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TRUST

Teaching Staff Capability Policy (LLT)



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<i>Origination</i>	<i>Authorised by</i>	<i>Policy Date</i>	<i>Review Date</i>	<i>Page 1 of 8</i>
HR Director	LLT Board	Feb 2025	Feb 2027	

Teaching Staff Capability Policy (LLT)

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Application of the Policy/Procedure.....	4
3. Formal Capability Meeting.....	4
4. Monitoring and Review Period Following a Formal Capability Meeting.....	5
5. Formal Review Meeting.....	5
6. Decision Meeting.....	6
7. Decision to Dismiss.....	6
8. Dismissal.....	6
9. Appeal.....	6
10. General Principles Underlying the Policy.....	7
Confidentiality.....	7
Consistency of Treatment and Fairness.....	7
Definitions.....	7
Delegation.....	7
Grievances.....	7
Sickness.....	7
Retention of Records.....	7
Review and Monitoring.....	8

<i>Origination</i>	<i>Authorised by</i>	<i>Policy Date</i>	<i>Review Date</i>	<i>Page 2 of 8</i>
HR Director	LLT Board	Feb 2025	Feb 2027	

Teaching Staff Capability Policy (LLT)

1. Introduction

Lydiate Learning Trust is committed to providing high quality teaching and learning. Through our workforce we aim to engage, enable and empower all of our pupils whatever their ability. Each employee will therefore be given support to ensure they are able to develop the skills they need to carry out their role, to help them continually improve their performance and to develop their full potential, which will in turn improve outcomes and “life chances” for our young people.

Having an effective support process in place is one of the ways we can help employees and deal with performance matters as they arise. This can involve effective day-to-day supervision, carrying out appraisals, providing CPDL, coaches, mentors and operating a fair and reasonable capability process.

To ensure there is a “no surprises” culture within the Trust, there will be an informal element to the capability procedure to ensure there has been opportunity for the employee to improve their performance via a support plan.

The first steps in attempting to improve performance are to identify the reasons or causes of the problem and consider any positive support that can be provided.

Informal measures of providing additional management support can be beneficial in addressing concerns about employee’s performance; therefore, this option should be explored before moving to Formal Measures.

It is for the appraisee (in conjunction with the line manager, where one aren’t the same) to determine the time period for agreed actions. It should be reasonable and proportionate, but not excessively long, and should provide sufficient opportunity for an improvement to take place. 6 weeks, in most cases, is a reasonable length of time.

Additional management support could include offering the facility to observe good practice; receive advice from an experienced colleague or line manager; having a mentor or coach, or access to appropriate training or resources.

The employee may be able to suggest other methods of support they feel would assist them. This list should not be seen as exhaustive or a requirement but gives an indication of the types of support a manager may consider providing.

If there is no time or space at a review meeting, or concerns about the employee’s performance arise before the next scheduled review, a specific meeting should be arranged to allow discussions between the appraiser/line manager/senior line manager and employee to take place in an open and constructive atmosphere and should be regarded as part of the normal working routine.

The specific aim of these discussions will be to identify ways in which the employee can be encouraged and helped to improve performance. The employee should refer to this Policy/Procedure document.

This meeting will provide opportunity for:

- the appraiser to clearly identify and illustrate the areas of concern;
- the employee to respond to the concerns outlined;

<i>Origination</i>	<i>Authorised by</i>	<i>Policy Date</i>	<i>Review Date</i>	<i>Page 3 of 8</i>
HR Director	LLT Board	Feb 2025	Feb 2027	

Teaching Staff Capability Policy (LLT)

- the employee to acknowledge their own responsibility to fully engage with the procedure and improve their own performance;
- the appraiser to outline the standards of performance required to exit the informal process;
- identification of any difficulties which may be preventing satisfactory performance;
- confirmation of the level of support which will be provided during the period of review;
- agreement of a reasonable timescale for monitoring and date for an appraisal review

Support or guidance from the wider Trust (or beyond) may be enlisted if deemed appropriate by the appraiser.

The appraiser should confirm in writing to the employee the required improvements and how they will be measured, a programme of support, as well as the timescale over which improvement is to be achieved. In addition, any points raised by the employee will be recorded. The details will be collated into a support plan.

Regular monitoring and feedback should take place during the period given for improvement, with the appraiser meeting with the employee at least fortnightly.

At the end of the agreed review period the appraiser should meet with the employee concerned to discuss: the extent to which performance has improved; the need to sustain the performance and the potential for this to be achieved; and any outstanding areas of concern. A brief written record of this meeting and the outcomes arising from it should be kept.

It is hoped that the vast majority of cases will be resolved at this Informal Stage and it will only be necessary to proceed to the Formal Stage in those cases where advice and additional support have not achieved the required improvement.

Where it has not been possible to eliminate concerns about an employee's performance by informal means, or improvement has not been sustained, Formal Measures may be taken.

The decision to move on from informal measures sits with the CEO (for direct reportees and central Trust staff) or the Headteacher (for staff employed in their school/academy). It is recommended that advice be sought from the Trust's HR Team before moving to the Formal Stage.

FORMAL STAGE

2. Application of the Policy/Procedure

The Capability Policy/Procedure will apply only to staff (including Headteacher) about whose performance there are serious concerns that the appraisal process has been unable to address.

Formal capability can begin at any time as indicated verbally. Where the Headteacher determines that a meeting should be convened to apply the capability procedure a formal meeting will be convened. The teacher will be given 5 working days' notice of the meeting.

3. Formal Capability Meeting

This meeting is intended to establish the facts. It will be conducted by the Chair of Governors (for Headteacher capability meetings) or Headteacher (for other teachers). The meeting allows the member of staff, accompanied by a companion if they wish, to respond to concerns about their performance and to make any relevant representations. This may provide new information or a

<i>Origination</i>	<i>Authorised by</i>	<i>Policy Date</i>	<i>Review Date</i>	<i>Page 4 of 8</i>
HR Director	LLT Board	Feb 2025	Feb 2027	

Teaching Staff Capability Policy (LLT)

different context to the information/evidence already collected.

The person conducting the meeting may conclude that there are insufficient grounds for pursuing the capability issue and that it would be more appropriate to continue to address the remaining concerns through the appraisal process. In such cases, the capability procedure will come to an end. The person conducting the meeting may also adjourn the meeting for example if they decide that further investigation is needed, or that more time is needed in which to consider any additional information.

In other cases, the meeting will continue. During the meeting, or any other meeting which could lead to a formal warning being issued, the person conducting the meeting will:

- identify the professional shortcomings, for example which of the standards expected of staff are not being met;
- give clear guidance on the improved standard of performance needed to ensure that the member of staff can be removed from formal capability procedures (this may include the setting of new objectives focused on the specific weaknesses that need to be addressed, any success criteria that might be appropriate and the evidence that will be used to assess whether or not the necessary improvement has been made);
- reinforce any support that will be available to help the teacher improve their performance e.g. mentoring, co-planning, observing best practice and will be tailored to each individual member of staff;
- set out the timetable for improvement and explain how performance will be monitored and reviewed. The timetable will depend on the circumstances of the individual case, but in straightforward cases could be between 8 and 13 weeks. It is for the school to determine the set period. It should be reasonable and proportionate, but not excessively long, and should provide sufficient opportunity for an improvement to take place; and
- warn the member of staff formally that failure to improve within the set period could lead to dismissal. In very serious cases, this warning could be a final written warning.

Notes will be taken of formal meetings and a copy sent to the member of staff. Where a warning is issued, the member of staff will be informed in writing of the matters covered in the bullet points above and given information about the timing and handling of the review stage and the procedure and time limits for appealing against the warning.

4. Monitoring and Review Period Following a Formal Capability Meeting

A performance monitoring and review period will follow the formal capability meeting. Formal monitoring, evaluation, guidance, and support will continue during this period. The member of staff will be invited to a formal review meeting, unless they were issued with a final written warning, in which case they will be invited to a decision meeting (see below).

5. Formal Review Meeting

As with formal capability meetings, at least five working days' notice will be given and the notification will give details of the time and place of the meeting and will advise the member of staff of their right to be accompanied by a companion who may be a colleague, a trade union official, or a trade union representative who has been certified by their union as being competent.

If the person conducting the meeting is satisfied that the member of staff has made sufficient

<i>Origination</i>	<i>Authorised by</i>	<i>Policy Date</i>	<i>Review Date</i>	<i>Page 5 of 8</i>
HR Director	LLT Board	Feb 2025	Feb 2027	

Teaching Staff Capability Policy (LLT)

improvement, the capability procedure will cease, and the appraisal process will re-start. In other cases:

- if some progress has been made and there is confidence that more is likely, it may be appropriate to extend the monitoring and review period;
- if no, or insufficient, improvement has been made during the monitoring and review period, the member of staff will receive a final written warning.

As before, notes will be taken of formal meetings and a copy sent to the member of staff. The final written warning will mirror any previous warnings that have been issued. Where a final warning is issued, the member of staff will be informed in writing that failure to achieve an acceptable standard of performance (within the set timescale), may result in dismissal and given information about the handling of the further monitoring and review period and the procedure and time limits for appealing against the final warning. The member of staff will be invited to a decision meeting.

6. Decision Meeting

As with formal capability meetings and formal review meetings, at least five working days' notice will be given and the notification will give details of the time and place of the meeting and will advise the member of staff of their right to be accompanied by a companion who may be a colleague, a trade union official, or a trade union representative who has been certified by their union as being competent.

If an acceptable standard of performance has been achieved during the further monitoring and review period, the capability procedure will end, and the appraisal process will re-start. If performance remains unsatisfactory, a decision, or recommendation to the Governing Body will be made that the teacher should be dismissed or required to cease working at the school.

The member of staff will be informed as soon as possible of the reasons for the dismissal, the date on which the employment contract will end, the appropriate period of notice and their right of appeal.

7. Decision to Dismiss

The power to decide that members of staff should no longer work at this school has been delegated to the Headteacher.

8. Dismissal

Once the decision has been taken, the Headteacher will dismiss the member of staff with notice.

9. Appeal

If a member of staff feels that a decision to dismiss them, or other action taken against them, is wrong or unjust, they may appeal in writing against the decision within five working days of the decision, setting out at the same time the grounds for appeal. Appeals will be heard without unreasonable delay and where possible, at an agreed time and place. The same arrangements for notification and right to be accompanied by a companion will apply as with the formal capability and review meetings and, as with other formal meetings, notes will be taken, and a copy sent to the teacher.

The appeal will be dealt with impartially and wherever possible, by managers and Governors who have not previously been involved with the case.

<i>Origination</i>	<i>Authorised by</i>	<i>Policy Date</i>	<i>Review Date</i>	<i>Page 6 of 8</i>
HR Director	LLT Board	Feb 2025	Feb 2027	

Teaching Staff Capability Policy (LLT)

The teacher will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal hearing as soon as possible.

10. General Principles Underlying the Policy

ACAS Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievance Procedures

The Capability Procedure will be implemented in accordance with the provisions of the ACAS Code of Practice.

Confidentiality

The capability process will be treated with confidentiality. However, the desire for confidentiality does not override the need for the Headteacher and Governing Body to quality-assure the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal system.

Consistency of Treatment and Fairness

The Governing Body is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness and will abide by all relevant equality legislation.

Definitions

Unless otherwise indicated, all references to teacher/staff include the Headteacher.

Delegation

Normal Rules Apply in respect of the delegation of functions by Governing Bodies, Headteachers and local authorities.

Grievances

Where a member of staff raises a grievance during the capability procedure it may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance. Where the grievance and capability cases are related it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently.

Sickness

If long term absence appears to have been triggered by the commencement of monitoring or formal capability procedure, the case will be dealt with in accordance with the school's absence policy. In such cases a detailed referral to the Occupational Health Service will be made at the earliest opportunity, normally within the first three weeks of non-attendance, to assess the member of staff's health and fitness in regard to consideration of a return to work and continuation with the formal procedure.

Retention of Records

The Governing Body and Headteacher will ensure that all documents referred to as part of the capability procedure are retained in a secure place for the appropriate period and then destroyed. For instance, Appraisal records must be retained for six years, whilst a warning issued may be removed after the stipulated period. Where dismissal is the outcome, it is advised that all

<i>Origination</i>	<i>Authorised by</i>	<i>Policy Date</i>	<i>Review Date</i>	<i>Page 7 of 8</i>
HR Director	LLT Board	Feb 2025	Feb 2027	

Teaching Staff Capability Policy (LLT)

documents relating to the process are retained for six years and then destroyed.

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually, in consultation with the recognised unions, to ensure consistency, fairness, and effectiveness, and to reflect any changes in employment legislation.

The Trust will monitor, review and report on the outcomes and impact of this policy on an annual basis and in line with the Equality Act 2010.

On the application of this policy, The Trust will share with the recognised unions and/or the workplace Health and Safety Committee information such as appropriate anonymised data broken down by equality characteristics in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), including the number of requests granted and the outcome of any appeal. Should analysis of this data cause concern then this will trigger a review of the policy and the application of the policy.

<i>Origination</i>	<i>Authorised by</i>	<i>Policy Date</i>	<i>Review Date</i>	<i>Page 8 of 8</i>
<i>HR Director</i>	<i>LLT Board</i>	<i>Feb 2025</i>	<i>Feb 2027</i>	