Grove
Learning Trust

# Performance Management Policy

## Version Control

| Version | Date | Status | Author (AU) / Approver (AP) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Draft 01 | Sept 23 | Completion of first draft | PHP (AU) |
| Final – A | Autumn 23 | To be ratified by the Board of Directors | BOD(AP) |
| Review | Spring 24 | Review of policy and addition of Support Staff information | CS (AU) |
| Review | Autumn 25 | Review of policy, removal of performance related pay in line with School Teachers Pay and Conditions.<br><br>Addition of sections relating to new performance management process. | CS & AW (AU) |

## Vision

As one organisation, our vision for Grove Learning Trust is unapologetically bold. We are all about **creating remarkable futures.** For our children, our people, our places of work, we want the very best. We know that strong connections will enable us to achieve our vision, in a world where purposeful collaboration, based on mutual respect and trust, helps us to achieve more together.

**Trust >> Connect >> Collaborate**

Our policies underpin our vision and set out clearly our expectations of each other.

## About this Policy

Grove Learning Trust (The Trust) seeks to provide an excellent education for all pupils within its care. The Trust aims for the performance management process to be supportive and developmental to help staff have the appropriate skills and support to carry out their roles to the best of their ability and continue to improve their professional practice.

The Board is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness and to stay within the legal framework applicable to all employers; for example, the Equality Act 2010, the Employment Rights Act 1996, the Part-Time Workers Regulations 2000, the Fixed Term Employees Regulations 2002 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

This policy does not form part of the employee's contract of employment and the Trust may amend it at any time.

## Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to all employees only except those subject to a capability process. It does not apply to self-employed contractors, volunteers, or agency workers.

It does not apply to the following circumstances:

- To those staff within their probationary period.
- Early Career Teachers in their statutory induction period.
- ECTs who have an extended induction over two years.
- Those subject to a formal capability process.
- It does not apply to self-employed contractors, volunteers or agency workers.

For staff returning from maternity leave or long-term absence, a tailored mini appraisal meeting will be conducted promptly to set clear objectives and support reintegration, ensuring workload and wellbeing considerations are central to planning.

## Who is responsible for this policy?

The executive team and headteachers have overall responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy.

Any questions an employee has about the application of this policy should be referred to their line manager in the first instance.

This policy is reviewed annually by the HR team and shared with the Trust Board.

## Purpose

This policy applies to all employees and is intended to facilitate and support a continuous development and improvement process for all employees. It does not apply to the following circumstances:

- Employees who are within their probationary period
- ECT's who have an extended induction over two years
- Employees on a formal capability process

The appraisal process will be a supportive and developmental process, it will help to provide clarity to employees around what is expected of them in their role and ensure that they are pro-active in continuing to improve their professional practice.

Where there is evidence that leads to concern that an employee is consistently failing to reach professionally acceptable standards through lack of capability, then the Capability Policy should be followed.

Misconduct, wilfully deficient performance, refusal to follow reasonable management instructions, negligence and other similar situations should be dealt with under the Disciplinary policy.

Where ill-health or other health issues are identified as a contributor to under performance, the matter should be dealt with under the Sickness Absence Policy.

## Principles

The appraisal process is based on the following principles:

- Creating a workplace that employees value and enjoy working in, one that encourages and supports work–life balance, wellbeing and engagement. Appraisal discussions will include consideration of staff workload and wellbeing, and how the Trust can support sustainable practice.
- Ensures consistency and fairness across the Trust.
- Ensures that all employees have the skills and knowledge they need to fulfil and excel in their role.

- Creates a process where the professional development of staff at the Trust is supported and encouraged, in the context of the Teachers' Standards (for teaching staff), the Headteachers' Standards (for headteachers), and the relevant role expectations for support staff, alongside the requirements of the role or future opportunities.
- Ensures appraisal is fair, inclusive and free from discrimination, with reasonable adjustments made where required under the Equality Act 2010, particularly for staff with disabilities, part-time staff, or those with protected characteristics.
- Enhances communication between employees and their managers, and to provide a clear understanding and appreciation of the issues facing the Trust.
- Identifies staff development and training needs with their line manager, ensuring alignment with school and Trust needs and CPD strategy.
- An employees performance review is not linked to pay progression unless they have entered capability procedures.

## Definitions

**Performance management** is the ongoing process by which the Trust ensures that all employees are supported to meet the expectations of their role, develop professionally, and contribute to the Trust's strategic priorities. It is a continuous cycle of planning, monitoring, supporting, and reviewing performance, with the aim of improving outcomes for pupils and sustaining a high-quality workforce.

**Appraisal** is the formal, annual part of the performance management cycle. It is a structured meeting between an employee and their appraiser, where performance over the review period is evaluated against agreed objectives, professional standards (Teachers' Standards or Headteachers' Standards where applicable), and the employee's role profile. The appraisal provides a record of achievements, identifies areas for development, and informs decisions about professional development and pay progression where applicable.

## Reviewing Performance

The review period coincides with the cycle of reporting and planning for the Trust.

The performance management cycle is founded on professional conversations that review work knowledge and skills alongside behaviours. It is considered good practice to hold at least 2 professional conversations with each employee over the academic year, to review progress and note any areas of success or concern.

Where the employee is a teacher, professional conversations will be informed by the Teachers' Standards. For Headteachers, the Headteachers' Standards will be used. For support staff, professional conversations will be informed by their job description and role profile.

Where an employee starts or transfers to a new post within the school part way through a performance management cycle, the line manager shall determine appraisal arrangements for the remainder of the performance review period, with a view to bringing their cycle into line with the cycle for other employees as soon as possible.

A practical and flexible approach to conducting appraisals for employees who are absent on maternity leave should be taken. For example, in reviewing performance, the Trust will consider the work that the employee has done in the time available or take into account evidence from the previous year.

## Appraisers

All appraisers, including any Trustees, should be provided with appropriate tools and guidance to carry out the process fairly and in line with the principles of this policy.

The Trust Board is the appraiser for the CEO. Refer to the Executive Pay Policy for guidance on how pay is reviewed.

The CEO is the appraiser for the executive leaders.

The Deputy CEO is the appraiser for Headteachers.

The Headteacher is responsible for the appraisal of all other employees in their school but will delegate this responsibility to others who will normally have line management responsibility for those they appraise.

Central Team employees will normally be appraised by their line manager unless in exceptional circumstances an alternative person is considered more appropriate due to their knowledge and skills.

Employees wishing to object to their appraiser (for example if the employee is related to their appraiser, or a grievance has been submitted between the employee and their appraiser) must submit their concerns in writing within 10 working days of the appraisal cycle's start. The line manager will consider the request promptly and communicate the decision. While reasonable efforts will be made to appoint an alternative appraiser, the line manager's decision will be final with no further right of appeal.

## What x How

The **What × How** assessment ensures appraisal judges both **what** is achieved and **how** it is achieved - the professional behaviours that safeguard pupils, sustain a positive culture, and uphold the Teachers'/Headteachers' Standards (or support-staff role profiles).

Balancing What and How aligns performance with Trust and school values and recognises strong conduct even when external factors limit outcomes.

"How" covers observable behaviours: safeguarding and conduct; inclusive practice; collaboration and leadership; evidence-informed pedagogy and judgement; workload and wellbeing; CPD engagement.

Both parties will use appendix A and B to inform and record these discussions. Any agreed support and training will also be documented.

Constructive feedback will be given throughout the appraisal process including highlighting strengths and how performance could be improved. Where concerns in performance are highlighted, the following will be discussed:

- Clear feedback about the concerns and the seriousness of the concerns.
- Provide the opportunity to discuss the concerns.
- Agree what support will be provided to address the concerns.
- Agree when and how the appraiser will review progress including any revising objectives as necessary. Ensure that enough time is allowed for sufficient progress to be made.

It is important that all discussions relating to an employee's performance are documented and held on the employee's personnel file. A copy of the notes should also be shared with the employee.

With regard to the provision of continued professional development (CPD) in the case of competing demands on the Trust budget, a decision on relative priority will be taken with regard to the extent to which:

- meets the needs of the pupils.
- the training and support will help the trust to achieve its priorities; and
- the CPD identified as essential for a teacher to meet their targets.

Where an employee has been absent for some or all of the assessment period, an assessment will be based on performance during any periods of attendance and/or prior performance.

Any employee with a live disciplinary warning during the preceding academic year for attendance, capability or conduct will automatically be prevented from having their pay scale increased.

## Support Plan

If individual concerns are raised, or come to light during the professional conversation, a support plan (appendix C) will be written with the employee to support them to achieve the expectations of the job description. This support plan will include specific targets with the focus on improving individual performance.

This targeted support with success criteria, support offered and a review period (typically 3 – 5 working weeks) will be agreed and recorded.

If the support plan does not improve the individual's performance, the process moves to the capability process. Please see the capability process for next steps.

## Pay Progression

Pay progression and appeals are managed under the Trust's pay policy.

## Confidentiality

Any parties affected by or involved in the application of this policy will be expected to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. Breaches of confidentiality will be taken seriously. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Policy.

Disclosure of information may also be a breach of the General Data Protection Regulations and may lead to action being taken under the Disciplinary Policy.

In line with UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 requirements, appraisal records will be retained securely on the employee's personnel file for a period of six years after the end of employment, unless a longer retention period is required by law. Employees have the right to access their records in line with the Trust's Data Protection Policy.

## Grievances

Where a member of staff raises a grievance during the appraisal process, the appraisal process may be temporarily suspended to deal with the grievance.

## Absence or Reasonable Adjustments

The Trust is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness in the operation of the performance management process. Where employees have been absent for a period of the appraisal term, maternity or long-term sickness as examples; the Trust will ensure that the staff receive fair treatment while ensuring the integrity and robustness of the appraisal process.

Where appropriate, the Trust will consider conducting appraisals prior to individuals departing on maternity leave, even if this is early in the appraisal year, and basing any appraisal and pay determination on the evidence of performance to date in that appraisal year. Account could also be taken of performance in previous appraisal periods if there is very little to go on in the current year. This can also apply in making judgements where there has been long term sickness.

It is advisable for those staff returning from a period of long absence, such as maternity, that a mini appraisal should take place.

## Review of policy

This policy is reviewed every year or upon change of relevant legislation. The executive team will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.

The executive team will annually review the application and outcomes of the performance management policy to ensure it supports Trust and school improvement priorities, staff well-being and statutory compliance. Feedback from staff will be gathered to inform policy updates.

# Appendix A

## Performance management – What X How

The Grove Learning Trust performance management process assesses an employee's "what" – their ability within their role against their job description, by their "How" – the attitude and behaviours displayed in role.

The performance management process will provide opportunity to grade employees 1-3 in their what and A-C in their How and plot them on a chart. This activity enables the employee and their line manager to plot separately and come together to discuss and provide supporting evidence for their scoring, opening a dialogue to ensure fairness and transparency. This conversation should be constructive and help support the employee to perform against the expectations of their role (obtained from their job description). It also allows opportunity to review and amend a job description where additional responsibilities have become apparent and formed part of an employee's day to day role.

**What**

1 – The employee has rarely performed against the responsibilities within their job description and needs further structured support and guidance to be successful in role.

2 – The employee does a good job of performing against the responsibilities within their job description and needs little to no support.

3 – The employee has excelled in all responsibilities as listed in their job description.

**How**

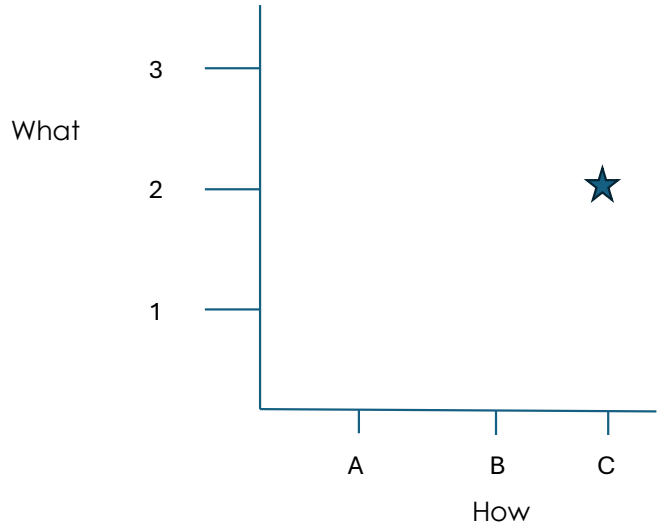
A – The employee rarely displays positive attitudes or behaviours when in role and creates a negative environment for other employees and or children.

B – The employee does a good job of displaying positive attitudes and behaviours in role though sometimes can bring negativity into the working environment.

C – The employee is always displaying positive attitudes and behaviours in role and supports others in displaying the same. When the employee feels negatively about a situation, they handle this in the appropriate manner as to not affect others.

## Performance management – What X How

### Example




This employee has been marked at 2C.

They do a good job of performing against the responsibilities within their job description and needs little to no support. They always display positive attitudes and behaviours and support others in displaying the same. When the employee feels negatively about a situation, they handle this in the appropriate manner as to not affect others.

This has been evidenced in examples documented on the employee's appraisal form.

Appendix B

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Employee Name: | Job title:<br><br>School: | Appraiser: |
| Review period: | From: | To: |

**Professional Conversation Record**

**This section is for the line manager to use to record notes of the discussion with the employee.**

**The professional conversation will use the following to inform the discussion:**

- **What X How (see appendix A)**
- **Employee job description**
- **Relevant national standards (e.g. teacher, headteacher, teaching assistant etc)**

**The professional conversation might involve the setting of target(s) but this is at the discretion of the Headteacher in each school and the CEO for the central team. Where targets are set, these could be for an individual, a group of staff or for a whole team of staff working towards a shared improvement goal.**

**If individual concerns are raised, or come to light during the professional conversation, a support plan (appendix C) will be written with the employee to support them to achieve the expectations of the job description. This support plan will include specific targets with the focus on improving individual performance.**

**Appendix C**

**DEVELOPING PERFORMANCE SUPPORT PLAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Name:** | | **Job Title:** | |
| **Date:** | | | |

This plan is part of the Developing Performance Procedure. It is intended to support rapid improvements in performance. The plan outlines the key issues that need to be addressed, the actions that need to be taken to address the issues and the support mechanisms. The success criteria will be used to measure the progress made. It is expected that significant progress will be evident by the review date.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Start Date:** | | **Review Date:** | | |
| **Key Issue** | **Actions to be Taken** | **Additional Support/ Resources Required** | **Monitoring/ Assessment Arrangements & timescale for achievement or review** | **Success Criteria** |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

**Support Plan Agreed By:**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Member of Staff:** | | **Signature:** | | **Date:** | |
| **Line Manager:** | | **Signature:** | | **Date:** | |