



The Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust Capability Procedure

This policy is a mandatory policy for all Vine Academies and must be implemented with no amendments.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The minimum standard expected of all employees is the satisfactory performance of the tasks as set out in their job description, to the level set out in the person specification for that job and any standards applicable to the role e.g. Headteacher Standards, Teaching Standards, Threshold Standards, and HLTA Standards.

The performance of staff is monitored and managed on a day to day basis by line managers and through the Performance Management Procedures. The Capability Procedure sets out arrangements that will apply where an employee's performance falls below the minimum standard of competence that is expected of them.

A summary of the procedure is set out at Appendix A.

2. Scope

- 2.1.1 This Procedure is applicable to all staff (including the headteacher).
In the case of staff with less than one year's service and on fixed term contracts, while the principles of reasonableness and natural justice reflected in these procedures and the ACAS Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance matters will apply, it may be appropriate to foreshorten procedures, processes and relevant timescales in keeping with the particular nature of their employment.
- 2.2 Separate procedures apply to:
- Teachers' during the Statutory Induction Period.
 - Probationary Periods.
 - Misconduct cases
 - Ill health cases.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of the Trust Board to:
- define procedures
 - appoint a member(s) to manage the process where the headteacher is the subject of the procedure;
 - establish where appropriate, capability/dismissal and appeals committees.
- 3.1.1 The Trust Board delegate to the Local Governing Body the responsibility to:
- communicate procedures and to ensure that they are applied in a consistent manner;
 - ensure that systems are in place for the proper induction of new and promoted staff, and for day to day management and performance management of staff, to ensure that minor deficiencies in performance are dealt with effectively without recourse to the formal procedure;
- 3.2 It is the responsibility of the headteacher and other managers to:
- manage performance effectively ensuring that staff are aware of the standards expected of them and dealing with any minor deficiencies in conduct at the earliest

stage through normal day to day supervision and probation, induction and performance management procedures;

- ensure that, where necessary, capability procedures are carried out promptly, fairly and equitably;
- issue warnings and make initial dismissal decisions (headteacher only) where appropriate.

3.3 It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- be aware of and comply with all general rules and procedures referred to in their contract, conditions of service job description and any specific standards of performance related to their area of work and workplace;
- comply fully with this procedure and to co-operate with the processes contained therein.

4. Representation

4.1 An employee is entitled to be accompanied by a trade union/professional association representative, colleague, friend or other appropriate person, at all stages of the formal procedure. The employee must make his/her own arrangements for this.

5. The Procedure

5.1 Identified concerns

Where evidence emerges that an employee's performance has fallen below the minimum standards expected of them (as set out in 1.1 above), this will be discussed with the employee normally (see 5.3 below) as part of the **Performance Management Procedure**. The line manager or other appropriate manager, will:

- set out the nature and seriousness of the concerns;
- confirm any previous discussions/support;
- give the employee the opportunity to comment and discuss concerns.

5.2 Monitoring

A monitoring period will usually be set as part of the Performance Management Procedure, in all but the most serious cases (see 5.3 below).

The manager will:

- set targets for future performance (in addition to existing Performance Management Targets);
- agree any further support with the employee;
- make it clear how, and by whom, progress will be monitored and when it will be reviewed;
- explain the consequences and process if no, or insufficient, improvement is made.

The period of monitoring will normally be between 4 and 8 working weeks and in any case shall only be as long as is necessary to allow reasonable time for improvement and this will depend on the seriousness of the issues and individual circumstances. Exceptionally, an extension of not normally more than 4 weeks may be granted, where there has been significant improvement or there has been significant absence during the monitoring period.

Full detail of this meeting and its decisions will be confirmed in writing to the employee.

Regular contact will be maintained throughout the monitoring period to review and support progress.

5.3 The formal procedure

In the most severe cases, and/or where there has been insufficient improvement following any monitoring period, the Performance Management Process will be suspended and the **Formal Capability Procedure** will be invoked. The employee will be called to a formal capability meeting. The meeting will be conducted by an appropriate manager. This will be the headteacher where there have been previous warnings and dismissal is therefore a possible outcome. Where the headteacher is the subject of the procedure the meeting will be conducted by a deputed trustee.

- 5.3.1 The employee will be given at least five working days' notice, in writing, of the date, time and place of the meeting. When given this notice, the employee will be:
- informed of the nature and details of the concerns;
 - informed of his/her right to be accompanied at the meeting by a representative (see 4. above);
 - supplied with a copy of the evidence which is to be considered at the meeting;
 - given an indication of the possible penalty which could be imposed if the concerns are found to be substantiated, e.g. a formal warning or termination of employment by dismissal where previous warnings have been issued);
 - informed who will be involved in the meeting including the name of any advisers.
- 5.3.2 Not later than two working days before the meeting the employee:
- must supply the name and status of his/her representative;
 - may submit a written statement or other supporting written evidence if s/he wishes, either direct or through his/her representative.
- 5.3.3 At the meeting the concerns will be explained to the employee and they will have the opportunity to make representations.

6. Outcomes

- 6.1 Where the concerns are substantiated the following decisions may be made:
- 6.1.1 (i) Written warning (normally for one year) and a formal monitoring period: where there is serious concern about the standard of performance or there has been insufficient progress following a period of monitoring (4-8 weeks).
- (ii) Final Written Warning (normally for one year) and a formal monitoring period: where the concerns are particularly serious or there has been insufficient progress following a previous warning or period of monitoring (4-8 weeks).
- (iii) Dismissal with notice: in the most serious cases and where there has been:
- no progress following a previous warning/period of monitoring
 - insufficient progress following a final written warning.

- 6.1.2 Where the concerns are substantiated at a formal meeting, this is likely to result in any pay increment due to the employee at the end of the relevant year, being withheld.
- 6.2 Where a warning is determined, the employee will be informed, normally at the end of the meeting, and in any case, in writing of:
- the nature and seriousness of the concerns;
 - the improvement in performance that is required during the formal monitoring period to remove them from the formal process (i.e. through set targets);
 - the support that will be available to help the member of staff improve;
 - the end date of the formal monitoring period and how performance will be monitored during this period, including any review dates;
 - the fact that any pay progression due at the next pay review is likely to be withheld;
 - the consequences of failure to improve to the required standard;
 - in the case of a formal warning or dismissal the employee will also be notified of his/her right of appeal.
- 6.3 In the case of dismissal, employees will normally be placed on paid suspension for the period of notice, pending any appeal by them.

7. Appeals

- 7.1 An employee has a right of appeal against any warning/dismissal. An employee may forego his/her right to appeal.
- 7.2 Notice of any appeal must be given in writing to the headteacher within five working days of receipt of the written notification by the employee of the outcome of the formal meeting, clearly stating the grounds upon which the appeal is made.
- 7.3 Appeals will be heard by the headteacher, where s/he did not conduct the original meeting or by the Trust Board Disciplinary/Dismissal Appeals Committee, who will be drawn where possible from the Local Governing Body, in other cases and where the headteacher is the subject of the procedure. The decision of those hearing the appeal is final, subject to the employee's rights at law.
- 7.4 The procedures and conduct of appeals shall be the same as for formal meetings.

8. Records

- 8.1 Notes of formal meetings and appeal hearings will be taken and shared with the employee as soon as possible after the meeting/hearing. The employee has the right to challenge the accuracy of any minutes and to have these recorded.
- 8.2 No-one may record meetings or hearings, except for the Clerk, to assist with producing the minutes, where permission is given by all parties. The recording will be destroyed once minutes are completed.
- 8.3 Details of any formal action, including any warnings will be retained on the employee's personal file. Warnings will be disregarded after the expiry of their life (see 6.1.1).
- 8.4 Details of any current capability procedures and/or warnings will be referred to when responding to an employee reference request.

9. Timing / location of meetings / hearings

- 9.1 Employers are obliged to deal with performance issues without undue delay. It is expected that employees and their representatives will assist in this aim.
- 9.2 Where possible, timings of formal meetings and appeal hearings will be agreed with the employee and his/her representative and will normally take place during the working day.
- 9.3 Employees and their representatives should make themselves available to attend meetings within a reasonable period of time. If however, the employee's chosen companion is not available, for a reason that was not reasonably unforeseeable, at the time proposed for any meeting or hearing, one alternative date will be set, normally no later than five working days from the original date.
- 9.4 Where possible meetings and hearings will be held at a mutually convenient location, which meet any special needs of attendees and which may sometimes be away from the normal place of work where this is considered to be appropriate.
- 9.5 Reasonable time off with pay will be granted to employees who are acting as representative for an employee who is subject to the capability process.

10. Grievances raised during Capability Procedures

If an employee raises a grievance during the course of the capability procedure, related to the case, the grievance will normally be dealt with as part of the formal capability meeting/appeal. If appropriate, given the nature of the grievance, the capability process may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance.

11. Ill Health during Capability Procedures

- 11.1 While it is recognised that capability procedures can be distressing and may sometimes lead to an employee feeling unwell, the T believes that it is in everyone's best interest to conclude matters as quickly as possible and will work with the employee to achieve this.
- 11.2 If sickness absence appears to have been triggered by the commencement of the capability procedure, the case will be referred immediately to an occupational health adviser to assess the employee's fitness for participation in the capability. Where an employee remains off sick, the matter will subsequently be dealt with in accordance with the sickness absence procedure.

Appendix A Summary Capability Procedure

