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Introduction

Dealing with teachers who are not performing as well as they could is not an easy process. However, there are benefits for the pupils, other teachers and the teacher concerned in doing so.

It is essential that throughout the procedure written evidence is gathered to support decisions on areas of concern and on the support provided to teachers to address these concerns.

These guidelines have been produced to assist managers in dealing with these issues and must be read in conjunction with the Competency Procedure for Teaching Staff.

1. Before you Start

Before an issue of competence is raised formally with a teacher, the school should have ensured that all teaching staff have access to the relevant resources, understands policies and has had clear expectations for some time.

Once it has been identified that a problem exists, it should be defined in relation to the Standards for Full Registration (SFR). It is acknowledged that this is a detailed document and should not be applied with rigorous prescription. In this context, the main areas under the SFR are:

- Planning
- Communication
- Differentiation
- Safe, orderly classroom
- Fair & consistent behaviour management
- Assessment recording and reporting
- Curriculum and subject knowledge

The following questions may assist:

- Is there an absence of planning?
- Can the teacher justify what he/she is teaching?
- Do pupils understand what they are required to do?
- How does the teacher check pupils' understanding?
- What differentiation is taking place in the class?
- Is the teacher following school policies?
- Is feedback given to pupils?

2. Evidence Gathering

Evidence of under performance may come from a variety of sources. It is important that any evidence is discussed with the teacher and recorded in writing. The teacher should also be made aware of how this evidence relates to the SFR.

A number of areas of teaching practice can be subjective. The evidence should show that all decisions have a firm basis and are being made in as objective a manner as possible.

3. The Action Plan

When issues of incompetence are first raised with a teacher under this procedure an Action Plan should be developed which details:

1. The area(s) of concern
2. The evidence to support this
3. Support agreed
4. How progress will be measured
5. The expected outcome.

An exemplar is included at Form I within this pack to assist you, and it is also advisable to seek advice from your Education Officer in compiling the plan.

Where possible, the teachers who are subject to review should take an active part in seeking support for areas where they know they are not giving of their best. A good way to start their thinking is by using the GTC self evaluation sheet – however, it is recognised that teachers are required to be reflective practitioners and may have other ways of identifying areas of concern.

4. Review Meetings

These are the formal meetings that decide whether issues of under performance have been resolved or still require to be addressed. The teacher should be notified of the meeting in advance and be made aware of his/her right to be accompanied.

At the meeting a report should be presented by the relevant officer outlining the evidence which has been gathered showing the areas of concern, the support which has been given and the progress that has been made.

The teacher, or his/her representative, will then have the opportunity to question any of the evidence presented. The chair, and HR representative, will also have the opportunity to question the evidence presented.

The teacher and/or his/her representative will then present any evidence, or mitigating circumstances. The presenting officer, chair and HR representative will have the chance to question the teacher's presentation.

The chair will then adjourn to consider the evidence present and consult with the HR representative, if appropriate. All parties will then be recalled and the chair will give their decision and any action to be taken. The teacher will be given an explanation for that action.

5. Decision Making

It is important that the decisions made throughout the Competency Procedure are made with as much information to hand as possible. The decisions can have a major impact on the individual's life, so should not be taken lightly.

There are three possible decisions at each stage.

Outcome 1:

Where improvements have been achieved to the required standard, no further action will be taken. The proceedings will be deemed to be complete.

It is important that when this decision is taken, the teacher is encouraged to continue teaching to the best of their ability and not to slip back to a situation where they are not performing satisfactorily.

Outcome 2:

In cases where the performance of the teacher has improved significantly during the review period but some areas have not reached the required standard consideration can be given to extending the review period. This will allow a further period for the teacher to reach the required standard. Only one extension of the review period can be granted before a final decision on how to progress the performance issue.

This should not be seen as the easy option. As only one extension can be granted, this option should only be used when there is a reasonable chance of sufficient progress being made within the extension period. If the evidence suggests this is unlikely, the decision should be to progress to the next stage. It is important that the Action Plan is updated if this outcome is decided upon.

Outcome 3:

Where improvements have not been achieved to the standard required the teacher will be advised that the matter will be progressed under the next stage of the procedure.

If this is the outcome, the teacher should be informed of what they are required to do to meet the standard and the support that will be provided to them during the next period.

6. Interim Progress Meetings

At each stage of the procedure a number of progress meetings will require to be held with the teacher. These should be as informal as possible and should allow open discussion of progress, areas of concern and support to be provided as stated in the Action Plan.

7. Support for Employees

The principle of the policy is to provide the teacher with all possible support to allow the teacher opportunities to improve their practice. As such all reasonable requests for support from the teacher should be considered as sympathetically as possible.

Examples of support which could be offered are:

Classroom observations – in line with the policy on classroom observation

Observation of other teachers

Team teaching

Input from a subject specialist (either within school or using the QIN)

Show examples of best practice

Clarification of policies and procedures

CPD courses

Additional resources

Peer support