



The First Federation Trust

Staff Appraisal Policy

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The First Federation Trust is committed to providing high quality teaching and learning. Through our workforce we aim to provide opportunities for all of our pupils, whatever their ability. Each employee will therefore be given support to ensure that they have the skills they need to carry out their role, help them continually improve their performance and develop to their full potential which will in turn help improve outcomes for our young people.
- 1.2 Having an effective performance management process in place is one of the ways we can support our employees and deal with performance matters as they arise. This involves effective day-to-day supervision, carrying out appraisals, providing development opportunities and operating a fair and reasonable capability process.
- 1.3 This appraisal policy has been developed to comply with current legislation including the Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012 (the Appraisal Regulations), that apply to teachers in all maintained schools. The First Federation Trust has decided to follow the principles of these Regulations in developing and implementing this policy. This policy will also apply to support staff employed within The First Federation Trust to ensure consistency across all employees.
- 1.4 This policy has been implemented following consultation with the recognised trade unions.
- 1.5 The Board of Directors adopted this policy on 14th December 2023.
- 1.6 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

2 Scope and purpose of this policy

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of all employees, and for supporting their development within the context of the First Federation Trust's plan for improving educational provision and performance, and the set standards expected of each employee.
- 2.2 This First Federation Trust regards the Department for Education Teachers' Standards¹ as the baseline of expectations for the professional practice and conduct of teachers, from the point of qualification.
- 2.3 In implementing this policy, The First Federation Trust will ensure that appraisal is managed in a way that avoids increased workload for all parties concerned, for example, reviewing the number and frequency of meetings and observations, and ensuring the process for collecting evidence is always proportionate.
- 2.4 This policy applies to all employees of The First Federation Trust including teachers and support staff, [and centrally employed staff within the trust] except those on contracts of less than one

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards>

term, those undergoing statutory induction (i.e. Early Career Teachers -ECTs) and those who are subject to the First Federation Trust's Capability Policy. It does not apply to agency workers.

- 2.5 Employees within a probationary period are, in addition, subject to the First Federation Trust's Probationary Policy.
- 2.6 Where an employee is not covered by this policy as set out in 2.4 above, then performance will be managed through regular supervision and feedback.
- 2.7 The Trust have invested in Blue Sky Education software for recording performance management. All employees will have their own account to enable them to record their performance against objectives, CPL etc. throughout the year

3 The appraisal period

- 3.1 The appraisal period will run for twelve months from September to July for Teaching Staff and September to August for centrally employed Support Staff, and from April to March for School based Support Staff.
- 3.2 Employees who are employed on a fixed term contract of less than one year but more than one term will have their performance managed in accordance with the principles underpinning this policy. The length of the period and teacher's objectives will be determined by the duration of their contract.

4 Appointing appraisers

- 4.1 The Board of Directors has agreed that the Chief Executive Officer will be appraised by an External Advisor alongside a delegated sub-group of three Directors. In appraising the performance of the Chief Executive Officers the Board of Directors will consult the appointed external advisor
- 4.2 The Chief Executive Officer of the First Federation Trust will decide who will appraise all other employees.
- 4.3 Employees will be notified of who their appraiser will be, before or as soon as practicable after the start of each appraisal period.

5 Setting objectives

All employees

- 5.1 Objectives for each employee will be set before or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period. The objectives will be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART) and will be fair, reasonable and appropriate to their role and level of experience. The appraiser and appraisee will seek to agree the objectives but, if that is not

possible, the appraiser will determine the objectives. The First Federation Trust has a duty to have a regard to the work life balance of all employees and the objectives will reflect this.

- 5.2 Objectives and performance management discussions for teachers will not be based on teacher generated data and predictions, or solely on the assessment data for a single group of pupils.
- 5.3 Objectives may be revised if circumstances change during the appraisal period; revisions will usually be agreed during the 'Review and Adjust' meetings or the mid-year formal review meeting where appropriate. The timings of these are dependent on the appraisal period for staff.
- 5.4 The objectives set for each employee will, if achieved, contribute to the First Federation Trust's plans for improving educational provision and performance and improving the education of pupils. The Chief Executive Officer of the First Federation Trust together with the senior leadership team will be responsible for quality assuring objectives set across the whole First Federation Trust against the First Federation Trust's improvement plan.

Teachers

- 5.5 The performance of each teacher will be assessed against the relevant teacher standards which are set within the Blue Sky Performance Management software, which contribute to our aims and provide a guide to being a teacher.

6 Reviewing performance

Observation

Teachers and teaching assistants

- 6.1 This First Federation Trust understands the importance of carrying out observation of classroom practice and other responsibilities of teachers and teaching assistants. Observation assesses performance to identify strengths (so the appraiser can give positive feedback and praise) and areas for development but also provides a way of gaining useful information which can inform improvements in the First Federation Trust more generally and enabling teachers to learn from each other and collaborate.
- 6.2 In this The First Federation Trust, performance will be regularly observed, but the amount and type of classroom observation will depend on the individual circumstances of the employee and the overall needs of the First Federation Trust. Responsibilities outside the classroom will also be observed and assessed where appropriate. All observations will be carried out in a supportive fashion and not add to teacher and teaching assistant workload. Classroom observations for teachers will be carried out by those with QTS and for teaching assistants by those with QTS or Senior Staff.
- 6.3 In addition to formal observation, the Chief Executive Officer or other leaders with responsibility for teaching standards may "drop in" in order to evaluate the standards of teaching and classroom practice 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. "Drop in" can be used to provide feedback to teachers as part of the ongoing supportive nature of the appraisal process.

Development and support

- 6.4 Our appraisal process is supportive and is used to inform and decide continuing professional development which improves performance. The First Federation Trust encourages a culture in which all employees take responsibility for improving their performance in their role and extending their depth of knowledge through appropriate professional development. Agreed training and professional development will be linked to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of individuals, as well as First Federation Trust improvement priorities. We are committed to supporting appropriate and reasonable development which not only assists the employee in their role but also leads to improvements in performance across the First Federation Trust. The process will also be used to determine decisions on pay progression.

Feedback

- 6.5 Regular, professional dialogue (Coaching) between the employee and their line manager is encouraged so that employees have the opportunity to be self-reflective regarding their own performance and professional development.
- 6.6 Within this The First Federation Trust employees will receive constructive feedback on their performance throughout the year and as soon as practicable after an observation has taken place (where applicable) or other evidence has come to light. Feedback should highlight particular areas of strength as well as any areas that require further development, in line with the Four Pillars of Teaching and Learning. Often this can resolve issues without the need for any formal action.
- 6.7 Feedback will also be sought from relevant employees within the First Federation Trust for example, a teacher may be asked to provide feedback on a teaching assistant who works with them.
- 6.8 Where there are concerns about any aspects of an employee's performance the appraiser will meet the appraisee to:
- 6.8.1 give clear feedback about the nature and seriousness of the concerns;
 - 6.8.2 give the appraisee the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns;
 - 6.8.3 find out if there are any issues (both in or outside of work) that are affecting their performance that the appraiser can assist with or provide support;
 - 6.8.4 set clear objectives for the required improvements and how these can be achieved;
 - 6.8.5 agree any support (for example coaching, mentoring, training, structured observations, observing others in a similar role etc), that will be provided to help address those specific concerns;

- 6.8.6 make clear how, and by when, the appraiser will review progress either by setting new and clear objectives for required development which will be assessed during the review period or by revising current objectives, allowing sufficient time for improvement; the amount of time for this should reflect the seriousness of the concerns. This will be an informal review period and will be confirmed in an Action Plan;
 - 6.8.7 explain the implications and process if no - or insufficient - improvement is made during the informal review period for example, impact on pay progression and potential move to formal capability.
- 6.9 This meeting can happen at any time during the appraisal period. It is designed to be a supportive meeting to address issues early to avoid the matter escalating, giving the employee the opportunity to improve. At the meeting, the appraiser will present evidence collected that indicates that the employee's performance is not up to the required standard. There is no right to be accompanied to this meeting. Although this is part of an informal process, a note of the meeting will be made and a copy given to the employee so that they are clear about the support they will be given, what improvements need to be made and the timescales.
- 6.10 An informal review period will follow this meeting; the length will be determined by the appraiser based on the individual circumstances of the situation but it should not be unduly long. During the informal review period, regular meetings should take place to ensure progress is being made.
- 6.11 At the end of this informal review period when progress is reviewed, if the appraiser is satisfied that the employee 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. If performance is improving and the appraiser feels that further time is required to monitor improving performance, the appraiser can decide to extend the informal review period but it should not be unduly long. If no or insufficient improvement is being made, then the process set out below (section 10) should be followed. It will be for the appraiser to decide which procedure will be followed.

7 Evidence

Evidence supports the appraisal process. The range and level of evidence collected for appraisal and pay determination purposes will always be proportionate and minimise workload.

All employees

- 7.1 During the appraisal period, each employee has a responsibility for gathering evidence of their progress and recording this on Blue Sky throughout the year in order for them to identify any particular strengths or areas for further development at the interim and annual review meetings. The appraiser will then record the discussion on this evidence and make an assessment in the appraisal report. Templates are provided on Blue Sky to support employees when reflecting on their own performance and aspirations; these should be completed prior to the initial target setting meeting and the 'Review and Adjust Meetings'.

Teachers

7.2 In addition, a range of evidence should be available to the appraiser on a teacher's performance as part of the First Federation Trust's quality assurance processes. Evidence may include but is not limited to:

- 7.2.1 lesson observations (including "drop ins")
- 7.2.2 work scrutiny
- 7.2.3 questionnaires (pupil or parent - where obtained)
- 7.2.4 planning scrutiny
- 7.2.5 learning walks
- 7.2.6 pupil feedback (where obtained)
- 7.2.7 tracking data of pupil's progress
- 7.2.8 progress of individuals/groups
- 7.2.9 evidence of meeting Standards
- 7.2.10 Assessment of TLR

Leadership

7.3 In addition, a range of evidence should be available to the appraiser on the member of staff on the Leadership pay scale as part of the First Federation Trust's quality assurance processes. Evidence may include but is not limited to:

- 7.3.1 Monitoring records: lesson obs, pupil discussion, book scrutiny
- 7.3.2 Evidence of support for staff to improve practice
- 7.3.3 Impact of data analysis
- 7.3.4 Learning walks
- 7.3.5 External/internal reviews
- 7.3.6 Parent and staff surveys
- 7.3.7 Planning scrutiny
- 7.3.8 Quality Assurance visit reports.

8 Annual assessment

- 8.1 Performance and development priorities will be reviewed and addressed throughout the process and an interim appraisal meeting will take place at the mid-point of the cycle to review performance and progress towards objectives. Any concerns will be noted and an appropriate support plan will be put in place for the remainder of the cycle. The support plan will set out what improvement is required and what support will be provided.
- 8.2 Each employee's performance will be formally assessed in respect of each appraisal period. In assessing the performance of the Chief Executive Officer the Board of Directors must consult the external adviser. An annual assessment is the end point to the annual appraisal cycle and will formally assess each employee's performance in respect of that cycle. The employee will receive a written appraisal report using Blue Sky performance management system to help reduce workload as soon as practicable afterwards and by the end of the Summer Term and have the opportunity to comment on it in writing. The appraisal report will be a summary of the performance during the year and set out what the employee's development needs are for the next year. In particular the report will include:
- 8.2.1 details of the objectives for the appraisal period in question;
 - 8.2.2 an assessment of performance of their roles and responsibilities against each objective AND any relevant standards;
 - 8.2.3 a summary of observation findings if applicable;
 - 8.2.4 an assessment of training and professional development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them;
 - 8.2.5 a recommendation on pay if relevant. This will be in accordance with criteria set out in the Pay Policy, which will include reference to sources of evidence that may be used in assessment of pay progression.
- 8.3 The assessment of performance and of professional development needs from each individual appraisal will inform the planning process for the following appraisal period for the whole First Federation Trust.

9 Transition to Capability

Performance management is an ongoing process. If an employee demonstrates underperformance and has not responded to support provided within the appraisal process, the employee will be notified in writing that the appraisal system will no longer apply and that their performance will be managed under the Capability Policy, and will be invited to a formal capability meeting.

10 General Principles Underlying This policy

Confidentiality

- 10.1 The appraisal process will be treated confidentially. However, the desire for confidentiality does not override the need for the Chief Executive Officer and the Board of Directors to quality-assure the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal system. In this First Federation Trust the Chief Executive Officer in conjunction with the senior leadership team, is responsible for reviewing objectives and written appraisal records, in order to check consistency of approach and expectation between different appraisers.

Consistency of Treatment and Fairness

- 10.2 The First Federation Trust and the Board of Directors are 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 employees. The Governing Body is aware of the guidance on the Equality Act 2010 issued by the Department for Education.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- 10.3 The Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal arrangements. In developing, applying and evaluating this policy we will monitor the impact on different groups of people with protected characteristics in line with the First Federation Trust's Equal Opportunities policy and our Workforce Privacy Notice. This will ensure that what we do is done fairly.

Retention and data protection

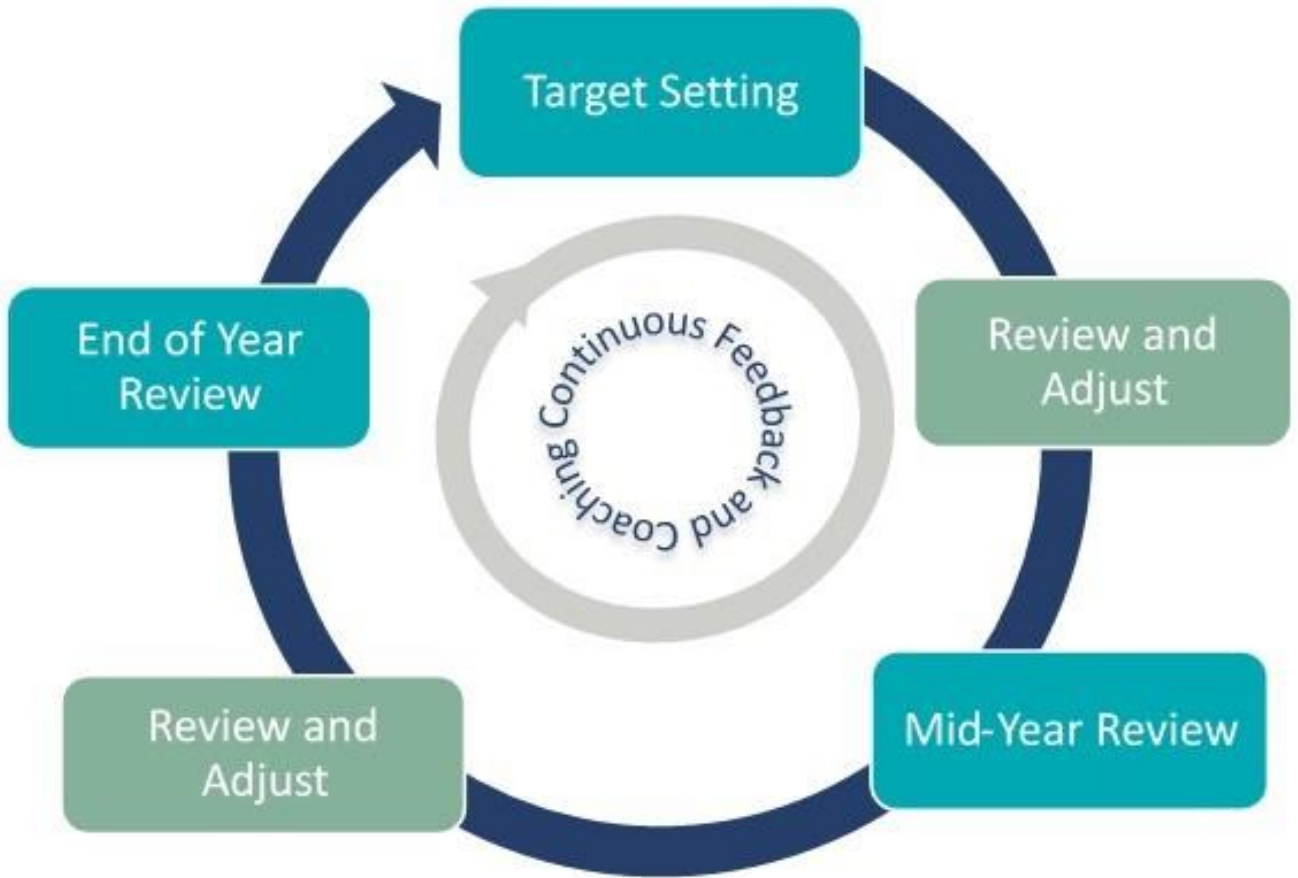
- 10.4 The Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer will ensure that all written appraisal records are retained in a secure place. It is the appraiser's responsibility to ensure a copy of all relevant documents is placed on the employee's personnel file.. As part of the application of this policy, the First Federation Trust may collect, process and store personal data in accordance with our data protection policy. We will comply with the requirements of Data Protection Legislation (being (i) the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) (unless and until the GDPR is no longer directly applicable in the UK) and any national implementing laws, regulations and secondary legislation, as amended or updated from time to time, in the UK and then (ii) any successor legislation to the GDPR or the Data Protection Act 1998, including the Data Protection Act 2018). Records will be kept in accordance with our Workforce Privacy Notice, and in line with the requirements of Data Protection Legislation.

11 Review of policy

This policy is reviewed annually by First Federation Trust in consultation with the recognised trade unions. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.

Appendix A

First Federation Trust Performance Development Model



Appendix B

First Federation Trust Performance Development Timeline

