

Supervisions, Appraisals, Staff training and Development, and Performance improvement policy and process

We implement a system of supervision and appraisals for all of our staff following their induction and probation period.

Supervisions and Appraisals is part of the nursery's overall performance management system and promotes a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement.

The Appraisal is a formal process completed as a bi-annual meeting of each employee and their line manager to discuss his/her work. The purpose of the meeting is to review the achievements, provide a performance rating to the employees and to set objectives for going forward. These should align individual employees' goals and objectives with organisational goals and objectives.

Supervisions are more frequent taking stock meetings with the employees that are to be completed once every 3 months to ensure employees/ staff are supported and heard on their work and progress. It encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues including the opportunity for staff and their managers to:

- Discuss any issues – particularly concerning children's development or well-being, including child protection concerns
- Identify solutions to address issues as they arise
- Receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness
- Develop their own skills/training needs in order to progress in their role
- Discuss any concerns relating to changes in personal circumstances that might affect an individual's ability/suitability to work with children. (This should include any incidents resulting in a reprimand, caution or prosecution by the police, any court orders or changes to their health. These changes are recorded as a declaration on the individual member of staff's supervision form and appropriate action is taken, where applicable, in line with the safeguarding/child protection and disciplinary procedure).

The frequency of supervision meetings is once each term or according to individual needs.

A template agenda is used in all meetings to ensure consistency across the nursery. Appraisals have a detailed template as per the staff procedures handbook and staff supervisions are recorded on google forms. This clearly sets out who does what and the timeframe, i.e. what the manager is responsible for and what the practitioner needs to do.

There should always be something that a member of staff can discuss, e.g. a particular child's development, strengths or concerns. However, if there are times where staff may be struggling to identify areas to discuss in a supervision we will ask them to identify three things they have enjoyed about their job/done well since the last supervision and one thing they have least enjoyed/requires further improvement. They will be asked to complete this prior to appraisal (as set out in their responsibilities).

There may be times when supervision may be increased for members of the team as and when needed, i.e. if they have particular concerns about a child or if they are going through personal

circumstances at home, for new starters, staff returning after long-term illness, on request from staff.

It is the responsibility of the manager to plan time to ensure that all staff have supervisions and appraisals.

Supervision and appraisals are carried out by the manager/ deputy/ room leaders. If for any reason a supervision is cancelled a new date will be rearranged within 7 days.

All members of staff responsible for carrying out supervisions and appraisals are trained and supported prior to carrying these out.

Staff have a responsibility to ensure that they are available for supervision and appraisal meetings and that the necessary paperwork is complete. Information shared in supervision and appraisal sessions is confidential. The supervision and appraisal process will be evaluated once/twice a year through staff feedback and is used as part of the overall performance monitoring system at the nursery.

Performance Monitoring

Our success as a nursery is built on the contribution of each one of our staff, so we know how important it is to create an environment which fosters the very best people, where everyone feels valued and able to contribute to the goals of the nursery.

Staff Daily observations are completed for all staff by the line manager and nursery management.

These daily observations focus on staff practice and are used to highlight good practice and also practise in which needs to be improved.

Where improvements are needed, the manager completing the observation should give actions to help support the staff to improve on practice. Staff interactions, engagements and completion of daily jobs are graded to support monitoring of staff performance. The information is used to support supervisions and set individual targets, performance appraisals and to highlight areas of training needed or management support, as well as celebrating staff's hard work and focus.

Staff Performance tracking, managers are requested to complete the daily staff supervision forms and to grade the observations that will be the data to monitor the staff performance. This data can be shared with staff during termly supervisions/staff appraisals to support targets for individual staff. Overall performance of staff will be based on percentage of grades.

Green for 80% Outstanding or Good

Amber for 50% Good

Red for <50% Good

There will be times when an individual's performance falls below the standard we expect. Most performance issues can be resolved through early informal discussion, regular 1:1s, feedback and a manager's support.

This policy sets a fair and objective framework for resolving performance improvement challenges and the time driven process that would apply without discrimination.

This policy does not form part of the contract of employment.

What is poor performance?

If someone appears to be willing to perform well but isn't able to achieve the standard expected the Performance Improvement Policy will apply. This is applicable when the manager of the employee concludes the standards of the job role are not being met. Or when an employee receives a performance rating of "2 – Needs Development" on any of the sections of the performance appraisal.

Here are some examples of poor performance:

Inability to meet the needs of children within the context of the statutory framework's learning, care, & welfare requirements.

Poor communication with children, colleagues, or parents.

Using out of date subject/professional knowledge to inform work.

Missing deadlines.

Repeated errors or inaccuracies, or written documents.

Absenteeism.

Sickness.

If someone appears to have the ability to perform well but is unwilling to perform to the standard expected due to inappropriate behaviour, their attitude or wilful neglect of duties this will be considered to be misconduct and the Disciplinary Procedure will apply.

Examples of misconduct:

Wilful negligence

Behaviour contrary to nursery's code of conduct

Poor timekeeping

Fraud

Violence

Breaking the rules

Bullying or harassment

Refusing to follow reasonable instructions

Causes of Poor Performance

When a manager first recognises a performance issue it is important to consider what the underlying cause may be. Possible causes might be: Insufficient training or experience, Lack of competence, Unclear responsibilities or standards, Lack of motivation to perform well, Personal difficulties, ill health or absence, Disability, Stress, Work overload or lack of resources.

How we'll manage performance issues after a probationary period.

We hope that our employees will always perform well in their job and meet the high standards we expect. But if the performance falls below our expectations, we'll address any issues with you in a fair and supportive way, to help improve and maintain level of performance.

During the probation period the employees would be given constant feedback and their confirmation and completion of probation would be subject to the condition that their performance is satisfactory and meets the expectations and standards we need. Not meeting standards of performance while still in probation would mean an extension of the probation period or non-completion of probation and as a result dismissal.

Crucial bits

The Performance Improvement Policy applies to all colleagues, including if you're on a fixed-term contract, after you've successfully completed your probationary period, including any required training/development period

If you receive a performance rating of "needs development" at any point (either at your mid-year or end of year review) then your manager will review and discuss with you on how to support you in improving your performance.

Informal discussions

Wherever we can, we'll try to resolve performance issues informally. If your manager has any concerns about your performance, they'll raise this with you during a regular 1-2-1 or a performance review meeting, or they may set up a meeting with you just to talk about it.

Your manager will explain their concerns and discuss and agree with you the steps you need to take to improve your performance. They'll make a record so you can both remember what you've discussed and agreed. Ask your manager questions if you're not clear about what or how you need to improve and let them know if there's anything you need from them.

If the colleague's performance doesn't improve to the standard required, we'll start the formal Performance Improvement Process detailed later in this policy.

Formal meetings

If things don't improve, we'll need to move into the formal Performance Improvement Process detailed later in this policy

Before starting the formal process, your manager will make sure that:

- You know what's expected of you and that this is realistic
- You've had the level of training, advice and support you need to do your job
- The volume of work you're being given is reasonable
- You have the equipment, resources and right working conditions to do your job
- There are no underlying medical conditions that are causing your performance to suffer
- As part of the Performance Improvement Process, you'll be invited to some formal meetings to talk about your performance

You should be aware that if your performance doesn't improve throughout this series of meetings, the final outcome could be dismissal.

Any performance warnings will stay active for three months, so if your performance drops again in that time, we'll start the process again at the point you left. If your performance drops again outside this timescale, but you've demonstrated that you're capable of performing well and there have been no significant changes to your role, we may deal with this as a conduct issue under the disciplinary policy

Appeals

You'll always be given the right to appeal any performance warning. This'll be explained in the outcome letter and will tell you who to address your appeal to. You need to appeal within seven calendar days of getting your outcome letter, but we'll give you longer in exceptional circumstances.

Things to think about

Medical conditions

If a medical condition or disability may be affecting your performance at work, talk to your manager so they understand the issue and they'll look at how they can support you. This might include referring you for an occupational health assessment, so we can find out more about your condition and how it may affect you at work and whether there are any work adjustments we could make that may help.

If there are reasonable adjustments that we can support then your manager will complete a work adjustments assessment with you and then put in place any agreed adjustments. They will then allow time for these to take effect before reviewing your performance again.

Extreme underperformance

In exceptional circumstances, if your underperformance is so extreme that it puts the nursery, children or other staff at significant risk – such as if it endangers health and safety – and is due to incompetence rather than negligence or conduct, we may start the performance improvement process at any stage. This could include the final stage.

If we decide that it's not appropriate for you to carry on with your current role while things are fully investigated, we might ask you to take on alternative duties or location.

Impact of performance

If we have concerns about your performance which we're dealing with through the performance improvement process, your manager will take this into consideration during any annual performance discussions and in any formal performance rating you're given.

Just so you know, this may impact on any annual salary review increases and potential annual bonus/incentive scheme payments.

Performance Improvement Process

Informal discussions

Managers should raise any concerns they have about a colleague's performance informally first - and should keep notes of what was discussed and agreed. If the colleague's performance doesn't improve to the standard required, we'll start the formal Performance Improvement Process detailed below.

Formal meetings

If things don't improve, we'll need to move into the formal performance improvement process. Before starting the formal process, your manager will make sure that:

- You know what's expected of you and that this is realistic
- You've had the level of training, advice and support you need to do your job
- The volume of work you're being given is reasonable
- You have the equipment, resources and right working conditions to do your job
- There are no underlying medical conditions that are causing your performance to suffer
- As part of the Performance Improvement Process, you'll be invited to some formal meetings to talk about your performance

Arranging a meeting

You will be given 48 hours' notice in writing of any performance improvement meeting – and in some cases it may be longer than this. You can choose to be accompanied with a chosen representative for this meeting if you like.

You can have either a work colleague or a trade union representative come with you to any formal performance improvement meeting.

Colleagues should do their best to attend, but if they or their chosen representative can't make it, they should tell the manager holding the meeting as soon as possible letting them know dates and times they can make and the manager will try to rearrange it for a time that works for everyone.

If the colleague doesn't turn up for the meeting, without telling us in advance, we'll rearrange it and write to confirm the new details.

If they don't turn up for the rearranged meeting, we'll deal with the matter under the Disciplinary Process – unless there are exceptional circumstances, in which case we'll rearrange it once more.

Any rescheduled meetings will usually be within a week of the original meeting time.

Performance improvement review meetings

Colleagues will be invited to a Performance Improvement Review Meeting to review their performance against their Performance Improvement Plan, giving them at least 48 hours' notice.

If there's not sufficient improvement at the first meeting, we'll then schedule a second review meeting – again, usually after a minimum period of four weeks, but this may be sooner.

In these meetings we'll talk about the colleague's performance, the steps they've taken to improve and the support that's been provided. Depending on the colleague's progress, there are two possible outcomes of each meeting:

Performance has improved to the required level

Managers should send the colleague a letter to confirm this and issue a performance improvement warning. The Performance Improvement Process will end here, but the warning will stay active for three months. This means that if the colleague's performance level falls below the required level again during this time, they'll re-enter the formal process at the point they left.

Performance is not at the required level

Managers should send the colleague a letter detailing the improvements they still need to make and the date agreed for the second/final review meeting.

We'll normally confirm the outcome of any Performance Improvement Review meeting within 14 calendar days of the meeting, but if it's likely to take longer we'll let the colleague know.

If we think that the colleague's performance issue is due to their conduct or attitude rather than their capability to do the role, we may decide to move to the Disciplinary Process.

Final performance improvement review meeting

If the colleague's performance still hasn't improved to the required standard after two Performance Improvement Review Meetings, managers should invite them to a Final Performance Improvement Review Meeting giving them at least 48 hours' notice. In the letter we'll let them know that dismissal could be an outcome of the meeting.

Depending on the colleague's progress, these are two possible outcomes of the meeting:

Performance has improved to the required level

Managers should send the colleague a letter to confirm this and issue a performance warning. The Performance Improvement Process will end here, but the warning will stay active for three months – so if their performance level falls below standard during this time, they'll re-enter the formal process at the point they left.

Performance is not at the required level

We'll usually dismiss the colleague with contractual notice and send them a letter to confirm.

In exceptional circumstances, we may give them an extension to the timescale for improvement and agree a further final review date with them. As an alternative to dismissal, we may offer the colleague the option to transfer to a lower level role or apply for a suitable vacancy, if this is appropriate.

Managers should contact Directors for advice when considering dismissal or alternatives to dismissal.

Sickness during the performance improvement process

If at any point in the Performance Improvement Process the colleague goes off sick, managers should send them a letter to let them know that the process has been put on hold and will restart when they return to work.

Appeal

The colleague can appeal against a performance warning. The colleague should give the grounds for their appeal as either;

- new information or evidence is available that wasn't considered before
- the process wasn't followed correctly, or
- they feel the outcome wasn't fair and reasonable

Colleagues should send their appeal within seven calendar days of receiving the outcome letter – but we'll give them longer in exceptional circumstances.

Appeal meeting

The appeal meeting will be with an independent manager who's had nothing to do with the original decision.

The appeal manager will invite the colleague to an appeal meeting, giving them at least 48 hours' notice. This will usually be within 14 calendar days of getting the appeal letter, but we'll let the colleague know if it's going to take longer.

At the appeal meeting, we'll ask the colleague to explain the reasons for their appeal and why they feel that the original outcome wasn't appropriate.

The manager will adjourn the meeting if necessary to get further evidence. If there is any further evidence, we'll make sure the colleague is given a copy or provided access to it and give them the opportunity to respond to it.

The appeal manager will take a colleague to the meeting with them to take notes and at the end of the meeting everyone will be asked to check and sign the notes.

The manager will then adjourn the meeting while they make their decision.

Appeal outcomes

Once the appeal manager has reached their decision, they should confirm it to the colleague in writing. This will normally be within 14 calendar days, but if it's going to take longer we'll keep the colleague informed. The appeal manager may decide to:

- Reject the appeal – so the original decision is upheld
- Uphold the appeal – and overturn the dismissal

This ends the appeals process.

Staff Training and Development

We value our staff highly. We believe that ongoing personal and professional development is essential for the delivery of high-quality learning and development opportunities for children in their early years

The overall quality of our nursery is underpinned by our staff having the appropriate qualifications, training, skills, knowledge, and a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Every staff member is given the opportunity to further develop their training, knowledge and skills through a comprehensive and targeted programme of professional development. High-quality professional supervision is also provided, this provides each staff member with support, coaching and training and promotes the interests of children. Each meeting is planned based on individual performance related targets, consistent and sharply focused observation and evaluations of the impact of staff's practice.

We ensure that at least 50% of staff working with children are qualified to Level 3 (or equivalent) or above in childcare and education or Early Years Educator. Other staff working at the nursery are either qualified to Level 2 or undertaking childcare training. Where necessary staff will be supported to achieve a suitable level 2 qualification in Maths and English (as defined by the Department for Education on the Early Years Qualifications List) for the completion of the Early Years Educator.

We strongly promote continuous professional development and all staff have individual training records and training plans to enhance their skills and expertise, which are based on discussions at supervision meetings and appraisal meetings. We have a training budget which is set annually and reviewed to ensure that the team gain external support and training where needed.

To facilitate the development of staff the nursery manager and Deputy Manager are responsible to:

- Coach, mentor, lead and offer encouragement and support to achieve a high level of morale and motivation
- Promote teamwork through ongoing communication, involvement and a no blame culture to enhance nursery practice
- Provide opportunities for delegation based on skills and expertise to offer recognition and empower staff
- Encourage staff to contribute ideas for change within the nursery and hold regular staff meetings and team meetings to develop these ideas. Regular meetings are also held to discuss strategy, policy and activity planning
- Encourage staff to further their experience and knowledge by attending relevant external training courses
- Encourage staff to pass on their knowledge to those who are less experienced and share knowledge from external training with small groups of staff within the nursery
- Provide regular in-house training relevant to the needs of the nursery
- Carry out regular supervision meetings with all staff. These provide opportunities for staff to discuss any issues particularly concerning children's development or well-being including child protection concerns, identify solutions to address issues as they arise and receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness. **Staff appraisals are carried out six monthly** where objectives and action plans for staff are set out, while also identifying training needs according to their individual needs
- Develop a training plan that sets out the aims and intended outcomes of any training, addressing both the qualification and continuous professional development needs of the nursery and individual staff
- Carry out training need analysis for all individual staff, the team as a whole, and for the nursery every six months
- Promote a positive learning culture within the nursery
- Offer annual team building training.
- Carry out full evaluations of all training events and use these to evaluate the training against the aims set to enable the development of future training programmes to improve effectiveness and staff learning
- Provide inductions to welcome all new staff and assign a 'work buddy' to coach, mentor and support new staff
- Offer ongoing support and guidance
- Offer varied information sources including membership of local and national organisations, resources, publications and literature to all staff.