

Appraisal Policy

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1. Introduction

Flying High Trust (FHT) believe that an appraisal process is more than setting and reviewing objectives, it's about sharing expectations and using relevant CPL to motivate and reward our team through development and career progression.

We recognise that an effective appraisal process and professional development are key to supporting the career progression of all employees and it will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that employees not only have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively, but that they will have the opportunity for relevant professional development within their role or career path.

The appraisal process will be intrinsically supportive and developmental, conducted within a culture that values openness and fairness. It is designed to ensure that all staff have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively.

2. General Principles

The appraisal period will run throughout the academic year, which begins in September and concludes in August the following year.

Employees on fixed term contracts will be expected to participate in the appraisal process unless the duration of their fixed term contract expires within 6 months, as their performance will be monitored as part of the probation process.

If an employee begins their employment part way through the appraisal cycle the line manager should look to set SMART objectives that are commensurate to the remainder of the academic year.

If an employee changes roles within the appraisal period, the line manager will discuss altering the objectives so that they are relevant to the new role.

This policy applies to all employees of the Trust.

3. The Appraisal Process

In order for members of staff to reach a goal or strategic objective, it is necessary to provide them with a 'road map' of where they are heading. Clear and detailed appraisal objectives will not only enable meaningful career development but will also support in helping the Partnership and school to achieve its strategic goals.

Personal objectives are not meant to cover all aspects of an appraisee's job description but should focus on their performance and contribution around key aspects or activities within their role. This does not preclude them from fulfilling the full duties as set out in their job description.

It is easy for objectives to become a wish list. Appraisers should prevent this from happening by taking a structured approach to identifying and agreeing development needs and these should be related directly to the achievement of work objectives.

Appraisers have the responsibility to support appraisees to learn and develop effectively and appraisees have responsibility to take their learning and development seriously.

Appraisers should prioritise learning and development needs by considering:

- Any statutory and regulatory requirements that must be met;
- Any gaps in the competencies required for the Appraisee to meet their performance objectives;
- Any gaps in competence levels and areas of specialism across the team;
- Career aspirations of the appraisee;
- Longer term organisational objectives (may include succession planning).

Appraisers will meet with the appraisee half termly during the academic year on a 1:1 basis to discuss objectives, workload, progress and any concerns that either party has. These meetings will be documented.

4. The Partnership Cultural Expectations

The vision of the Partnership is, ***together we will create unique, exceptional and sustainable schools that inspire communities and empower children***. This is fundamental to our appraisal process and the way in which we support and develop our people.

Underpinning this vision are our staff cultural expectations. These expectations should be reviewed and considered at the beginning of the appraisal process. The employee is expected to complete a self-evaluation document (see appendix 2) which will be sent from the appraiser prior to the target setting meeting. Target setting should begin with a reflective conversation around this self-evaluation document to highlight strengths and areas of focus. Where appropriate, objectives should demonstrate a clear alignment with the cultural expectations that have been identified as areas of focus. This process aims to support all staff within the partnership to be reflective and encourage open and transparent conversations with line managers on staff behaviors.

5. Setting Objectives

It is important that the objectives are both relevant, realistic and reasonable within the context of workload. Appraisers should be confident that it is reasonable to expect that the development needs agreed for the Appraisee can be met within the appraisal review year.

Appraisers should have an open and honest conversation with the appraisee about success and areas for improvement, identifying suitable learning and development opportunities that will address any areas for improvement, in doing so both parties will consider:

- The appraisee's preferred way of learning and developing;
- Available opportunities and how to access them;
- Practical issues such as workload.

There will be no expectation that appraisees will have to collate evidence as the appraiser should already be in receipt of any relevant evidence from the 1:1 meeting held with the appraisee. If the appraisee wishes to present evidence, they are free to do so.

All objectives will be:

- **Specific** - Objectives need to state what specifically needs to be achieved, not just what actions are to be undertaken but also the purpose of the actions, what is ultimately aiming to be achieved. Keeping objectives simple helps to ensure that they are clear and specific.
- **Measurable** - It should be clear how you will know or assess if an objective has been achieved. Although it may not be readily apparent, every objective can be measured. Some objectives can be measured quantitatively; others must be measured qualitatively. Consideration should be given as to what data or information is needed to provide ongoing feedback on how the appraisee is progressing. Measurements are subject to change and should be reviewed periodically.
- **Accountable** - Accountability for performance objectives must be clear. A clear definition of what the appraisee is specifically accountable for will help reduce confusion and may provide a sense of urgency and purpose on the part of the appraisee.
- **Realistic** - For an objective to be meaningful, it must be realistic and reasonable. Objectives should challenge appraisees towards continuous improvement but should not be unrealistic or unattainable. It should also be reasonably within their influence or control.
- **Time bound** - An achievable timeframe must be set for reaching the objective's goals.

All Teachers will have 3 objectives, one of which will be developmental and will be agreed by both parties by reflecting on areas for improvement, career aspiration and needs of the school. All Teachers will be assessed against the Teachers Standards as set in 2012. All Headteachers will be assessed against the Headteacher Standards 2020.

Objectives will be set before the end of the Autumn term with the purpose of those objectives being to facilitate in-role development and to act as a vehicle that supports career progression. Some roles may benefit from having objectives set before the end of Autumn 1 (October half term), but this will ultimately be determined by the appraiser. The objectives will contain a description of what success may look like and identify areas for professional development. The appraisee should expect to work with the appraiser to agree the objectives.

Objectives will be set accordingly using the appraisal template (appendix 2) such that they best reflect the role an individual has within their setting. Objectives may be revised if circumstances change, such as an employee starting maternity leave, or undergoing surgery/medical treatment or a change of role, to take account of the anticipated absence and to allow the individual to meet reduced and attainable targets.

If an employee works part-time, objectives should be set taking into account the individual's hours of work. If an employee has returned to work following a period of extended absence or if they require adjustments in relation to a disability, objectives and timescales may need to be adjusted.

If appraisers would like more guidance when setting objectives, they can speak to a member of the HR team.

6. Reviewing and Monitoring Objectives

Appraisers will meet with their appraisees regularly throughout the appraisal period to review progress made against the objectives set (see section 3). These reviews should consistently include discussions on cultural expectations, with a focus on reflecting upon the areas identified for improvement at the start of the process.

It is expected that the appraisal document be updated during these 1:1 meetings, which are recommended to take place on a half-termly basis in accordance with best practices. However, if this is not feasible, there will be, at a minimum, a mid-year review held six months after the objectives have been set. In cases where performance concerns arise, more frequent reviews should be conducted to provide timely feedback and additional support as needed.

Reviewing the performance of employees is ongoing throughout the year, in doing this the Trust uses a number of methods to continually support and monitor employees, these include:

- **Observation:** the Trust believes that observation is important both as a way of assessing performance in order to identify any strengths and areas for development they may have and of gaining useful information which can inform improvement generally. The Trust defines observation as the action or process of closely observing and monitoring something or someone and recognise this can take many forms dependent on the individual circumstances of staff and the needs of the individual schools. It is recognised that observation forms a small part of assessing performance. The school/Trust will also use other methods to monitor performance, including scrutiny of pupils' books, conversations with pupils and the overall quality of education for those staff whose role is classroom based.
- Observation will be tailored to individual roles and utilised when required and may involve scrutiny of processes, output, quality and adherence to protocols and policy.

Appraiser's should provide constructive and developmental feedback on an individual's performance throughout the appraisal cycle. Feedback will highlight particular areas of strength as well as areas of development. Where areas of development have been identified, the appraiser will give clear feedback and agree any additional support eg. Coaching/mentoring.

At the end of the appraisal period there should a final review meeting that will determine whether the objectives set were achieved by the appraisee. Final review meetings should take place before the start of the next academic year. The completed appraisal documentation will be stored on the appraisee's personnel file, and a copy will be shared with the appraisee.

7. Employees Experiencing Difficulties

7.1 Informal Support

During the review cycle where there are concerns about any aspects of the employee's performance, support will be identified and discussed with the member of staff. The detail of the support will depend on the needs of the individual and will be delivered in an informal support plan agreed with the individual and their Line Manager. This informal support will be provided in a reasonable timescale (normally 6 weeks). Where the informal support does not have the desired impact and there is a need to have a formal support process, this will be addressed under section headed: employees continuing to Experience Difficulties (Formal Support).

When progress is reviewed, if the appraiser is satisfied that the employee has made, or is making, sufficient improvement, the appraisal process will continue as normal, with any remaining issues continuing to be addressed through the normal CPD, mentoring and upskilling of staff.

At this stage every effort will be made to support the employee to enhance their performance; this may include breaking their objectives down into smaller points to focus on the issues and bringing other staff with expertise into the support team to enhance the support plan. Support will be provided with the aim of improving practice and areas where there are concerns. The school/Partnership will ensure that members of staff who require support will have a Support Manager to work with them as well as expertise from across the Trust if required.

7.2 Formal Support

Where, during the appraisal cycle, informal support has not had the desired outcome of improvement and there is clear evidence of serious concerns about any aspects of an employee's performance, the appraiser will arrange to meet formally with them giving at least five days' notice. This is after a period of informal support has already been provided and clarity about the performance issues has been discussed with the employee. Prior to the meeting the appraiser will provide the employee with clear written feedback about the nature and seriousness of the concerns and a draft Formal Support Plan. Employees are entitled to be represented by a trade union representative or a work colleague at the formal support meeting as this is the best opportunity to avoid the matter escalating. The support plan manager will be advised by HR at the meeting.

At the meeting the employee and the support plan manager will:

- Consider the evidence of serious concerns.
- Give the employee the opportunity to comment and discuss the concern.
- Discuss the formal support plan and ensure that clarification is given on all aspects of the formal support plan.
- Identify in the support plan how and when additional monitoring will take place. The purpose of this additional monitoring is to assess if the support is having the correct impact for the school and that the employee is responding to the support.
- Discuss objectives in the support plan; objectives may be broken down into smaller sections to target specific areas of concern.
- Make clear how, and by when, the appraiser will review progress. It may be appropriate to revise objectives and it will be necessary to allow sufficient time for improvement. The amount of time will depend on the seriousness of the concerns but will not be less than 4 weeks except in exceptional circumstances.
- Discuss who will provide the support and guidance, and who will be involved in the support team.
- Explain the implications and the process if no – or insufficient – improvement is made against the targets and milestones agreed.

This meeting and any further support and guidance given will be with the aim that the employee's performance improves and the need to move into formal capability procedures is avoided. Where progress is being made towards meeting the objectives set out in the support plan, consideration will be given to an extension of the timescale.

At the end of the support period the employee will be invited to a formal review meeting (5 working days-notice with the right to representation).

7.3 Formal review meeting

At the end of the formal support period the employee will be invited to a Formal Review Meeting with their support plan manager and HR. They will have the right to be represented by a trade union representative or a work colleague.

Where sufficient progress is made such that the employee is performing at a level that indicates that there is no longer a possibility of capability procedures being invoked, the employee should be informed of this at a formal review meeting with the support plan manager. Following this meeting, the appraisal process will continue as normal. The outcome will be provided in writing to the employee.

If the support plan manager is not satisfied with progress, the employee will be notified in writing that the appraisal system will no longer apply and that their performance will be managed under the formal capability procedure. The individual will be invited to a formal capability meeting in line with the formal capability procedure.

7.4 Transition to Capability

If the support plan manager is not satisfied with progress following the agreed additional support and time frame, they will write to the employee (appraisee) inviting them to a formal capability meeting, with at least five working days' notice. The notification will include:

- Sufficient information about the concerns about performance and their possible consequences to enable the employee to prepare to answer the case at a formal capability meeting.
- Copies of any written evidence connected to the concerns as outlined in the support planning process.
- The details of the date, time and place of the meeting.
- Advice to the employee of their right to be represented/accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.
- The names of those who will be at the meeting and their role.
- An outline of possible courses of action.

Wherever possible the time and date of meeting should be agreed with the employee and their representative. The process to be followed is set out in detail in the capability procedure.

7.5 Personal Illness during the Improving Performance process

Where an employee is experiencing personal illness during this process, such that they may feel unable to attend a formal meeting, the Trust will request a medical report from Occupational Health (or the member of staff's GP or specialist) to determine if and when they are fit to attend.

Where the subsequent medical advice deems that a member of staff is fit enough to attend a formal meeting, it will be arranged as detailed in the Policy. Where the medical advice suggests that a formal meeting may go ahead with adjustments, the hearing will be arranged accordingly with reasonable adjustments being made.

Where the subsequent medical advice deems that the employee is too unwell to attend a formal meeting, the meeting will normally be rescheduled. However, where the employee is persistently

unable to attend or offer a reasonable explanation for non-attendance, the manager who will lead the meeting may decide to hold the meeting in their absence, using documentary evidence and any written submissions put forward.

7.6 Ill-health or disability affecting performance but not attendance

If it becomes apparent during any informal discussions that an employee's ill-health or disability may be affecting their performance (but not their attendance – this would be managed via the Absence Management Policy) the line manager must seek advice from Human Resources (HR) before proceeding further.

If a member of staff wishes to advise the Trust of any medical condition which they consider to be relevant to the performance in their role, they should discuss this with their line manager.

7.7 Misconduct

During informal discussions, the line manager may wish to change the policy under which they are reviewing a member of staff's standard of work. What initially presented itself as a performance issue may subsequently reveal itself to be a conduct issue, which would require a different process to be followed. If it is believed that it is a conduct issue, the Disciplinary Policy should be applied.

It may not always be straightforward for a line manager to assess whether a shortfall in performance is due to a performance or a conduct issue but advice can be sought from the HR Team.

8. Confidentiality and Retention of Records

The appraisal process and the statements generated within it will be treated with the strictest confidentiality at all times. Access to appraisal records will be restricted to relevant personnel only.

Appraisal records will be retained securely and confidentially for a minimum period of 6 years.

Appendix 1: Appraisal Template

Appraisal and Feedback Form for 2024/25

This form is to record the objectives that you are set, your progress towards meeting those objectives, and the outcome of your final appraisal based on what you have done to meet those objectives.

You and your line manager should review your objectives regularly (at least every 6 months).

While the objectives agreed between you and your line manager must be consistent with business needs, they should also be **SMART**: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound.

An objective can be task-based, ie focus on outcomes. However, an objective can focus on behaviours, ie the behaviours and skills that you are expected to display when performing your role.

Employee Name		Line Manager Name	
Date of Target Setting Meeting	Mid-Year Review Meeting		End of Year Review Meeting
Click or tap to enter a date.	Click or tap to enter a date.		Click or tap to enter a date.
Areas of Focus (Identified in 2023/24)			
Career Conversation: Do you want further progression this year?			
Review of Staff Cultural Expectations	See Appendix 2: Self Evaluation Form – Cultural Expectations		

Agreed professional learning:

CPL focus (to be completed at the start of the year)	Course title (to be completed throughout the year)	Date Completed (to be completed at the end of the year)
		Click or tap to enter a date.
		Click or tap to enter a date.
		Click or tap to enter a date.

Objective 1:	<i>This section should provide an overview of the objective and set out the specific steps that need to be taken to meet the objective, while giving as much autonomy as possible over how the objective is achieved. Include a timeline for when each step is expected to be completed.</i>	Success Criteria	<i>This section should set out what measurements will be used to tell you whether the objective has been achieved.</i>
Appraisee Comments	<i>It is important to add notes here on any points that are raised during regular catch-ups with your line manager and especially during your formal mid year review meetings, to assess your progress against your objectives. Focus comments on your key progress to date, what are the key areas of focus to enable you to achieve this target? Are you on track to achieve this target? Is there any further support required to enable you to achieve the target?</i>		
	Areas of success	Areas for continued development	
Appraiser Comments	<i>It is important for the line manager to add notes here on any points that are raised during regular catch-ups and especially during formal mid year review meetings.</i>		
	Areas of success	Areas for continued development	
Appraisee Self Evaluation	Choose an item.	Appraiser Judgement	Choose an item.

Any support requested (if appropriate)			
Final review			
Appraisee Comments	<i>This section should set out an assessment of how you think you have performed in meeting your objectives. You can highlight what you think you did well, including where you went above and beyond, and what you think you could have done better.</i>		
	Areas of success		Current areas for continued development
Appraiser Comments			
	Areas of success		Current areas for continued development
End Of Year Appraisee Self Evaluation	Choose an item.	End Of Year Appraiser judgement	Choose an item.

Objective 2:	<i>This section should provide an overview of the objective and set out the specific steps that need to be taken to meet the objective, while giving as much autonomy as possible over how the objective is achieved. Include a timeline for when each step is expected to be completed.</i>	Success Criteria	<i>This section should set out what measurements will be used to tell you whether the objective has been achieved.</i>
Appraisee Comments	<i>It is important to add notes here on any points that are raised during regular catch-ups with your line manager and especially during your formal mid year review meetings, to assess your progress against your objectives. Focus comments on your key progress to date, what are the key areas of focus to enable you to achieve this target? Are you on track to achieve this target? Is there any further support required to enable you to achieve the target?</i>		

	Areas of success	Areas for continued development	
Appraiser Comments	<i>It is important for the line manager to add notes here on any points that are raised during regular catch-ups and especially during formal mid year review meetings.</i>		
	Areas of success	Areas for continued development	
Appraisee Self Evaluation	Choose an item.	Appraiser Judgement	Choose an item.
Any support requested (if appropriate)			
Final review			
Appraisee Comments	<i>This section should set out an assessment of how you think you have performed in meeting your objectives. You can highlight what you think you did well, including where you went above and beyond, and what you think you could have done better.</i>		
	Areas of success	Current areas for continued development	
Appraiser Comments			
	Areas of success	Current areas for continued development	
End Of Year Appraisee Self Evaluation	Choose an item.	End Of Year Appraiser judgement	Choose an item.

Objective 3:	<i>This section should provide an overview of the objective and set out the specific steps that need to be taken to meet the objective, while giving as much autonomy as possible over how the objective is achieved. Include a timeline for when each step is expected to be completed.</i>	Success Criteria	<i>This section should set out what measurements will be used to tell you whether the objective has been achieved.</i>
Appraisee Comments	<i>It is important to add notes here on any points that are raised during regular catch-ups with your line manager and especially during your formal mid year review meetings, to assess your progress against your objectives. Focus comments on your key progress to date, what are the key areas of focus to enable you to achieve this target? Are you on track to achieve this target? Is there any further support required to enable you to achieve the target?</i>		
	Areas of success	Areas for continued development	
Appraiser Comments	<i>It is important for the line manager to add notes here on any points that are raised during regular catch-ups and especially during formal mid year review meetings.</i>		
	Areas of success	Areas for continued development	
Appraisee Self Evaluation	Choose an item.	Appraiser Judgement	Choose an item.
Any support requested (if appropriate)			
Final review			
Appraisee Comments	<i>This section should set out an assessment of how you think you have performed in meeting your objectives. You can highlight what you think you did well, including where you went above and beyond, and what you think you could have done better.</i>		

	Areas of success	Current areas for continued development
Appraiser Comments		
	Areas of success	Current areas for continued development
End Of Year Appraisee Self Evaluation	Choose an item.	End Of Year Appraiser judgement
		Choose an item.

Agreed areas of continued development and support in 2025/26	To be completed at the final review meeting.
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Sign Off

	Signature	Date
Appraisee (Employee)		Click or tap to enter a date.
Appraiser (Line Manager)		Click or tap to enter a date.

Appendix 2: Self Evaluation Form – Cultural Expectations

Staff Cultural Expectations Self-Evaluation

Please review the cultural expectations listed below. Identify those expectations that feel relevant to your personal development.

Use this document for your own personal reflections, and as prompt to support discussion with your line manager.

Cultural Expectation	What does it mean	What can I do to improve this area.....	How can the Partnership support you to improve this area.....
Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy, interest and support of others. • Decisions and actions are child centred. 		
Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you say you'll do something, do it. • Honesty and integrity. 		
Humility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking for help when you need it. • Willingness to share the success of everyone. 		
Aspiration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High expectations for yourself, others and every child. • No barriers or excuses. 		
Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our important job matters. • A commitment to quality in all that we do. 		
Curiosity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An inquisitive mindset. • Seeking new ideas and solutions. 		
Desire for Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing the opportunity to learn. • Continuous reflection. 		
Desire to Improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking opportunities to develop and grow. • Embracing the productive struggle. 		
Enablement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing others through doing with, not for. • Providing the tools and support to give others confidence to own decisions. 		
Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and growing from experiences. • Bouncing back from challenges. 		
Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking ownership of actions and consequences. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working collaboratively within established structures. 		
Solution Focused Mindset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking to understand the problem and bring solutions. • A determination to always find a way. 		

Appendix 3: Support Plan Template

Informal / Formal Support Plan

Informal support is a process contained in the appraisal policy. This process is used when it has been identified that performance is not meeting the standards required. The aim of informal support is to provide support via training, mentoring, shadowing to enhance the performance and support the member of staff to enable them to meet the required standards.

The Trust expects all staff to engage in the process to work together with their support manager.

Name		Start Date of Informal/Formal support plan	Click or tap to enter a date.
School		Support Manager Support Team Members	

Overall Objective Link to relevant standards/job description	Area to be improved What we are seeing	Expectations/Evidence to be used to assess progress What we expect to see	Support/Resources required What we will do to support you to achieve the expectations	Who/How/When Who will provide this, how it will be provided & when
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

A review meeting will be held at the end of every week to document progress, challenges, questions and employee wellbeing.

Week one - Review meeting				
Identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what has been successful • what the following week will focus on • what has been a challenge • well being questions 				
Date of meeting/ Attendees	Employee Comments	Line Manager comments	Any changes required to the plan	On track to meet objectives?
Click or tap to enter a date.				

Week two - Review meeting				
Identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what has been successful • what the following week will focus on • what has been a challenge • well being questions 				
Date of meeting/ Attendees	Employee Comments	Line Manager comments	Any changes required to the plan	On track to meet objectives?
Click or tap to enter a date.				

Week three - Review meeting Identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what has been successful • what the following week will focus on • what has been a challenge • well being questions 				
Date of meeting/ Attendees	Employee Comments	Line Manager comments	Any changes required to the plan	On track to meet objectives?
Click or tap to enter a date.				

Week four - Review meeting Identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what has been successful • what the following week will focus on • what has been a challenge • well being questions 				
Date of meeting/ Attendees	Employee Comments	Line Manager comments	Any changes required to the plan	On track to meet objectives?
Click or tap to enter a date.				

Week five - Review meeting				
Identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what has been successful • what the following week will focus on • what has been a challenge • well being questions 				
Date of meeting/ Attendees	Employee Comments	Line Manager comments	Any changes required to the plan	On track to meet objectives?
Click or tap to enter a date.				

Final Review meeting (week six)				
Identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what has been successful • what the following week will focus on • what has been a challenge • well being questions 				
Date of meeting/ Attendees	Employee Comments	Line Manager comments	Any changes required to the plan	On track to meet objectives?
Click or tap to enter a date.				

Other support provided	
Mentor/Coach allocated	Yes – [Insert name]
Counselling to be provided	Yes/No
Occupational Health referral to be made	Yes/No
Formal review date	[Insert date/time]

Next steps and Rationale	
Signed by	Date
Employee:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Line Manager:	Click or tap to enter a date.