

## DEMAT Capability Policy

In the development of this policy consideration has been given to Equality and Diversity and Data Protection.

### Equality and Diversity

DEMAT is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants. We aim to create a supportive and inclusive working environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit. We do not discriminate against staff on the basis of age; race; sex; disability; sexual orientation; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; religion, faith or belief. (Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics). The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff and Governors treat visitors, volunteers, contractors and former staff members.

### Data Protection

DEMAT will process personal data of staff (which may be held on paper, electronically, or otherwise). DEMAT recognises the need to treat it in an appropriate and lawful manner, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) (due to change to GDPR in May 2018).

	Version	Date
Date of EPM Model Policy used as a baseline by DEMAT	1	February 2012
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For all questions in relation to this policy please contact the DEMAT HR Manager on 01353 656760

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## Definitions

“Headteacher” also refers to any other title used to identify the Headteacher where appropriate.

“Senior Manager” refers to Senior Manager of DEMAT.

“Employee” refers to any member of staff, namely teaching, support and central team staff employed to work within DEMAT.

“Companion” refers to a person chosen by the employee to accompany him/her, who shall be a trade union representative or a workplace colleague.

In cases relating to employees within the DEMAT Central Team, the term ‘Chair of Governor’ or ‘Governor’ to be replaced by DEMAT Senior Officer.

## Application of the Policy

This policy is to be used by all employees employed by The Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust (DEMAT). The following definitions are included for reference purposes for both School and Central Team staff to enable clarity and transparency when applying this policy. This policy should be read and applied in conjunction with the Trust’s appraisal policy.

## 1. Formal Capability Meeting

- 1.1 This procedure applies only to employees about whose performance there are serious concerns that the appraisal process has been unable to address. If under the appraisal policy an employee's performance is not wholly satisfactory, the headteacher/senior manager, or other person with line management responsibility for the employee, will invite the employee to a formal capability meeting to discuss with the employee the identified poor performance as specifically as possible.
- 1.2 The headteacher/senior manager will write to the employee at least 5 working days in advance to inform him/her about:
- a) the date, time and place of the meeting.
  - b) the basic details of the concerns about the employee's performance
  - c) the employee's right to be accompanied by a representative of his/her trade union or a workplace colleague of his/her choice
  - d) the titles of enclosed copies of any documents to be used at the meeting.
  - e) names of any witnesses to be called
  - f) his/her right to call witnesses on his/her behalf.
  - g) The name and office of any adviser who will accompany the headteacher/senior manager at the meeting.

An extra copy, together with any enclosures, will be provided for his/her companion.

- 1.3 This meeting is intended to establish the facts. It will be conducted by the head teacher/senior manager (or Senior Manager nominated by DEMAT in the case of a head teacher). The meeting will allow the employee to respond to concerns about his/her performance and to make any relevant representations. This may provide new information or a different context to the information/evidence already collected.
- 1.4 The headteacher/senior manager 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.
- 1.5 The headteacher/senior manager may also adjourn the meeting if it is decided 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.
- 1.6 During the meeting, or any other meeting which could lead to a formal warning being issued, the headteacher/senior manager will:
- In the case of a teacher, identify the poor performance, including which of the standards expected of the teacher is not being met;
  - In the case of any other employee, identify poor performance;
  - Ensure the employee is given an opportunity to ask questions, present evidence, call witnesses, respond to evidence and make representations;
  - Establish the likely causes of poor performance including any reasons why any measures taken so far have not led to the required improvement;

- Give clear guidance on the improved standard of performance needed to ensure that the employee can be removed from formal capability procedures which may include the setting of new objectives focused on the specific area/s of poor performance that need to be addressed. It will include any success criteria that are appropriate and the evidence that will be used to assess whether or not the necessary improvement has been made;
  - Identify whether there are further measures which may improve performance and explain any support that will be considered and planned to help the employee, e.g. in-service training, visits to other schools, discussion with appropriate colleagues or professionals;
  - 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 will be reasonable and proportionate, between four and ten weeks in normal circumstances, and will provide sufficient opportunity for improvement to take place. The length of time required will depend on the concerns raised with the employee, the nature of any support and training required, and sufficient time to establish whether performance has improved; and
  - Warn the employee formally that failure to improve within the set period could lead to a final written warning which could then lead to his/her dismissal.
  - Inform the employee of the right of appeal.
  - Agree with the employee and any companion the date of the formal review meeting.
- 1.7 Notes will be taken of formal meetings and a copy sent to the employee and any companion. Where a first warning is issued, the employee will be informed in writing of the matters discussed in 1.6 above. S/he will also be informed in writing that failure to achieve an acceptable standard of performance (within the set timescale), may result in a final written warning which could then lead to dismissal if wholly satisfactory performance is not achieved, together with the time limit for appealing against the first written warning.
- 1.8 If the concerns relate to a lack of capability that poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children, or is likely to result in serious damage to pupils' education, the shorter timescale may be appropriate. In such cases, the headteacher/senior manager may exceptionally decide to issue a first and final written warning. If to do otherwise would expose students to serious risk in terms of their health, safety, well-being or educational prospects.

## **2. Sickness absence and the use of this procedure**

- 2.1 It is important that sickness absence should not delay or avoid the use of formal capability procedures. It is in the interests of all parties to address concerns about performance without undue delay. Arrangements will normally be made to seek medical advice from an occupational health adviser to assess the employee's health and fitness for continued employment at the school or central team office.
- 2.2 Consideration will be given to whether poor performance may be related to a disability and, if so, whether there are reasonable adjustments that could be made to the employee's working arrangements, including changing the employees' duties or providing additional equipment or training. We may also consider making adjustments to this procedure in appropriate cases e.g. moving from this procedure to procedures used by the school to terminate the employment of the employee on the grounds of ill health.
- 2.3 If an employee's medical condition is not serious enough to warrant a consideration of termination of employment on the grounds of ill health, the occupational health adviser will normally be asked to assess whether an employee absent through sickness is fit enough to attend a meeting under this procedure. In the event that the employee is deemed not fit to attend a formal capability meeting s/he may present a written submission for consideration and/or be represented by a companion in her/his absence.

## **3. Monitoring and review period following a formal capability meeting**

- 3.1 A performance monitoring and review period will follow the formal capability meeting. Formal monitoring, evaluation, guidance and support will continue during this period. Following this monitoring and review period, the employee will be invited to a formal review meeting (see paragraph 4 below), unless s/he had been issued with a final written warning, in which case s/he will be invited to a decision meeting (see paragraph 6 below).

## **4. Formal review meeting**

- 4.1 At least 5 working days before the date for the formal review meeting a written reminder will be given to the employee together with details of the meeting as set out in paragraph 1.2 above.
- 4.2 The formal review meeting will follow a similar procedure to that identified for the formal capability meeting as set out in paragraph 1.6 above.
- 4.3 If the headteacher/senior manager (Senior Manager nominated by DEMAT in the case of the headteacher) is satisfied that the employee has made sufficient improvement, the formal capability procedure will cease, and the appraisal process will re-start where the employee is subject to Part A above.
- 4.4 In cases:
  - where some progress has been made and there is confidence that more is likely, it may be appropriate to extend the monitoring and review period;
  - where no, or insufficient improvement has been made during the monitoring and review period, the employee will receive a final written warning.

- 4.5 Notes will be taken at the formal review meeting and a copy will be sent to the employee and any companion.
- 4.6 Where a final warning is issued, the employee will be informed in writing that failure to achieve an acceptable standard of performance (within the set timescale), may result in dismissal and will be given information about the further monitoring and review period and the procedure and time limits for appealing against the final written warning. The date the decision meeting will be agreed with the employee and any companion.
- 4.7 At this stage, rather than refer the matter to a decision meeting, consideration could be given to the employee being given a different range of duties or an alternative post. By agreement, this may include transfer to a post suited to the employee's capabilities. If this post is at a lower salary level, the substantive lower salary would apply.

**5. Right of Appeal against a formal written warning**

- 5.1 If an employee feels that a decision to issue a first and/or final written warning, is wrong or unjust, s/he may appeal in writing against the decision
- 5.2 Appeals against a written warning shall be restricted to considering the reasonableness of the decision made by the headteacher/senior manager, any relevant new evidence not previously available to the headteacher/senior manager or any procedural irregularities. In a school context a statement giving the reasons for the appeal should be submitted to the Clerk to the local governing body within 5 working days of the formal written warning having been received. In a central team context, a statement giving the reasons for the appeal should be submitted to the DEMAT HR Manager within 5 working days of the formal written warning having been received
- 5.3 All appeal hearings will be held as soon as possible after receipt of the appeal at an agreed time and place.
- 5.4 The appeal will be heard by the Appeals Committee. The number on the Appeals Committee may have one or more advisors. The panel can either confirm the warning, reduce a final warning to a warning, or cancel the warning. The employee will be informed in writing of the results of the appeal hearing as soon as possible.
- 5.5 The same arrangements for notification and the right to be accompanied by a companion will apply for an appeal hearing as for the formal capability and review meetings and, as with those meetings, notes will be taken, and a copy sent to the employee and any companion.
- 5.6 Pending any appeal the employee will be expected to continue to work in accordance with targets set for the next stage of the procedure and his/her progress towards the achievement of these targets may be monitored during this period.

## **6. Decision meeting**

- 6.1 At least 5 working days before the date of the decision meeting a reminder will be given in writing together with details of the meeting as in paragraph 1.2 above. The meeting will be conducted by the Head teacher/Senior Manager.
- 6.2 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 where the employee is subject to Part A above.
- 6.3 If progress has been made and there is confidence that wholly satisfactory performance will be achieved by a short extension, it may be appropriate to extend the monitoring and review period rather than to dismiss. The final written warning will be extended for a short-specified assessment period.
- 6.4 If performance has remained unsatisfactory, a decision will be made that the employee will be dismissed. The employee will be informed in writing 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 whether the notice is to be served or there will be pay in lieu of notice, and the right of appeal.
- 6.5 Any dismissal must be notified to the DEMAT HR Manager in writing, stating whether the dismissal was with, or without notice or with pay in lieu of notice.

## **7. Right of Appeal against a decision to dismiss**

- 7.1 The employee has a right of appeal to the Appeals Committee against a decision to dismiss.
- 7.2 In the context of a school the Appeals Committee shall consist of at least 3 governors or Senior Officers of DEMAT, none of whom will have had any previous involvement in the case. In the context of the central team the Appeals Committee shall consist of at least 3 trustees or senior officers, none of whom have had any previous involvement in the case.
- 7.3 The employee's notice of appeal should be sent to the Chair of Governors (for school) or DEMAT HR Manager (for central team) within 5 working days of receipt of the written decision to dismiss, setting out the grounds of appeal.
- 7.4 Appeal hearings should be held as soon as possible after receipt of the appeal and will be conducted in the same way as appeals referred to in paragraph 5 above.

## **8. Notice of Dismissal**

- 8.1 Following a decision to dismiss, the Appeals Committee will notify DEMAT HR Manager in writing that the employee is to be dismissed, whether with notice or with pay in lieu of notice.
- 8.2 In the event that the Appeal Committee decides not to uphold the decision to dismiss, the employee shall be informed immediately, and the notice of dismissal shall be immediately withdrawn.

**9. Grievances arising during the procedure**

9.1 Where an employee has a grievance against the way any person has conducted the procedure this will normally be dealt with under the appeals process set out above. However, in very exceptional circumstances, where the behaviour of the Senior manager is the cause of the grievance, it may be appropriate to suspend this procedure for a short period until the grievance has been considered.

**10. Trade Union Officials**

10.1 Although normal performance standards must apply to an employee who is a lay trade union official, no disciplinary action, beyond an informal oral warning will be taken until the circumstances of the case have been discussed with the relevant professional trade union officer.

**11. Confidentiality**

11.1 Our aim is to deal with performance matters sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of any individuals involved. All employees must treat as confidential any information communicated to them about a matter which is subject to this capability procedure.

11.2 The employee, and anyone accompanying the employee (including witnesses), must not make electronic recordings of any meetings or hearings conducted under this procedure. Failure to observe confidentiality could be a reason for disciplinary action under the disciplinary procedure applicable to the person concerned.