

Capability Policy

Introduction

Alder Bridge Steiner-Waldorf School is committed to providing high quality teaching and learning. Through our team of Staff, Trustees and Mandate Holders we aim to provide opportunities for all of our pupils, whatever their ability. Each member of Staff, Trustee and Mandate Holder will therefore be given support to help them continually improve their performance and develop to their full potential, which will in turn help improve outcomes for our pupils.

Having an effective performance management process in place is one of the ways the School can support our Staff and deal with performance matters as they arise; this is set out in our Performance Management Policy which includes our Appraisal Policy.

This policy sets out the arrangements that will apply when a member of our Staff falls below the levels of competence and performance that are expected of them and serious concerns have been raised which the Appraisal Policy has been unable to address.

This policy has been designed to comply with current legislation and the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.

The policy has been implemented following consultation with Staff, Trustees and Mandate Holders. It has been formally adopted by the Trustees. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

Scope

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework within which the School can work with our Staff to improve and maintain satisfactory standards of performance where serious concerns have been raised.

This policy will be applied when informal support as set out in the Performance Management Policy has been provided and the required improvement has not been made.

This policy applies to all employees of the school, including Teachers and Support Staff, excluding those who are in the probationary period. It does not apply to agency workers.

Notification and Procedure for Formal Meetings

The Staff member subject to this policy will be given at least five working days' written notice if required to attend any formal meeting under this procedure.

The written notification will also contain:

- Sufficient information about the performance concerns and their possible consequences (including either issuing a warning or dismissal) to enable the employee to prepare to answer the case
- Copies of any written evidence
- Copies of witness statements and details of witnesses attending (if appropriate)
- Details of the time and place of the meeting
- Your right to be accompanied
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Formal meetings will be conducted by the Trustees or others delegated this responsibility by the Trustees. The Staff member has the right to be accompanied to any formal meeting under this procedure by a companion, who may be a colleague or a trade union representative.

Relevant witnesses may be called by the person conducting the meeting and the Staff member may request that relevant witnesses are called to any formal meeting.

A formal meeting under this procedure will:

- identify performance shortcomings;

- allow the Staff member 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 any support that will be available to help the Staff member improve performance;
- where appropriate, warn the Staff member formally that failure to improve within the set period could lead to dismissal; and
- confirm the timescales for the monitoring and review period which will follow a formal meeting where a warning is issued. 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. Formal monitoring, evaluation, guidance and support will continue during this period.

The person conducting the meeting may adjourn the meeting, for example for further investigation or to consider if additional information is required.

If at any stage the person conducting the meeting is satisfied that the Staff member has made sufficient improvement, the capability procedure will cease and the appraisal process will re-start.

Following a formal meeting, the matters covered above and any other relevant points will be confirmed in writing. Where a warning has been issued the letter will set out the length of the monitoring and review period and the procedure and time limits for appealing against the warning.

Minutes will be taken of all formal meetings and the Staff member will be sent a copy following the meeting.

Formal Capability Meeting (Stage 1)

If the school considers that there are serious performance concerns the Staff member will be invited to a formal capability meeting to establish the facts.

Where a warning is issued, this will usually be a first written warning. However in very serious cases or in cases where performance issues have been dealt with previously under the formal capability procedure, this could be a final written warning.

Monitoring & Review Period (1):

The length of the monitoring and review period following the formal capability meeting in this School is flexible and will be determined as part of the formal capability process. The minimum period of monitoring and review is 4 weeks and the maximum is one term.

At the end of the monitoring and review period you will be invited to a formal review meeting, unless you were issued with a final written warning in which case you will be invited to a decision meeting.

Formal Review Meeting (Stage 2)

If the person conducting the formal review meeting decides that some progress has been made and there is confidence that more is likely, it may be appropriate to extend the monitoring and review period up to a maximum of 2 terms.

If no, or insufficient improvement has been made during the monitoring and review period, you will receive a final written warning.

Monitoring & Review Period (2):

At the end of the further monitoring and review period, the Staff member will be invited to a decision meeting. At this stage and by agreement with the Staff member, instead of progressing to a decision meeting it may be appropriate to consider whether there is a vacant post and if so whether this may be more suited to your capabilities. If there is a vacant post which the school and the Staff member agree is suitable, this would be a permanent change in role and if the alternative post is at a lower salary level, the substantive lower salary

would apply. The capability procedure would cease on commencing in the new post and the appraisal process would re-start.

Decision Meeting (Stage3)

The decision meeting will usually be conducted by a panel appointed by the Trustees of people not previously involved in the case. Dismissal is a possible outcome of a decision meeting.

If performance is deemed to have improved but not reached the required standard a further monitoring and review period can be imposed. There will be a further decision meeting at the end of that extended monitoring and review period.

If performance remains unsatisfactory, a decision will be made that the Staff member should be dismissed or required to cease working at the School.

The Staff member will be informed in writing as soon as possible of the dismissal, the reasons for the dismissal, the date on which the employment contract will end, the appropriate period of notice and the Staff member's right of appeal.

Appeal

If the Staff member feels that the decision to dismiss them or other action taken against them (including warnings) is wrong or unjust, they may appeal. They should appeal in writing to the Trustees setting out the grounds for appeal within five working days of the decision.

Appeals will be heard without unreasonable delay and, where possible, at an agreed time and place. The same arrangements for notification and right to be accompanied by a companion will apply as set out in the Notification and Procedure for formal meetings.

The appeal will be dealt with impartially and, wherever possible, by a panel appointed by the Trustees of people who have not previously been involved in the case in line with the School's arrangements for appeals. The Staff member will be informed in writing of the results of the appeal hearing as soon as possible. There is no further right of appeal against the sanction or dismissal within the School.

Sickness

If at any stage long term sickness absence appears to have been triggered by the commencement of this procedure, the case will be dealt with in accordance with the School's sickness absence policy.

The employee will be referred immediately to the occupational health service to assess their health and fitness for continued employment and the appropriateness or otherwise of continuing with monitoring or formal procedures. In some cases, it may be appropriate for monitoring and/or formal procedures to continue during a period of sickness absence.

Review of Policy

This policy is reviewed annually by Alder Bridge Steiner-Waldorf School. The School will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.