



The Downland Federation

Appraisal Policy

(Teaching Staff)

Date of last review: October 2023

Date of next review: September 2024

Version: 2

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries will provide the Governing Board with a written report on the operation of the appraisal policy annually. The report will contain only information related to staff in general. The report will include:

- the operation of the policy
- the effectiveness of the procedures
- summary of staff training and development needs
- a summary of any equality issues
- a record of the number of appeals

Schools within the Downland Federation are committed to ensuring that individual staff and teams continue to improve. The Governing Board and the Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries will check that effective and challenging targets are set, that all reviews are completed on time and the assessment of performance is consistently applied. The Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries will evaluate the effectiveness of the policy in helping to improve standards of the quality of education. This monitoring and evaluation will include ensuring that the arrangements minimise the impact on workload for all parties involved.

The process of monitoring and recording appraisal reviews, objective setting and recording of teaching and learning in the Federation is undertaken in a fair and non-discriminatory way and is assisted electronically through the use of BlueSky Education software.

The information contained within this policy and the appendix are of equal importance. For relevant information please ensure you review the policy in its entirety.

**The Downland Federation is committed to the safeguarding
and welfare of its students and young people**

Status

Non Statutory

1. Purpose and Rationale

In this Federation we are committed to appraisal as a means to develop all staff and to improve teaching and learning, in order to raise standards of achievement for all students.

This appraisal policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the performance of teachers, including the Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries for supporting professional needs within the context of the school improvement plans, assessment against teacher standards and any other standards pertaining to a specified teacher role.

Our procedures are based on:

- continuing to raise standards, achievement and quality, and to support teaching staff in achieving this
- the need to support continuous professional development for the benefit of the student, teacher and respective schools
- staff being full partners in a mutually beneficial process
- the principles of fairness, openness and equality

Appraisal in this Federation will be a supportive and developmental process designed to foster a professional dialogue between colleagues and to ensure that all teachers have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively. It will help to ensure that teachers have real clarity around what is expected of them in their role and to ensure they are proactive in continuing to improve their professional practice and to develop confidently as teachers.

Throughout the cycle, the assessment of performance against teacher standards and the agreed performance criteria will be the basis on which the recommendation is made by the appraiser with regard to pay progression.

The arrangements that will apply when there are serious performance concerns and a teacher's performance falls below the levels of competence that is expected are covered under the Federation's Capability Policy and Pay Policy. The Capability Procedure will be used where concerns about performance are not able to be resolved successfully under this Appraisal Policy. The Pay Policy sets out the links between performance and pay and details the process to be used for effecting pay change.

2. Application

The policy applies to the Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries and to all teachers employed by the Federation.

Exceptions to this are: those on contracts of less than one term; those undergoing induction (including Early Career Teachers); and those where performance raises serious concerns which have not been addressed by the appraisal process and who are subject to capability procedures.

3. Relationship with other policies

Pay Policy, Code of Conduct (Employee), Grievance Procedure, Disciplinary Policy, CPDL Policy, Sickness Absence Policy, Wellbeing Policy, Induction Policy, Capability Policy, Appraisal Policy Associate Staff, Data Protection Policy

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- The Senior Leadership Teams of the Federation agree the Federation's Appraisal Policy, ensuring that performance of staff in the Federation is regularly reviewed and that the appraisal process is monitored
- The Governing Board is responsible for the appraisal of the Executive Headteacher with advice and support from an external adviser who must be both independent and unbiased. The Executive Headteacher's targets will be consistent with the Federation's focus for improvement priorities. The Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries is responsible for implementing the Federation's appraisal policy and ensuring that appraisal reviews take place
- The appraiser is responsible for managing the process for the staff they will appraise and ensuring it is recorded in an appropriate way and following the Federation's operational practices in the use of BlueSky Education
- Both the appraiser and the appraisee are expected to prepare for the process and to contribute to it
- The Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries should ensure that individual training and development needs are reflected in the programme for professional development and identified in the respective school improvement plan

Appraisal involves both the appraiser and the appraisee **working together** to ensure that: targets are discussed and agreed; regular and objective feedback is given; adequate coaching, training and development is provided; and that appraisal takes place. *Where targets cannot be agreed, the appraiser will identify what they are. **Ultimately, however, staff have a shared responsibility for their own professional development.***

5. The Appraisal Period and Timings of Reviews

The timing of appraisals in the policy is based on an annual cycle for the appraisal period starting from the autumn term (1st September) and running for 12 months until 31 August. Planning for targets flows naturally from the previous year's review. These targets should also flow from the School Improvement Plans which come from the individual school Quality Assurance process outcomes.

Staff joining a school part way through a cycle will have targets agreed in accordance with the school induction process, the time remaining in the cycle, personal circumstances and according to school priorities.

The meeting and setting of targets must be complete for all teachers by 31 October at the latest (31 December for the Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries) of each academic year.

Teachers who are employed on a fixed term contract of less than one year will be appraised in accordance with the principles underpinning this policy. The length of the period will be determined by the duration of their contract. There is flexibility to have a longer or shorter appraisal period when teachers begin or end employment within the Federation e.g. for maternity cover. Teachers who have been absent from their school for a significant period due to sickness or maternity absence, will have their performance appraised on the basis of the evidence available. Where appropriate, consideration will be given to evidence from the year prior to the absence.

6. Appointing appraisers

The Executive Headteacher will be appraised by the Governing Board, supported by a professionally skilled and experienced external adviser who is both independent and unbiased and has been appointed by the Governing Board for that purpose.

The Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries will decide who will appraise other teachers and in most cases, this will be the line manager. Where a teacher has more than one line manager, the Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries will decide who is best placed to review a teacher's performance and this 'lead' appraiser should seek input from the other line manager(s) when setting targets, development planning and conducting the end of cycle appraisal review. There is a maximum number a member of staff will review, which would normally not exceed four. Should an appraiser be considered unsuitable by the appraisee, there is opportunity to request one change.

7. Appraising performance

The Executive Headteacher's targets will be set by the Governing Board after consultation with the external adviser.

Targets for each teacher will be set before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period. Whilst the final deadline is the 31st October, in order to ensure the deadline is met, the federation allocates time for appraisers/appraisees to meet prior to this to ensure targets are established. The targets set for each teacher will be:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Time-bound
- Individual
- Differentiated
(SMART-ID)

and will be appropriate to the teacher's role, level of experience, and equitable when compared to someone at a similar stage. The targets should take account of the teacher's professional aspirations and relevant pay progression criteria.

The appraiser and teacher will seek to agree the targets but, if that is not possible, the appraiser will identify the targets. Targets may be revised if circumstances change e.g. where a teacher

has taken on more responsibility, stepped down or has been absent for a significant period of time.

The targets set for each teacher will, if achieved, contribute to school improvement and focus on improving the education of students. This will be confirmed by quality assuring all targets against the school improvement plans and ensuring parity in targets for similar job roles. This will be carried out by the Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries and Deputy Headteachers as appropriate.

Before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period, each teacher should be clear how that teacher's performance in that appraisal period will be assessed and the name of the person who will be appraising them. Most teachers should expect the appraisal process to include teaching observations, work scrutinies and data analysis alongside any other relevant information that can be gathered throughout the cycle.

8. Development and support

Appraisal is a supportive process which will be used to inform continuing professional development. The Federation wishes to encourage a culture in which all teachers in all schools take responsibility for improving their teaching through appropriate professional development. This should be linked to school improvement priorities and to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of individual teachers. Training and support will be identified, as appropriate, to enable staff to do this.

9. Feedback

Teachers will receive constructive feedback on their practice throughout the year and as soon as practicable after any quality assurance activity has taken place.

Feedback will highlight particular areas of strength as well as any areas that need development.

10. Concerns

Where there are concerns about any aspects of the teacher's performance at any time during the cycle, the appraiser will meet the teacher formally for a professional dialogue to determine the next steps and to:

- give clear feedback to the teacher about the nature and seriousness of the concerns
- give the teacher the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns
- agree any support though the implementation of an informal support plan to help address those specific concerns
- make clear how, and by when, the appraiser will review progress *(It may be appropriate to revise targets, and it will be necessary to allow sufficient time for improvement. The amount of time will reflect the nature and seriousness of the concerns.)*

- explain the implications and process if no – or insufficient – improvement is made.

The appraiser should consult with their Senior Leadership Team line manager where appropriate to provide focussed support. When progress is reviewed after an agreed period of time, if the appraiser is satisfied that the teacher has made or is making sufficient improvement, the appraisal process will continue as normal. Any remaining issues will continue to be addressed through that process.

11. Transition to capability

If the appraiser is not satisfied with progress, a decision to proceed to the Capability Procedure will be taken (see Capability Policy). The appraisee will be notified in writing that the appraisal system will no longer apply and that their performance will be managed under the Federation's Capability Procedure.

12. Annual assessment

Each teacher's performance will be formally assessed in respect of each appraisal period. In assessing the performance of the Executive Headteacher, the Governing Board must consult an external adviser.

This assessment is the end point to the annual appraisal process, but performance and development priorities will be reviewed and addressed on a regular basis throughout the year in interim meetings, with a formal interim review being completed and recorded by the end of the Spring Term.

As soon as practicable following the end of each appraisal period, the teacher will have the opportunity to comment in writing on a written appraisal report recorded using BlueSky Education which will include:

- an assessment of the teacher's performance of their role and responsibilities against the relevant teacher standards
- an assessment of the impact of the teacher's targets for the appraisal period
- an assessment of the teacher's training and development needs and identification of any actions that should be taken to address them
- an overall assessment of performance across the appraisal period
- a recommendation on pay in line with the Federation's Pay Policy where that is relevant (*NB – pay recommendations need to be made by 31st December for Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries and by 31st October for other teachers*)

The assessment of performance and of training and development needs will inform the planning process for the following appraisal period.

13. Training and Support

The individual schools' Continuing Professional Development and Learning (CPDL) programme will be informed by any training and development needs identified through the appraisal process.

14. Moderation of Statements by the Executive Headteacher/ Director of Primaries

The Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries is required to moderate the consistency of the statements/targets and pay recommendations and may wish to look at a sample of statements/targets from all appraisers or all statements from across the Federation.

The grounds on which the Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries may query a statement/pay recommendation is that the statement was not consistent with those for other staff with similar experience and/or similar levels of responsibility, or, that the statement was not in line with the Federation's appraisal policy or the individual school improvement priorities.

If the Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries is concerned about a statement, following discussion with the appraisee and the appraiser a revised statement should be prepared within 10 days of being instructed by the Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries. The appraisee may also add any comments at this stage.

The appraisal process will be treated with confidentiality. However, the desire for confidentiality does not override the need for the Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries and Governing Board to quality assure the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal system. This quality assurance will include checks on the consistency of approach and expectations between appraisers. These will be undertaken by the Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries and associated Deputy Headteachers.

15. Appeals

At specified points in the appraisal process teachers (including the Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries) have a right of appeal against any of the entries in their review statements. Where an appraisee wishes to appeal on the basis of more than one entry this would constitute an appeal hearing.

The arrangements for appeals are outlined as follows:

- a. The teacher receives a written copy of the appraisal review statement following moderation by the Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries (where applicable)
- b. If the teacher or Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries is not satisfied with any entry, he/she should seek to resolve this by discussing the matter informally with his/her appraiser, or in the case of the Executive Headteacher the chair of the Governing Board's

Appraisal Review Panel and the Director of Primaries the Executive Headteacher, within 10 working days of the decision

- c. Where this is not possible, or where the teacher/Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries continues to be dissatisfied, he/she may follow a formal appeal process
- d. The Executive Headteacher/ Director of Primaries should set down in writing the grounds for questioning the entry in his/her appraisal review statement and send it to the Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries or, in cases where the Executive Headteacher/ Director of Primaries is appealing, the Chair of Governors, within 10 working days of the notification of the entry being appealed against or the outcome of the discussion referred to above
- e. An appeal will be considered by:
 - a panel of 3 governors who were not part of the original appraisal panel
 - where the Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries is appealing, a panel of 3 governors
 - where the Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries has delegated the responsibility for a teacher appraisal in its entirety to the teacher's line manager, the Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries will consider any appeal
- f. An appeal will normally be heard within 20 working days of the receipt of the written appeal notification. At the appeal the person appealing or their representative will present their representations. The panel of Governors or Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries may ask the employee relevant questions. The person who made the entry on the appraisal review statement will explain the case/evidence for the entry. The employee and their representative, and the appeal panel may ask the person who made the entry on the appraisal review statement relevant questions. The decision of the appeal panel will be given in writing, and where the appeal is rejected will include a note of the evidence considered and the reasons for the decision. The decision is final and there is no recourse to the Federation's grievance procedure
- g. Each step and action of this process must be taken without unreasonable delay. At any formal appeal hearing the teacher is entitled to be accompanied by a work place colleague or a union representative. The timing and location of the hearing and appeal meetings must be reasonable and the employee must be given at least 5 working days notice, in writing, of the date and time and a copy of the documentation that will be referred to by the person who made the entry. Wherever possible the date and time of the meeting should be agreed in advance with a staff work place colleague or union representative to ensure availability. At least 3 working days before the appeal hearing, the teacher / Executive Headteacher/ Director of Primaries must provide the Chair of the appeal with a copy of the documents that they will be referring to. The appeal must allow both parties to explain their cases.

Where a teacher raises an appeal in relation to his/her pay this should be dealt with in accordance with the Downland Federation Pay Policy.

16. Other General Underlying Principles

a) **Consistency of Treatment and Fairness**

The Governing Board is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness. It will abide by all relevant equality legislation, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled teachers. The governance board is aware of the guidance on the Equality Act issued by the Department for Education.

b) **Sickness**

If long term sickness absence appears to have been triggered by the commencement of monitoring performance at any stage of the procedure (or a formal capability procedure), the case will be dealt with in accordance with the Federation's sickness and absence policy and will usually be referred immediately to the occupational health service to assess the member of staff's 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.

c) **Retention**

The Governing Board and Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries will ensure that all written appraisal records are retained and stored in a secure place in line with their Retention and Disposal Policy.

Definitions

Unless indicated otherwise, all references to 'member of staff/teacher/employees' include the Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries .

Delegation

Normal rules apply in respect of the delegation of functions by Governing Boards, Executive Headteacher/Director of Primaries and local authorities.