KALEIDOSCOPE
Multi Academy Trust

Probation Policy

Approved by:	Kaleidoscope Trust Board	**Date:** September 2026
Next Review:	September 2027	

CONTENTS

Policy Aims	2
Scope	2
Roles and Responsibilities	2
Line Manager	2
Employee	2
Governors/Trustees	3
General Provisions	3
Probation Assessment	4
Probation Review Assessment Meetings	4
Successful Completion of Probation Period	5
Extension of Probation Period	5
Termination of Employment	6
Probation Hearing	6
Right of Appeal	7
Appeal Hearing	7
Disclosure and Barring Service	8
Confidentiality and Records	8

PROBATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR SUPPORT STAFF IN SCHOOLS

1. POLICY AIMS

1.1 Kaleidoscope Multi-Academy Trust (KMAT) and its schools recognises the importance of ensuring that new employees are fully supported from the commencement of their employment to enable them to familiarise with their job and become integrated and productive at the earliest opportunity. This policy aims to assist both new employees and their managers in providing a structure for the effective management of Probation periods, Probation assessment and where appropriate the management of unsatisfactory performance, attendance and/or conduct during the Probation period.

2. SCOPE

2.1 This procedure applies to all new members of support staff of the School (including fixed term employees) in their first 6 months of employment.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Line Manager

- For ensuring that this policy is applied consistently and in a way which does not discriminate.
- For monitoring the progress of new employees against standards which are clearly communicated to the employee.
- To provide the necessary support to the employee to enhance the opportunity for the Probation period to be successful.
- To provide the employee with regular feedback on their progress throughout their Probation period, ensuring that training and development needs are identified and met.
- Ensuring the employee has the opportunity to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and experience.
- Ensuring the completion of Probation review/assessment relevant paperwork underpinning the Probation procedure.

3.2 Employees

- Complying with the expected standards of performance, attendance and conduct required by the manager.
- Informing the manager if they are having any difficulty in meeting these standards.
- Undertaking training activities, agreed with the manager to support their achievement of the required standards.
- Attending Probation review/assessment meetings with the manager.
- Performing their duties in accordance with their contractual obligations e.g. being honest, trustworthy, co-operative and act reasonably, treating colleagues, pupils and parents with respect, honesty and dignity.

3.3 Local Partnership Committees

- Attend Probation hearings and appeal hearings as part of a panel and to make a fair decision in relation to the specific case.
- Attend appeal hearings as part of a panel and to make a fair decision in relation to the specific case
- To monitor and review this policy.

4. GENERAL PROVISIONS

4.1 All new employees will be provided with an appropriate induction programme, to help them settle into their new environment and team and familiarise themselves with the roles and responsibilities of their job.

4.2 The confirmation of the on-going employment of every new employee is subject to successful completion of a formal Probation period. During the Probation period the Line Manager will make an assessment of capability (performance and attendance) and conduct (behaviour) to determine whether the employment will be confirmed.

4.3 The Probation period will last up to **six months** but may be extended in particular, defined circumstances (*see section 8)*) for a further period of up to **three months**.

4.4 During the Probation period the School and employee only need to give one week's notice for the cessation of a contract of employment unless the employee has continuous local government service in which case, where the school is giving notice to the employee, the notice set out in the employee's contract should be given. The exception is in cases of gross misconduct. Where an act of gross misconduct has been committed dismissal will be without notice or payment in lieu of notice.

4.5 Any performance, attendance or conduct issues during the Probation period should be addressed under this policy.

4.6 It is expected that the majority of new staff will progress effectively through their Probation period. However where an employee is not achieving the standards expected, the manager will seek to establish with the employee whether there are any reasons or mitigating circumstances affecting the employee's performance, attendance and/or conduct and provide training, support and supervision where appropriate. The Line Manager will ensure that the areas of concern are explained and the employee is given clear objectives for performance, attendance and/or conduct. The opportunity to improve within a defined period of time will also be provided. The manager will ensure that the employee understands the standards against which their performance, attendance and/or conduct is being assessed and will explore any support the employee needs to assist them in achieving these standards.

4.7 The Line Manager does not need to wait until a formal Probation review/assessment meeting to raise any performance, attendance and/or conduct concerns; rather these will be discussed with the employee at the earliest opportunity as part of the normal supervisory/management arrangements, if a Probation review/assessment meeting is not imminent, with any such discussions being recorded and then referred to in the formal Probation review/assessment meetings.

4.8 If there are serious concerns about performance, attendance and/or conduct at any point during the Probation period and the Line Manager considers, based on the evidence, that sufficient improvement is unlikely to be made, the manager may, at that point, convene a review meeting at which the decision may be made to invite the employee to a Probation Hearing *(see section 10)* to consider their continued employment. By serious concerns is meant those cases of failure to meet job expectations and relevant standards where there are substantial negative consequences for the pupils or the School.

4.9 The procedure in this policy should be conducted in line with any safe working practices in place in the school and in line with any applicable government guidance.

5. PROBATION ASSESSMENT

5.1 The way in which work performance and conduct is assessed will vary depending on the responsibilities of each employee's job, grade and work environment and will include:

- Quality of work performance
- Quantity of work
- Flexibility
- Attendance, timekeeping and health record
- Reliability
- Relationship with other employees
- Initiative

6. PROBATION REVIEW ASSESSMENT MEETINGS

6.1 With the exception of where there are serious concerns that need to be addressed urgently (see paragraph 4.8), performance, attendance and conduct will be formally assessed at regular Probation review meetings and these meetings will take place no later than at **4 to 6 weeks**, at **10 to 12 weeks** and at **18 to 20 weeks**. From the commencement of the employee's employment to the review meeting at **4 to 6 weeks**, and following the meetings at **4 to 6** weeks and **10 to 12** weeks there will be review periods during which the employee's performance, attendance and conduct will be monitored and assessed, as necessary. It is important that these meetings are held in accordance with this timeline wherever practicable to ensure that the employee benefits from regular, timely meetings and from the information shared at them. Managers should be mindful of the implications of school holidays for term time only employees which could mean adjustment to the timing of review meetings and the completion of progress reports. The meetings provide an opportunity for the Line Manager to assess the employee's progress against the relevant standards and targets, clarify any standards/targets that are not clear, set improvement objectives, hear an employee's views on what they feel will assist their work performance, attendance and/ or conduct, discuss measures that may be taken to assist the employee in reaching the standards required and any identify training or development needs.

6.2 The KMAT probation review/assessment form should be used to record the main points of the Probation review/assessment meeting and a copy should be given to the employee and a copy placed on the employee's personnel file in school. This assessment form will be re-visited at the second and third Probation review/assessment meetings.

6.4 Managers are advised to seek advice from their HR Advisory Service in the following circumstances:

- where the induction and probation policy has not been followed,
- when a manager is looking to extend the Probation period,
- when the employee is at risk of failing probation.

7.0 SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE PROBATION PERIOD

7.1 If an employee's performance, attendance and behaviour/conduct has been satisfactory his/her ongoing employment will be confirmed in writing by the school at the end of the Probation period.

8. EXTENSION OF PROBATION PERIOD

8.1 A decision to extend the Probation period should be made no later than the final Probation review/assessment meeting (no more than **18 to 20** weeks after appointment). A decision to extend the Probation period for up to a maximum of three months, will only be made in the following circumstances:

- If it has not been possible to make a fair assessment of the employee's performance, attendance and/or conduct within the Probation period for good reason e.g. the employee has been absent for a substantial part of their Probation period, for example, due to sickness or the probation period includes the summer holidays.
- Where an employee has not met the required standards of performance, attendance and this may be due to a disability. The Line Manager will meet with the employee and establish whether there is any reasonable adjustments that can be made to assist the employee in achieving the required standards, including an extension to the Probation period.

8.2 Any decision to extend the Probation period must be fully explained to the employee and confirmed in writing, setting out:

- the length of the extension and the date of the probation extension review meeting);
- identifying any training/other support that will be given;
- areas for improvement and how this will be monitored/measured; and
- what may happen at the end of the extension review period i.e. where satisfactory improvement is made the employee will be confirmed in post/where there is no or unacceptable improvement they will be invited to a Probation Hearing at which their dismissal will be considered.

There will be no more than one extension of the probation period.

9. TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

9.1 [***Include if Headteacher will consider dismissal*** If the Line Manager decides, based on evidence, that the performance, attendance and/or conduct of an employee does not reach

the standards required during the final probation review period at the time of the final review meeting (or in serious cases at any time during the probation period (see para 4.8), the employee will be invited to attend a Probation Hearing at which their continued employment will be considered, with dismissal being a possible outcome. ***OR*** ****Include if Governor's Panel will consider the dismissal*** *If the Line Manager decides, based on evidence, that the performance, attendance and/or conduct of an employee does not reach the standards required during the final probation review period at the time of the final review meeting (or in serious cases at any time during the probation period (see para 4.8), the manager should discuss the case with their Headteacher/Executive Headteacher if they are not already involved. If the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher agree that there is evidence to support the view that the employee has not satisfactorily completed his/her Probation period, the employee will be invited to attend a Probation Hearing at which their continued employment will be considered, with dismissal being a possible outcome.]

10. PROBATION HEARING

10.1 A Probation Hearing will be arranged to consider the continued employment of an employee who has failed to meet the required standards of performance, attendance and/or conduct. [*A Probation Hearing panel of normally at least three Local Partners will be arranged. ***OR*** *The Headteacher/Executive Headteacher will consider the continued employment of the employee. ****delete as appropriate***]

10.2 A Probation Hearing will be arranged:-

- After the final Probation review meeting or after the probation extension review meeting where there are evidenced on-going concerns about the employee's performance, attendance and/or conduct and there is no or insufficient evidence of improvement in the employee's performance, attendance and/or conduct (it should be arranged in sufficient time to allow for the relevant notice period to be issued within the probation period or probation extension period should the hearing decide to dismiss the employee); or
- At any point during the probation period, where there are serious evidenced concerns about the employee's performance, attendance and/or conduct and there is no or insufficient evidence that the employee's performance, attendance and/or conduct will sufficiently improve.

10.3 The employee will normally be given **10 and no fewer than 5 working days'** notice in writing of a Probation Hearing. The [*Chair of the Hearing ***OR*** *Headteacher ****delete as appropriate***] will write to the employee to confirm:

- the concerns regarding the employee's performance, attendance and/or conduct;
- the date/time and location of the hearing;
- where applicable, the names of the governors on the panel;
- the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work colleague;
- the requirement to provide (preferably at least **5 working days**) before the hearing a copy of the documents that he/she will be relying upon and the names of any witnesses that he/she will be calling at the hearing; and
- to advise that a possible outcome of the hearing could be the employee's dismissal.

10.4 A copy of any documentation that the presenting manager will refer to at the hearing and the names of any witnesses that they intend to call will be included in the notification.

10.5 If the employee gives a valid reason for not being able to attend the hearing one alternative date no more than **5 days** after the first suggested date will be arranged.

10.6 The outcome of the Probation Hearing will be confirmed in writing to the employee normally within 5 working days of the date of the hearing. .Where the employee is dismissed the reasons for this decision must be included in the letter.

11. RIGHT OF APPEAL

11.1 Employees have the right to appeal against dismissal. Any appeal requests must be lodged with the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher in writing, stating the grounds for appeal, within ten working days of receipt of the dismissal letter.

12. APPEAL HEARING

12.1 The appeal will be heard by a panel of at least three Local Partners who have not been involved in the case.

12.2 The employee will normally be given **10 working days'** and not less than **5 working days'** notice of the date and time for the appeal hearing and informed of their entitlement to be accompanied at the appeal hearing by either a trade union representative or a work colleague. If the employee gives a valid reason for not being able to attend the hearing one alternative date no more than **5 days** after the first suggested date will be arranged.

12.3 Both parties must indicate at least 5 **working days** in advance of the appeal hearing whether they wish to call any witnesses and provide copies of any documentation that will be relied upon at the hearing

12.4 The chair of the Probation hearing will attend the appeal to present the management case.

12.5 The employee will be able to present the evidence which is directly relevant to the grounds of the appeal. Management will have the opportunity to respond.

12.6 The appeal panel may confirm or overturn the decision of the Probation hearing. It may result in the Probation period being extended.

12.7 The employee will be informed of the appeal decision in writing. The decision of the appeal panel is final.

13. DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE

13.1 There is a statutory requirement to refer an individual to the Disclosure and Barring Service in circumstances where an employee has been dismissed, or who resigns in circumstances which may have led to dismissal or where a disciplinary has occurred on grounds of misconduct which harmed or placed a child at risk of harm.

14.0 MEETING PROVISIONS

14.1 Employees and / or their representatives are not permitted to record electronically any meeting held informally or formally under this Probation Policy. This is to encourage openness and full participation by all parties during meetings. Any breach of this provision may lead to disciplinary action against the employee concerned, up to and including dismissal.

14.2 Where exceptional circumstances apply and following consultation and agreement from all the parties, meetings may be conducted remotely using information technology and consideration should be given to doing so. The hearing and appeal hearing may be recorded electronically by the note-taker to provide a back-up for minute taking provided all parties present at the hearing give their agreement to this at the start of the meeting. The electronic recording must be deleted by the note-taker promptly following the meeting once the minutes have been finalised. Confirmation that the deletion of the electronic recording of the minutes has taken place must be provided in writing by the note-taker to the Chair of the Panel. Where meetings are face-to-face, they should be conducted in line with any safe working practices in the school.

15.0 CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORDS

15.1 All individuals involved in the Probation process have a responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of personal information in their possession.

15.2 Records of the outcomes of all meetings with employees under this Policy will be kept.

15.3 All records will be kept confidential, used and retained in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.