The Parkside School
learn grow thrive

Probation policy and procedure

Approved by:	Mrs C Ellis-Gage Head Teacher	**Date:** October 2026
Signed:		
Next review :	October 2027 John Habershon Deputy Head	

1. Introduction and scope

1.1 This policy forms part of our overall commitment to providing a structured and supportive environment for the professional development and integration of new employees. By establishing clear expectations, objectives, and support mechanisms during the probationary period, we aim to facilitate a smooth transition into the role and ensure that new employees have the necessary resources and guidance to succeed.

All new non-teaching employees to the school are subject to a probationary period.

For staff starting employment with the Parkside School from October 2026 - The standard probation period for support staff in schools will be 12 working weeks. For those working all year round, this will mean 12 calendar weeks. For those working less than all year round, this will normally mean 12 term-time weeks.

1.2 The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that all new employees undergo a fair and structured probationary period upon commencement of their employment. This period serves to assess their suitability for the role, provide feedback on performance, and facilitate their integration into the place of work. This will enable all employees to perform to their full potential in the workplace.

1.3 This policy and procedure supports our obligation to work in line with current legislation, ACAS best practice, contractual requirements and national/local terms and conditions relevant to this area of employment practice.

1.4 Where this policy references The Headteacher these responsibilities can be delegated to another member of the leadership team.

2. Equalities and support

2.1 The Headteacher will ensure that all reasonable adjustments or supportive measures are considered to allow equality of access and opportunity regardless of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation.

2.2 Through the implementation of this policy and procedure, the Governing Board/Trust will be mindful of their obligation to seek to maintain and protect the mental health and wellbeing of all employees as far as is reasonably practicable.

2.3 According to ACAS it is estimated one in seven people are neurodivergent, meaning that the brain functions, learns and processes information uniquely. Where an employee discloses neurodiversity, the Governing Board/Trust understands the employee may require extra support in relation to the application of this policy. Where reasonable adjustments are necessary and can be accommodated, the Headteacher will support these.

3. Employees covered by the policy

3.1 All new non-teaching employees are covered by this agreement, regardless of previous continuous service with other organisations and irrespective of contracted hours.

3.2 Employees appointed to short-term temporary posts are not normally required to undergo a formal probationary period. If a longer-term post (including permanent) is offered, they must undergo a probationary period, unless exceptionally they have already done so under their short-term employment. In general, existing temporary staff appointed to permanent or long-term temporary posts will be subject to a probationary period unless:-

- they have already been subject to a formal probationary period,
- they have already satisfactorily completed a period of regular performance monitoring and review,
- the role is the same or similar to that which the post holder has already undertaken for a reasonable period and their performance is deemed satisfactory by the Headteacher.

3.3 This policy is not to be applied to teaching staff.

4. The probation procedure

4.1 It is the policy of the school that performance during the probationary period is actively managed and assessed. This document and the accompanying *Probation evaluation form F113* can assist the Headteacher to manage the probation period and make a decision to either confirm the appointment or not, before the expiry of the probationary period. The documents should also help to ensure that an open, fair and consistent approach is followed.

4.2 The performance of the employee must be actively monitored throughout the probationary period. Where concerns arise, these must be raised with the employee without delay, with support and guidance being put in place. Any concerns identified and discussed with the employee should be recorded. Concerns must be shared at the time they arise so that the maximum time for improvement is allowed and the employee is clear about what they need to do to improve. Concerns should not be saved for discussion at the end of the probationary period.

4.3 At the end of the probationary period in most cases, the employee will have proved satisfactory such that the employment should be confirmed.

Strategy consideration - *Probation - confirming satisfactory period template letter L113* is available on InfoSpace.

4.4 However, in some cases there will be cause for concern about the employee's progress and capability. It is essential that the job performance and progress of all probationers are monitored regularly and reviewed during this 12 working week period and their training and development needs taken into account.

4.5 Problems need to be identified, and the employee must be made aware of the Headteacher's concerns, at an early stage. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the probationer must be given the necessary support, training and time to improve, before termination of employment is considered as an option.

4.6 At the end of this period, taking into account any supportive measures as required, a decision must be made as to whether the probation has been:

- **Satisfactory**; the appointment will need to be confirmed by the Headteacher and authorised by them accordingly.
- **Unsatisfactory**; the appointment will be terminated through due process.

4.7 In addition to performance, capability and attendance, issues of conduct and discipline also need to be considered in the probationary period (including any extension of the probation if applicable).

5. Probation evaluation form

5.1 A Probation evaluation form should be completed for all probationers.

5.2 It is important that issues are addressed as they arise with appropriate support and guidance being put in place as early as possible. Where issues with performance are identified, a fortnightly review cycle for the remainder of the probationary period would be appropriate.

5.3 The formal review, including completion of the probation evaluation form, is a means of assessing and feeding back on performance and progress. The form incorporates a first formal assessment, which should be undertaken within the first six working weeks of employment, although the Headteacher should not wait until the six week review before raising concerns which have been identified earlier.

5.4 A final formal review and decision would need to take place before the end of the 12 week probationary period. This would take into account any concerns identified before, at, or after the six week review and any subsequent progress made.

5.5 The form is completed by the Headteacher and discussed with the employee. As it is an open process, it is important that the employee reads and understands the Headteacher's comments; there is also space on the form for the employee's own comments. If the employee feels that they are struggling or have any problems, then it is important that this is raised with the Headteacher as soon as possible. Headteachers should encourage this, especially as some new employees may naturally find this difficult.

5.6 If there are identified problems/issues, then action plans must be formulated, and set out on the form. The employee must know what is expected of them and that appropriate support and training will be given, together with an agreed timescale for reaching the required standard.

5.7 It should be made clear to the employee at this stage that, if the required improvement does not occur, then their appointment will not be confirmed and their employment will be terminated.

5.8 Depending on the issues, it may be appropriate for the Headteacher to consult with their HR provider at this stage for further advice. If there are still issues/problems at the time of the final review, advise will need to be sought from the HR provider in advance of a decision being made to terminate employment.

5.9 The Headteacher should write to the employee in advance of the final review meeting, detailing the unresolved issues/problems and any action, support or training, which has been implemented to address these. The letter should give the employee five school days' notice of the meeting to allow sufficient time to prepare.

5.10 The purpose of the meeting is to explore the unresolved concerns regarding performance and allow the employee the opportunity to respond to these. The employee may be accompanied at the meeting by a Trade Union representative, companion or colleague.

5.11 Following the meeting the Headteacher should confirm the outcome to the employee and their right of appeal in writing.

6. Notice periods

6.1 If the employment is terminated, the employee is entitled to the notice period specified in their contract of employment with full pay. As far as is possible,

notice must be given such that it expires at (and not beyond) the end of the 12 working weeks period.

6.2 In order to expedite the process and in recognition of different notice periods, it would be usual to pay in lieu of notice.

7. Disciplinary issues arising within the probationary period

7.1 It is anticipated that any disciplinary issues which might arise during the period will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. If disciplinary action is taken, this will be taken into account at the final assessment. Minor issues around conduct may also be considered as part of the overall probation assessment where appropriate.

7.2 If a serious disciplinary issue arises which requires suspension and is not likely to be resolved during the period, then an extension of up to a maximum of four weeks may be made to assist with the completion of investigation and resolution of the matter. If the issue remains unresolved at this stage, then no further extension will be made and the employment will be terminated in accordance with normal procedures.

7.3 Every effort must be made to resolve disciplinary matters within the probationary period.

8. Extension of probationary period

8.1 The 12 working weeks period should give sufficient opportunity for the Headteacher to assess whether an employee has reached an acceptable standard of performance and a management decision should be taken during this period. The formal review process and completion of *Probation evaluation form F113* assists this process.

8.2 In exceptional circumstances, however, for example sickness absence of the employee or in some disciplinary situations (see section 7), a probationary period may be extended by a period of up to four working weeks. Four weeks is the maximum permitted extension.

8.3 During the extension the general principles of the probationary period still apply.

8.4 Any extension, up to the maximum permitted, must be authorised by the Headteacher.