



**Federation of
Westminster Special Schools
& Bi-Borough Inclusion Service**

FEDERATION PROBATION POLICY

Policy approved by the Full Governing Board: July 2025
To be reviewed: July 2026 (unless advice from WCC updated earlier)

Probation

This policy is based on that issued by Westminster City Council in February 2024. It has been adapted to make it more appropriate for use within the Federation of Westminster Special Schools (FWSS) and has been adopted by the Full Governing Board. It will be reviewed annually or earlier if Westminster City Council update their advice.

Introduction

The Federation wants to create opportunities for people who join us to thrive. To help achieve that aim, we recognise all new employees need a supportive probation process when they start their employment with FWSS. The probationary period is a positive two-way process, designed to assist the employee to integrate into their new role, with an emphasis on support and development.

We believe that everyone has talent and we encourage personal development, therefore the probation process will work alongside the induction process, to help create a supportive working environment, allowing new staff to settle into the organisation and learn the key elements of their new job. It provides the opportunity to learn how the role fits within the schools or the Bi-Borough Inclusion Service and to get to know our values and aspirations and how these fit into the expected standards of performance. It will also provide the Federation with an opportunity to assess the skills, conduct, capability and attendance of new staff members. This policy provides a framework so any areas of concern can be identified, addressed and resolved.

All new staff starting employment with the Federation will be subject to a six-month probationary review period regardless of any previous local government service. This will include employees who have previously worked for the Council as an employee, contractor, agency worker, volunteer or in any other capacity. Current employees within the Federation who move between roles will not be subject to this policy, therefore if issues with their performance occurs, the Unsatisfactory Performance policy should be used.

There are some roles where the probation period will be for a longer period, this will be up to a maximum of one year.

Managers role

During probationary period managers will:

- provide a comprehensive **induction** so you understand your role in the organisation, the standards expected and how your performance will be monitored and assessed throughout the probation period
- ensure you have the tools and equipment necessary to do your job, and that you receive help and support when you need it
- hold regular 1-1 meetings with you to see how you are getting on, how you feel about the job and provide feedback on your performance
- hold formal probationary review meetings during the 3rd and in the 6th month of employment, to assess your performance progress (managers are advised to set reminders when the review is due).
- discuss areas that require improvement and provide any assistance or training that you may need
- share records of your reviews with you and retain copies on your electronic personnel file
- confirm in writing the outcome of your probationary review

Employees Role

During the probationary period you should:

- ensure you understand what is required of you in your role and strive to achieve this
- make sure you understand and follow the Federation's values and behaviours
- clarify with your manager any standards or expectations which are not clear
- discuss with your manager any help or support that you need
- attend/complete any training courses/development programmes that have been arranged for you

Probation Process

As well as regular 1-1 meetings, your manager will hold formal probationary review meetings after 3 months and 6 months to assess your performance progress. If there are areas that need improvement these will be discussed with you along with any support that might help.

At the 6th month meeting, the manager will confirm the outcome of the probation period. This would be to confirm that the probationary period has been successful OR that the probationary period has been unsuccessful and employment within the Federation will come to an end OR that the probationary period can be extended for up to 3 months.

Employment can be ended (with appropriate notice) at any time during the probationary period and can be earlier than the 6th month review meeting. However, it should be noted that this will be in exceptional circumstances only, where it is clear that, even with supportive measures, you cannot bridge the gap between current performance and expected performance within the probationary period. In general, the expectation is that where performance is a concern that the probationary period is used to support you so that you are able to perform your role fully.

If the manager decides the probationary period has been unsatisfactory and the employment needs to come to an end, they should contact the Federation HR Adviser before making any final decisions. The manager must also write to the School Headteacher/Head of BIS prior to the 6th month meeting to get approval to end the employment. This would need to detail why the manager believes this is the most appropriate course of action as well as demonstrating all the support measures that have been put in place to help you succeed and why they do not feel an extension would be appropriate.

In meetings where dismissal will be considered, you have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague and should be given at least five working days notice.

If a decision is made to terminate your employment, you will be given one months notice. You have the right of appeal against the decision to terminate your employment. Any outstanding annual leave should be taken in the notice period if it has not been taken prior.

Extension to the Probation Period

If necessary, the probation period can be extended where:

- you have not been performing satisfactorily but your manager considers that a further period of probation may improve performance
- due to sickness it has not been possible to assess performance
- an adjustment in the workplace is introduced (as a result of medical advice to comply with Health & Safety requirements or reasonable adjustments) and as a result it has not been possible to assess performance fully. If you are meeting the standards expected even without these adjustments, then instead of extending the probationary period employment should be confirmed in the normal way.

It will not be appropriate to extend the probation due to the previous review meetings having not taken place.

During and at the end of any extension period your manager will:

- meet and discuss performance with you regularly
- consider the progress you have made and see if any further support is required
- determine whether or not performance is satisfactory

If the manager deems at the end of the extension that the probationary period has been unsuccessful, they will need to get approval from the Associate Executive Headteacher to dismiss as outlined above.

Appeal Process

You should outline the grounds of your appeal and send them to the Federation Chair of Governors within 10 working days from your dismissal. They will invite you to a formal meeting and will consider the grounds of appeal and will take into account the 3 and 6 month assessment reports. They may seek additional information from you or the manager who conducted the dismissal. Any additional information should be confirmed in writing.

You have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague and will be advised of the outcome in writing within 5 working days of the decision being made (unless agreed otherwise).

If it is one of the School Headteachers or Head of the Bi-Borough Inclusion Service whose probation period has been unsatisfactory then the monitoring of progress will be by the Chair of Governors and a panel of Governors will be constituted to deal with any further action.

Matters of misconduct during probationary period

Where any misconduct occurs during the probationary period, it will be dealt under the Probation Policy. Managers will carry out a fair process to investigate the alleged misconduct and will provide you with the opportunity to respond. Where it is decided that dismissal is appropriate action, you will be informed of the reasons for dismissal and given a right to appeal. Managers should link to disciplinary guidance note on investigations.

Supporting documents and letters

Letter 1: Probation extension letter template is available [here](#).

Letter 2 : 3 month successful probation letter template is available [here](#).

Letter 3: 3 month unsuccessful probation letter template is available [here](#).

Letter 4: 6 month successful probation letter template is available [here](#).

[3 Month Probationary Review Form](#)

[6 Month Probationary Review Form](#)

[Invite - Potential end of employment meeting](#) (available from HR Provider)

[Dismissal Letter](#) (Available from HR Provider)