



St. Gregory's Catholic High School

Support Staff Probationary Period Policy

Monitoring

The implementation of the policy will be monitored by the Director of Finance and Resources

Evaluation

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Director of Finance and Resources and Senior Leadership Team on 20th April 2026 prior to the submission of the policy to Governors' Community Committee for scrutiny and recommendation to the Full Governing Board for approval.

Key policy dates:

Ratified by the Full Governing Board: 8th July 2026

Review frequency: Annually

Next policy review commences: Summer Term 2027

Mission Statement

Every member of St. Gregory's Catholic High School will work together in solidarity for the common good of our diverse community. We have no better inspiration than the teaching of Jesus Christ. We believe every person is unique and made in the image of God and should be treated justly with dignity, love and respect. We will follow Jesus by embracing our God given charisms to carry out our mission to serve. We are one family inspired to learn.

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Statement of intent

St. Gregory's Catholic High School recognises the importance of ensuring that its new staff members are performing to a satisfactory standard and that they are receiving appropriate support as they settle in to their new role.

The probationary period is intended to give new employees the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to achieve a satisfactory level of performance and to determine whether the new position meets their expectations. We use this period to evaluate employees' capability, work habits and overall performance. This policy outlines the school's provision regarding probationary periods and informs staff of their rights and expectations during their probation.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- DfE 'Staffing and employment advice for schools'
- 'School teachers' pay and conditions document 2024 and guidance on school teachers' pay and conditions'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Staff Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Teacher Capability Policy
- Support Staff Capability Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The headteacher or designated member of staff will:

- Be responsible for the overall implementation of this policy.
- Deal with any concerns the line manager has regarding new employees
- Welcome new employees to the school and congratulate them on the completion of their probation period.
- Ensure the school's relevant policies and procedures are in place in order to ensure probationary periods run smoothly.

The line manager will:

- Observe whether the new employee is enjoying their role.
- Support the new employee with integrating them within the school.
- Introduce the new employee to their colleagues.
- Ensure they are developing and transferring their knowledge, skills and abilities successfully.
- Report any concerns they have regarding new employees to the headteacher.

New employees will:

- Use the probationary period to assess whether the role is right for them.
- Consider their own capability by being self-critical about their own skills, performance, attendance and general conduct.

- Discuss with their line manager how they can use their skills to successfully integrate into their new role.

3. The probationary period

The school's probationary period will last six months (unless the appointment is on a temporary basis and then the period will be proportionate).

Prior to the commencement of their probationary period, all new employees will be made aware of where to find the following:

- The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- The Staff Code of Conduct
- The Staff Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Teacher Capability or Support Staff Capability Policy as appropriate

All new staff will be expected to read, understand and act in accordance with these policies during their probationary period.

At the start of the probationary period, the line manager will meet with the new employee and discuss:

- What the employee is expected to achieve in their role during the probationary period and thereafter.
- Details of the core values of the organisation and behaviours expected of the employee.
- The standards of regular attendance expected from the employee.
- The standards of service expected from the employee.
- Any development required to help the employee to do their job.
- How any problems with performance will be addressed.
- When the probationary period review meeting will take place.

The line manager will ensure the new employee understands this information and who they can turn to for any questions and support.

The employee will agree on objectives (in line with the Job Description) at the beginning of the probationary period. The extent to which these objectives were achieved will be discussed at the end of the probationary period.

The line manager will set out details of what structured training, guidance and supervisory support the new employee can expect to help them achieve the required standards.

The line manager will explain the mechanism for identifying and discussing any problem areas at the earliest opportunity, together with the provision of regular, constructive, two-way feedback.

All new employees will be inducted in line with the school's Induction of New Staff Policy.

4. Review during the probationary period

During the probationary period, a series of formal review meetings will take place between the new employee and their line manager, including:

- On the first day of the new role.
- No later than **week 4** in the new role.
- No later than **week 12** in the new role.
- No later than **week 26** in the new role, where it is a three-month probationary period and only where an extension is required.

Prior to all meetings, the line manager will prepare a probation review form to help discussions during the meeting. The line manager will keep full, clear records, and will document all meetings throughout the probationary process, ensuring all documentation is signed off by both the new employee and the line manager. A copy of all paperwork will be given to the employee.

To assist the employee in preparing for their probation review meetings, the line manager will issue the employee with an invitation letter and a copy of the partly completed probation review form. This information will be provided in advance of the meeting, giving sufficient time for the employee to prepare.

5. Overcoming challenges and providing support

If the employee is experiencing problems at any stage during their probationary period, their line manager will discuss these with the employee as soon as possible and will not wait until the next scheduled review meeting.

The line manager will use these meetings to ensure sustained improvement in performance of the new employee and that the employee has had sufficient opportunities to achieve this.

The new employee's wellbeing will be supported in line with the school's Staff Wellbeing Policy.

At any review meeting with the employee where there are issues to be addressed, the line manager will:

- Reinforce the areas where the employee is doing well.
- Be open and honest with the employee about their shortcomings. Provide documentary evidence whenever possible.
- Give the employee the opportunity to respond. There might be some other factor behind the problem.
- Try to reach an agreement on the nature of the problem. If joint agreement can be reached, the employee is more likely to react positively to any suggestion for improvement.
- Offer guidance and support on how to overcome the difficulties. This might include extra training, coaching or closer supervision.

- Ensure the employee understands the degree of progress required and that successful completion of the probationary period is dependent on it.
- Warn the employee that if this standard is not reached, it will be necessary to terminate their employment.
- In the case of misconduct, short of gross misconduct (for which summary dismissal will be appropriate), warn the employee that any further misconduct will lead to immediate termination of their employment.

6. Successful outcome of probationary periods

If the employee's probationary period is satisfactory, the manager will inform the employee at the final meeting that their appointment will be confirmed, and a successful outcome letter will be sent to confirm this.

7. Extending the probationary period

The line manager will use their professional judgement to assess whether the probation needs to be extended to allow the employee further time to improve their performance and to demonstrate competence in the full range of duties and required behaviours.

If the new employee's performance is unsatisfactory in some areas, but their line manager feels that further training and support may bring the employee up to the required standard, an extension will be considered on a **monthly** basis.

The 'Overcoming challenges and providing support' section of this policy will also be adhered to in cases where the employee has been absent from the workplace for an extended period during probation due to circumstances beyond their control, e.g. illness or bereavement.

Extensions to the probationary period will be made before the end of the original period of probation and the line manager will inform both the new employee and a member of the SLT of the extension and the reasons why.

The line manager will set out the terms of the extension in writing to the new employee. The notification will include:

- The length of the extension and the date on which the extended period will end.
- The reason for the extension, e.g. that the employee's performance has fallen short of certain standards, but that the line manager reasonably believes that an extension will enable the employee to achieve these standards.
- The performance standards or objectives that the employee is required to achieve by the end of the extended period of probation.
- Any support, such as further training, that will be provided during the extension.
- The condition that if the employee does not meet fully the required standards by the end of the extended period of probation, their employment may be terminated.

8. Termination of contract

Where a decision to terminate the employee's contract has been made, the line manager will meet with the employee, having given them at least five days' notice in writing.

The employee will be advised that they may be represented by a trade union representative or work colleague during the meeting.

The line manager will set out clearly the reasons why the employee has not successfully completed the probationary period and will give the employee the opportunity to present their case, including any mitigating circumstances.

A letter will be provided to the employee confirming the reasons for the termination of employment.

The School Staffing Regulations 2009 procedures for dismissal will be followed in the event that termination of employment is necessary.