Support Staff Appraisal Policy

Prepared by: Head of Brownmead Academy in consultation with Director of HR, Heads of Academy, whole school staff and trade unions

Applies to: Support Staff in all WHMAT Academies

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1. **Introduction & Purpose**

1.1 Washwood Heath Multi Academy Trust ("WHMAT") is committed to providing the very best education to pupils, through high quality teaching and learning and support services. It recognises the immense value that support staff provide across WHMAT to all aspects of academy life.

1.2 WHMAT attaches great importance to performance management as it can provide:

1.2.1 An opportunity for staff and managers to identify, evaluate and develop work performance and training, so that goals and objectives are more effectively achieved.

1.2.2 A chance for recognition and feedback on job performance, together with career guidance and development.

1.2.3 Dedicated time for managers and employees to discuss/review individual job descriptions and to ensure that they reflect individual roles and the business needs of individual academies.

1.3 The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that:

1.3.1 Support staff appraisal is carried out fairly, consistently and effectively through ongoing professional dialogue between managers and their staff.

1.3.2 All staff are given a full opportunity to contribute to the achievement of WHMAT and individual academy goals/objectives.

1.3.3 All staff have an opportunity to develop their careers and training within their base academies or across WHMAT, so that they are motivated and happy at work.

1.4 This Policy does not form part of an employee’s contract of employment and may be amended subject to consultation. However, all employees are expected to participate in the appraisal process and to comply with this Policy.

2. **Scope**

2.1 This Policy applies to all support staff across WHMAT academies.

2.2 It does not apply to:

2.2.1 Those who are on contracts lasting less than one term;

2.2.2 Those subject to WHMAT’s Capability Procedure;

2.2.3 Agency workers

2.3 In this Policy, ‘Appraiser’ is the member of staff carrying out the appraisal and ‘Appraisee’ is the member of staff who is being appraised under this Policy.

3. **Appraisal Period**

3.1 The appraisal period will run for twelve months (from 1st September to 31st August).
3.2 Support Staff who are employed on a fixed term contract of less than one year but more than one term will have their performance managed in accordance with the principles of this policy. However, the length of the appraisal period and the number/type of objectives will be determined by and proportionate to the duration of their contract.

3.3 Support staff who leave WHMAT employment before the end of the appraisal period may request a meeting with their appraiser prior to their departure. The purpose of the meeting will be to review their performance on the basis of available evidence prior to their departure. If, following moderation in November, a decision to award incremental pay progression is taken, a pro-rata amount of back pay will be given to the departing employee. If a departing member of staff does not request a review meeting prior to their departure, incremental pay progression will not be considered.

4. **Appointing Appraisers**

4.1 The CEO will be responsible for appraising WHMAT Head Office support staff.

4.2 The Heads of Academy will decide who will appraise support staff in their academies. However, this will normally be a member of staff who has clear line management responsibility for the appraiser, understands the requirements of their role and is appropriately trained on the requirements of this Policy.

4.3 Support staff who are unhappy with their choice of appraiser should explain their concerns to the relevant Head of Academy, who may then appoint an alternative appraiser if this is reasonable and/or justified in the circumstances.

5. **The Appraisal Cycle**

5.1 The Appraisal Cycle consists of 4 stages 1) Appraisal Information Briefing; 2) First Appraisal Meeting; 3) Mid-Year Review Meeting; and 4) Final Year Review meeting (see diagram at appendices 1 & 2).

6.0 **Appraisal Information Briefing**

6.1 In September of each year, the Head of Academy will hold an informal group meeting with all support staff to discuss the appraisal cycle, including process, benefits and aims. This will provide an opportunity for clarification, questions and reassurance to appraisers and appraisees alike. During this meeting, copies of the Frequently Asked Questions, Appraisal Profile Booklet (including self-reflection tool) and guidance on applying for accelerated pay progression will be distributed and discussed with all support staff (see toolkit).

6.2 Staff will be given a reasonable opportunity to prepare for appraisal meetings during working hours.

7.0 **First Appraisal Meeting (Individual)**

7.1 Shortly after the start of the appraisal period (and by no later than the end of October), the designated appraiser will hold a First Appraisal Meeting with the appraisee to:
7.1.1 review and discuss the appraisee’s self-reflection tool;
7.1.2 agree 3 performance objectives, including how they will be achieved and assessed (see further at 8 below);
7.1.3 review the current job description to ensure that it reflects individual roles and academy business needs;
7.1.4 identify and agree the member of staff’s professional development needs (strengths and areas for improvement) and Continued Professional Development (“CPD”) for the forthcoming year (e.g. training needs).

First Appraisal Meeting (Team)

7.2 Where appropriate, the appraiser may hold a “team appraisal meeting” instead of an individual appraisal meeting. This will usually be where a group of support staff will be set the same appraisal objectives and have similar CPD needs. The appraiser will agree this with affected staff in advance and will still give opportunities for individual discussions if a member of staff requests this. Mid-year review meetings and final-year-review meetings will be held as individual meetings between appraiser and appraisee even if team objectives have been set.

8.0 Setting Objectives

8.1 The objectives set by each appraiser during an individual or team appraisal meeting shall be appropriate to individual roles and enable the appraisee to work at or above their expected level of performance by the end of the appraisal cycle. Job descriptions can be a useful way of identifying relevant objectives. Other useful documents may include school improvement plans, business plans, Ofsted reports etc.

8.2 Three objectives shall be set for each member of staff. They should be SMART:

S = Specific (what exactly does the appraisee need to do and what steps should they take to achieve it?)

M = Measurable (how will appraiser/appraisee know that the objective has been met e.g. what are the success criteria?)

A = Achievable (is it a reasonable expectation for the appraisee to achieve the objective? Also, what development/training is needed to support the employee to meet the objective?)

R = Relevant (is the objective relevant to the appraisee’s role/responsibility/level of experience/spot on pay scale?)

T = Timed (when does the appraisee need to meet the objective by?)

8.3 Objectives should be fair and reasonable when judged across employees with similar roles, responsibilities and levels of experience. However, they will normally become more challenging as a member of support staff progresses up the pay scale. The CEO and Heads
of Academy will moderate objectives across WHMAT by approximately mid-November in each year by collecting and reviewing a sample from across WHMAT.

8.4 Objectives may be revised if roles/responsibilities/personal circumstances of the appraisee change during the appraisal period. In addition, if a member of staff is absent for a significant period during the appraisal cycle due to maternity, long-term sickness, or a disability, WHMAT will ensure that they do not suffer a detriment as a result. In these circumstances, the appraisal outcome may be based on the performance outcome from the previous 12 months.

8.5 The appraiser and the appraisee should aim to agree objectives but, if that is not possible, the appraiser will determine the objectives. The appraiser will record them in the support staff appraisal booklet (see toolkit) and provide a copy to the appraisee.

9.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

9.1 During the appraisal period, the appraiser shall monitor the appraisee’s performance using appropriate work-related evidence e.g. observations may be appropriate for teaching assistants, or reviewing policies or documents may be relevant for other non-class-based staff. A suggested lesson observation form for Teaching Assistants appears in the toolkit.

9.2 In addition, each member of staff should gather relevant evidence in support of their progress, and in line with their objectives. To avoid any surprises and manage the expectations of appraisees, the types of evidence that will be used to assess performance against targets and success criteria will be clarified at the first appraisal meeting and recorded in the appraisal booklet.

9.3 Ongoing professional dialogue between appraisers and appraisees is encouraged during the appraisal cycle as appropriate. Appraisers should do all they reasonably can to provide feedback on performance promptly, whether it is good or bad, so that there are no surprises and improvements in performance can be encouraged. This is in addition to the First Appraisal Meeting, Mid-Year Review and Final Year Review meetings (see further below).

9.4 The CEO and Heads of Academy are responsible for ensuring that the Appraisal process operates fairly and consistently within each academy and that objectives are set in line with the principles at 8.2 above. If the CEO has concerns about the relevance/nature of the objectives set, these concerns will be discussed with the Heads of Academy, who will ensure that the appraiser promptly discusses these concerns with the member of staff and that the objectives are amended accordingly.

10.0 Mid-year review meeting

10.1 The appraiser and appraisee shall meet between February and March each year for a mid-year review meeting, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

10.2 The purpose of the mid-year review meeting is to:

10.2.1 review progress against agreed objectives in line with the appraisal booklet;

10.2.2 give the appraisee an opportunity to reflect and discuss performance and to request support, amendments to objectives as appropriate;
10.2.3 identify new CPD and/or professional development requirements;

10.2.4 discuss and agree informal support, if it is apparent from the evidence, that the appraisee is struggling with some or all of the aspects of their role (see further at 15 below)

11.0 Final-year-review meeting

11.1 The appraiser and appraisee shall meet by the end of October each year for a final-year review meeting, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Often, this meeting will be combined with the First Appraisal meeting for the new cycle.

11.2 The purpose of the meeting is to:

11.2.1 review whether objectives have been met in line with the appraisal booklet, by reviewing evidence collected by appraiser and appraisee;

11.2.2 to celebrate successes/achievements;

11.2.3 to set objectives and CPD for the new appraisal cycle; and

11.2.4 to discuss and agree informal support, if it is apparent from the evidence, that the appraisee has struggled with some or all of their agreed objectives and has therefore not met, or has only partially met those objectives (see further at 15 below).

11.2.5 review/finalise the appraisal booklet

11.3 The Appraiser will forward a final signed copy of the appraisal booklet to appraisees within 5 working days of the final-year review meeting, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

12.0 Moderation

12.1 Once final year reviews have taken place and appraisal booklets have been completed, a sample from across WHMAT will be moderated by Heads of Academy and the CEO.

12.2 The Heads of Academy (or CEO in case of head office staff) will prepare a summary appraisal report setting out outcomes and any recommendations on pay progression, accelerated pay progression and/or those staff requiring additional support (see toolkit).

12.3 Once moderation has been completed, Heads of Academy will write to all staff confirming the final outcome of the appraisal cycle, which depending on the evidence, could be one of the following:

12.3.1 incremental rise of 1 spinal column point as all objectives met or partially met (but with justification of why this is the case);

12.3.2 no incremental rise as some or all of objectives have not been met;

12.3.3 some or all of objectives met but no incremental pay rise as member of staff at top of their existing pay scale;
12.3.4 incremental rise of 2 spinal column points as all objectives met and/or exceeded and business case for accelerated pay progression approved (see further at 13.0 below).

13.0 Working above expected performance/accelerated pay progression (APP)

13.1 A member of support staff may submit a business case (with supporting evidence) by email to their Head of Academy before the start of October half term each year requesting to be considered for accelerated pay progression within their pay band e.g. an incremental pay rise of a maximum of 2 spinal column points at the end of the appraisal cycle. This means demonstrating through the business case and supporting documents that they have:

13.1.1 worked in excess of the requirements required for their role/grade/job description e.g. taken on additional responsibilities; and

13.1.2 exceeded the objectives that were set for them during the appraisal cycle.

13.2 Accelerated pay progression, if approved, could mean 1) jumping a maximum of 2 points up their existing pay band at the end of the appraisal cycle, or 2) receiving a temporary honorarium/compensatory payment commensurate to their grade to recognise the additional responsibilities that they have taken on and/or the fact that they have worked in excess of the requirements of their role.

13.3 Members of staff wishing to request accelerated pay progression will need to complete a business case (see template in toolkit) and email this to the Head of Academy (CEO in case of head office staff) before the start of the October half term. Where possible, these should be submitted earlier. Business cases will be reviewed by the Head of Academy and the CEO, who may seek advice from the Director of HR and/or board of directors as appropriate.

13.4 The outcome of any application will be confirmed in writing to the member of staff by the CEO or Head of Academy as appropriate, by the end of November each year, unless there are exceptional circumstances (see template in toolkit).

14.0 Head/CEO’s Report to Governing Body & Staffing & Pay Group

14.1 Once the moderation process has taken place, the Heads of Academy (or CEO in case of head office staff) will summarise the outcome of the appraisal process for their local governing bodies. The report will also be shared with the CEO and WHMAT’s Staffing & Pay Group.

14.2 A template report appears in the toolkit and should, if available, include:

- confirmation of how many staff have been awarded incremental pay progression during this appraisal cycle; and
- a breakdown of how many staff applied for and were awarded accelerated pay progression; and
- confirmation of how many staff appealed against the outcome of their applications for accelerated pay progression, and the outcome of those appeals (if known at the time of writing the report)
• a breakdown of results based on the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. The purpose of this breakdown is to identify trends and/or potential discrimination in the workplace and to look at whether any positive action can be taken by WHMAT to minimise such discrimination.

15.0 Working below acceptable standards

15.1 Where, during the appraisal cycle, the evidence shows that there are concerns about any aspects of the staff member’s performance (based on objectives set, job description and/or expectations of their pay grade), the appraiser, or another appropriate manager, will meet with the member of staff to discuss the nature and the level of concerns.

15.2 This will be a supportive meeting to address issues early on, to give the employee an opportunity to improve and to avoid the matter escalating to capability. During this meeting, the appraiser will:

• Give clear feedback to the member of staff about the nature and seriousness of these concerns with specific reference to objectives set/job description and/or expectations for their grade;
• Give the member of staff the opportunity to comment on and discuss these concerns;
• Find out if there are any issues (both inside and outside of work) that are affecting their performance, so that the appraiser can provide support/assist;
• Offer informal support for up to 6 working weeks, including agreeing what increased support will be provided (e.g. mentoring, structured observations for teaching assistants, or additional training);
• Clarify expected performance within the informal support period including revising objectives if required;
• Explain the implications and process if little or insufficient improvement is made by the end of the informal support period i.e. potential transition to a period of informal support under WHMAT’s capability procedure. This is essential to avoid any surprises.

15.3 Following the meeting at 15.2, the appraiser shall confirm in writing within a reasonable period, the content of the discussion, including a summary of the concerns discussed, a summary of the agreed informal support plan (including objectives set, additional support agreed, start and end date of informal monitoring period and date scheduled to review progress made during informal monitoring period).

15.4 At the end of the 6-week informal support period under appraisal, the appraiser will meet with the appraisee to review progress. The appraiser may:

a) be satisfied that the member of staff has made, or is making sufficient improvements in line with the agreed support plan. If this is the case, the appraisal process will continue as normal with any remaining issues continuing to be addressed through that process; or

b) believe that whilst performance has improved, further time is required to monitor the employee’s performance under appraisal, in which case a further final period of informal support under appraisal will be agreed. This should not be more than a further 6 weeks and regular reviews should take place to ensure progress is being made; or

c) be satisfied that the member of staff has not made, or is not making sufficient improvements in performance despite the agreed support plan. In this situation, the
matter will be referred to the Head of Academy, who, in consultation with the CEO and/or Director of HR, may start a 6-week period of informal support under the Capability Procedure. If so, the member of staff will be notified in writing that the appraisal process will be suspended so that the informal monitoring under capability can take place.

15.5 A brief note of areas raised and support and/or action points agreed, should be provided by the appraiser to the member of staff within a reasonable period of the meeting to ensure clarity of expectation and understanding of the support to be implemented during the informal capability period.

15.6 If a member of staff chooses not to engage with the informal support being offered to them in good faith under appraisal, this will be less beneficial for them. The appraisee will make a note in their appraisal paperwork and the Head of Academy will be informed. Depending on the circumstances of the case, this may be treated as a potential disciplinary matter “failure to follow a reasonable management instruction” and/or the appraisal process may need to be suspended at the end of any agreed period of informal support, to allow for the capability process to start.

16.0 Appeals

16.1 Employees who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their appraisal (see 12.3) may appeal in writing to their Head of Academy (CEO in case of head office staff) within 4 weeks of receiving formal confirmation of their appraisal outcome. Head Office staff will need to appeal to the Chair of WHMAT’s Staffing & Pay Group. The letter should clarify the specific grounds of appeal and any relevant supporting evidence should be attached.

16.2 The Head of Academy (or Chair of Staffing & Pay Group as appropriate) will meet with the employee within a reasonable period of receiving their complaint and may call appropriate witnesses. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a workplace colleague or trade union representative, although this is not obligatory. They may also call relevant witnesses where appropriate.

16.3 The outcome of the appeal will either be a) that the employee’s appeal has been upheld; or b) that the employee’s appeal has not been upheld. The Head of Academy (or Chair of Staffing & Pay Group) will confirm the outcome in writing to the employee within a reasonable period after the appeal meeting has taken place.

16.4 The outcome of this appeal will be final and the employee does not then have a further right to raise the same concern under any other WHMAT policies.

17.0 Storage of appraisal paperwork

17.1 Once appropriate steps have been taken by WHMAT in relation to appraisal paper-work, the Head of Academy will arrange for confidential storage of the appraisal report for up to 6 years in each member of staff’s HR file.

18.0 Review of Policy

18.1 This Policy will be reviewed annually in consultation with affected staff. WHMAT will monitor the application and outcomes of this Policy to ensure that it is working effectively.
Appendix 1  Appraisal Cycle – Individual Performance Management

1. Informal discussion about the process and its aims and benefits for support staff (offers explanation and reassurance.)

2. Flyer about Performance Management and a copy of the Self-Reflection tool are given to the member of support staff

3. First Performance Management meeting takes place to:
   - Discuss the job description, strengths and areas for development/weaknesses, career hopes and particular areas of work related interest
   - Identify 3 objectives
   - Set dates for observations and further meetings
   - Record main points of discussion.
   - Give copy of the objectives to the Headteacher

4. Monitoring and Observation:
   Ensure the Actions identified originally are taking place—including any Continuing Professional Development. Where Observations have taken place provide feedback within a previously agreed framework.
   Consider providing a halfway monitoring process that results in a summary of progress countersigned by the member of staff.

5. Final PM Meeting takes place to:
   Review outcomes and celebrate successes
   Complete a joint write up of the summary statement—countersigned by, and distributed to, both parties.
1. Support Staff Teams build team purpose and direction by:
   - Relating their work to the School vision
   - Developing clear and unifying targets that contribute to school goals
   - Identifying objectives for individuals in areas that are challenging for them.

2. Support staff Teams clarify standards for their work by:
   - Agreeing success criteria
   - Setting agreed standards for consistent ways of working
   - Developing job descriptions that clarify their role
   - Identifying team development needs in the context of school priorities
   - Agreeing individual development objectives that link to team targets and professional aspirations

3. Support Staff Teams plan for team & individual development by:
   - Discussing improvement and staff development needs as a team
   - Identifying local and national sources of advice and training
   - Developing individual plans to assure progress towards objectives

4. Support Staff teams learn and develop by:
   - Reflecting together and individually in their performances
   - Generating their own solutions to problems
   - Helping each other to learn through coaching

5. Support Staff Teams keep track of individual and team progress by:
   - Accepting joint responsibility for the work of the team
   - Developing self-monitoring methods
   - Meeting regularly to review progress

6. Support Staff Teams celebrate their contribution to school success by:
   - Collecting data & evidence to demonstrate achievement
   - Engaging in open and frank reviews of their performance as a team
   - Ensuring that individual review meetings are concerned with overall and current and future success