




'Christ at the centre, children at the heart'

Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic MAT

Company No: 08444133

Registered Office: Fordham Road, Newmarket, Suffolk, CB8 7AA

Approved by the Trust Board:	July 2025
Signed by Trust CEO:	
Review Date:	July 2028

Appraisal Policy Support Staff

APPRAISAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR SUPPORT STAFF

Commitment to Equality:

We are committed to providing a positive working environment which is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation. We have developed several key policies to ensure that the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in relation to human dignity and dignity in work become embedded into every aspect of school life and these policies are reviewed regularly in this regard.

DEFINITIONS

In this Appraisal Policy and Procedure, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

- i. 'Academy' means the academy named at the beginning of this Appraisal Policy and Procedure and includes all sites upon which the Academy undertaking is, from time to time, being carried out.
- ii. 'Academy Trust Company' means the company responsible for the management of the Academy and, for all purposes, means the employer of staff at the Academy.
- iii. 'Board' means the board of Directors of the Academy Trust Company.
- iv. 'Chair' means the Chair of the Board as appointed from time to time.
- v. 'Clerk' means the Clerk to the Board as appointed from time to time.
- vi. 'Companion' means a willing work colleague not involved in the substance of the employee's performance under review by this Appraisal Policy and Procedure, or a trade union official, an accredited representative of a trade union or other professional association of which the employee is a member, who should be available for the periods of time necessary to meet the timescales under this Appraisal Policy and Procedure.
- vii. 'Diocesan Schools Commission' means the education service provided by the diocese in which the Academy is situated, which may also be known, or referred to, as the Diocesan Education Service.
- viii. 'Directors' means directors appointed to the Board from time to time.
- ix. 'Governing Board' means the body carrying out the employment functions of the Academy Trust Company in relation to the Academy and such term may include the Board or the Local Governing Body of the Academy.

- x. 'Governors' means, (if appropriate to the context), the governors appointed or elected to the Local Governing Body, from time to time.
- xi. 'Headteacher' means the most senior teacher in the Academy who is responsible for its management and administration. Such teacher may also be referred to as the Head of School or Principal.
- xii. 'Local Governing Body' means, (if appropriate to the context), the Governors appointed to carry out specified functions in relation to the Academy as delegated by the Academy Trust Company.
- xiii. 'Working Day' means any day on which you would ordinarily work if you were a full-time employee. In other words, 'Working Day' may apply differently to teaching and non-teaching staff. However, part-time and full-time staff will not be treated differently for the purposes of implementing this Appraisal Policy and Procedure.
- xiv. 'Working Week' means any week that you would ordinarily work.

1. APPLICATION

- 1.1 Subject to Paragraph 1.2 below, this Appraisal Policy and Procedure applies to you if you are an employee or worker at the Academy and are not employed as a teacher or Headteacher (hereinafter referred to as an "employee" or "you").
- 1.2 This Appraisal Policy and Procedure does not apply to those employees who are employed under a contract of employment for less than one term and those who are subject to the Academy's Capability Policy and Procedure.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 The purpose of this Appraisal Policy and Procedure is to establish a framework for a clear and consistent review of the performance of employees and for supporting their development within the context of the Academy Trust Company's plan for improving educational provision and performance and in order to enhance the employees' professional practice. The review shall have regard to any applicable codes of practice or standards applicable to the employee's employment as referenced in their job description.
- 2.2 The Academy Trust Company is committed to ensuring respect, objectivity, belief in the dignity of the individual, consistency of treatment and fairness in the operation of this Appraisal Policy and Procedure. This commitment extends to promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating unlawful discrimination throughout the Academy community which includes all of the academies in the Academy Trust Company's group.
- 2.3 The Academy Trust Company is committed to providing a supportive working environment for all employees through this Appraisal Policy and Procedure. Concerns about an employee's performance will always be addressed in the first instance through the operation of this Appraisal Policy and Procedure. Where it is not possible to resolve concerns through the operation of this Appraisal Policy and Procedure it may be necessary to consider whether to invoke the Academy's Capability Policy and Procedure in accordance with Paragraph 9.
- 2.4 This Appraisal Policy and Procedure does not form part of any other procedure but relevant information on appraisal, including Appraisal Reports, may be taken into account in relation to the operation of other applicable policies and procedures.
- 2.5 An employee is entitled to have access, by arrangement, to their personnel file and to request the deletion of time-expired records in line with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.

2.6 The Academy Trust Company delegates its authority in the manner set out in this policy.

2.7 The Academy Trust Company is committed to ensuring that the operation of this Appraisal Policy and Procedure does not lead to an unnecessary increase in workload for employees and Appraisers. This Appraisal Policy and Procedure will always be applied in a way which is robust and fair, whilst monitoring the impact on workload for employees, Appraisers, Directors and Governors.

3. **APPRAISAL IN A CATHOLIC CONTEXT**

3.1 Appraisal will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all employees have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively within the context of the Academy Trust Company's ethos. It will help to ensure that employees are able to continue to improve their professional practice and develop as professionals in their area of expertise.

3.2 Arrangements for appraisal will be conducted in such a way that employees will be secure in the knowledge that their progress and commitment to the Academy are acknowledged.

3.3 Appraisal is a time to celebrate achievement wherever possible, as well as for discerning where there is scope for development. Challenge is at the heart of the Gospels. Christ challenged all whom he encountered, each according to their needs and readiness.

3.4 This Appraisal Policy and Procedure offers opportunities to ensure justice for employees and pupils alike and has the potential for the expression of Christian qualities such as honesty, self-knowledge, respect for others and their gifts, recognition of the needs and achievements of others, challenge of self and others, personal growth and openness.

4. THE APPRAISAL PERIOD

- 4.1 The Appraisal Period will run for twelve months from 1st January to 31st December.
- 4.2 Employees who are employed on a fixed-term or temporary contract of less than one year will have their performance managed in accordance with the principles underpinning this Appraisal Policy and Procedure. The length of the Appraisal Period will be determined by the duration of their contract of employment.
- 4.3 Where an employee starts their employment with the Academy Trust Company part-way through the Academy's usual Appraisal Period, the Headteacher shall determine the proportionate length of the Appraisal Period for that employee with a view to bringing his/her Appraisal Period into line with the Academy's usual Appraisal Period (as per Paragraph 4.1 above) as soon as possible.
- 4.4 Where an employee transfers to a new post within the Academy or any other Academy within the Academy Trust Company's Group part-way through an Appraisal Period, the Headteacher shall determine, in discussion with the employee, whether the Appraisal Period should be re-set and whether the Appraiser should be changed.

5. APPOINTING APPRAISERS

- 5.1 The Headteacher will appoint an Appraiser to appraise each employee of the Academy during the Appraisal Period. Appraisers should have received appropriate training for the role.
- 5.2 The Appraiser will set the employee objectives in accordance with Paragraph 6 below.

- 5.3 The Appraiser, through the Headteacher and/or Governing Board, may seek advice from other external advisers including, but not limited to, the Diocesan Schools Commission.
- 5.4 Where it becomes apparent that an Appraiser appointed by the Headteacher will be absent for the majority of the Appraisal Period, the Headteacher may perform the duties of the Appraiser or delegate those duties to another employee for the duration of the absence.
- 5.5 Where an employee has an objection to the choice of Appraiser, their concerns will be carefully considered by the Headteacher and, where it can be reasonably accommodated, an alternative Appraiser will be provided.

6. SETTING OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 Appraisal objectives should reflect the Catholic identity and mission of the Academy Trust Company and the values it proclaims¹ and Appraisers are expected to explore the alignment of such objectives with the Academy's priorities and plans, working at all times to ensure that the Catholic ethos is developed, preserved and maintained.
- 6.2 The Appraiser and the employee will engage in a professional dialogue with a view to agreeing a realistic number of objectives which shall be reasonably achievable during the course of the Appraisal Period taking into account the professional development aspirations of the employee. Objectives may be revised following discussion with the employee if circumstances change. The Academy operates a system of moderation to ensure that all appraisals are carried out in a consistent manner. Objectives will be moderated across the Academy and other academies in the Academy Trust Company's group to ensure that they are consistent between employees with similar experience and levels of responsibility. Should the objectives not be agreed, a record of the employee's comments in relation to the objectives set shall be added to the appraisal documentation but the final decision on allocation of objectives rests with the Appraiser.

- 6.3 The objectives set for each employee will, if achieved, contribute to the Academy's plans for improving educational provision and improving the progress, development and well-being of the pupils at the Academy. This will be ensured by quality assuring against Academy/ Academy Trust Company improvement plans.
- 6.4 Objectives, where met, should contribute to improving the progress, development and well-being of pupils at the Academy as understood in relation to the Catholic nature of the Academy and so include the academic, spiritual, moral, social, emotional and cultural development of each pupil.
- 6.5 The objectives set will be Challenging, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound and will be appropriate to the employee's role and level of experience.
- 6.6 The Appraiser will consider the Academy's work/life balance strategy and the effects of an individual's circumstances, including any disability requiring the implementation of reasonable adjustments, when agreeing objectives and Appraisers will include a review of an employee's workload in the Appraisal Report.
- 6.7 Following discussion between the Appraiser and the employee, set objectives may be revised by the Appraiser in accordance with the needs of the Academy and the employee, and any such revision(s) to set objectives will be recorded in writing and a copy will be provided to the employee.

7. REVIEWING PERFORMANCE

Gathering Evidence

- 7.1 In order to review performance, the Appraiser will need to rely on the available evidence obtained in connection with the employee's performance. The evidence required will depend on the employee's role and where possible, the evidence to be obtained should be agreed when the objectives are set.
- 7.2 When collecting evidence, the focus will be on using evidence which is readily available from day-to-day practice wherever possible.

Observation

- 7.3 The Academy Trust Company believes that observation of work practice is important both as a way of reviewing employee performance to identify any strengths and areas for development as well as gaining useful information which can inform Academy improvement more generally.
- 7.4 All observation of work in practice will be carried out in a supportive fashion and will not lead to unnecessary increases in workload, and all feedback will be developmental.
- 7.5 Employees will receive constructive feedback on their performance throughout the year and as soon as practicable after observation has taken place or other evidence has come to light. Feedback will include discussion with the employee, highlighting their areas of strength and areas that need attention and will determine any appropriate action required.

Development and Support

- 7.6 Appraisal is a supportive process which will be used to inform the employee's continuing professional development. The Academy Trust Company wishes to encourage a culture in which all employees take responsibility for improving the Academy and all academies in the Academy

Trust Company's Group through appropriate professional development. Professional development will be linked to the Academy's improvement priorities and to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of individual employees.

Informal Support

- 7.7 An employee's line manager may identify concerns on an informal basis at any time about any performance falling short of the standards expected by the Academy and/or the Academy Trust Company and/or the Governing Board (as appropriate).
- 7.8 An employee's line manager may also provide informal advice and appropriate support which may include training, coaching, mentoring, counselling, monitoring, working in a professional learning community, learning and development opportunities, supervision, occupational health, arrangements for observation of lessons taught by teachers at the Academy or elsewhere or discussing practice with advisory teachers or other employees (as appropriate to the employee's role). These arrangements will consider the employee's workload.
- 7.9 Informal support could include reaffirming the expectations that the Academy and/or the Academy Trust Company and/or the Governing Board (as appropriate) has of the employee and what support may be provided to help the employee to meet those expectations.
- 7.10 Informal support will be recorded in writing and may be referred to at a later stage as evidence of an attempt to address the concerns identified using informal support and the outcome of such an attempt. Where any informal support is recorded in writing, the employee will be provided with a copy of any written record and will be given 5 Working Days to comment on the written record in writing.

Alternative Support

- 7.11 There may be a situation where the employee's line manager and/or the Appraiser considers that a recent promotion or job change has been a contributory factor in any unsatisfactory performance. In such a case, informal support should be provided as described in Paragraphs 7.7 and 7.10 above.
- 7.12 If such informal support is ineffective, the employee's line manager/Appraiser may offer the employee the option of agreeing to voluntarily give up the promotion or job change as an alternative to proceeding with formal action pursuant to Paragraph 9 of this Appraisal Policy and Procedure.

8. ANNUAL REVIEW

- 8.1 Employees' performance will be formally reviewed in respect of each Appraisal Period by way of an Annual Review.
- 8.2 The Annual Review is the end point to the annual Appraisal Period but performance and development priorities will be reviewed and addressed throughout the year at interim meetings (which shall be conducted in person or via other appropriate medium, depending on the circumstances) which may take place termly or mid-year, for example. Employee workload will be considered when determining the frequency of such interim meetings.
- 8.3 The employee will receive, as soon as practicable following the end of each Appraisal Period but in any event by 31st January annually a written Appraisal Report. The employee will have the opportunity to comment on the Appraisal Report in writing.
- 8.4 The Appraisal Report will include:

- (a) Details of the employee's objectives for the relevant Appraisal Period;
 - (b) A review of the employee's performance of their role and responsibilities against their objectives and any relevant standards;
 - (c) An assessment of the employee's training and development needs and details of any action that should be taken to address them;
 - (d) A recommendation on pay where that is relevant;
 - (e) A space for the employee's own comments;
- 8.5 A review meeting will take place after the end of the Appraisal Period to discuss the content of the Appraisal Report and the employee's written comments in the Appraisal Report (if any), to decide any further action required, including setting a period for review of performance, and to inform objective setting for the next Appraisal Period.
- 8.6 Where it has not been possible for employees to fully meet their objectives because the agreed support has not been provided this will be considered in the review meeting.

9. EMPLOYEES EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES

- 9.1 It is the Academy's aim, when dealing with an employee experiencing difficulties, to provide support and guidance through the appraisal process in such a way that the employee's performance improves and the problem is, therefore, resolved.
- 9.2 Where it is apparent that an employee's personal circumstances are leading to difficulties at work, the Academy will aim to establish informally whether the reason is due to ill-health, lack of competence, misconduct or other mitigating personal circumstances. Support will then be offered and/or appropriate action taken as soon as reasonably practicable, without waiting for the Annual Review detailed in Paragraph 8. Support could include informal advice and appropriate support which may include training, coaching, mentoring, counselling, monitoring, working in a professional learning community, learning and development opportunities, supervision, occupational health,

arrangements for observation of lessons taught by teachers at the Academy or elsewhere or discussing practice with advisory teachers or other employees (as appropriate to the employee's role). These arrangements will consider the employee's workload.

9.3 If an Appraiser identifies through the appraisal process, or via other sources of information, that the difficulties experienced by the employee are such that, if not rectified, could lead to the Academy's Capability Policy and Procedure being invoked, the Appraiser, the Headteacher or a member of the senior leadership team (as appropriate) will meet with the employee to:

- (a) Give clear written feedback to the employee about the nature and seriousness of the concerns;
- (b) Give the employee the opportunity to comment on, refute, explain and discuss the concerns;
- (c) Give the employee at least 5 Working Days' notice that a meeting will be held to discuss targets for improvement alongside a programme of support, and inform the employee that they have the right to be accompanied at any such meetings by a Companion;
- (d) In consultation with the employee at the above meeting, an action plan with support will be established (e.g. coaching, training, in-class support, mentoring, structured observations, visits to other classes or schools or discussions with advisory teachers or other employees, (as appropriate to the employee's role), that will help address those specific concerns;
- (e) Make clear how progress will be monitored and when it will be reviewed; and
- (f) Explain the implications and process if no, or no sufficient, improvement is made.

9.4 The employee's progress will continue to be monitored as part of the appraisal process and a reasonable time will be given for their performance to improve. The relevant monitoring period will depend on the circumstances but will usually be for a period of between three and six Working Weeks, with appropriate support as agreed in the action plan detailed in Paragraph 9.3(d) above in order that the aim of improving performance can be achieved. During this monitoring period the employee will be given regular feedback on his or her progress and arrangements will be made to modify the support programme if appropriate.

9.5 At the end of the review period referred to in Paragraph 9.4 above, if sufficient improvement is made, such that the employee is performing at a level that indicates there is no longer a possibility of the Academy's Capability Policy and Procedure being invoked, the employee will be informed of

this at a formal meeting with the Appraiser. Following this meeting, the appraisal process will continue as normal. The employee will be given at least 5 Working Days' notice of such formal meeting and will have the right to be accompanied by a Companion. The outcome of such meeting will be confirmed in writing to the employee within 5 Working Days of the meeting taking place.

- 9.6 If no, or no sufficient, improvement has been made by the end of the monitoring period referred to in Paragraph 9.4 above, the employee will be invited to a transition meeting with the Appraiser to determine whether the Academy's Capability Policy and Procedure needs to be invoked or whether the appraisal process will remain in place. The employee will be given at least 5 Working Days' notice of such meeting and shall be entitled to be accompanied at the meeting by a Companion. The outcome of such meeting will be confirmed in writing to the employee within 5 Working Days of the meeting.
- 9.7 Prior to invoking the Capability Policy and Procedure, the Appraiser will seek to ensure that the employee has undergone an appropriate period of induction to their role, an up to date job description has been issued to them, professional standards and overall expectations of performance have been made clear and the employee's performance has been monitored and feedback has been provided.
- 9.8 Whilst the Appraisal Report does not form part of any formal capability or disciplinary procedures, any relevant information from the appraisal process including the contents of the Appraisal Report may be considered by those responsible for taking decisions about capability and disciplinary matters.

10. APPEALS

- 10.1 Employees have a right of appeal against any of the entries in the written Appraisal Report and a separate right of appeal against a decision to invoke the Academy's Capability Policy and Procedure made in accordance with Paragraph 9.6 above. If an appeal relates to a decision about pay, the employee is referred to the Academy's Pay Policy and Procedure.
- 10.2 An appeal in accordance with Paragraph 10.1 must be made in writing to the Clerk and lodged within 10 Working Days of receipt of the Appraisal Report (which will usually be received in the

review meeting referred to in Paragraph 8.5) or the date of the letter confirming the outcome of the meeting provided for in Paragraph 9.6.

10.3 The appeal letter must set out the grounds of the appeal in detail.

10.4 An Appeal Meeting will normally be held within 20 Working Days of an appeal letter being received by the Clerk.

10.5 The appeal will usually be heard by the Headteacher unless they have participated in the appraisal review, which is being appealed, in which case the appeal will be heard by the Chair assisted by a representative appointed by the Local Governing Body (if the Chair deems this is necessary).

10.6 The outcome of the Appeal Meeting will be confirmed in writing to you within 5 Working Days of the date of the Appeal Meeting. The decision reached following the Appeal Meeting is final and there will be no further right of appeal. The possible outcomes of an Appeal Meeting are any one or more of the following (as appropriate):

- (a) the entries made in the Appraisal Report are upheld;
- (b) the outcome of the meeting provided for in Paragraph 9.6 stands and the Capability Policy is invoked;
- (c) the appeal is upheld and any disputed entries in the Appraisal Report are referred to the Appraiser for reconsideration;
- (d) the outcome of the meeting under Paragraph 9.6 is overturned and the appraisal process will continue as normal.

10.7 Where an appeal is against entries in the Appraisal Report and the outcome of a meeting heard under Paragraph 9.6, the appeals will be heard together. For the avoidance of doubt, it will be possible for the outcome of each appeal, where both entries in the Appraisal Report and the outcome of a meeting heard under Paragraph 9.6 are appealed, to be different.

11. COMPANION

- 11.1 Where a meeting is held under Paragraphs 9 or 10 above, you may be accompanied by a Companion.
- 11.2 You must let the person appointed to hold such meeting under Paragraphs 9 or 10 above know who your Companion will be at least one Working Day before the meeting.
- 11.3 If you have any reasonable need, for example, because you have a disability, you can also be accompanied by a suitable helper.
- 11.4 Your Companion can address the meeting to:
- (a) put your case;
 - (b) sum up your case;
 - (c) respond on your behalf to any view expressed at the meeting; and
 - (d) ask questions on your behalf.
- 11.5 Your Companion can also confer with you during the meeting.
- 11.6 Your Companion has no right to:
- (a) answer questions on your behalf;
 - (b) address the meeting if you do not wish it; or
 - (c) prevent you from explaining your case.
- 11.7 Where you have identified your Companion and they have confirmed in writing to the relevant person appointed under Paragraphs 9 or 10 that they cannot attend the date or time set for the meeting, the meeting will be postponed for a period not in excess of five Working Days from the date set by the Academy to a date or time agreed with your Companion. Should your Companion subsequently be unable to attend the rearranged date, the meeting may be held in their absence or written representations will be accepted.

12. TIMING OF MEETINGS

The aim is that meetings under this Appraisal Policy and Procedure will be held at mutually convenient times but depending on the circumstances meetings may:

- 1.1 need to be held when you were timetabled to assist with lessons (if that is appropriate to your role);
- 1.2 exceptionally be held after the end of the Academy Day;
- 1.3 not be held on days on which you would not ordinarily work;
- 1.4 be extended by agreement between the parties if the time limits cannot be met for any justifiable reason.

2 VENUE FOR MEETINGS

Any meeting held under Paragraph 9 or 10 may be held off the Academy site to minimise any distress to the employee.

3 ASSISTANCE

Where matters fall to be decided under Paragraphs 9 and 10, the Diocesan Schools Commission may send a representative to advise the Academy Trust Company.

4 REVIEW OF THIS PROCEDURE

This procedure was produced in September 2013, amended in June 2016, May 2018 and May 2020 by the Catholic Education Service (CES) for use in Catholic Voluntary Academies in England following consultation with the national trade unions. It may be adapted, as appropriate, for use in joint Church academies subject to the approval of the CES on referral by the relevant Catholic Diocese.