



Rawdah Montessori Primary School Staff Probation Policy

Version: 1.0

Reviewed: October 2025

Next Review Due: October 2026

1. Policy Statement

Rawdah Montessori Primary School is committed to ensuring that all new staff are supported, developed, and assessed fairly during their initial period of employment. We recognise that the probationary period is essential for:

- Confirming that the individual is suitable for the role and the school community.
- Ensuring that the individual understands their responsibilities and the standards expected of them.
- Providing support, guidance, and feedback to help new staff succeed.
- Making informed decisions about long-term employment.

This policy sets out the framework for probation, ensuring a consistent, fair, and transparent process for all new staff. It reflects the school's Islamic values of justice, compassion, and integrity.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the:

- **Staff Induction Policy**
- **Staff Performance Management Policy**
- **Safer Recruitment Policy**
- **Disciplinary Policy**
- **Grievance Policy**
- **Staff Code of Conduct**

2. Purpose and Aims

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide a structured framework for assessing new staff during their probationary period.
- Ensure that new staff receive appropriate support, guidance, and feedback.
- Confirm that new staff are suitable for their role and demonstrate the required standards of performance, conduct, and professionalism.
- Identify any areas for development early and provide support to address them.
- Make fair and informed decisions about confirmation of employment, extension of probation, or termination of employment.
- Comply with employment law and statutory guidance.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all new staff joining the school, including:

- Teaching and support staff (full-time, part-time, permanent)
- Staff returning to the school after a break in service (at the discretion of the Headteacher)
- Staff moving to a significantly different role within the school (at the discretion of the Headteacher)

This policy does not normally apply to:

- Fixed-term contract staff (unless the contract duration warrants a probation period)
- Temporary or agency staff (who are covered by their own arrangements)
- Volunteers or governors

4. Legal Framework

This policy is guided by the following legislation and statutory guidance:

Legislation / Guidance	Relevance
Employment Rights Act 1996	Provides the framework for unfair dismissal claims; employees with less than 2 years' service have limited rights, but a fair process must still be followed .
Equality Act 2010	Protects against discrimination during probation and any subsequent decisions.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025	Emphasises the importance of ongoing suitability checks and vigilance during the initial period of employment .
ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures	Provides guidance on fair processes, which should be reflected in probation procedures.

5. Duration of Probation

- The standard probationary period for all new staff is **6 months**.
- The probation period is clearly stated in the staff member's **Contract of Employment**.
- In exceptional circumstances, the probation period may be extended by up to a further **3 months** (see Section 10.2). Any extension must be confirmed in writing.
- For staff moving to a significantly different role within the school, a probation period of up to **3 months** may apply, at the discretion of the Headteacher.

6. Key Principles

Principle	Explanation
Fairness and Consistency	All staff will be treated fairly and consistently throughout the probation process.
Support and Development	The probation period is primarily a supportive process, with clear feedback and guidance.
Clear Expectations	Staff will be informed of the standards expected of them and the criteria against which they will be assessed.
Regular Reviews	Progress will be reviewed at regular intervals, with written feedback provided.
Right to be Accompanied	Staff have the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or trade union representative at formal probation review meetings.
Confidentiality	All probation records will be treated confidentially and stored securely.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Governing Body	Ensure the school has an effective probation policy and that it is implemented consistently.
Headteacher	Overall responsibility for the probation process; make final decisions on confirmation, extension, or termination.
Line Manager / Appraiser	Lead the probation process for their team; conduct regular reviews; provide feedback and support; make recommendations to the Headteacher.
Mentor / Buddy	Provide day-to-day support and guidance; help the new staff member settle into the school.
HR Lead / Administrator	Maintain probation records; ensure timely reviews are scheduled; provide advice on process.
New Staff Member	Engage positively with the probation process; seek feedback; participate in reviews; demonstrate commitment to the role and school ethos.

8. The Probation Process

The probation process consists of four key stages:

8.1 Stage 1: Induction (Day 1 Onwards)

- The probation period begins on the staff member's first day of employment.
- The staff member will complete a structured induction programme in line with the **Staff Induction Policy**.
- The line manager will explain the probation process, including review dates and assessment criteria.
- Objectives for the probation period will be set, aligned with the role and school priorities.

8.2 Stage 2: Initial Review (1 Month)

A formal review meeting is held at approximately **1 month** to:

- Discuss progress against initial objectives.
- Identify any early concerns or support needs.
- Confirm that the staff member has completed core induction training.
- Provide written feedback.

Outcome: The staff member receives written confirmation that they are on track, or a note of any concerns and agreed actions.

8.3 Stage 3: Mid-Point Review (3 Months)

A formal review meeting is held at approximately **3 months** to:

- Review progress against objectives in more detail.
- Discuss any emerging strengths or areas for development.
- Identify any training or support needs.
- Provide written feedback.

Outcome: The staff member receives a written summary of progress, including:

- Confirmation that they are on track to pass probation.
- A note of any concerns and an action plan for improvement (if applicable).
- Confirmation of the next review date.

8.4 Stage 4: Final Review (5 Months)

A formal review meeting is held at approximately **5 months** to:

- Review overall performance against probation objectives.
- Gather evidence from a range of sources (e.g., lesson observations, feedback from colleagues, pupil progress data).
- Discuss the staff member's suitability for permanent employment.
- Make a recommendation to the Headteacher.

Outcome: The line manager provides a written recommendation to the Headteacher (see Section 9).

9. Assessment Criteria

During the probation period, staff will be assessed against the following criteria:

Criterion	Examples of Evidence
Safeguarding and Child Protection	Understanding of policies; vigilance; appropriate conduct; reporting concerns.
Professional Conduct	Adherence to Staff Code of Conduct; punctuality; reliability; professionalism.
Job Performance	Achievement of probation objectives; quality of work; effectiveness in role.
Relationships and Communication	Interactions with pupils, colleagues, parents, and visitors; teamwork.
Understanding of School Ethos	Alignment with Islamic values; respect for the school's faith-based ethos.
Attendance and Punctuality	Reliable attendance; timely arrival; adherence to absence reporting procedures.

Criterion	Examples of Evidence
Health and Safety	Understanding of procedures; safe working practices; reporting of hazards.

10. Possible Outcomes

At the end of the probation period, following the final review, the Headteacher will make one of the following decisions:

10.1 Confirmation of Appointment

If the staff member has met all required standards and demonstrated suitability for the role, their appointment will be confirmed in writing. This letter will:

- Confirm that probation has been successfully completed.
- Confirm that employment continues, subject to the terms of the contract.
- Note any ongoing development objectives for the performance management cycle.

10.2 Extension of Probation

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to extend the probation period to allow more time for assessment. This may apply where:

- The staff member has made progress but has not yet fully met all standards.
- There have been exceptional circumstances (e.g., prolonged absence) that prevented a full assessment.
- Additional time is needed to complete mandatory training.

An extension will normally be for a fixed period of up to **3-6 months**. The staff member will receive:

- Written confirmation of the extension and the reasons for it.
- A clear action plan with specific targets and support measures.
- Confirmation of the new review date.

10.3 Termination of Employment

If the staff member has not met the required standards and is not considered suitable for the role, their employment may be terminated during or at the end of the probation period.

- The decision will be made by the Headteacher, in consultation with the line manager and HR (where applicable).
- The staff member will be invited to a formal meeting to discuss the concerns and the proposed decision. They have the right to be accompanied.
- If the decision is to terminate employment, the staff member will receive written confirmation, including:
 - The reasons for the decision.
 - The notice period (as stated in their contract).
 - Information about their right to appeal.

Note: During the probation period, the notice period is typically shorter than the standard contractual notice (e.g., 1 week). This will be set out in the Contract of Employment.

11. Managing Concerns During Probation

If concerns about performance or conduct arise at any point during the probation period, the line manager will:

1. **Meet informally** with the staff member to discuss the concern, listen to their perspective, and agree on actions to address it.
2. **Provide support**, such as additional training, coaching, or mentoring.
3. **Set clear targets** for improvement, with a reasonable timescale.
4. **Monitor progress** and provide regular feedback.

If there is no improvement, or if the concern is more serious, the matter may be addressed through an **accelerated probation review** (see Section 11.1).

11.1 Accelerated Probation Review

If significant concerns arise that cannot wait until the next scheduled review, an accelerated review meeting will be arranged. The process will be similar to the formal review meetings, with written feedback and clear actions.

If the concerns are of a serious nature (e.g., gross misconduct), the matter may be referred directly to the **Disciplinary Policy**.

12. Sickness During Probation

- If a staff member is absent due to sickness during the probation period, the probation period will normally be **extended** by the duration of the absence, to allow for a full assessment period .
- The staff member will be informed of this in writing.
- The school's **Staff Attendance and Absence Management Policy** applies during probation.

13. Right to be Accompanied

At all formal probation review meetings (initial, mid-point, final, and accelerated), the staff member has the right to be accompanied by:

- A fellow employee of the school; or
- A trade union representative (if a member).

The companion may address the meeting, ask questions, and confer with the staff member, but may not answer questions on their behalf .

14. Appeals

Staff have the right to appeal against a decision to:

- Extend the probation period.
- Terminate employment during or at the end of probation.

14.1 Grounds for Appeal

Appeals will only be considered on the following grounds:

- A procedural irregularity occurred that affected the fairness of the process.
- New evidence has come to light that was not reasonably available at the time.
- The decision was unreasonable given the evidence.

14.2 Appeal Process

1. Submit a written appeal to the **Headteacher** (or **Chair of Governors** if the appeal concerns the Headteacher) within **5 working days** of receiving the decision.
2. The appeal will be heard by a manager or panel not previously involved in the case (e.g., a governor or external advisor).
3. The appellant has the right to be accompanied.
4. A written outcome will be provided within **10 working days** of the appeal hearing.

The appeal decision is final.

15. Record Keeping

- All probation records (including review meeting notes, feedback forms, and outcome letters) will be kept securely in the staff member's personnel file.
- Records are confidential and access is restricted to the staff member, their line manager, the Headteacher, and HR (where applicable).
- Records will be retained in line with the school's **Data Retention Schedule** and **Data Protection Policy**.

16. Support for Staff

We recognise that the probation period can be challenging. New staff are encouraged to:

- Ask questions and seek clarification at any time.
- Raise any concerns with their line manager, mentor, or the Headteacher.
- Access support from colleagues and the wider staff team.
- Familiarise themselves with the school's policies and procedures.

17. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the Headteacher and Governing Body, or sooner following:

- Changes to employment law or statutory guidance.
- Feedback from staff and managers on the probation process.
- A recommendation from an external audit or inspection.

The review will include analysis of probation outcomes, feedback, and any trends or areas for improvement.

Appendix A – Probation Review Form Template

Staff Member:

Role:

Line Manager:

Review Stage: ☐ Initial (1 month) ☐ Mid-Point (3 months) ☐ Final (5 months) ☐ Accelerated Review

Review Date:

Progress Against Objectives

Objective	Progress	Comments / Evidence
1.	<input type="checkbox"/> Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met	
2.	<input type="checkbox"/> Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met	
3.	<input type="checkbox"/> Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met	
4.	<input type="checkbox"/> Met <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Met <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met	

Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion	Rating	Comments
Safeguarding and Child Protection	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Requires Improvement	
Professional Conduct	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Requires Improvement	
Job Performance	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Requires Improvement	
Relationships and Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Requires Improvement	
Understanding of School Ethos	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Requires Improvement	
Attendance and Punctuality	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Requires Improvement	
Health and Safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Requires Improvement	

Summary of Progress

Strengths:

Areas for Development:

Support Provided / Agreed:

Recommendation (for Final Review only)

- ☐ **Confirm appointment** – All standards met.
- ☐ **Extend probation** – Further assessment required (proposed extension period: ____ months).
- ☐ **Terminate employment** – Standards not met, not suitable for role.

Signatures

Line Manager:

Date:

Staff Member:

Date:

Signatures confirm that the review has taken place and the content has been discussed. Signature does not necessarily indicate agreement with the content.

Review of Policy Dates

REVIEW DATE	REVIEWED BY	SIGNED OFF (Name & Role)
Oct 2025	Governing Body	Chair: Sohaib Tanvir
Next Review Due:		
Oct 2026	Governing Body	Chair:
	Headteacher	Headteacher: