



# APPRAISAL POLICY

## SUPPORT STAFF

<b>Document Control</b>			
Version Number	Final_v4.0	Author	Trust HR Director
To Be Approved by	Trust Board	Document Status	Approved
Meeting Date for approval	18 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	Date Approved	18 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
Effective Date	19 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	Date of next review	October 2024 <i>(or earlier if legislation or CES changes)</i>
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## DEFINITIONS

In this Appraisal Policy and Procedure, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

- i. "Trust" means the Trust, schools and academies who belong to the Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust named at the beginning of this Appraisal Policy and Procedure and includes all sites upon which the Trust undertaking is, from time to time, being carried out.
- ii. Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust is responsible for the management of the school/academy and, for all purposes, means the employer of staff at the school/academy. The Trust also employs staff working directly to the Chief Executive of the Trust.
- i. 'Trust Board' means the body carrying out the employment functions of the Trust.
- iii. 'Directors' means Directors appointed to the Trust Board.
- iv. 'Chair' means the Chair of the Trust Board, or the Chair of the Local Academy Committee appointed from time to time, as appropriate.
- v. 'SEL' means the Trust Strategic Executive Lead within whose role contains those duties of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
- vi. 'Companion' means a willing work colleague not involved in the substance of the employee's performance under review by this Appraisal Policy and Procedure, or an accredited trade union representative or an official employed by a trade union who will be expected to make themselves available for the periods of time necessary to meet the timescales under this Appraisal Policy and Procedure.
- vii. 'Diocesan Schools Commission' means the education service provided by the diocese, which may also be known, or referred to, as the Diocesan Education Service.
- viii. 'Support staff' means those staff employed within the Trust who are not qualified Teachers but may be professionally qualified in other careers.
- ix. Local Academy Committee Members' (LAC) means the Local Academy Committee Members appointed and elected to carry out specified functions delegated by the Trust in relation to each of the schools/academies, from time to time.

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- x. 'Vice-Chair' means the Vice-Chair of the Trust Board, or the Vice-Chair of the Local Academy Committee of the school/academy elected from time to time, as appropriate.
- xi. 'Headteacher' means the most senior teacher in the Academy who is responsible for its management and administration. Such teacher may also be referred to as the Head of School or Principal.
- xii. 'Working Day' means any day on which you would ordinarily work if you were a full-time employee. In other words, 'Working Day' may apply differently to teaching and non-teaching staff. However, part-time and full-time staff will not be treated differently for the purposes of implementing this Appraisal Policy and Procedure.
- xiii. 'Working Week' means any week that you would ordinarily work.

## **1. APPLICATION**

- 1.1 Subject to Paragraph 1.3 below, this Appraisal Policy and Procedure applies to you if you are an employee or worker at the school/academy employed in your capacity as support staff worker and are not employed as a teacher or Headteacher (hereinafter referred to as an "employee" or "you").
- 1.2 Subject to Paragraph 1.3 below, this Appraisal Policy and Procedure applies to you if you are an employee or worker employed as a member of the Trust Central Team and you are employed on support staff terms and conditions and on teacher terms and conditions (hereinafter referred to as an "employee" or "you").
- 1.3 This Appraisal Policy and Procedure does not apply to those employees who are employed under a contract of employment for less than one term and those who are subject to the Trust's Capability Policy and Procedure.

## **2. SCOPE**

- 2.1 The purpose of this procedure is to establish a framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of employees and for supporting their development within the context of the Trust's plan for improving educational provision and performance, and the standards expected of the staff of the Trust. The review shall have regard to any applicable codes of practice or standards applicable to the employee's employment as referenced in the job description or Trust Code of Conduct.
- 2.2 The Trust is committed to ensuring respect, objectivity, belief in the dignity of the individual, consistency of treatment and fairness in the operation of this Appraisal Policy and Procedure. This commitment extends to promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating unlawful discrimination throughout the Trust community (which includes all the schools/academies in the Trust).
- 2.3 The Trust is committed to providing a supportive working environment for all employees through this Appraisal Policy and Procedure. Concerns about an employee's performance will always be addressed in the first instance through the operation of this Appraisal Policy

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and Procedure. Where it is not possible to resolve concerns through the operation of this Policy and Procedure. Where it is not possible to resolve concerns through the operation of this Policy, it may be necessary to consider whether to invoke the Trust's Capability Policy and Procedure in accordance with Paragraph 9.

- 2.4 This Appraisal Policy and Procedure does not form part of any other procedure but relevant information on appraisal, including Appraisal Reports, may be considered in relation to other applicable policies and procedures.
- 2.5 An employee is entitled to have access by arrangement to their personnel file and to request the deletion of time expired records in line with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 2.6 The Trust delegates its authority in the manner set out in this policy.
- 2.7 The Trust is committed to ensuring that the operation of this Appraisal Policy and Procedure does not lead to an unnecessary increase in workload for employees and Appraisers. This Appraisal Policy and Procedure will always be applied in a way which is robust and fair, whilst monitoring the impact on workload for employees, Appraisers, Directors and Governors.

### **3. APPRAISAL IN A CATHOLIC CONTEXT**

- 3.1 Appraisal will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all employees have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively within the context of the Trust's ethos. It will help to ensure that employees are able to continue to improve their professional practice and develop as professionals in their area of expertise.
- 3.2 Arrangements for appraisal will be conducted in such a way that employees will be secure in the knowledge that their progress and commitment to the Trust are acknowledged.
- 3.3 Appraisal is a time to celebrate achievement wherever possible, as well as for discerning where there is scope for development. Challenge is at the heart of the Gospels. Christ challenged all whom he encountered, each according to their needs and readiness.
- 3.4 The Trust is committed to ensuring respect, objectivity, belief in the dignity of the individual, consistency of treatment and fairness in the operation of performance management as a Catholic Trust. This Appraisal Policy and Procedure offers opportunities to ensure justice for employees and pupils alike and has the potential for the expression of Christian qualities such as honesty, self-knowledge, respect for others and their gifts, recognition of the needs and achievements of others, challenge of self and others, personal growth and openness.

### **4. THE APPRAISAL PERIOD**

- 4.1 The Appraisal Period will run for twelve months from **1 April** to the following **31 March**, every academic year.
- 4.2 Employees who are employed on a fixed-term or temporary contract of less than one year will have their performance managed in accordance with the principles underpinning this Appraisal Policy and Procedure. The length of the Appraisal Period will be determined by the duration of their contract of employment.

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4.3 Where an employee starts their employment at the Trust/school/academy part-way through the usual Appraisal Period, the SEL or Headteacher shall determine the length of the Appraisal Period for that employee with a view to bringing his/her Appraisal Period into line with the Trust's usual Appraisal Period (as per Paragraph 4.1 above) as soon as possible.

4.4 Where an employee transfers to a new post within the Trust/school/academy part-way through an Appraisal Period, the SEL or Headteacher shall determine whether the Appraisal Period should be re-set and whether the Appraiser should be changed.

## **5. APPOINTING APPRAISERS**

5.1 An Appraiser will be appointed by the Headteacher to appraise an employee of the school/academy or, in the case of the central Trust, the SEL. Appraisers should have received appropriate training for the role.

5.2 The Appraiser will set employee objectives in accordance with Paragraph 6 below.

5.3 The Appraiser, through the Headteacher and/or Trust Board, may seek advice from other external advisers including, but not limited to, the Diocesan Schools' Commission.

5.4 Where it becomes apparent that an Appraiser appointed by the SEL or Headteacher will be absent for the majority of the Appraisal Period, the SEL/Headteacher may perform the duties of the Appraiser or delegate those duties to another employee for the duration of the absence.

5.5 Where an employee has a reasonable objection to the choice of Appraiser, their concerns may be carefully considered and, where it can be reasonably accommodated, an alternative appraiser may be offered.

## **6. SETTING OBJECTIVES**

6.1 Appraisal objectives should reflect the Catholic identity and mission of the Trust and the values it proclaims<sup>1</sup> and Appraisers are expected to explore the alignment of such objectives with the Academy's priorities and plans, working at all times to ensure that the Catholic ethos is developed and maintained.

6.2 The Appraiser and the employee will engage in a professional dialogue with a view to agreeing a realistic number of objectives which shall be reasonably achievable during the course of the Appraisal period considering the professional development aspirations of the employee. Objectives may be revised following discussion with the employee if circumstances change. The Trust operates a system of moderation to ensure that all appraisals are carried out in a consistent manner. Objectives will be moderated across the schools/academies and the Trust to ensure that they are consistent between employees with similar experience and levels of responsibility. Should the objectives not be agreed, a record of the employee's comments in relation to the objectives set shall be added to the appraisal documentation but the final decision on allocation of objectives rests with the Appraiser.

6.3 The objectives set for each employee will, if achieved, contribute to the Trust's plans for improving educational provision and improving the progress, development and well-being of

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<sup>1</sup> Such values should include the principles of Catholic social teaching in respect of justice for all, the needs of the whole person, respect for the individual and the community and the preferential option for the poor.

the pupils at the schools/academies. This will be ensured by quality assuring all objectives through the monitoring cycle against the school improvement plan.

- 6.4 Objectives, where met, should contribute to improving the progress, development and well-being of pupils at the school/academy as understood in relation to the Catholic nature of the Trust and so include the academic, spiritual, moral, social, emotional and cultural development of each pupil.
- 6.5 In accordance with Paragraph 5, the employee's objectives will be set by the Appraiser before, or as soon as reasonably practicable after, the start of each Appraisal Period and the employee will be informed of the objectives and standards against which their performance will be appraised in that Appraisal Period.
- 6.6 The objectives will be Challenging, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound and will be appropriate to the employee's role and level of experience.
- 6.7 The Appraiser will consider the Trust/School/Academy's work/life balance strategy and the effects of an individual's circumstances, including any disability, requiring the implementation of reasonable adjustments, when agreeing objectives and Appraisers will include a review of an employee's workload in the Appraisal Report.
- 6.8 Following discussion between the Appraiser and the employee, set objectives may be revised by the Appraiser in accordance with the needs of the Trust/School/Academy and the employee, and any such revision(s) to set objectives will be recorded in writing and a copy will be provided to the employee.

## **7. REVIEWING PERFORMANCE**

### **Gathering Evidence**

- 7.1 In order to review performance, the Appraiser will need to rely on the available evidence obtained in connection with the employee's performance. The evidence required will depend on the employee's role and where possible, the evidence to be obtained should be agreed when objectives are set.
- 7.2 When collecting evidence, the focus will be on using evidence which is readily available from day to day practice wherever possible.

### **Observation**

- 7.3 The Trust believes that observation of work practice is important both as a way of reviewing employee performance in order to identify any particular strengths and areas for development as well as gaining useful information which can inform school/academy improvement more generally.
- 7.4 All observation will be carried out in a supportive fashion and will not lead to unnecessary increases in workload and all feedback will be developmental.
- 7.5 Employees will receive constructive feedback on their performance throughout the year and as soon as practicable after observation has taken place or other evidence has come to light. Feedback will include discussion with the employee, highlighting their areas of strength and areas that need attention and will determine any appropriate action required.

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## **Development and Support**

- 7.6 Appraisal is a supportive process which will be used to inform the employee's continuing professional development. The Trust wishes to encourage a culture in which all employees take responsibility for improving the Trust (and all schools/academies in the Trust) through appropriate professional development. Professional development will be linked to the Trust's improvement priorities and to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of individual employees.

## **Informal Support**

- 7.7 An employee's line manager may identify concerns on an informal basis at any time about any performance falling short of the standards expected by the school/academy and/or the Trust
- 7.8 An employee's line manager may also provide informal advice and appropriate support which may include training, coaching, mentoring, counselling, monitoring, working in a professional learning community, learning and development opportunities, supervision, occupational health, arrangements for observation of lessons taught by teachers at the Academy or elsewhere or discussing practice with advisory teachers or other employees (as appropriate to the employee's role). These arrangements will consider the employee's workload.
- 7.9 Informal support could include reaffirming the expectations that the school/academy and/or the Trust (as appropriate) has of the employee and what support may be provided to help the employee to meet those expectations.
- 7.10 Informal support may be recorded in writing and may be referred to at a later stage as evidence of an attempt to address the concerns identified using informal support and the outcome of such an attempt. Where any informal support is recorded in writing, the employee will be provided with a copy of any written record and will be given 5 Working Days to comment on the written record in writing.

## **Alternative Support**

- 7.11 There may be a situation where the employee's line manager and/or the Appraiser considers that a recent promotion or job change has been a contributory factor in any unsatisfactory performance. In such a case, informal support should be provided as described in Paragraphs 7.7 and 7.10 above.
- 7.12 If such informal support is ineffective, the employee's line manager/Appraiser may offer the employee the option of agreeing to voluntarily give up the promotion or job change (providing a vacancy exists and/or meets school need) as an alternative to proceeding with formal action pursuant to Paragraph 9 of this Appraisal Policy and Procedure.

## **8. ANNUAL REVIEW (PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEW)**

- 8.1 Employees performance will be formally assessed in respect of each Appraisal Period by way of an annual review (Professional Development Review – PDR).
- 8.2 The annual review is at the end point to the annual appraisal period, but performance and development priorities will be reviewed and addressed throughout the year at interim meetings (which shall be conducted in person or via other appropriate medium, depending

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on the circumstances) which may take place once term or at least mid-year. Employee workload will be considered when determining the frequency of such interim meetings.

8.3 The employee will receive, as soon as practicable following the end of each Appraisal Period, a written Appraisal Report. The employee will have the opportunity to comment on the Appraisal Report in writing.

8.4 The Appraisal Report will include:

- (a) Details of the employee's objectives for the relevant Appraisal Period;
- (b) An assessment of the employee's performance of their role and responsibilities against their objectives and any relevant standards;
- (c) An assessment of the employee's training and development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them;
- (d) A recommendation on pay where that is relevant;
- (e) A space for the employee's own comments
- (f) A note of any concerns and actions taken to resolve them.

8.5 A review meeting will take place to discuss the content of the Appraisal Report to discuss the content of the Appraisal Report and the employee's written comments in the Appraisal Report (if any), to decide any further action required, including setting a period for review of performance, and to inform objective setting for the next Appraisal Period.

8.6 Where it has not been possible for employees to fully meet their objectives because the agreed support has not been provided this will be considered in the review meeting.

## **9. EMPLOYEES EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES**

9.1 It is the Trust's aim, when dealing with an employee experiencing difficulties, to provide support and guidance through the appraisal process in such a way that the employee's performance improves and the problem is, therefore, resolved.

9.2 Where it is apparent that an employee's personal circumstances are leading to difficulties at work, the Academy will aim to establish informally whether the reason is due to ill-health, lack of competence, misconduct or other mitigating personal circumstances. Support will then be offered and/or appropriate action taken as soon as reasonably practicable, without waiting for the Annual Review detailed in Paragraph 8. Support could include informal advice and appropriate support which may include training, coaching, mentoring, counselling, monitoring, working in a professional learning community, learning and development opportunities, supervision, occupational health, arrangements for observation of lessons taught by teachers at the Academy or elsewhere or discussing practice with advisory teachers or other employees (as appropriate to the employee's role). These arrangements will consider the employee's workload.

9.3 If an Appraiser identifies through the appraisal process, or via other sources of information, that the difficulties experienced by the employee are such that, if not rectified, could lead to the Trust's Capability Policy and Procedure being invoked, the Appraiser, the Headteacher or a member of the senior leadership team (as appropriate) will meet with the employee to:

- (a) Give clear written feedback to the employee about the nature and seriousness of the concerns;

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- (b) Give the employee the opportunity to comment on, refute, explain and discuss the concerns;
  - (c) Give the employee at least 5 Working Days' notice that a meeting will be held to discuss targets for improvement alongside a programme of support, and inform the employee that they have the right to be accompanied at any such meetings by a Companion;
  - (d) In consultation with the employee at the above meeting, an action plan with support will be established (e.g. coaching, training, in-class support, mentoring, structured observations, visits to other classes or schools or discussions with advisory teachers or other employees, (as appropriate to the employee's role), that will help address those specific concerns;
  - (e) Make clear how progress will be monitored and when it will be reviewed; and
  - (f) Explain the implications and process if no, or no sufficient, improvement is made
- 9.4 The employee's progress will continue to be monitored as part of the appraisal process and a reasonable time will be given for their performance to improve. The relevant monitoring period will depend on the circumstances but will usually be for a period of between 6 to 8 Working Weeks, with appropriate support as agreed in the action plan detailed in Paragraph 9.3(d) above in order that the aim of improving performance can be achieved. During this monitoring period the employee will be given regular feedback on his or her progress and arrangements will be made to modify the support programme if appropriate
- 9.5 At the end of the review period referred to in Paragraph 9.4 above, if sufficient improvement is made, such that the employee is performing at a level that indicates there is no longer a possibility of the Trust's Capability Policy and Procedure being invoked, the employee will be informed of this at a formal meeting with the Appraiser. Following this meeting, the appraisal process will continue as normal. The employee will be given at least 5 Working Days' notice of such formal meeting and will have the right to be accompanied by a Companion. The outcome of such meeting will be confirmed in writing to the employee within 5 Working Days of the meeting taking place.
- 9.6 If no, or no sufficient, improvement has been made by the end of the monitoring period referred to in Paragraph 9.4 above, the employee will be invited to a transition meeting with the Appraiser to determine whether the Trust's Capability Policy and Procedure needs to be invoked or whether the appraisal process will remain in place. The employee will be given at least 5 Working Days' notice of such meeting and shall be entitled to be accompanied at the meeting by a Companion. The outcome of such meeting will be confirmed in writing to the employee within 5 Working Days of the meeting.
- 9.7 Prior to invoking the Trust's Capability Policy and Procedure, the Appraiser will seek to ensure that the employee has undergone an appropriate period of induction to their role, an up to date job description has been issued to them, professional standards and overall expectations of performance have been made clear and the employee's performance has been monitored and feedback has been provided.
- 9.8 Whilst the Appraisal Report does not form part of any formal capability or disciplinary procedures, any relevant information from the appraisal process including the contents of the Appraisal Report may be considered by those responsible for taking decisions about capability and disciplinary matters

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## **10. APPEALS**

- 10.1 Employees have a right of appeal against any of the entries in the written Appraisal Report and a separate right of appeal against a decision to invoke the Trust's Capability Policy and Procedure made in accordance with Paragraph 9.6 above. If an appeal relates to a decision about pay, the employee is referred to the Trust's Pay Policy and Procedure.
- 10.2 An appeal in accordance with Paragraph 10.1 must be made in writing to the Trust HR Director and lodged within 10 working days of receipt of the Appraisal Report (which will usually be received in the review meeting referred to in Paragraph 8.5) or the date of the letter confirming the outcome of the meeting provided for in Paragraph 9.6.
- 10.3 Your appeal letter must set out the grounds of your appeal in detail.
- 10.4 The Appeal Meeting will normally be held within 20 working days of your appeal letter being received by the Trust HR Director.
- 10.5 The appeal will normally be heard by the Headteacher (or SEL), unless they have participated in the appraisal review which is being appealed, in which case the appeal will be heard by the SEL (or Trust Board Director with senior Trust staff). In both cases, the Trust HR Director will be in attendance.
- 10.6 The outcome of the Appeal Meeting will be confirmed in writing to you within 5 working days of the date of the Appeal Meeting. The decision reached following the Appeal Meeting is final and there will be no further right of appeal. The possible outcomes of the Appeal Meeting are any one or more of the following (as appropriate):
- (a) the entries made in the appraisal report are upheld;
  - (b) the outcome of the meeting provided for in Paragraph 9.6 stands and the Capability Policy is invoked;
  - (c) the appeal is upheld and any disputed entries in the Appraisal Report are referred back to the Appraiser for reconsideration;
  - (d) the outcome of the meeting under Paragraph 9.6 is overturned and the appraisal process will continue as normal.
- 10.7 Where an appeal is against entries in the Appraisal Report and the outcome of a meeting heard under Paragraph 9.6, the appeals will be heard together. For the avoidance of doubt, it will be possible for the outcome of each appeal, where both entries in the Appraisal Report and the outcome of a meeting heard under Paragraph 9.6 are appealed, to be different.

## **11. COMPANION**

- 11.1 Where a meeting is held in accordance with the Trust Capability Policy, you may be accompanied by a Companion (see definition).
- 11.2 You must let the person appointed to hold such meeting under Paragraphs 9 or 10 above know who your Companion will be at least one working day before the meeting.
- 11.3 If you have any particular reasonable need, for example, because you have a disability, you can also be accompanied by a suitable helper.

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11.4 Your Companion can address the meeting in order to:

- (a) put your case;
- (b) sum up your case;
- (c) respond on your behalf to any view expressed at the meeting; and
- (d) Ask questions on your behalf.

11.5 Your Companion can also confer with you during the meeting.

11.6 Your Companion has no right to:

- (a) answer questions on your behalf;
- (b) address the meeting if you do not wish it; or
- (c) prevent you from explaining your case.

11.7 Where you have identified your Companion and they have confirmed in writing to the relevant person appointed under Paragraphs 9 or 10 that they cannot attend the date or time set for the meeting, the meeting will be postponed for a period not in excess of five working days from the date set by the school/academy to a date or time agreed with your Companion. Should your Companion subsequently be unable to attend the rearranged date, the meeting may be held in their absence or written representations will be accepted.

## **12. TIMING OF MEETINGS**

The aim is that meetings under this Appraisal Policy and Procedure will be held at mutually convenient times but depending on the circumstances meeting may:

- a) need to be held when you were timetabled to teach;
- b) exceptionally be held during planning, preparation and administration time if this does not impact on lesson preparation;
- c) be held after the end of the school/academy day;
- d) not normally be held on days on which you would not ordinarily work;
- e) be extended by agreement between the parties if the time limits cannot be met for any justifiable reason.

## **13. VENUE OF MEETINGS**

Any meeting held under Paragraph 9 or 10 may be held off the school/academy site to minimise any distress to the employee.

## **14. ASSISTANCE**

Where matters fall to be decided under Paragraphs 9 and 10, the Diocesan Schools Commission may send a representative to advise the Trust.

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## **15. REVIEW OF THIS PROCEDURE**

This policy and procedure have been developed utilising a template produced in September 2013 and amended in June 2016, May 2018 and May 2020 by the Catholic Education Service (CES) for use in Catholic Voluntary Academies in England following consultation with the national trade unions. This procedure will be reviewed by the CES in readiness for the academic year 2022/23.

***END OF DOCUMENT***

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