APPRAISAL POLICY

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Approved by	Principal
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Contents

INTRODUCTION
PURPOSE

This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance and development of all employees via our appraisal practice. It includes details of appraisal including reference to standards for all roles and levels of responsibility, as well as guidance for academic observations.

Appraisals at CATS Global Schools will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure all employees have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively and to inform continuing professional development and training. We wish to encourage a culture in which all employees take responsibility for improving their performance through engaging with meaningful objectives and professional development and training, which will be linked to our Group values, the priorities of the local centre or department and the needs and aspirations of the individual employee.

APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

This policy will apply to all employees, except those on contracts of less than one term / 3 months. New employees will undergo a probation period where participation in professional development and training will form part of probationary expectations, and they will join the next available appraisal cycle.

Academic employees who are undergoing teacher qualifications and those in their Early Career period will follow their own induction schedule, which can be embedded into their appraisal, objectives and actions. They will often have a bespoke professional development calendar but will join regular professional development activities as appropriate. Employees who are completing apprenticeships or academic teaching placements are welcome to join the appraisal process to enrich their portfolio and workplace experience, at the discretion of the employee, their mentor and line manager.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Consistency of Treatment and Fairness
CATS Global Schools is committed to ensuring consistency and fairness for all employees and we will abide by all relevant equality and diversity legislation.

Monitoring and Evaluation
The People & Engagement team, including HR Business Partners, will monitor the operation and effectiveness of appraisal arrangements.

Disputes
In trying to ensure appraisal documentation accurately reflects the appraisal meeting and captures points made by both appraiser and employee both parties are requested to read and engage with objectives on BlueSky. On occasions where there is a dispute over what is recorded, the appraisee should note their objection within the comments on BlueSky.

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To ensure appraisal conversations are captured accurately and meaningfully, both appraiser and employee are expected to engage with the appraisal practice, utilising the opportunities for notes, evidence and comments on BlueSky to record and approve the appraisal. If dispute over an appraisal process or its content arises, both appraiser and employee should document their respective points and objections during the appraisal process and using BlueSky.

Performance Development and Improvement

If the appraiser is not satisfied with the employee's progress or performance, they should carry out developmental conversations and observations, as necessary, and work with the employee to locate possible barriers and solutions. If the employee does not engage with developmental opportunities and is unable to provide valid reasons, they will be notified in writing that their performance will be managed under the Performance Improvement Procedure (see separate policy).

If the employee is not satisfied that their appraisal is taking place in a developmental way, they should approach this with the appraiser in the first instance if the professional relationship allows. If the employee does not feel able to approach the appraiser or constructive conversation breaks down, they should discuss their concerns with the appropriate HR Business Partner for their centre.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives for each employee will be populated on BlueSky by senior leaders or line managers before, or as soon as practicably after, the start of each appraisal period. Objectives will be FAST: Frequently discussed, Ambitious, Specific and Transparent (see Appendix I). The employee and appraiser will seek to agree actions to meet each objective. Actions will be appropriate to the level of experience of each individual employee Objectives and actions may need to be revised if circumstances change. Objectives will be set annually and will be aligned to Group values (see Appendix II) and local priorities.

Objectives and appraisal practice will be reviewed and monitored annually to remain appropriate, provide support as necessary and ensure feedback is provided in a timely manner. At least one mid-year review will take place during each appraisal cycle between employee and appraiser, which can be arranged by either party.

It is recommended that job descriptions are reviewed annually to ensure they remain relevant and that all parties understand role and responsibility expectations. Please check with your HR Business Partner if you have any queries.

APPRAISAL PERIOD: RESPONDING TO AND ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES

The appraisal period runs annually from November to October. An annual appraisal meeting will be held each year, with the completion by employee and validation by appraiser on BlueSky no later than the end of November. Appraisal of performance is an ongoing activity and throughout the year there will be regular informal and formal reviews, including one-to-one meetings, self-reflection and observations of practice where appropriate.

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a) October-November: The employee will have access to set objectives on BlueSky and will respond to each one with their own suggested actions, appropriate to their role. The appraiser will make a one-to-one appraisal appointment with the employee to discuss these actions and work together to refine or expand them as necessary;

b) December-February: The employee will review their own progress, adding evidence (possibly in note form at this stage) to each objective. Workplace observations will be arranged for a mutually convenient time or within a designated time frame. Employees should have the opportunity to request a specific focus for this observation (see Appendix 3);

c) March: The appraiser will arrange a calendared opportunity for the employee to review their own progress and discuss with the appraiser any potential barriers and solutions as required;

d) April-June: The employee will review their own progress, adding evidence (possibly in note form at this stage) to each objective;

e) September: The employee will review their own progress, adding evidence (in elaborated form, if not yet done) to each objective. Evidence will reflect the progress of their agreed actions. Employees will select their level of achievement: Achieved, Partially Achieved, Not Achieved. Employees will add a statement of impact reflecting on their level of achievement, including successes and any areas for development;

f) October-November: The appraiser will make one-to-one appraisal appointment with the employee to discuss progress and agree final levels of achievement. This is an opportunity to celebrate strengths and locate areas of need for future development. Appraisers will add their own note to each objective to acknowledge the employee's impact statement and progress. This appraisal meeting will also involve a discussion of objectives for the new academic year, offering an opportunity to carry over specific actions into the next appraisal cycle - see stage (a).

Employees on a fixed term contract of between three months and one year will be provided with appraisal and performance development opportunities in accordance with the principles underpinning this policy, but the length of the appraisal period will be determined by the duration of their contract.

THE ROLE OF APPRAISER

In the majority of cases an employee's appraiser will be the line manager, although there may be activities during the year where review of performance could be undertaken by a relevant individual who is not the line manager.

The appraiser will ensure the formal appraisal meeting is held with the employee and that they have the relevant documentation in relation to it. The appraiser will also gather information from other relevant parties, as appropriate, to ensure the review fairly and accurately reflects performance across all areas of the employee's role, including observations of practice and stakeholder feedback. For

employees who have been in positions of responsibility and leadership for at least a year, 360 reviews will be encouraged to promote meaningful reflection.

THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEE

CATS Global Schools seek to create a culture where employees take responsibility for their own performance development, actively engaging in discussions regarding performance, objective setting and professional development and training.

The employee will complete their actions on BlueSky in advance of a formal appraisal meeting and gather any relevant documentation for discussion. The employee is expected to actively engage with opportunities for self-review, reflection, and professional development, and is encouraged to proactively seek and engage with training opportunities or appraisal discussions.

Objectives will be reviewed throughout the annual appraisal cycle. Employees will access their objectives at the start or as soon as practicably after the start of the new appraisal cycle and respond to each objective with their own actions, appropriate to their role.

The employee will self-review their own areas of strengths and needs against professional and industry standards, as defined by the Group. Acknowledged strengths and needs can prompt professional development and training requests by the employee or the appraiser and can form actions towards an agreed objective. Self-reviews will take place at least every alternate academic year, but can take place more frequently, at the discretion of the employee and their appraiser.

FEEDBACK

Employees will receive feedback on their performance in a timely manner throughout the year. This will take place through at least two one-to-one meetings between employee and appraiser, as well as more frequent department meetings and observed practice. Appraisals, observations, feedback and responses will be recorded on BlueSky, accessible by the employee, their line manager, their appraiser (if different) and the HR Business Manager on behalf of the People & Engagement team.

Areas of strength will be acknowledged and, where appropriate, the employee will be encouraged to share effective practice with their colleagues. Existing strengths can be embedded with further professional development and training, which can be requested at any time by the employee.

Areas of need will be acknowledged and opportunities for development, as well as potential barriers, will be discussed between the employee and appraiser. Employees will be encouraged to take professional development and training opportunities offered, and these can be requested at any time by the employee.

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APPENDIX 1: FAST OBJECTIVES

FREQUENTLY DISCUSSED
Objectives should be embedded in ongoing discussions to review progress, allocate resources, prioritise initiatives and provide feedback.

AMBITIOUS
Objectives should be challenging enough, allowing for development and improving quality. However, they must also be attainable. Setting objectives that are too difficult to complete will potentially act as a demotivating factor as opposed to promoting good performance. Objectives should also take account of skills, knowledge and resources needed to achieve them and whether there is any training or development required. These can be explicitly referred to in the Success Criteria and Organisation Commitments when setting Objectives in BlueSky.

SPECIFIC
Objectives in BlueSky can make use of Success Criteria to link to concrete metrics and milestones that ensure clarity on how progress will be measured.

TRANSPARENT
Objectives and performance information should be clear and easily accessible for the employee to see, review and access at any point.

APPENDIX 2: GROUP VALUES

Objectives should be connected to our Group Values. Each of our values has specific behaviours associated with it that will relate to our different objectives. The Group Values are provided in detail below, along with instructions for setting objectives and connecting them to Group Values and Local Priorities.

Our Vision:
Inspiring the next generation of world shapers. CATS Global Schools is a leading education group committed to inspiring the next generation of world shapers. We create a positive learning environment where every student is empowered to make a contribution to shape their world. This is made possible because of the commitment of our pioneering, persevering people who do the very best for our students.

Our Mission:
To create a global community of schools that goes further than others in the pursuit of future-thinking academic excellence.

Our Values:

Pioneering

Inspired by our people, history and creativity, we are ambitious in our pursuit of new ideas, greater understanding and discovery of academic excellence.

Persevering

If it is to be, it's up to me. We are not afraid to challenge the status quo and keep going in our pursuit of better, even when it's both unusual and difficult to do so.

People

We treat each other with kindness, warmth and care, with the unwavering belief that everybody matters and that we are stronger together.

Appraisal objectives are connected to these actions:

CATS Global Schools Group Values

In BlueSky, these will sit in the 'Partnership objectives'.

Pioneering
- Draw inspiration from our people, history and creativity
- Pursue new ideas ambitiously
- Discover, understand, apply and achieve excellent academic standards

Persevering
- Take responsibility for establishing and continuing excellent practice
- Challenge norms for the sake of improvement

People
- Treat others with kindness, warmth and care
- Take proactive steps to build and consolidate our global community

Creating your Local Priorities and Individual Objectives in BlueSky:

Setting Local Priorities

In BlueSky, these will sit in the 'Organisation objectives' and should be connected to appropriate Partnership objectives (above).

Make sure you have access to your school/college's development plan or self-evaluation, so you can ensure consistency with your existing ideas.

- In **Admin**, select **Objectives** from the left-hand navigation menu.
- There are two levels that make up the structure of your plan;
    - **Organisation Priority** - this is the overall heading of the area of improvement or focus.
    - **Organisation Objective** - this is the action and detail that make up the content of its parent priority.
- Select **New Organisation Priority** in the top right corner.
- Complete the **Name** field with your priority area and press **Save**. This is commonly based on inspection criteria such as Quality of Teaching or Leadership and Management, but you might have your own specific focus, such as 'Literacy' or 'Innovation', which can be tailored to your own school/college.
- If your plan's focus areas are unlikely to change then it is **recommended not to date them.**

Now you can either create specific Objectives for individuals and teams across your school/college directly from these Organisation Priorities, or you can connect back to them later on.

Setting Individual Objectives for staff

In BlueSky, these sit in the Objectives tab, and should be connected to appropriate Partnership and Organisation objectives (above), which should not be changed. Additional connections can be made by individuals.

'Flood-filling' can be completed by the designated BlueSky admin for your school/college. Flood-filling objectives will save time by applying specific objectives to all the staff you select.
- Head into your **Admin** area and select **Flood Fill** from the left-hand navigation menu.
- Select **Objectives** from the expanded sub-menu.
- Now you can select individuals, groups of individuals or select all. This feature works best when you have arranged staff into their teams or groups, e.g.: 'Boarding staff' or 'Science department'.
- Scroll down slightly and select **Next step**.
- On the right-hand side, you can review the selected individuals. If you need to amend the individuals selected, press back in your browser, make any changes and press **Next step** to move forward again.
- Begin filling out the fields with your objective content:
    - 'Objective' should be a simple, stated aim
    (e.g.: Monitor, evaluate and improve your own leadership and your team's performance;
    - 'Success criteria' should outline what successful completion could look like
    (e.g.: Model high levels of professional standards'; 'Create opportunities to share effective practice'...)
    - 'Organisation commitments' should offer a menu of resources and opportunities your staff can access in order to achieve their objective. This could include access to budgets, calendared time, training, data or support.
    - 'Actions' should be left blank, so that individual staff can engage with the objective by identifying how they will complete it in their own role.
    - 'Evidence' should be left blank, so that individual staff can return to the objective later in the year and reflect on their progress.
- When you're happy with it, head down and press **Next step**.
- You now have the opportunity to link these professional objectives to one or multiple actions from the **Partnership objectives** and your **Organisation objectives** (above). Make any relevant selections and press **Save**.
- That's it, all the individuals you selected will now have an objective in their account.

APPENDIX 3: WORKPLACE OBSERVATIONS

At CATS Global Schools, we are determined to use observations of practice in ways that offer productive developmental value for our staff. Regular observations do not contribute to judgements about performance and staff are encouraged to peer- and self-observation as part of any induction period, or their ongoing professional development and training. Employees should be given the opportunity to request a specific focus for their observation, in line with their own needs and aspirations.

Each school will have autonomy over their own use of observations, as long as these principles are maintained, in line with current educational research and inspector/union advice:

- No member of staff should be observed on more than three separate occasions in any one academic year, and should total no longer than three hours of observation, unless a capability process is in place;
- Observations should in all instances be pre-arranged between the member of staff and their observer and at a mutually convenient time or within a designated period of time;
- Observation feedback should be provided verbally face-to-face in the first instance, as soon as feasibly possible and within 3 working days of the observation. Written feedback should be provided within 5 working days of the observation. Observed members of staff should always have the opportunity to respond to feedback, with their comments recorded in written form;
- Observations should be undertaken in the spirit of appreciative inquiry, seeking strengths that could be further developed or shared with colleagues;
- Feedback conversations should be in the spirit of professional dialogue and observers should employ open questioning to support staff in drawing their own conclusions and reflection on areas for development;
- Observations of trainee teachers and Early Career Teachers should be carried out as specified by their training institution and lead mentors, with no additional burden. Line managers may coordinate with training mentors to join an existing observation, as appropriate.

For academic observations, there is no requirement to grade lessons in line with inspection frameworks.

In cases where observed practice gives rise to concerns, the Performance Improvement Procedure will begin (see separate policy).