signature:**

Comments by employee

I confirm that I have understood the above report and have had the opportunity to make my own comments.

Signature of Employee _____ **Date** _____