

## Professional Learning Policy

### Policy Number – 01

#### Document Management Information

<b>Applicable to:</b>	All staff
<b>Dissemination:</b>	DoPL to Principals and all staff
<b>Linked policies:</b>	Capability Policy Pay Policy
<b>Implementation:</b>	Line managers under guidance from DoPL
<b>Training:</b>	Provided by DoPL
<b>Review Frequency:</b>	Every 2 years
<b>Policy Author:</b>	DoPL
<b>Policy Lead:</b>	DoPL
<b>Approval by:</b>	Trust Board
<b>Approval Date:</b>	September 2022
<b>Next Review Due:</b>	Autumn 2024

#### Revision History

Document version	Description of Revision	Date Approved
V1	New policy	2021
V2	Split Professional Learning Policy from Capability Policy. Professional Policy revised and updated. Adjusting of line management to take account of roles COO and Director of School Improvement. Reference to Trust Strategic Plan included.	September 2022



## **Introduction**

The Professional Learning process is one that ensures that every member of staff in all our academies and across the Nene Education Trust is giving ongoing development as our commitment to them. Offering a positive environment as a developmental organisation to enable everyone to be better is one of our core strategic aims.

Time invested in each person is a positive and supportive process that enables us to focus on the professional learning of all individuals. Professional Learning is one part of a process to ensure everyone understands their role and contribution in achieving the aims of the Trust: developing character, raising aspirations and celebrating achievement. Our core Professional Learning Principles are:

We are all learners.

1. Professional development is personal
2. We can learn from each other
3. Impactful development is relevant and linked to School and Trust priorities.
4. Professional development is ongoing and evolves over time.

This policy is linked to the Trust's Pay Policy.

This policy applies to all employees of the Trust employed on permanent and temporary contracts with the exception of teachers undertaking their Early Careers Frameworks in their first two years of teaching, support staff within their probationary periods and those training to be teachers. It does not apply to agency workers, contractors or volunteers.

## **Purpose**

This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of employees covered by the Professional Learning policy and for supporting their development within the context of the Nene Education Trust's Strategic Plan, and the standards expected of employees in their respective roles.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time following consultation. We may also vary any parts of this procedure, including any time limits, as appropriate in any case.

The Trust is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment in the operation of Professional Learning. The CEO and Principals will delegate the reviewer role in those circumstances where they are not the line manager. In these circumstances, the CEO/Principal will arrange to moderate a sample of objectives of teachers and support staff to ensure that they comply with the Trust's Professional Learning policy and the regulations and the requirements of equality legislation.



## **Application of the policy**

### **Professional Learning overview**

The Professional Learning policy will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all employees identified by the policy have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively and ultimately become ever better at their role. It will help to ensure that all employees are able to continue to improve their professional/employment practice and to develop in their respective roles.

### **The Professional Learning period**

The Professional Learning period will run for twelve months from 1 September to 31 August.

Employees who are employed on a fixed term contract of less than one year will have their performance managed in accordance with the principles underpinning this policy. The length of the review period will be determined by the duration of their contract.

Employees will not normally be dismissed for performance reasons without previous warnings. However, in serious cases of gross negligence, or in any case involving an employee who has not yet completed their probationary period, dismissal without previous warnings may be appropriate.

### **Appointing reviewers**

The CEO will be performance managed by the Trustees (3, but if an external adviser is involved, a minimum of 2). If requested or appropriate, supported by a suitably skilled and/or experienced external adviser who has been appointed by the Trustees for that purpose.

The task of performance managing the Principals, including the setting of objectives, will be delegated to the Director of School Improvement. If requested or appropriate, supported by a suitably skilled and/or experienced external adviser who has been appointed by the CEO for that purpose.

The Principals in each Academy will decide who will review other employees covered by the policy. This will be notified to staff annually. The CEO and COO will determine reviewer arrangements for the Trust central team.

Advice and guidance on the application of this policy should be sought, when required from the Trust's HR team.

### **Professional Learning Objectives Setting objectives**

Our Professional Learning process focusses on the question; what will you learn/do to improve yourself / others / the organisation as you contribute to your own development, the



development of your team and the development of our school and our Trust. The policy will link to the Nene Education Trust Professional Learning Appraisal Process document.

Professional Learning objectives can come in many forms. It is important to remember that it is school staff leading this process with their colleagues and that the objectives set must fit within the aims of the priority areas and improvement plan for the school and Trust.

The Principal and Reviewer must be confident that any objectives set can be evaluated in a fair and robust manner. Success criteria should supply the clarity over what will lead to successful achievement of a performance objective and in time allow the member of staff to exemplify their success.

Objectives should be underpinned by success criteria and be date specific where appropriate.

Objectives for each employee covered by the policy will be set as soon as practicable after the start of each Professional Learning period. The objectives set will be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound and will be appropriate to the employee's role and level of experience. The reviewer and employee will seek to agree the objectives but, if that is not possible, the reviewer will determine the objectives. Objectives may be revised if circumstances change.

The objectives set for each employee will, if achieved, contribute to the Trust's Strategic Plan or School Improvement Plan. This will be ensured by quality assuring all objectives are set against either document.

The objectives for the CEO and Trust central team will, if achieved, contribute to delivering on the Trust Strategic Plan.

### **Performance of Teachers**

At NET we do not use data objectives to measure individual teacher performance.

Before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each Professional Learning period, a teacher will be informed of the standards against which that teacher's performance in that Professional Learning period will be assessed. Each teacher will be assessed against the set of standards contained in the document called "Teachers' Standards" published in July 2011 and any subsequent amendment thereof.

All staff will have a target for 'Improving Self'. The focus of this will be based on self review at the 'Discover' stage of the process and the focus area identified from the teaching and learning wheel. This will link to the Trust priorities and also include teaching and learning. Staff who are UPS / TLR post holders / central team leaders, will also have a target for 'Improving others', this may include;

- Leading professional learning meetings with clear evidence of impact
- Completing an accredited course, e.g. NPQ
- Leading a learning Community for the Trust
- Supporting school improvement in another school
- Course facilitation, e.g. ECF modules partnered with a leadership member



- UPS holders will be expected to improve others
- Leading an effective team and evidencing developing them

Staff who are leadership post holders, will also have a target for 'Improving the organisation', this may include;

- Leading on new whole school improvement projects
- SLT development and that of colleagues in and beyond own school
- Developing Trust culture as driven by the Strategic Plan
- Career progression of colleagues
- Course facilitation, e.g. leading ECF modules, NPQ delivery
- Principals will offer 10% of their time for cross Trust collaboration for school improvement

### **Performance of Support staff**

Before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each Professional Learning period, support staff will be informed of any sets of standards that are relevant to them and against which their performance in that Professional Learning period will be assessed.

### **Reviewing performance**

The performance of all staff will be reviewed on an on-going basis, evaluating information from a range of sources and not just the Professional Learning meetings. The Nene Education Trust believes it is important that a variety of methods is used to check that high standards of professional performance are established and maintained, identify any particular strengths and areas for development employees may have and gain useful information which can inform school improvement more generally.

### **Performance Review of Teaching staff**

For teachers, this will include formal observation of classroom practice, lesson dips/drop ins or learning walks, work scrutiny, data analysis and other methods to assess associated responsibilities such as planning and marking and any other post holder responsibilities.

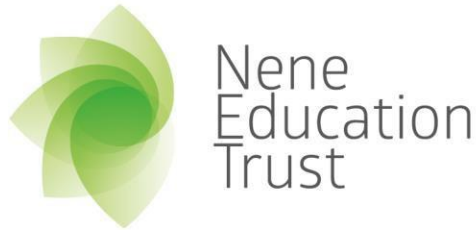
All observations, lesson dips and learning walks will be carried out in a supportive fashion and in accordance with the observation protocols determined by the Principal following consultation with the staff to whom it applies. Refer to each school's observation protocols for more details.

Teachers' performance will be regularly observed but the amount and type of classroom observation will depend on the individual circumstances of the employee and the overall needs of the school.

All classroom observations will be carried out in a supportive fashion and by trained observers with QTS.

Employees who have responsibilities outside the classroom should also expect to have their performance of those responsibilities observed and assessed.

### **Performance Review of Support staff**



The Trust's core Professional Learning principles (stated above) apply. Support staff Professional Learning objectives will take account of both the Trust's Strategic Plan and school's priorities for improvement, the job description of the employee and expected standards of performance (taking account of relevant performance standards) and be pupil focused (where relevant).

### **Development and support**

Professional Learning is a supportive process which will be used to inform continuing professional development. The Nene Education Trust wishes to encourage a positive environment and culture in which all employees take responsibility for improving their performance through appropriate development.

### **Feedback**

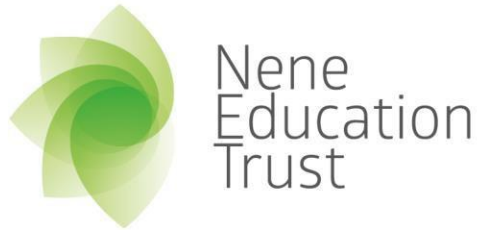
Employees will receive constructive feedback on their performance throughout the year. Following an observation of work performance, feedback will be provided as soon as practicable and no later than 5 days after an observation has taken place or other evidence has come to light. Feedback will highlight particular areas of strength as well as any areas that need attention.

Whilst it is perfectly normal for progress through the Professional Learning cycle to be monitored and additional support provided where necessary, occasionally a staff member may be identified as having particular difficulties in achieving a satisfactory standard of performance.

### **Informal Support Arrangements**

Where concerns arise about an employee's performance through monitoring, observations of performance or via other sources of information (for example parental complaints), the reviewer will meet with the employee to discuss these concerns and a way forward as part of a Support and Challenge programme. The meeting will:

- 1) give clear feedback about the areas of concern;
- 2) give the employee the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns and establish the likely causes of poor performance and identify any training needs/support needed (e.g. coaching, monitoring, structured observation) ;
- 3) clarify the required standards and agree any support (e.g. coaching, mentoring, structured observations), that will be provided to help address those specific concerns;
- 4) make clear how, and by when, the reviewer will review progress;
- 5) if it is appropriate to revise objectives, it will be necessary to allow sufficient time for improvement;
- 6) the amount of time agreed for the Support and Challenge programme will reflect the



seriousness of the concerns but should not be longer than 6 weeks;

7) the reviewer should explain the implications and process if no, or insufficient, improvement is made.

When progress is reviewed, if the reviewer is satisfied that the employee has made, or is making, sufficient improvement, the Professional Learning process will continue as normal, with any remaining issues continuing to be addressed through that process.

The reviewer will keep a note of any concerns, the support given and the review judgement. A copy of this note will be given to the employee. If required, this will inform any decision on transition to the capability procedure

### **Transition to capability**

If the reviewer is not satisfied with progress, the employee will be notified in writing that the Professional Learning system will no longer apply and that his/her performance will be managed under the capability procedure. The employee will be invited to a formal capability meeting. Please refer to the capability policy.

### **Annual assessment**

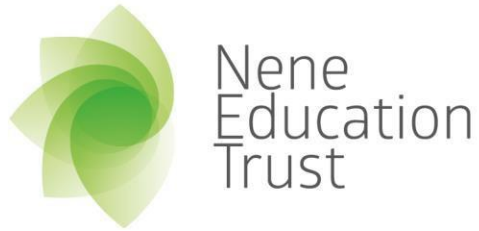
Performance and development priorities will be reviewed and addressed on a regular basis throughout the year. The employee will receive as soon as practicable following the end of each Performance review period, a written Professional Learning report and will have the opportunity to comment in writing.

The performance of each employee covered by this policy will be formally assessed at the end point of the annual Professional Learning cycle.

All staff will receive their completed written Professional Learning reports by 31 October, except in some of our larger schools where support staff may continue on a cycle that is formally concluded by 31 March.

The completed Professional Learning report will include:

- 1) details of the employee's objectives for the Professional Learning period in question;
- 2) an assessment of the employee's performance of their role and responsibilities against their objectives and, for teachers, against the relevant standards; for support staff consideration against relevant performance standards.
- 3) an assessment of the employee's training and development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them. The assessment of performance and of training and development needs will inform the planning process for the following Professional Learning period.
- 4) a recommendation on pay where that is relevant. Pay recommendations will be made by 31 October for the majority of staff with the exception of support staff as described in the



previous section whose cut off date is 31 March.

### **Appeals**

Staff will have the right to comment on the Professional Learning report and through discussion the need to appeal may be avoided.

Reviewers have a right of appeal against any of the entries in their Professional Learning written report. Details of the appeals process are as follows. The first line of appeal will be by making representations at a meeting with the reviewer. If the matter is still unresolved after this stage the matter will be heard by the reviewers line manager. The final right of appeal would be to the Appeals Committee of the Trustees using the Trust's grievance procedures.

Appeals on matters relating to pay progression will be dealt with under the procedure set out in the Trust's pay policy.