Avenue
CENTRE FOR EDUCATION

Probationary Procedure for Support Staff in Schools

2026 - 2027

Author:	© Luton HR Traded Services
Review Date:	June 2026
Reviewer:	SLT
Version:	1.0
SLT Review Date:	16th June 2026
Approval Level:	Management Committee
Approval Date:	16th July 2026
Review Cycle:	Annually
Next Review Date:	July 2027

Introduction

This procedure applies to employees who are:

- employed on 'Green Book' terms and conditions of service who are new to a Luton Borough Council community school and do not already have more than **six** months continuous service, or
- new to a Voluntary Aided, Foundation School, Academy or Trust

The procedure is designed to help and encourage support staff to achieve and maintain the required standards expected in their role and within the school.

It is important that the probation process is undertaken for all eligible support staff and is applied in a fair and consistent manner. No employee should be treated less favourably than any other person or group because of a protected characteristic.

Whilst the employee is within their probationary period, they are not subject to the school's disciplinary, capability or sickness absence procedures. Areas of conduct and concern that require addressing during their probationary period will be addressed through this procedure.

Length of probationary period

The duration of the probationary period is **6 months**. However, **a decision on suitability must be made by month five.** During this period the employee's performance and attendance at work will be reviewed periodically and, subject to the provision of suitable warnings of concerns and opportunity for improvement, or as a consequence of a one-off serious incident or concern, their employment may be terminated at any time during the probation period if they are deemed to be unsuitable for employment. **Any issues arising after month five, will need to be dealt with under the appropriate policy (e.g. sickness, capability or disciplinary.)**

Regular meetings will be held to provide feedback. Please refer to the attached probationary form for further details.

Probationary meetings

The probationary form should be completed at every probationary meeting with the employee. It is advised that managers may like to schedule the meetings in advance to ensure they take place in a timely manner. The manager and employee should both sign the form at the end of each probationary meeting. If the employee disagrees with the feedback from the probationary meeting, the employee may submit a written submission which will be held alongside the probationary form.

If the line manager and/or employee identify that further additional support and training is required to assist the employee in reaching the standards, the school have a responsibility to provide reasonable additional support and training to the employee. Training is not required to be an internal or external course and may consist, for example, of shadowing or similar on the job training.

It is essential that the employee is advised in the probationary meetings if there are concerns about their progress or their suitability for the post, that targets are set and a reasonable time allowed to demonstrate improvement prior to a subsequent meeting. The employee must be

clearly advised what improvements are required and within what timeframe and that should the school subsequently deem them not to be suitable/satisfactory their employment with the school will be terminated. This should be recorded on the 'Action Plan' at Appendix 2.

There may be circumstances in which an employee is not afforded the opportunity to demonstrate an improvement in their performance. If the employee commits an act that may constitute gross misconduct, a fact-finding investigation will be undertaken prior to them being invited to a Probationary Review Meeting with the headteacher at which dismissal would be a possible outcome.

If an employee does not meet satisfactory standards of performance, after support and training has been given and following recorded review meetings, a Probationary Review Meeting will be held with the headteacher.

Probationary Review Meeting with the headteacher

The employee will be written to giving 7 calendar days notice of the meeting. A template letter can be found at appendix 3. Any documentation which will be referred to at the meeting by the employee's manager, in addition to the Probationary Report, will be supplied to the employee seven days before the meeting. The employee should provide the headteacher with a copy of any documentation to which they will refer at the meeting at least three days prior to it.

The employee may be accompanied to the meeting by a trade union representative or a workplace colleague. The headteacher may be accompanied by a HR Adviser.

For community schools, where dismissal is a possible sanction, a representative of the Director of Children, Families & Education Services must attend the meeting.

If an employee, or their representative, is unable to attend the meeting for reasons that were unforeseeable at the time the meeting was arranged (e.g. illness) then the school will reschedule once, within a reasonable timeframe. If the employee is unable to attend the re-scheduled meeting, it will convene in the employee's absence. The employee may send a written representation, a trade union representative or work colleague on their behalf.

At the meeting each party will be entitled to present their case, and, in exceptional cases, may call witnesses provided their intention to do so was confirmed within the timescales set out above. The procedure is as follows:

- The manager will confirm the concerns about the employee's performance, attendance and/or behaviour and the support provided.
- The employee or their representative may ask questions of the manager.
- The headteacher may ask questions of the manager.
- The employee or their representative will respond and present the employee's case.
- The manager may ask questions of the employee.
- The headteacher may ask questions of the employee.

- At the end of the meeting each party will have the opportunity to sum up their case. Both parties will then leave the meeting and the headteacher will make a decision.

The decision will be confirmed in writing to the employee within seven days of the meeting. An employee who is dismissed will be given notice in accordance with their contract of employment.

Appeals

An employee who is dismissed will be entitled to appeal against the decision by writing to the Chair of the Governing Body within seven calendar days of receiving the written confirmation of the decision. The letter must clearly state their grounds for appeal.

The appeal will be heard by a panel of not less than two governors. The Chair of the appeal panel will write to the employee giving 7 days notice, in writing, of the date of the appeal meeting. Any documentation that will be relied upon at the appeal meeting will be sent to the employee seven days before the meeting.

The employee must provide the Chair of the appeal meeting with a copy of any documentation that they will refer to at the appeal meeting at least three days prior to the appeal. Only directly relevant evidence will be considered.

The manager that attended the Probationary Review meeting held with the headteacher may be required to attend the appeal meeting. In exceptional circumstances other witnesses may be called.

The procedure to be followed at the appeal meeting is as follows:

- The employee will confirm their grounds of appeal and present their case.
- The headteacher may ask questions of the employee.
- The appeal panel may ask questions of the employee.
- The headteacher will confirm the concerns about the employee's performance, attendance and/or behaviour, the support provided and the reasons for dismissal. (The headteacher may ask the manager to confirm the concerns about the employee's performance attendance and/or behaviour and the support provided). The employee or their representative may ask questions of the headteacher/manager.
- The appeal panel may ask questions of the headteacher/manager.
- At the end of the meeting each party will have the opportunity to sum up their case. Both parties will then leave the meeting and the appeal panel will make a decision.

The employee will be informed of the decision reached by the appeal panel in writing within seven days.

APPENDIX 1 - PROBATIONARY REPORT

For School Support Staff / 'Green Book' employees

Probation applies to those employees who are either new to a Luton Council community school or new to a VA/Foundation school or an academy and do not already have more than **six months** continuous service. Employees are advised that their appointment is subject to a probationary period in their contract of employment.

The employee must be made aware at meetings to discuss progress that they are on probation and the implications of this for continuing employment. Basic induction procedures must have been carried out. Employees during their six month probationary period are not subject to the school's Disciplinary, Capability, Appraisal or Sickness Absence procedures and thus employees failing to reach standards required in any area of work, conduct or attendance can be dismissed with notice without the school having to follow the above stated procedures. Please contact the Luton HR Traded Services team **BEFORE** taking such action. Full notes of any such concerns or action should be made on this form.

The assessment necessary to complete this form should be made during a meeting with the employee who should sign the form at the appropriate place to indicate understanding of the comments and any action plan and targets and the possible consequences of failure to meet these. A copy of the form should be given to the employee after each probationary appraisal meeting.

The form suggests probationary appraisal meetings take place at the 6th, 12th and 18th week of employment. At the final meeting (18th week) it should be confirmed whether or not the employee has passed their probationary period. It is not mandatory that the school adheres to those intervals, nor that the school hold all of the meetings. What is essential is that any concerns about performance or suitability are addressed as early as possible during the probation period. Where concerns are identified, targets must be set, and a reasonable timeframe allowed to demonstrate improvement prior to a subsequent meeting. The employee should also be clearly advised that should the school deem them not to be suitable / satisfactory their employment with the school will be terminated.

Should meetings be held at different intervals to those listed above, the report form should be amended to reflect the intervals at which the meetings are held. The final meeting must take place, in order to confirm whether the employee has passed their probation period. **Should a probation meeting with the headteacher be necessary, this meeting should be held no later than month five of their probation.**

Name of Employee .....

Date Appointed .....

Post Title .....

Date Probation Ends……

Please use the grading scheme below when completing the above report at each meeting. Please ensure you provide an explanation in the manager's comment section to explain the rationale for the score you have given.

GRADE A or 1 = Excellent

GRADE B or 2 = Good

GRADE C or 3 = Satisfactory

GRADE D or 4 = Poor

EMPLOYEE NAME Add in Date for each week	6th Week	12th Week	18th Week
1. Timekeeping			
2. Meeting job requirements			
3. Standard of work			
4. Initiative			
5. Relationship with colleagues			
6. Relationship with superiors			
7. Sickness Record: No. of working days absence during period			
No. of periods absence during period Please add extra information on sickness record if required			

	6th Week	12th Week	18th Week
8. Has it been necessary to discuss with the employee: (a) any recurring deficiency in the performance of their duties? (b) any misconduct?			
9. Has it been necessary to give: (a) any additional training? (b) more than normal supervision?			

Please answer yes or no to the questions above. If the answer to any question is yes, please give appropriate information in the relevant section below:

Employees who are not meeting the required standards of work or conduct at any stage during their probationary period should be set targets for improvement with reasonable timeframes for improvement which will enable them to overcome these difficulties. These must be discussed with the employee to ensure that they understand the targets, the reasons for setting them, as well as the consequences of failing to achieve them. The targets and timescales for improvement should be recorded on Appendix 2 – Probation Report Action Plan.

6th week probation meeting

Manager's Comments:

Employee's Comments

Has it been necessary to implement an Action Plan? If so, please provide details below:

.....Manager's signature Date.....

I understand the above comments, action, plan and targets, which have been discussed with me. I understand that failure to achieve these targets to the agreed standards will jeopardise my continuing employment with the school.

.....Employee's signature Date.....

12th week probation meeting

Manager's Comments:

Employee's Comments

Has it been necessary to implement an Action Plan? If so, please provide details below:

.....Manager's signature Date.....

I understand the above comments, action, plan and targets, which have been discussed with me. I understand that failure to achieve these targets to the agreed standards will jeopardise my continuing employment with the school.

.....Employee's signature Date.....

18th week probation meeting – Final Probation Review Meeting

Manager's Comments:

Employee's Comments

I CONFIRM THAT THE ABOVE-MENTIONED EMPLOYEE IS/IS NOT SUITABLE FOR TRANSFER TO THE PERMANENT ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SCHOOL**

Signed.....Date.....

Headteacher

** Please delete as appropriate

Please attach outcome letter from the meeting with the Headteacher. This document should be kept on the employee's personal file.

APPENDIX 2 – PROBATION REPORT ACTION PLAN

Name _____

Date action agreed	What is required?	Date for completion	How will you know the objective has been achieved?	Outcome	Any further action /support required

APPENDIX 3 – INVITE TO PROBATION MEETING WITH HEADTEACHER

Date

Private & Confidential

Addressee Only

Dear

I am writing to invite you to a probationary review meeting with the headteacher. The meeting will be held on INSERT VENUE, TIME, DATE.

Employees during their probationary period are not subject to the school's Disciplinary, Capability, Appraisal or Sickness Absence procedures and thus employees failing to reach standards required in any area of work or conduct can be dismissed with notice.

Please therefore be aware that a possible outcome of the meeting could be your dismissal from your post.

LINE MANAGER'S NAME will attend to present the information from your probationary report and any additional information they consider relevant. I enclose a copy of that information.

You have the right to be accompanied by a workplace colleague or trade union representative at the meeting.

I will be accompanied by HR REP NAME, HR Advisor, Luton Borough Council.

Please confirm your attendance to NAME by DATE THREE DAYS PRIOR TO MEETING. Please supply me with any documentation that you wish to rely upon by the ADD IN THE DATE THREE DAYS BEFORE THE MEETING.

Should you neither attend, nor contact the school to request a change of date for the meeting, the meeting will be held in your absence.

You may be dismissed in your absence.

Yours sincerely

NAME

Headteacher

APPENDIX 4 – PROBATION MEETING OUTCOME LETTER

Dear ,

I write to confirm the outcome of the meeting held on DATE following your probation period. At the meeting the following issue/s was/were considered:

- Your probationary report which, whilst highlighting many positives about your skills, identified a failure to ……

Your line manager detailed the concerns and the supportive measures taken to enable you to improve your……...

You confirmed…..

After consideration I concluded that this failure to meet a requirement of the job and work to the required standards resulted in your failure to successfully pass your probationary period.

You are therefore dismissed with notice from your post as a POST TITLE. We agreed that you would not work your notice period.

You are required to immediately return any keys or property of the school with immediate effect. Please contact NAME to make arrangements for a convenient time.

I have notified the LA of this decision and, in accordance with the School Staffing (England) Regulations 2003 they will advise you formally of this decision, in their role as employer.

You have the right to appeal against this decision. If you wish to do so you should write to NAME, the Chair of the Governing Body, at NAME OF School within seven calendar days of the date you received this letter. Your letter must clearly state your reasons for the appeal.

Yours sincerely

NAME
Headteacher

APPENDIX 5 - TEMPLATE CONTENTS PAGE

Probationary Meeting with the Headteacher Contents Page

Part One

Job Description

Person Specification

Contract of Employment

Part Two

Probationary Procedure

Part Three

Probationary Report

Part Four – FOR CAPABILITY

Evidence of all support provided by the school e.g copies of training, completed forms other documents

Part Five – FOR SICKNESS ABSENCE

Doctor certificates

Return to work completed forms

Any report from OH (IF APPROPRIATE)