DDAT
Derby Diocesan Academy Trust

Probation Policy and Procedure

September 2026

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Probation Policy and Procedure is to ensure that all new employees commencing a new role within Derby Diocesan Academy Trust (DDAT) are provided with appropriate support, guidance and training to enable them to perform successfully in their role.

The policy also provides a fair and consistent framework for line managers to monitor and review performance, conduct, attendance and suitability during the probation period.

1.2 Principles

DDAT is committed to:

- supporting employees to achieve a successful start in their role;
- ensuring probation is managed fairly, consistently and sensitively;
- identifying and addressing concerns at the earliest opportunity, and giving employees the chance to respond and reasonable opportunity to improve;
- providing appropriate training, coaching and guidance throughout the probation period; and
- ensuring all decisions are made equitably and without discrimination.

All decisions under this policy will be taken in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and with due regard to protected characteristics including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Consideration will also be given to any medical conditions, disabilities or other individual circumstances which may impact performance, attendance or conduct during probation.

1.3 Trust Policy Statement

This policy does not form part of an employee's contract of employment and may be amended by DDAT from time to time following consultation with recognised trade unions where appropriate.

2. Scope

2.1 Application

This policy applies to all newly appointed employees of DDAT.

2.2 Exclusions

This policy does not apply to:

- agency workers;
- contractors;
- consultants;
- volunteers; or
- self-employed individuals.

3. Length of Probation

3.1 The standard probation period is three months unless otherwise stated in the employee's contract of employment.

3.2 The probation period may be extended once for a maximum period of two months where additional time is required to assess one or more of the following:

- performance;
- conduct;
- attendance; or
- suitability for the role.

3.3 Employees will only be confirmed in post once written confirmation has been issued by the Trust.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Line Manager Responsibilities

Line managers are responsible for:

- setting clear expectations and SMART objectives;
- providing induction, support and training;
- conducting probation & review meetings;
- monitoring performance, attendance and conduct;
- maintaining written records of meetings and objectives;
- Identifying and addressing concerns promptly; and
- seeking advice from the DDAT Central HR Team where required.

4.2 Employee Responsibilities

Employees are expected to:

- actively participating in induction and training;
- work towards agreed objectives;
- raising any support or training needs early;
- attend review meetings; and
- Maintain acceptable standards of performance, conduct and attendance.

5. Support During Probation

5.1 General Support

The level of support provided during probation will depend on the individual employee and the requirements of the role.

5.2 Induction and Training

The line manager must ensure employees receive:

- an appropriate induction;
- relevant policies and procedures;
- role-specific training;
- regular supervision and feedback
- Regular 1:1 meetings with their line manager; and
- opportunities for professional development where appropriate.

5.3 Disabled Employees

DDAT is committed to supporting disabled employees throughout probation.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered and implemented where appropriate in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, and any agreed reasonable adjustments will be captured on a Reasonable Adjustment Passport.

Line managers must consult with the DDAT Central HR Team where adjustments or additional support may be required.

6. Probation Review Process

6.1 Review Meetings

Formal probation review meetings will normally take place at the following stages:

Review Stage	Timing
Initial Review	Within 4 weeks
Mid-Probation Review	8 weeks
Final Probation Review	12 weeks
Extension Review (if applicable)	before the end of the extended probation period

Regular 1:1 meetings between the employee and their line manager should also take place throughout the probation period.

6.2 Initial Review – within 4 weeks

At the initial review meeting, the line manager and employee will:

- discuss the requirements of the role;
- agree SMART objectives;
- review induction progress;
- identify training and support needs; and
- confirm expectations relating to performance, conduct and attendance.

Line managers must ensure that appropriate training, induction and support is provided to enable the employee to achieve the objectives within the required timeframe.

A written record of the meeting must be retained using the correct Probation Review Assessment Form (Appendix 1).

6.3 Mid-Probation Review – 8 Weeks

The mid-probation review meeting will assess:

- progress against agreed objectives;
- standards of performance;
- attendance and punctuality;
- conduct and behaviour; and
- any additional support or training required.

The employee should also be given the opportunity to comment on their performance, attendance and behaviour and identify any additional support they may require in order to achieve or maintain the required standards.

Where concerns are identified, these must be discussed formally and clearly with the employee, along with the improvements required and timescales for improvement.

A written record of the meeting must be retained using the correct Probation Review Assessment Form (Appendix 1).

Any concerns during an employee's probation period must be raised with the DDAT Central HR Team.

6.4 Final Probation Review – 12 weeks

Near the end of the probation period, the line manager will hold a Final Probation Review Meeting to determine the outcome of the probation period.

The possible outcomes are:

- successful completion of probation;
- extension of probation; or
- dismissal.

Line managers will assess the employee's performance, capability and suitability throughout the probation period.

A clear written record should be maintained for all formal review meetings and regular 1:1 discussions with the employee. The line manager should provide regular feedback regarding performance and progress and should address any concerns as soon as possible with a view to resolving them.

The line manager is responsible for providing guidance and support and for identifying and arranging any necessary support, training and coaching.

The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed to the employee in writing.

A written record of the meeting must be retained using the correct Probation Review Assessment Form (Appendix 1).

7. Addressing Concerns During Probation

7.1 Where concerns arise regarding performance, attendance or conduct, the line manager must address these promptly with the employee, after consulting with the DDAT Central HR Team.

7.2 The employee should be informed:

- of the concerns identified;
- the standards required;
- the improvements expected;

- any support available; and
- the timescale for improvement which will be reasonable in the circumstances.

7.3 A formal meeting may be arranged where concerns are significant or ongoing, and a proportionate review of the facts will be carried out before a decision is made.

We will allow the employee to be accompanied at formal meetings in accordance with Section 10 of this policy.

8. Extension of Probation

8.1 A probation period may be extended where:

- objectives have not yet been fully achieved;
- additional training or support is required;
- attendance or conduct concerns remain under review; or
- substantial absence has prevented a full assessment.

If a probation period is to be extended, advice at this point must be sought from the DDAT Central HR Team before the Final Probation Review Meeting is held.

Generally, the probation period will not be extended to compensate for periods of unauthorised absence.

The line manager will inform the employee at the Final Probation Review Meeting that their probation period is being extended and confirm this decision, in writing, to the employee within 5 working days of the meeting.

The line manager will set and confirm the objectives the employee is working towards during the extension using the DDAT Informal Improvement and Support Plan (Appendix 1).

Towards the end of the agreed extension period, the line manager should complete the 'Review Meeting' section on the document.

The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed to the employee in writing.

8.2 Probation will normally only be extended once and for no longer than two months.

8.3 The employee will be informed of:

- the reasons for the extension;
- the required improvements;
- any support measures;
- the review arrangements; and

- the revised probation end date.

Confirmation of the extension will be provided to the employee in writing.

9. Outcomes of Probation

Complete the outcome of probation form (Appendix 1)

9.1 Successful Completion

Where the employee has met the required standards, they will be confirmed in post in writing.

9.2 Dismissal During or at the End of Probation

Employment may be terminated during or at the end of probation where:

- performance remains unsatisfactory;
- conduct falls below expected standards;
- attendance is unacceptable; or
- the employee is considered unsuitable for the role

Prior to dismissal:

Advice at this point must be sought from the DDAT Central HR Team.

- concerns must have been discussed with the employee;
- appropriate support must have been considered and put in place
- If an employee is invited to a formal meeting, DDAT will allow them to be accompanied in accordance with Section 10 of this policy.

At the formal meeting, the employee will be given an opportunity to respond to concerns prior to a decision being made.

Any decision to dismiss must be based on documented evidence from probation review meetings and related records, and will be confirmed to the employee in writing, including the employee's right of appeal.

Notice will be provided in accordance with the employee's contract of employment.

9.2.1 Early Termination During Probation

In some circumstances, the line manager may identify that the employee is unsuitable for the role and unlikely to reach the required standard despite further support or training.

Where there is sufficient evidence that the required standards are not being met and are unlikely to be achieved despite appropriate support or training, employment may be terminated at any stage during the probation period. Where this is the case, the DDAT Central HR Team must be consulted with, and the employee will be invited to a formal probation review meeting and given the opportunity to respond before any decision is made.

9.2.2 Termination at the End of Probation

Where the employee has not met the required standards by the end of the probation period, despite appropriate support or training, the line manager may determine that probation has been unsuccessful.

The reasons for termination must be clearly documented within the Probation Review Form.

9.3 Employment After Probation

Following successful completion of probation, future performance and conduct issues will be managed under the Trust's capability or disciplinary procedures as appropriate.

10. Allowing employees to be accompanied

10.1 While there is no statutory right of accompaniment at meetings held under this policy and procedure, the School/Trust will allow all employees to be accompanied by either a work colleague or Trade Union representative, where a possible outcome could be dismissal and they will be informed of this in good time prior to the meeting.

Employees should advise of the name and status of their chosen companion, in good time ahead of any meetings under this policy and procedure.

A companion is allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay, however there is no obligation to act as a companion.

An employee will not be subjected to detriment by DDAT by reason of having acted as a companion.

10.2 The role of a companion is to:

- familiarise themselves with the employee's request
- assist the employee in preparing for the meeting
- confer with the employee before and after the meeting
- present and sum up the employee's circumstances, as agreed with the employee
- address the meeting, as agreed with the employee
- ask for adjournments, if necessary

- ask questions, however they are not permitted to answer questions on behalf of the employee
- not prevent the meeting chair from explaining the case
- not prevent any other person at the meeting from making their contribution

10.3 Electronic recording of any meetings held under this policy and procedure is not permitted without prior written consent from the Trust.

11. Absence During Probation

11.1 Where an employee is absent for a significant period during probation, the probation period may be extended to allow sufficient time for assessment.

11.2 Each case will be considered individually, taking into account:

- the reason for absence;
- the length of absence; and
- the extent to which the absence has affected the assessment process.

12. Allowing an Appeal

12.1 DDAT will allow the employee to appeal against dismissal during or at the end of probation.

12.2 Appeals must be submitted, in writing, to the DDAT Central HR Team at hr@ddat.org.uk within five working days of the date of the outcome letter and must clearly state the grounds of appeal.

The School/Trust will arrange an Appeal Hearing without unreasonable delay, giving employees at least five working days' written notice of the date, time and location this is scheduled to take place. If an employee requests for this meeting to take place sooner, the notice can be waived and, in this situation, it is good practice to confirm this in writing. For example, in an email.

12.3 An Appeal Hearing will be conducted impartially and, wherever possible, the panel shall be chaired by a more senior person who has not previously been involved in managing the probation period.

The Appeal Hearing will be a review of the fairness of the original decision in light of the procedure that was followed and will discuss the points of the appeal and will not be a rehearing of the case.

The appeal panel may adjourn the Appeal Hearing if the employee presents new information that they wish to be considered and/or if the School/Trust needs to make any additional enquiries. The employee will be given a reasonable opportunity to consider any new information obtained before a decision is made.

The appeal panel may:

- confirm the original decision;
- revoke the original decision

The appeal panel must inform the employee of the decision and should confirm this in writing without unreasonable delay, usually within five working days of the Appeal Hearing. The decision should make clear what has been decided and why.

A written confirmation of the decision should be stored on the employee's SAMPeople record.

A written record of the Appeal Hearing should be kept, and the notes should be shared with the employee following the meeting to give them the opportunity to confirm whether they are an accurate reflection of the discussion that has taken place. If the outcome is dismissal, then these are to be requested via the DDAT Central HR Team.

The decision of the appeal panel is final and there will be no further right of appeal.

12.4 If the appeal is successful, the employee will be reinstated with no loss of continuity of pay or service.

13. Records

13.1 Written records of probation meetings, objectives, review forms and correspondence will be retained on the employee's SAMPeople record in accordance with data protection requirements.

Appendix 1

Probation Period Assessment Form

Probation period reports are required for all new posts within the Trust. It is essential that these assessment reports are completed promptly by the new entrant's line manager. Managers should read the DDAT Probation Policy and Procedure before completing the reports.

A copy of each report must be provided to the employee.

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

The outcome report should be forwarded to the appropriate line manager/Headteacher and/or the DDAT Central HR Team.

Personal Details

Name of Employee	
School	
Job Title (attach copy of Job Description and Person Specification)	
Date of appointment	
Name of Line Manager	

Probation Assessment Review Dates

Report No	Date Completed
First report to be completed on Week 4	
Second report to be completed on Week 8	
Third report to be completed on Week 12	
Outcome report completed and sent to Line Manager/Headteacher/DDAT Central HR Team	

First Probation Review

Name of employee	

Number of days/occasions of sickness absence up to week 4	[ ] Days [ ] Occasions

	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		
Teaching standards and quality (If applicable)		
Adaptability and flexibility		
Leadership and Management (If applicable)		

CPD/Training Needs/Course	**Date**	**Successfully Completed Yes/No**
Safeguarding & KCSIE awareness, safer recruitment		
Trust policies, procedures and values		
Read and understand Scheme of Delegation		
National College Courses		

Goals/Objectives	**Achieved/Not Achieved**
(Mandatory Goal): To achieve an excellent standard of conduct that demonstrates the Trust's values	

(Mandatory Goal): To achieve an excellent standard of attendance and timekeeping	

Add further targets and objectives linked to role

Targets for Improvement (if applicable), ***and any support that may be needed in order to achieve these***

- I confirm that …….. **is** on track to satisfactorily complete the probation review period and that I have discussed all aspects of this report with the employee

  OR

- I confirm that ……. **is not** on track to satisfactorily complete the probation review period and that I have discussed all aspects of this report with the employee and agreed the targets for improvement as set out above.

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

I confirm I have read and reviewed the probation review report.	
Headteacher Name:	**Date:**
Headteacher Signature:	

Employee Comments:

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

Employee Signature _____

Date _____

Second Probation Review

Name of employee	

Number of days/occasions of sickness absence up to week 8	[ ] Days [ ] Occasions

	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		
Teaching standards and quality (If applicable)		
Adaptability and flexibility		
Leadership and Management (If applicable)		

CPD/Training Needs/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 further targets and objectives linked to role

Targets for Improvement (if applicable), *and any support that may be needed in order to achieve these*

- I confirm that …….. **is** on track to satisfactorily complete the probation review period and that I have discussed all aspects of this report with the employee

  OR

- I confirm that …… **is not** on track to satisfactorily complete the probation review period and that I have discussed all aspects of this report with the employee and agreed the targets for improvement as set out above.

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

I confirm I have read and reviewed the probation review report.	
Headteacher Name: (If applicable)	**Date:**
Headteacher Signature:	

Employee Comments:

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

Employee Signature _____

Date _____

Third Probation Review

Name of employee	

Number of days/occasions of sickness absence up to week 12	[ ] Days [ ] Occasions

	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		
Teaching standards and quality (If applicable)		
Adaptability and flexibility		
Leadership and Management (If applicable)		

CPD/Training Needs/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 further targets and objectives linked to role

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

I confirm I have read and reviewed the probation review report.	
Headteacher Name: (If applicable)	**Date:**
Headteacher Signature:	

Employee Comments:

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

Employee Signature _____

Date _____

Outcome of Probation (for office use only)

Outcome of 12 Week Probation Review Period - where the outcome is either section 2 or 3 below, please forward this completed form to hr@ddat.org.uk.
Please complete only one of the three sections numbered 1-3 below, depending on the outcome of the probation review period.
1 Confirmation of Appointment
I confirm that …….. is competent to undertake the duties of this post and has satisfactorily completed the probation 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: (If applicable)	**Date:**
Headteacher Signature:	

2 Recommendation to Extend Probation Period
I confirm that …… is NOT YET competent to undertake the duties of this post and recommend extension of the probation review period for the reasons outlined below. *1.* *2.* *3.* **I recommend the probation review period be extended for the period specified below** ☐ *4 weeks* ☐ *6 weeks*

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

Targets/Objectives for Improvement

I approve extension of the probation period for [ ] weeks	
Headteacher Name: (If applicable)	**Other**
Headteacher Signature:	

3 Recommendation to Dismiss	
I confirm that ……. is not on track to satisfactorily complete the probation review period with …….. School and I recommend that the appointment is NOT confirmed, and the employment be terminated under the relevant procedures *(please ensure that appropriate advice has been sought from the DDAT Central HR Team before any outcome is decided and/or delivered to the employee)* **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 Name:	**Date:**
DDAT HR Name:	