



TEACHERS EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES POLICY AND PROCEDURE

This policy/procedure/guidance is written by Worcestershire County Council HR and has been adopted by DOWMAT Board on 10.10.24 to apply to all schools in the DOWMAT. It is to be read in conjunction with the DOWMAT Scheme of Delegation (HR policies and procedures section and Appendix 1.).

Our Vision

'To Love, To Learn, To Serve' sums up the DoWMAT's vision for those who come together to create the MAT, enabling all to flourish both as individuals and in community with each other; living life in all its fullness (John 10:10).



Our Values

To Love

The New Testament sums up the entire law as a call to “love your neighbour as yourself” (Galatians 5:14). The Bible teaches that we are only able to love because God first loved us (1 John 4:10). This love is expected to characterise the way in which the DoWMAT operates, makes decisions, builds relationships, and carries out its day-to-day business: each person putting the needs of others before their own, with a commitment to the flourishing of all. The exposition of love in 1 Corinthians 13 reminds us that love is patient, kind, forgiving, generous, humble, trusting, respectful, hopeful, resilient and enduring. Those who learn and work in the DoWMAT, and all who come into contact with it, can expect to experience that love in the way that they are treated.



To Learn



The DoWMAT is a Christian learning community that is committed to enabling all to live a life of freedom and transformation as a result of the hope and wisdom that learning brings. Learning is at the heart of the Church of England’s vision for and commitment to education. Growing in wisdom is celebrated in the Bible and all are exhorted to listen, to seek guidance, to acquire knowledge and to learn discretion (Proverbs 1: 1-6), largely through human relationships and interactions. Jesus’ teaching, as summed up in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-10), describes human beings who are learning to live a life that is characterised by humility, compassion, mercy, righteousness and peace. The learning that takes place within the DoWMAT is expected to be recognisably rooted in these godly characteristics and focused upon enabling the holistic development of people who are made in the image of God.

To Serve

Service and servant leadership, was a striking feature of the way in which Jesus lived his life. The example he gave to his disciples in washing their feet (John 13:1-17) provides us with a role model for the way in which we should seek to live in community with others. Putting the needs of others before our own, supporting people in their growth and development as holistic human beings, enabling people’s gifts and talents to come to the fore as a result of our service to them are all defining characteristics of the way in which the DoWMAT operates. In serving others and meeting their needs through generosity of spirit, we manifest God’s grace and love for others (1 Peter 4:8-11).



These core values underpin all aspects of our Trust as we strive to make a positive difference to the lives of all DoWMAT pupils whilst they are at school and in later life. Through these values, we can be sure our community is one of hope; a place of transformation and trust, where all are treated with respect and dignity.

OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONALS | COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS | STRONG SYSTEMS | CONFIDENT LEARNERS

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Teachers Experiencing Difficulties Policy

Please note that this is a new Policy and Procedure (academic year 2024/25) and should be adopted by the Governing Body before use. The Teachers Capability Procedure has also been amended and is focused on the formal capability procedure. The stages of performance management are:

- *Appraisal*
- *Teachers Experiencing Difficulties (informal support)*
- *Teachers Capability Procedure (formal capability)*

Introduction

This policy sets out the steps the school will follow when an employee is failing to perform their duties to a professionally acceptable standard. The primary objective is to ensure maximum support is provided through guidance, counselling, and training to improve the employee's performance, encourage professionalism and autonomy, and resolve any performance-related issues.

This procedure should be followed when concerns have been identified and the teacher's performance is having a significant impact on the school's ability to deliver education to pupils or promote their health and welfare. This procedure is focussed on informal support with the aim of avoiding a formal capability procedure.

Scope

This policy applies to all teaching staff, including the Headteacher, except for Early Career Teachers (ECTs), for whom separate induction procedures should apply. If there are concerns with a Headteacher performance then it would be usual for the Chair of Governors to lead, with support from another Governor with Educational experience if deemed appropriate.

This procedure should not be used in cases of alleged misconduct or long-term sickness absence, which should be dealt with separately through the disciplinary policy or the absence management policy.

Roles and responsibilities

Where concerns about perceived under-performance and professional difficulties arise, the Headteacher or appropriate Senior Leader will ensure they are discussed with the employee and progressed in a structured, supportive, and non-threatening way which takes account of individual circumstances.

All teaching staff are expected to understand the nature of their role, including the professional duties set out in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), the duties set out in their job description and the professional standards set out in the Teachers' Standards (refer to appendix 1).

Headteachers are expected to ensure that all employees have a clearly defined and agreed job description, reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains relevant. Additionally, managers should ensure that employees know what is expected of them, and that relevant school policies and other information are available and drawn to employees' attention.

Whilst this is not a formal meeting giving a right to be accompanied, the school recognises the value of providing support to the employee at such meetings and so will consider requests to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or work colleague, providing this doesn't cause unreasonable delay. Similarly, where this would be a reasonable adjustment for an employee with a disability in accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

Timescales in this procedure may only be shortened or extended with the agreement of both parties.

There may, however, be circumstances in which it is necessary to invoke the capability policy without going through this procedure, for example if a capability issue arises from a disciplinary process.

Teachers Experiencing Difficulties Procedure

Meeting to discuss concerns

As soon as is practicably possible the Headteacher or Senior Leader should meet with the Teacher to discuss their concerns. There is a requirement to give 5 working days notice of this meeting. Whilst there isn't a right to be accompanied, an employee can request to be accompanied by a work colleague or union representative.

The meeting should cover the following:

- give clear feedback to the teacher about the nature and seriousness of the concerns
- give the teacher the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns
- explore any reasons for underperformance i.e. personal difficulties, health issues, specific challenges at school.
- set clear objectives for required improvement
- agree any appropriate support (e.g., coaching, mentoring, in-class support, structured observations, visits to other classes or schools, discussions with advisory teachers) that will be provided to help address those specific concerns (please refer to appendix 2)
- consider any adjustments as necessary such as Occupational Health opinion, amended duties, reduced hours etc.
- make clear how, and by when, the appraiser will review progress
- review objectives and allow sufficient time for improvement (the amount of time is up to the school but should reflect the seriousness of the concerns)
- explain the implications and process if no, or insufficient, improvement is made, e.g., impact on pay progression and potential move to formal capability.
- The appraisal process is paused during this procedure

A letter should be sent to the employee, within five working days of the meeting, confirming the agreed actions from the meeting which will include an Informal Performance Improvement Action Plan (refer to appendix 3).

Review meeting

A meeting should be scheduled within 4-6 weeks of the initial meeting, depending on any support already received, to review progress. In exceptional circumstances, where the interests of pupils are deemed to be seriously at risk, a short procedure of up to 4 weeks in total could apply.

It may be helpful for a mentor (if appointed) to review progress on a weekly/fortnightly basis and offer additional support and guidance. These review meetings should be recorded and made available to the Headteacher/Senior Leader at the final review meeting.

During the final review meeting the Headteacher or Senior Leader should:

- Review progress in accordance with the Informal Improvement Action Plan
- Consider any reports from the employee's mentor
- Consider whether the agreed support/training has taken place during the monitoring period
- Consider any adjustments agreed at the initial meeting and whether these have been put in place
- Consider whether there has been any absence or reasons why the improvement plan was not completed and whether that should be considered as a reason why targets/objectives have not been met
- Consider any other comments, concerns, mitigation presented by the employee
- Adjourn if necessary before an outcome is decided so proper consideration can be given to all the information presented during the meeting
- Agree one of the following outcomes:
 - a) If the Headteacher/Senior Leader is satisfied that the teacher has made, or is making, sufficient improvement, the appraisal process will continue as normal, with any remaining issues continuing to be addressed through that process.
 - b) If the teacher has made some progress towards objectives/targets then an extension to the period of informal support should be agreed. The Headteacher/Senior Leader should be confident that further progress can be achieved. In most cases 2 terms of informal support should be sufficient to allow for improvement. A review meeting date for the extension should be agreed
 - c) If, however, the Headteacher/Senior Leader is not satisfied with the progress, the teacher will be informed that transition to the formal capability procedure is required. The Headteacher or Senior Leader should then prepare a report in preparation for the formal capability meeting.

A letter confirming the outcome of the meeting should be sent to the employee within 5 working days of the final review meeting.

Please note that as this is an informal procedure with the aim of improving performance, and if the teacher's performance improves to the required standard there is no requirement for a school to declare that an employee was subject to this procedure on an employment reference.

Policy History

Version	1.0
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APPENDIX 1 – TEACHER STANDARDS

Preamble

Teachers make the education of their pupils their first concern and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils.

Part One: Teaching

A teacher must:

1. Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils

- establish a safe and stimulating environment for pupils, rooted in mutual respect
- set goals that stretch and challenge pupils of all backgrounds, abilities and dispositions
- demonstrate consistently the positive attitudes, values and behaviour which are expected of pupils.

2. Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils

- be accountable for pupils' attainment, progress and outcomes
- be aware of pupils' capabilities and their prior knowledge, and plan teaching to build on these
- guide pupils to reflect on the progress they have made and their emerging needs
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn and how this impacts on teaching
- encourage pupils to take a responsible and conscientious attitude to their own work and study.

3. Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge

- have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas, foster and maintain pupils' interest in the subject, and address misunderstandings
- demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum areas, and promote the value of scholarship
- demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject
- if teaching early reading, demonstrate a clear understanding of systematic synthetic phonics
- if teaching early mathematics, demonstrate a clear understanding of appropriate teaching strategies.

4. Plan and teach well-structured lessons

- impart knowledge and develop understanding through effective use of lesson time
- promote a love of learning and children's intellectual curiosity
- set homework and plan other out-of-class activities to consolidate and extend the knowledge and understanding pupils have acquired
- reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching
- contribute to the design and provision of an engaging curriculum within the relevant subject area(s).

5. Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils

- know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively
- have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils' ability to learn, and how best to overcome these
- demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of children, and know how to adapt teaching to support pupils' education at different stages of development
- have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.

6. Make accurate and productive use of assessment

- know and understand how to assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas, including statutory assessment requirements
- make use of formative and summative assessment to secure pupils' progress
- use relevant data to monitor progress, set targets, and plan subsequent lessons
- give pupils regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking and encourage pupils to respond to the feedback.

7. Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment

- have clear rules and routines for behaviour in classrooms, and take responsibility for promoting good and courteous behaviour both in classrooms and around the school, in accordance with the school's behaviour policy
- have high expectations of behaviour, and establish a framework for discipline with a range of strategies, using praise, sanctions and rewards consistently and fairly
- manage classes effectively, using approaches which are appropriate to pupils' needs in order to involve and motivate them
- maintain good relationships with pupils, exercise appropriate authority, and act decisively when necessary.

8. Fulfil wider professional responsibilities

- make a positive contribution to the wider life and ethos of the school
- develop effective professional relationships with colleagues, knowing how and when to draw on advice and specialist support
- deploy support staff effectively
- take responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues
- communicate effectively with parents with regard to pupils' achievements and well-being.

APPENDIX 2 - POSSIBLE SUPPORT MEASURES

The Headteacher/line manager and teacher should discuss and, where possible, agree upon a programme of support designed to help the teacher improve his/her performance. This should be flexible to focus on individual needs and take account of the area of concern and outcome required; individual learning style; and time available. The teacher should be encouraged to take personal responsibility for this programme and not feel that it is something which is 'done to him/her'.

The list below offers some ideas – it is not intended to be either exhaustive or exclusive:

Classroom observation with verbal and written feedback

- Headteacher/SLT
- external observer, e.g. School Improvement Adviser; Leading Practitioner from another setting

Observation/discussion of good practice (with clear focus)

- within school
- at another school
- joint observation with mentor/SLT

Mentor within school

- regular meetings
- observing and advising on classroom practice
- feedback on planning/assessment

Self-evaluation

- Recording via an appropriate device to observe own performance

Working within a team

- moderation activities
- shared planning activities
- team teaching or shadowing a colleague

INSET

- attendance at a professional course or conference
- on-line or distance learning, e.g. DVDs or websites
- in-school CPD (twilight or TED days)

Support from a specialist, e.g. Learning and Teaching Adviser

Counselling or other therapies

Name: _____

**Informal Performance Improvement Action Plan - Template
For Schools**

What is the overall outcome you wish to achieve? What specific objective needs to be achieved? (task or behaviour)	How will it be measured ? - Observed - Recorded - Evaluated By whom?	How can this be broken down into achievable steps ?	What resources are required? - People/support - Time - Financial	What is the overall time frame ? What are the time deadlines for the achievable steps ? What are the review dates ?