



Capability Procedure for Non-Teaching Staff

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1. **CAPABILITY PROCEDURE FOR NON-TEACHING STAFF**

- 1.1 This procedure **should only be used** when the non-teaching staff experiencing difficulty process within the appraisal policy for non-teaching staff has been applied and the individual has failed to achieve the required levels of improvement. **The issuing of a written warning or final written warning at the adjournment of the non-teaching staff experiencing difficulty review meeting will invoke the capability procedure.**
- 1.2 This procedure has been subject to consultation with recognised schools trade unions and was formally agreed with a recommendation that the Procedure be adopted by Somerset schools.

2. **INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The principal aim of this Capability Procedure is for an individual to achieve the required improvement in performance by the formalised provision of clear targets for improvement, structured support, monitoring and review where attempts to achieve and maintain the required standards of performance have failed during the non-teaching staff experiencing difficulties stage of the appraisal policy for non-teaching staff.
- 2.2 Once adopted, the procedure will apply to all non-teaching staff employed in the Trust.
- 2.3 It is important that the capability procedure is seen as distinct from the appraisal process, which will be suspended at the point when it is decided to invoke the capability procedure. This should not occur until the non-teaching staff experiencing difficulties provisions of the appraisal policy for non-teaching staff have been applied.
- 2.4 Where an individual fails consistently to perform their duties to an acceptable standard, despite being supported through normal management processes and the non-teaching staff experiencing difficulties provisions within the appraisal policy for non-teaching staff, this capability procedure should be applied. The procedure comprises formal support, including a structured support programme with targets and/or performance standards, a defined timescale in order to try to bring an employee's performance up to an acceptable level within a reasonable period of time, monitoring and review of progress backed up with formal sanctions, where justified, by inadequate progress in improving performance.
- 2.5 The procedure includes provision for dismissal if an acceptable standard of performance cannot be achieved and sustained after written warnings have been issued. An employee may appeal against a warning or decision to dismiss to the Local Governing Body's or Board of Director's Appeal

Committee, as appropriate to their place of employment. The conduct of an appeal against a warning or dismissal will be in accordance with Somerset Council school's appeals procedure.

- 2.6 The overall timescale adopted for achieving satisfactory improvement under the procedure will be in accordance with the seriousness of the employee's shortcomings in performance but will not usually be shorter than 10 school weeks and no longer than 24 school weeks. However, the timescale may be shortened if justified, for example where it becomes clear that an acceptable level of improvement is beyond the ability of the person assessed, or where there is a lack of co-operation with reasonable measures to achieve improvement, or where the progress of many pupils is impaired, or their safety is significantly compromised by the individual's poor performance. The minimum timescale for application of this procedure in such circumstances will be 4 school weeks.

The CEO of the Trust must be informed in **ALL** cases.

3. **PROCEDURE**

- 3.1 Where a **written or final** warning is issued following the adjournment of the non-teaching staff experiencing difficulties review meeting, the Headteacher or the line manager of a central team member should use the remainder of the meeting to:
- confirm the professional shortcomings;
 - give clear guidance on the improved standard of performance needed to end the capability procedure;
 - explain the support that will be available and how performance will be monitored over the following 4 to (10) weeks;
 - depending on the level of warning issued, identify the timetable for improvement and agree a date for the next/final evaluation meeting;
 - make it clear that failure to improve may lead ultimately to dismissal; and
 - provide a copy of the capability procedure to the individual.

The nature and extent of support provided should take into account the amount of support already given and the timescale within which the individual needs to demonstrate that he/she can achieve and maintain the required performance standards independent of more than usual levels of support.

A letter should be sent to the employee as quickly as possible after the non-teaching staff experiencing difficulties review meeting, recording the result of the review, the main points discussed at the meeting, the decision and, where a warning is issued, giving information about the handling of the capability procedure and the right of appeal (for model letter see [Appendix A](#)).

An appeal against the warning must not interrupt the progress of the capability procedure.

3.2 **First Assessment stage**

Weeks 1 to 4 – Support to the employee, monitoring and evaluation of performance, with guidance and training if necessary.

Week 5 - 11 – First formal meeting to review and assess performance over the previous 4 school weeks (for model invitation letter see [Appendix B](#)).

If all the identified required standards of performance have been achieved and there is confidence that they will be maintained, the procedure can end here with a letter from the Headteacher and the normal appraisal process resumed.

If some or all the required standards of performance have not been achieved, a final written warning should be issued. Formal monitoring, evaluation, guidance and support should continue for a further period. Arrangements for this should be explained at the meeting. The employee must be told clearly that failure to achieve and maintain the required standards may result in dismissal. The decision and main points of the meeting should be confirmed in writing (for model outcome letter see [Appendix C](#)). Any appeal must not interrupt the progress of the procedure.

3.3 **Second Assessment stage (if required)**

Weeks 1 to 4 - 10– Regular monitoring and evaluation of performance, with guidance, training if necessary, and where appropriate further support to the employee.

Week 5 - 11 – Second formal meeting to review and assess performance over the previous 4-10 school weeks (for model invitation letter see [Appendix D](#)).

If all the identified required standards of performance have been achieved, and there is confidence that they will be maintained, the procedure can end here, and the normal appraisal process resumed.

Prior to deciding to dismiss *or* making a recommendation to dismiss, the Headteacher may consider whether or not alternative employment is available within the establishment; the Line Manager may consider whether or not alternative employment is available within the Trust. If alternative employment is identified, this needs to be discussed with the individual. The

reasons for the offer of alternative employment and the implications of refusing it, i.e. termination of employment, should be given to the employee in writing.

All dismissals under this procedure will be subject to the appropriate period of notice being given in accordance with the employee's statutory or contractual rights. During the notice period the school could look at further options to redeploy the staff member, if appropriate roles arise.

If performance is unsatisfactory, either:

- (a) decide to dismiss (where the Headteacher/ Line Manager has been delegated the power to dismiss by the Board of Directors); or
- (b) recommend dismissal to the Local Governors' Staff Dismissal Committee or Directors' Staff Dismissal Committee as appropriate.

(For model outcome letter see [Appendix E](#)).

3.4 **Dismissal**

Where the Headteacher or Line Manager has previously been involved in issuing formal sanctions as part of the process, consideration should be given to whether any decision to dismiss should be referred to a Local Governing Body Staff Dismissal Committee or Director's Staff Dismissal Committee as appropriate.

Where the School Staff Dismissal Committee is convened, 3 Local Governors, (or 2 if there are not enough Governors who have not been involved in any action or decision connected with the dismissal), must hear the representations and recommendations brought by the Headteacher, and any representations that the employee may wish to make. In the case of a central team staff member, the committee will consist of 3 Directors, (or 2 if there are not enough Directors who have not been involved in any action or decision connected with the dismissal).

The Local Governing Body/Board of Directors should also set up an Appeal Committee to hear any appeal against a dismissal decision. No Governor/Director who served on a Staff Dismissal Committee should be on the Appeal Committee. There should always be at least the same number of Governors on the appeal committee as made the original decision to dismiss.

An HR Adviser should attend to advise the Headteacher/Governor Staff Dismissal Committee.

3.5 **Staff who are absent through illness during the Capability Process**

Absence which is considered by a Headteacher/Line Manager to have been primarily caused by the application of the capability procedure, and which management believe is likely to be indeterminate or long term, should be referred immediately to the occupational health provider to assess whether the individual is fit for work/able to attend a formal meeting and when a return to work is likely.

Reasonable steps should be made to enable the individual to attend evaluation meetings, but where they are unable to attend, these may proceed in the absence of the individual if delay would otherwise compromise the time set aside for the procedure. The employee may wish to consider having their Trade Union/Professional Association Representative attend evaluation meetings on their behalf. In such circumstances a full account of the evaluation should be provided in the letter confirming the decision taken. It would only be appropriate to continue the capability procedure where the individual is absent due to illness, if the monitoring and assessment of performance has reached a stage when the absence of the individual would not significantly affect the outcome.

If this is not the case the absence should be dealt with in accordance with the sickness absence management procedure, with the individual being made aware any return to work arrangements will include the on-going need to address performance concerns.

**STANDARD LETTER: CONFIRMING THE OUTCOME OF THE NON-TEACHING
STAFF EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTY REVIEW MEETING**

I am writing to confirm the outcome of the review meeting held on (date of meeting) which was attended by the following (names and positions of all attendees).

(Explain the process of the hearing i.e. who presented the management case and briefly what the employee replied).

After full consideration of all of the written evidence and the discussion, I informed you that as you had not made satisfactory progress towards the achievement of the identified standards of performance, I had no alternative but to issue you with a written/final written warning and invoke the formal capability procedure.

(State the areas of continuing concern about the standard of performance, detailing the structured support programme and the targets. Copies of which should be enclosed with this letter).

During the next 4-10 weeks, your performance will continue to be monitored. A formal meeting has been arranged for (specify date).

You have the right to appeal against this warning by writing to the Clerk to the Local Governors/Lead Governance Professional stating the reasons for your appeal within 10 school days of receiving this warning.

Please sign the enclosed copy of this letter to confirm its receipt and your understanding of its contents and return it to me.

May I reaffirm my commitment to helping you to achieve the standards of performance necessary in your work.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher/Line Manager

* Amend to reflect duration of improvement period.

STANDARD LETTER: INVITATION TO FIRST FORMAL CAPABILITY REVIEW MEETING

With reference to the formal meeting held on (date), as arranged, would you please attend a further formal meeting on (date) at (time) in (location), in accordance with the school's capability procedure for non-teaching staff.

The purpose of this meeting is to review and assess your progress towards the targets set and to decide, as a result of this review, the appropriate course of action. The options are:

- to drop the matter, ie all identified satisfactory standards of performance achieved;
- a final written warning, ie where a first written warning was given at the first formal meeting and none or only some of the identified standards of performance have been achieved.
- *a decision to dismiss/recommendation for dismissal to the Local Governors' Staff Dismissal Committee/Directors' Staff Dismissal Committee*, i.e. where a final warning was given at the first formal meeting and none or only some of the identified standards of performance have been achieved.

Enclosed with this letter are the following relevant reports and other documents, including those produced through the implementation of the structured support and monitoring/assessment programmes (describe the documentation below) which will be referred to at the meeting.

As this meeting may result in a *final written warning/dismissal/recommendation for your dismissal**, you are entitled to be accompanied by either your trade union/professional association representative or a work colleague. Also present at the meeting will be myself, (Insert Name) and an HR advisor

Please would you confirm with me that you are able to attend by contacting (insert name)

Yours sincerely

Headteacher/Line Manager

* delete/ amend as appropriate

STANDARD LETTER CONFIRMING THE OUTCOME OF FIRST FORMAL MEETING

I am writing to confirm the outcome of the formal meeting held on (date of meeting) which was attended by the following (names and positions of all attendees).

(Explain the process of the hearing, i.e. who presented the management case and briefly what the employee replied).

Alternative 1

After full consideration of all of the written evidence and the discussion, I am pleased to confirm that you have achieved the identified standards of performance. Consequently, you are no longer subject to the capability procedure for non-teaching staff and the normal appraisal process will resume. As I stressed to you, it is essential that you maintain these standards throughout the next appraisal cycle. Failure to do so may result in invoking the formal capability procedure without further recourse to the non-teaching staff experiencing difficulties process should similar concerns regarding performance arise during this period.

Alternative 2

After full consideration of all of the written evidence and the discussion, I informed you that as you had achieved none or only some the identified standards of performance, I had no alternative but to issue you with a final written warning. I need to emphasise that unless you achieve the standards of performance within XX school weeks, I will have no alternative other than to recommend to the Governors'/Directors' Staff Dismissal Committee that you are dismissed for reason of a lack of capability.

(State the areas of continuing concern about the standards of performance referring to the structured support programme and the target documents, copies of which should be enclosed with this letter).

The improvement period will be for XXX weeks and progress towards the identified standards of performance will be reviewed at the next formal meeting which has been arranged on (date) at (time) in (location). During this period, consideration will also be given to alternative employment opportunities within the establishment. In the event you are redeployed into a suitable alternative role, your final written warning will remain "live" throughout the next appraisal cycle.

You have the right to appeal against this final warning by writing to the Clerk to the Local Governors/Lead Governance Professional stating the reasons for your appeal within 10 school days of receiving this warning.

Please sign the enclosed copy of this letter to confirm its receipt and your understanding of its contents and return it to me.

Alternative 3

Where a final warning was issued at the non-teaching staff experiencing difficulties review meeting and a decision to dismiss/make a recommendation for dismissal is the outcome of the formal meeting, use Appendix E, Alternative 2.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher/Line Manager

STANDARD LETTER: INVITATION TO SECOND FORMAL CAPABILITY REVIEW MEETING

With reference to the previous formal meeting held on (date), as arranged, would you please attend a further formal meeting on (date) at (time) in (location), in accordance with the school's capability procedure for non-teaching staff.

The purpose of this meeting is to review and assess your progress towards the targets set and to decide the appropriate course of action. The options are:

- to drop the matter, i.e. all identified satisfactory standards of performance achieved;
- *a decision to dismiss/recommendation of dismissal to the Governors/Directors Staff Dismissal Committee* for reason of a lack of capability, i.e. none or only some the identified standards of performance have been achieved.

Enclosed with this letter are the following relevant reports and other documents, including those produced through the implementation of the structured support and monitoring/assessment programme (describe the documentation below), that will be referred to at the meeting.

As this meeting may result in a dismissal/recommendation for dismissal, you are entitled to be accompanied by either your trade union/professional association or a work colleague. Also present will be myself, (name of member of school's staff), and an HR Adviser

Please would you confirm with me that you are able to attend by contacting XXX.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher/Line Manager

* delete/amend as appropriate

STANDARD LETTER CONFIRMING OUTCOME OF SECOND FORMAL MEETING

I am writing to confirm the outcome of the second formal meeting held on (date of meeting) and attended by (names and positions of all attendees).

(Explain the process of the hearing, ie who presented the management case and briefly what the employee replied).

Alternative 1

After full consideration of all of the written evidence and the discussion, I am pleased to confirm that you have achieved all the identified standards of performance. Consequently, you are no longer subject to the capability procedure and the normal appraisal policy will resume. As I stressed to you, it is essential that you maintain these standards throughout the next appraisal cycle. Failure to do so may result in invoking the formal capability procedure without further recourse to the non-teaching staff experiencing difficulties process should similar concerns regarding performance arise during this period.

Alternative 2

After full consideration of all of the written evidence and the discussion, I informed you that as you had achieved none or only some the identified standards of performance, I had no alternative but to dismiss/*recommend to the Governors that you should be dismissed* from your post for reason of a lack of capability. *A meeting of the Governors' Staff Dismissal Committee is being arranged to consider my recommendation.* I will write to you with full details of the time, date, place and procedure for the hearing together with the documents I would wish the Committee to consider. If there are any documents that you would like the Committee to consider, please would you let me have these as quickly as possible.

*I regret that pending the outcome of the hearing you will be placed on paid leave of absence. While you are on paid leave of absence you should not enter the school premises without the permission of either myself or NAME.***

Yours sincerely

Headteacher/Line Manager

* Delete/ amend as appropriate

** If dismissal is recommended, Headteacher may wish to consider if appropriate for the individual to remain in post pending the hearing