



Policy for appraising teacher and support staff performance and dealing with concerns about performance

Introduction

1. In this policy as in all documents of Rush Common Academy Trust (“RCAT”) any reference to Governors of Rush Common School or Trustees of Rush Common Academy Trust is a reference to the Board of Directors of Rush Common Academy Trust and any reference to the Headteacher of Rush Common School is a reference to the Chief Executive Officer of RCAT.

Purpose

2. This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of teachers, support staff and Headteacher and for supporting their development within the context of the school’s plan for improving educational provision and performance and the standards expected of teachers and support staff. It also sets out the arrangements that will apply when teachers fall below the levels of competence that are expected of them.
3. Where teachers are eligible for pay progression, the assessment of performance through the appraisal procedure will be the basis on which a recommendation is made.
4. The appraisal procedure will be used also to address any concerns that are raised about an individual’s performance. If the concerns cannot be resolved through the appraisal process, performance will be managed under the Capability Procedure.
5. This policy, covers appraisal, applies to the Headteacher and to all teachers and support staff employed by RCAT. This Policy does not apply to (i) those on contracts of less than one term (as set out in Conditions of Service for School Teachers in England and Wales); (ii) those undergoing induction (i.e. NQTs); and (iii) those who are subject to Part B of this policy.
6. Appraisal in this school will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all staff have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively. It will help to ensure that teachers (including Headteacher) and support staff are able to continue to develop and improve their professional practice.

The appraisal period

7. The appraisal period will run for 12 months from 1 September to 31 August.
8. The appraisal procedure is an on-going process and feedback will be given on a regular basis as part of this procedure. A formal appraisal review will take place annually at the end of the appraisal period.
9. Individuals who are employed on a fixed term contract of less than one year will have their performance managed in accordance with the principles underpinning this policy. The length of the period will be determined by the duration of their contract.
10. Where an individual starts their employment part-way through the appraisal cycle their performance will be managed over a longer or shorter appraisal period as the Headteacher determines most appropriate, with the aim of bringing their cycle into line with the cycle for all other staff as soon as possible.
11. If a teacher transfers to a new post within the school part-way through the appraisal cycle, or if a centrally employed teacher changes post within the authority, the Headteacher will consider whether it is appropriate to continue with the current cycle and/or to revise the objectives in line with the new post.
12. In the case of the Headteacher's appraisal, the appraisal cycle will be determined by the appraisal sub-group (as defined in paragraph 16 below).

Appointing appraisers

13. The Headteacher will be appraised and have objectives set by three members of the Board of Directors' (the 'appraisal sub-group') who are appointed by the Board before or as soon as practicable after the start of each appraisal period. A suitably skilled and/or experienced external adviser will provide support for the appraisal.
14. Where a Headteacher is of the opinion that a Director is unsuitable to act as his/her appraiser, s/he may submit a written request to the Chair of the Board of Directors for that Director to be replaced, stating the reasons for the request.
15. The Headteacher will decide who will appraise other teachers and support staff. The Headteacher will normally be the appraiser for those staff s/he directly line-manages and the relevant line-manager will be the appraiser for those staff who they line-manage. Where an individual has more than one line-manager, the Headteacher will decide which individual is best placed to be the appraiser.
16. Where the Headteacher decides to delegate appraisal to line-managers, this will include all aspects of the process.
17. Where an individual is of the opinion that the person appointed is unsuitable to act as his/her appraiser, he/she may submit a written request to the Headteacher for the appraiser to be replaced, stating the reasons for the request.

18. All appraisers will receive appropriate training and guidance in these procedures.

Setting objectives

For the Headteacher

19. Before or as soon as practicable after the start of each appraisal period, the appraisal sub-group must inform the Headteacher of the standards against which his/her performance will be assessed and set objectives for that period.

20. The Headteacher's objectives will be set by the appraisal sub-group and if necessary, after consultation with an external adviser.

21. The appraisal sub-group and the Headteacher will seek to agree the objectives but, if that is not possible, the appraisers will determine the objectives. Objectives may be revised if circumstances change.

For Teachers

22. Before, or as soon as practicable after the start of each appraisal period, the Headteacher must inform each teacher of the standards against which their performance will be assessed and ensure that objectives are set for that appraisal period.

23. All teachers must be assessed against the *Teachers' Standards* published in July 2011 except for those who hold Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills status (QTLS)¹. The *Teachers' Standards* can be found in Annex A.

24. The Headteacher or Board of Directors (as appropriate), in discussion with the relevant teacher where appropriate, will need to consider whether certain teachers should also be assessed against other sets of standards either nationally or locally agreed.

25. Objectives for each teacher will be set before or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period. The objectives set for each teacher, will be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound and will be appropriate to the teacher's role and level of experience. In setting objectives, the appraiser will have regard to what can reasonably be expected in the context of roles, responsibilities and experience, consistent with the school's strategy for achieving a work/life balance for all staff.

26. The objectives set for each teacher will, if achieved, contribute to the school's plans for improving the school's educational provision and performance and

¹ For teachers who are qualified teachers by virtue of holding QTLS status, it is for the governing body or Headteacher to decide which standards are most appropriate. Such teachers may be assessed against the Teachers' Standards, against any other sets of standards issued by the Secretary of State, against any other professional standards relevant to their performance or any combination of those three.

improving the education of pupils at the school. The objectives should also support teachers' professional development. This will be ensured by quality assuring all objectives against the school improvement plan.

27. All teachers, including the Headteacher, will normally have no more than three objectives.
28. The appraiser and teacher will seek to agree the objectives but, if that is not possible, the appraiser will determine the objectives. Objectives may be revised if circumstances change.
29. Objectives will be moderated across the school by the Headteacher to ensure that they are consistent between teachers with similar experience and levels of responsibility.

Support Staff

30. Before or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period, the Headteacher or appraiser will inform each staff member of the standards against which their performance in that appraisal period will be assessed and agree objectives for that period.
31. Objectives for each support staff member will be set before or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period. There will normally be no more than three objectives. The objectives set for each staff member, will be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound and will be appropriate to the staff member's role and level of experience. In setting objectives, the appraiser will have regard to what can reasonably be expected in the context of roles, responsibilities and experience, consistent with the school's strategy for achieving a work/life balance for all staff.
32. The objectives set for each staff member will, if achieved, contribute to the school's plans for improving the school's educational provision and performance and improving the education of pupils at that school. This will be ensured by the Headteacher quality assuring objectives against school improvement priorities, support staff standards as available and identified continuing professional development needs.
33. The appraiser and staff member will seek to agree the objectives but, if that is not possible, the appraiser will determine the objectives. Objectives may be revised if circumstances change.

Pay progression

34. Where teachers are eligible for pay progression, the recommendation made by the appraiser will be based on the assessment of their performance against the relevant teacher standards (as articulated in the Competency Framework) and their agreed objectives. The decision made by the relevant decision-making body will be based on the statutory criteria and guidance set out in the School

Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD). Pay recommendations for teachers must be made by 31 October and for the Headteacher by 31 December.

35. For the purposes of a progression recommendation, through the upper pay range, a successful appraisal review will be one where the teacher has continued to perform highly competently and has achieved their agreed developmental objectives.

Reviewing performance

Observation

36. This school believes that observation of classroom practice and other responsibilities is important, both as a way of assessing staff performance in order to identify any particular strengths and areas for development they may have and of gaining useful information which can inform school improvement more generally. All observation and monitoring activity will be carried out in a supportive fashion and as pre-defined in the annual monitoring schedule. All monitoring will be in accordance with the 'Rush Common School Professional Practice Document for Monitoring and Observation in School'.
37. In this school, teachers' and support staff performance will be regularly observed but the amount and type of classroom observation will depend on the individual circumstances of the staff member and the overall needs of the school. Classroom observation will be carried out by those with QTS. In addition to formal observation, the Headteacher or other leaders with responsibility for teaching standards may complete an unannounced 'drop in' visit in order to evaluate the standards of teaching and to check that high standards of professional performance are established and maintained. The length and frequency of 'drop in' observations will vary depending on specific circumstances.
38. Teachers (including the Headteacher) and support staff who have responsibilities outside the classroom should also expect to have their performance of those responsibilities observed and assessed.

Feedback

39. All staff will receive constructive feedback on their performance throughout the year and as soon as practicable after observation has taken place or other evidence has come to light. Feedback will highlight particular areas of strength as well as any areas for development and/or that need attention.

Development and support

40. Appraisal is a supportive process which will be used to inform continuing professional development. The school wishes to encourage a culture in which all teachers and support staff take responsibility for improving their practice through appropriate professional development. Professional development will be linked to school improvement priorities and to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of individual staff members.

41. The school's continuing professional development (CPD) programme will be informed by the professional development needs identified as part of the appraisal process. The Board of Directors will ensure that, as far as possible, resources are made available in the school budget for appropriate training and support agreed through the appraisal process.

Assessment

42. The performance of each member of staff will be formally assessed in respect of each appraisal period. In assessing the performance of the Headteacher, the Board of Directors must consult the external adviser.

43. 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.

44. The member of staff will receive as soon as practicable following the end of each appraisal period and have the opportunity to comment in writing on a written appraisal report. Teachers will receive their written appraisal reports by 31 October (end of Term 3 (February) for Support Staff and 31 December for the Headteacher). The appraisal report will include:

- details of the objectives for the appraisal period in question;
- an assessment of the member of staff's performance of their role and responsibilities against the relevant standards. Where the standards are being met detailed written evidence will not normally be required. However, if there are concerns that standards are not being met, these should be capable of being evidenced;
- an assessment of the member of staff's performance of their role and responsibilities against their objectives;
- an assessment of the member of staff's professional development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them;
- a recommendation on pay where that is relevant; and
- a space for the member of staff's comments.

45. A review meeting will take place to discuss the content of the written appraisal report and any action required, and to inform objective setting for the next cycle. The assessment of performance and of professional development needs will inform the planning process for the following appraisal period.

46. A teacher who has achieved a rating of highly competent in the eight core teaching standards at their annual appraisal meeting, will be deemed to have demonstrated the level of performance/competence appropriate for application to or progression through the upper pay scale as defined in Appendix E of RCAT Pay Policy subject to fulfilment of any other requirements.

Appeals

47. Members of staff have a right of appeal against any of the entries in their written appraisal report. If a member of staff feels that an entry is wrong or unjust,

he/she may appeal in writing within five working days of receiving his/her written appraisal report, setting out at the same time the grounds for appeal. Where a member of staff wishes to appeal on the basis of more than one entry this would constitute one appeal hearing.

48. If the reason for appeal is associated with a decision on pay progression the appeal process in the Pay Policy should be followed.
49. In all other cases the appeal will be considered by a senior manager or an individual director who has not been previously involved with the case. Appeals will be heard without unreasonable delay and, where possible, at an agreed time and place. The member of staff will be given at least five working days' notice of the date of the hearing and has the right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or a work colleague. Notes will be taken and a copy sent to the employee.
50. Appeals should normally be restricted to considering the reasonableness of the decision made based on the then presented evidence, any relevant new evidence or any procedural irregularities. The employee will be informed in writing of the results of the appeal hearing within three working days of the date of the hearing.

Confidentiality

51. The appraisal process and the written appraisal report will be treated with confidentiality. However, the desire for confidentiality does not override the need for the Headteacher and Board of Directors to quality-assure the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal system. The Headteacher will provide the Board of Directors, Human Resources Committee with a written report on the operation and impact of the school's appraisal policy annually.

Retention

52. The Board of Directors and Headteacher will ensure that all written appraisal records are retained in a secure place for six years and then permanently erased and/or destroyed.

Concerns about performance

53. Where there are concerns about any aspects of a member of staff's performance at any time during the year, the appraiser will, as part of the appraisal process, meet the member of staff to:
- give clear feedback about the nature and seriousness of the concerns;
 - give the member of staff the opportunity to comment on and discuss the concerns;
 - agree any support (e.g. coaching, mentoring, structured observations), that will be provided to help address those specific concerns;
 - make clear how progress will be monitored and when it will be reviewed; and

- explain the implications and process if no, or insufficient improvement is made.
54. The staff member should be advised, in advance, of the nature and purpose of the meeting and given the opportunity to bring a union representative or work colleague to the meeting, if he/she wishes.
55. Notes will be taken of the meeting and a copy given to the member of staff within three working days of the meeting.
56. The staff member's progress will continue to be monitored as part of the appraisal process. It may be appropriate to revise his/her objectives. It will be necessary to allow sufficient time for improvement; this will depend on the circumstances but will normally be for a period of not less than four to six working weeks².
57. When progress is reviewed, if the appraiser is satisfied that the member of staff has made, or is making, sufficient improvement, the appraisal process will continue as normal, with any remaining issues continuing to be addressed through that process.
58. If the appraiser is not satisfied with progress, the teacher or Headteacher will be notified in writing that the appraisal system will no longer apply and that their performance will be managed under the Capability Procedure. He/she will be invited to a formal capability meeting.
59. Full details of the procedure to be followed are contained in part B of this policy.


Absence of Appraiser or Appraisee

60. If it becomes apparent that the appraiser will be absent for the majority of the appraisal cycle the Headteacher will appoint another appraiser or he/she can decide to carry out the appraisal him/herself.
61. If it becomes apparent that the member of staff being appraised will be absent for the majority of the appraisal cycle the effect of the period of absence will need to be taken into account.
62. If the absence is anticipated in advance, for example, if the member of staff will be on maternity leave the objectives should be revised. If the absence is due to sickness the agreed objectives may be revised when the member of staff returns to work or the length and impact of the absence on the member of staff's ability to achieve his /her objectives will be taken into account in the assessment at the end of the cycle.

² It is for the person conducting the meeting to determine the set period which should be between four and ten working weeks. It should be reasonable and proportionate and should provide sufficient opportunity for an improvement to take place.

63. In either case the extent to which the member of staff can achieve his/her objectives must be proportionate to the time spent at work during the appraisal cycle.

Approved by Human Resources Committee of the Board of Directors of RCAT on 9th December 2015


Signed: C Wilmschurst (Chair of Board of Directors)


Signed: L Youngman (Headteacher)

Date for review: December 2018

General Principles Underlying This policy

ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures

Part B of the policy will be implemented in accordance with the provisions of the ACAS Code of Practice.

Confidentiality

The appraisal and capability processes will be treated with confidentiality. However, the desire for confidentiality does not override the need for the Headteacher and Board of Directors to quality-assure the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal system. This will include an annual briefing for the team of reviewers prior to the appraisal period for confirming details of the required process and expectations and the Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher(s) reviewing all teachers' objectives and written appraisal records, in order to check for consistency of approach across appraisers.

Consistency of Treatment and Fairness

The Board of Directors is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness and will abide by all relevant equality legislation.

Definitions

Unless indicated otherwise, all references to "teacher" include the Headteacher.

Delegation

Normal rules apply in respect of the delegation of functions by The Board of Directors and, the Headteacher.

Grievances

Where a member of staff raises a grievance during the capability procedure the capability procedure may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance. Where the grievance and capability cases are related it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently. The staff Grievance policy should be followed where applicable when dealing with the grievance.

Sickness

If long term sickness absence appears to have been triggered by the commencement of monitoring or a formal capability procedure, the case will be dealt with in accordance with the school's absence policy and will 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.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Board of Directors and Headteacher will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the school's appraisal arrangements.

Retention

The Board of Directors and Headteacher will ensure that all written appraisal records are retained in a secure place for six years and then permanently erased and/or destroyed as appropriate.