



## Capability Policy

### 1. Terms of Reference

1.1. For all employees employed by the Trustees of Cotswold Beacon Academy Trust (CBAT), except Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs).

1.2. Definitions:

“Employee” refers to any member of the staff, teaching and support, employed to work at the academy school.

“Academy school” refers to any academy or school within Cotswold Beacon Academy Trust (CBAT) “

“Headteacher” refers to the Headteacher of the academy school and also refers to any other title used to identify the Headteacher, where appropriate, or other senior manager delegated to deal with the matter by the Headteacher.

The Headteacher is responsible for managing staffing in their academy school and is authorised to make a decision to dismiss on the grounds of capability, liaising with the CEO and CFOO during the process. For non-academy school based staff the CEO has this authority

“Senior manager” refers to any member of the Leadership Group, as defined by the School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document, or a senior support employee in cases involving support staff, delegated by the Headteacher, to deal with a capability matter under these procedures. A senior manager may only make a decision to issue a sanction up to and including a final written warning

If the Headteacher, following consultation with the Chair of Governors, considers that there is no senior manager to whom s/he can reasonably delegate a specific capability matter then the Headteacher will take the role of the senior manager for that specific case and the role of the “Headteacher” under this procedure will be performed by a “Disciplinary Committee” of the Governing Body consisting of not less than 3 Governors, (except in circumstances provided for in the Secretary of State’s guidance on the Staffing Regulations), none of whom will have had previous involvement in the case.

“Governing Body” or “Governors” refers to the Local Governing Body of the academy school who are responsible for implementing the policy within their setting. The Governing Body may refer a case to the Trustees if appropriate.

The role of the Headteacher will be taken by appropriate Governors as indicated where the appraisal and or capability being reviewed is that of the Headteacher. The governors will work with the CEO who is authorised to approve a recommendation to dismiss a Headteacher on the grounds of capability. Where the CEO is subject to capability procedures, a Trustee will take the role of line manager and the Board of Trustees have authority to dismiss.

The “Lack of capability” is defined as a situation in which an employee fails consistently to perform his/her duties to a wholly satisfactory standard of performance over a period of time.

### 2. Purpose

2.1 This policy sets out the arrangements that will apply when employees fall below the levels of competence that are expected of them and concerns are serious enough to require formal action or that efforts to address performance through the appraisal process have been unsuccessful.

Formal action may be taken when the employee has:

- Repeated occasions of poor work standards or where matters have not improved following informal action (normally under the appraisal process).
- Previous formal warnings on file for poor work standards that are still current and there continues to be a performance concern.

- Performance concerns that are so serious they cannot reasonably be addressed through informal action.

2.2 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time following consultation. We may also vary any parts of this procedure, including any time limits, as appropriate in any case.

### **3. Formal Capability Meeting**

3.1 This procedure applies only to employees about whose performance there are serious concerns that the appraisal process has been unable to address. If an employee's performance is not wholly satisfactory, the senior manager, or other person with line management responsibility for the employee, will invite the employee to a formal capability meeting to discuss with the employee the identified poor performance as specifically as possible.

3.2 The senior manager will write to the employee at least 5 working days in advance to inform him/her about:

- a) The date, time and place of the meeting.
- b) The basic details of the concerns about the employee's performance.
- c) The employee's right to be accompanied by a representative of his/her trade union or a workplace colleague of his/her choice.
- d) The titles of enclosed copies of any documents to be used at the meeting.
- e) Names of any witnesses to be called.
- f) His/her right to call witnesses on his/her behalf.
- g) The name and office of any adviser who will accompany the senior manager at the meeting.

An extra copy, together with any enclosures, will be provided for his/her companion.

3.3 This meeting is intended to establish the facts. It will be conducted by a senior manager delegated by the head teacher (or the Chair of Governors and CEO for the Headteacher). The meeting will allow the employee to respond to concerns about his/her performance and to make any relevant representations. This may provide new information or a different context to the information/evidence already collected.

3.4 The senior manager may conclude that there are insufficient grounds for pursuing the capability issue and that it would be more appropriate to continue to address the remaining concerns through the appraisal process. In such cases, the capability procedure will come to an end and the employee will be notified in writing.

3.5 The senior manager may also adjourn the meeting if it is decided that further investigation is needed, or that more time is needed in which to consider any additional information. In other cases, the meeting will continue.

3.6 During the meeting, or any other meeting which could lead to a formal warning being issued, the senior manager will:

- In the case of a teacher, identify the poor performance, including which of the standards expected of the teacher is not being met;
- Ensure the employee is given an opportunity to ask questions, present evidence, call witnesses, respond to evidence and make representations;
- Establish the likely causes of poor performance including any reasons why any measures taken so far have not led to the required improvement;
- Give clear guidance on the improved standard of performance needed to ensure that the employee can be removed from formal capability procedures which may include the setting of new objectives focused on the specific area/s of poor performance that need to be addressed. It will include any success criteria that are appropriate and the evidence that will be used to assess whether or not the necessary improvement has been made;

- Identify whether there are further measures which may improve performance and explain any support that will be considered and planned to help the employee, e.g. in-service training, visits to other schools, discussion with appropriate colleagues or professionals;
- Set out the timetable for improvement and explain how performance will be monitored and reviewed;
- The timetable will depend on the circumstances of the individual case but will be reasonable and proportionate, between four and ten weeks in normal circumstances, and will provide sufficient opportunity for improvement to take place. The length of time required will depend on the concerns raised with the employee, the nature of any support and training required, and sufficient time to establish whether performance has improved; and
- Warn the employee formally that failure to improve within the set period could lead to a final written warning which could then lead to his/her dismissal;
- For teachers, warn the employee that failure to improve within the set period could have implications on pay progression
- Inform the employee of the right of appeal;
- Agree with the employee and any companion the date of the formal review meeting.

3.7 Notes will be taken of formal meetings and a copy sent to the employee and any companion. Where a first warning is issued, the employee will be informed in writing of the matters discussed in 3.6 above. S/he will also be informed in writing that failure to achieve an acceptable standard of performance (within the set timescale), may result in a final written warning which could then lead to dismissal if wholly satisfactory performance is not achieved, together with the time limit for appealing against the first written warning.

3.8 If the concerns relate to a lack of capability that poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children, or is likely to result in serious damage to pupils' education, the shorter timescale may be appropriate. In such cases, the senior manager may exceptionally decide to issue a first and final written warning, if to do otherwise would expose students to serious risk in terms of their health, safety, well-being or educational prospects.

#### **4. Sickness absence and the use of this procedure**

4.1 It is important that sickness absence should not delay or avoid the use of formal capability procedures. It is in the interests of all parties to address concerns about performance without undue delay. Arrangements will normally be made to seek medical advice from an occupational health adviser to assess the employee's health and fitness for continued employment at the school (see CBAT Management of Sickness Absence Policy).

4.2 Consideration will be given to whether poor performance may be related to a disability and, if so, whether there are reasonable adjustments that could be made to the employee's working arrangements, including changing the employees duties or providing additional equipment or training. We may also consider making adjustments to this procedure in appropriate cases e.g. moving from this procedure to procedures used by the school to terminate the employment of the employee on the grounds of ill health.

4.3 If an employee's medical condition is not serious enough to warrant a consideration of termination of employment on the grounds of ill health, the occupational health adviser will normally be asked to assess whether an employee absent through sickness is fit enough to attend a meeting under this procedure. In the event that the employee is deemed not fit to attend a formal capability meeting s/he may present a written submission for consideration and/or be represented by a companion in her/his absence.

#### **5. Monitoring and review period following a formal capability meeting**

5.1 A performance monitoring and review period will follow the formal capability meeting. Formal monitoring, evaluation, guidance and support will continue during this period. Following this monitoring and review period, the employee will be invited to a formal review meeting (see paragraph 6 below), unless s/he had

been issued with a final written warning, in which case s/he will be invited to a decision meeting (see paragraph 6 below).

## **6. Formal review meeting**

- 6.1 At least 5 working days before the date for the formal review meeting a written reminder will be given to the employee together with details of the meeting as set out in paragraph 3.2 above.
- 6.2 The formal review meeting will follow a similar procedure to that identified for the formal capability meeting as set out in paragraph 3.6 above.
- 6.3 If the senior manager (Chair of Governors and CEO for the Headteacher) is satisfied that the employee has made sufficient improvement, the formal capability procedure will cease and the appraisal process will re-start.
- 6.4 In cases:
  - Where some progress has been made and there is confidence that more is likely, it may be appropriate to extend the monitoring and review period;
  - Where no, or insufficient improvement has been made during the monitoring and review period, the employee will receive a final written warning.
- 6.5 Notes will be taken at the formal review meeting and a copy will be sent to the employee and any companion normally within 5 working days.
- 6.6 Where a final warning is issued, the employee will be informed in writing that failure to achieve an acceptable standard of performance (within the set timescale), may result in dismissal and will be given information about the further monitoring and review period and the procedure and time limits for appealing against the final written warning. The date the decision meeting will be agreed with the employee and any companion.
- 6.7 At this stage, rather than refer the matter to a decision meeting, consideration could be given to the employee being given a different range of duties or an alternative post. By agreement, this may include transfer to a post suited to the employee's capabilities. If this post is at a lower salary level, the substantive lower salary would apply.

## **7. Right of Appeal against a formal written warning**

- 7.1 If an employee feels that a decision to issue a first and/or final written warning, is wrong or unjust, s/he may appeal in writing against the decision.
- 7.2 Appeals against a written warning shall be restricted to considering the reasonableness of the decision made by the senior manager, any relevant new evidence not previously available to the senior manager or any procedural irregularities. A statement giving the reasons for the appeal should be submitted to the Clerk to the Governors within 10 working days of the formal written warning having been received.
- 7.3 All appeal hearings will be held as soon as possible after receipt of the appeal at an agreed time and place.
- 7.4 The appeal will be heard by the Appeals Panel of Governors. The number of governors on the Appeals Panel of Governors will not be less than two. The panel may be advised by a person engaged for the purpose by the Governing Body. The panel can either confirm the warning, reduce a final warning to a warning, or cancel the warning. The employee will be informed in writing of the results of the appeal hearing as soon as possible and normally within 5 working days of the appeal hearing.
- 7.5 In exceptional circumstances, if there is a shortage of available governors from the SDB of the relevant school, with agreement from the appellant, the Trust may appoint one or more governors from the SDB of another school within the Trust to the Appeal Committee or convene a committee of the Trust Board.
- 7.6 The same arrangements for notification and the right to be accompanied by a companion will apply for an appeal hearing as for the formal capability and review meetings and, as with those meetings, notes will be taken and a copy sent to the employee and any companion.

7.7 Pending any appeal the employee will be expected to continue to work in accordance with targets set for the next stage of the procedure and his/her progress towards the achievement of these targets may be monitored during this period.

## **8. Decision meeting**

8.1 At least 10 working days before the date of the decision meeting a reminder will be given in writing together with details of the meeting as in paragraph 3.2 above. The meeting will be conducted by the Head teacher (Governor Panel and CEO for the Headteacher).

8.2 If an acceptable standard of performance has been achieved during the further monitoring and review period, the capability procedure will end and the appraisal process will re-start. This will be notified to the employee in writing.

8.3 If progress has been made and there is confidence that wholly satisfactory performance will be achieved by a short extension, it may be appropriate to extend the monitoring and review period rather than to dismiss. The final written warning will be extended for a short specified assessment period.

8.4 If performance has remained unsatisfactory, a decision will be made that the employee will be dismissed. The employee will be informed in writing as soon as possible of the reasons for the dismissal, the date on which the employment contract will end, the appropriate period of notice and whether the notice is to be served or there will be pay in lieu of notice, and the right of appeal.

## **9. Right of Appeal against a decision to dismiss**

9.1 The employee has a right of appeal to the Appeals Committee of the Governing Body against a decision to dismiss.

9.2 The Appeals Committee shall consist of at least 3 governors, none of whom will have had any previous involvement in the case.

9.3 The employee's notice of appeal should be sent to the Clerk to the Governors within 10 working days of receipt of the written decision to dismiss, setting out the grounds of appeal.

9.4 Appeal hearings should be held as soon as possible after receipt of the appeal and will be conducted in the same way as appeals referred to in paragraph 7 above.

## **10. Notice of Dismissal**

10.1 Following a decision to dismiss, the Governing Body will notify the employee in writing that the employee is to be dismissed, whether with notice or with pay in lieu of notice in accordance with the decision of the Head teacher (or Disciplinary Committee).

10.2 In the event that the Appeal Committee of the Governors decides not to uphold the decision to dismiss, the employee shall be informed immediately and the notice of dismissal shall be immediately withdrawn.

## **11. Grievances arising during the procedure**

11.1 Where an employee has a grievance against the way the senior manager has conducted the procedure this will normally be dealt with under the appeals process set out above. However, in very exceptional circumstances, where the behaviour of the senior manager is the cause of the grievance, it may be appropriate to suspend this procedure for a short period until the grievance has been considered.

## **12. Trade Union Officials**

12.1 Although normal performance standards must apply to an employee who is a lay trade union official, no disciplinary action, beyond an informal oral warning will be taken until the circumstances of the case have been discussed with the relevant professional trade union officer.

## **13. Confidentiality**

13.1 Our aim is to deal with performance matters sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of any

individuals involved. All employees must treat as confidential any information communicated to them in connection with a matter which is subject to this capability procedure.

13.2 The employee, and anyone accompanying the employee (including witnesses), must not make electronic recordings of any meetings or hearings conducted under this procedure. Failure to observe confidentiality could be a reason for disciplinary action under the school's disciplinary procedure.

**14. Links to other policies:**

- Teachers Performance Appraisal Policy
- Support Staff Performance Review Policy
- Disciplinary Procedure Relating to Misconduct for All Employees