



BERLESDUNA
ACADEMY TRUST

“Growing Great People”

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND PERFORMANCE

PROCEDURE

This policy was reviewed by Trustees:	October 2026
This policy will be reviewed:	Annually
This policy is due for renewal:	September 2027

DATE **September 2026**

LAST EDITION: **September 2025**

REVIEW: **Annual**

Updates since last edition

4	Equality Act and Reasonable Adjustments	Addition of new clause to directly address DfE guidance which required schools to consider protected characteristics, wellbeing, working pattern & reasonable adjustments
9.4	Absence	Addition to clarify absences linked to health may result in OH referral and temporary pause if performance management process in some cases
10.2	Unsatisfactory performance	Clarifying statement regarding distinguishing performance management is not linked to disciplinary.

INDEX

1.	Introduction	4
2.	Scope.....	5
3.	Roles and Responsibilities	5
4.	Equality Act and Reasonable Adjustments	6
5.	Continuous Professional Growth and Performance	6
6.	Professional Growth Plan and Goal Setting	7
7.	Monitoring and Supporting Performance	9
8.	Reviewing Professional Growth and Performance.....	10
9.	Unsatisfactory Professional Growth and Performance.....	11
10.	Confidentiality.....	12

1. Introduction

We recognise that every member of our community, from teaching staff to administrative and support personnel, plays a pivotal role in fostering an environment where every pupil can thrive.

Our professional growth and performance procedure ensure that every staff member is empowered in becoming the best version of themselves, thus enabling each pupil to achieve the highest possible standards. Ensuring that professional practice remains up to date with the latest methodologies, technologies, and educational research. The professional growth and performance procedure outline our high expectations and provides a clear framework for a cohesive approach to professional growth, allowing all our staff to flourish as respected and valued professionals.

The objectives of professional growth within Berlesduna Trust Academy encompass the following:

- **To build and enhance expertise, ensuring continuous improvement.**
- **To facilitate reflection on personal strengths, successes, and areas for further development.**
- **To recognise and cultivate a culture of professionalism encompassing all staff.**

The procedure sets out a framework for a clear, fair and consistent assessment of the overall professional growth and performance of staff. The process is designed to be supportive and developmental, ensuring that all staff are equipped with the skills, guidance and opportunities they need to carry out their roles effectively and to continuously improve their professional practice. Setting out the professional expectation for supporting staff growth and performance through supportive line management, and a people culture that encourages professional growth while nurturing a sense of belonging and commitment to communal goals. This is aligned with the Trust strategic improvement plan, as well as the high standards expected of staff under relevant national and local frameworks, including job and person specifications.

At Berlesduna Academy Trust, the established professional standards, such as the Teachers' Standards, Headteachers' Standards, and the expectations for Teaching Assistants, represent the essential benchmarks for all relevant staff. These are core expectations that must be consistently demonstrated through the regular and effective fulfilment of professional duties. The primary purpose of the professional growth and performance procedure is not to evidence baseline compliance, this will be delivered through day to day practise and appraised and supported through day to day line management and supervision. The aim of the professional growth and performance procedure is to promote continual improvement, professional collaboration, and the enhancement of practice beyond the foundational requirements. Fostering a culture of continual development and high-quality practice across the Trust. Where evidence indicates that professional standards are not being met, appropriate support will be provided at the earliest opportunity to address identified areas of concern.

This process is independent of annual pay progression, where eligible or appropriate. Pay progression, where eligible or appropriate, will be applied in line with the Trust Pay Policy and Capability Procedures.

2. Scope

This Procedure is applicable to all trust employees including those employed to work in individual academies within the Trust and to staff who are employed to work centrally and/or support several or all Trust academies.

In the case of:

- staff with less than one year's service/on fixed term contracts - the cycle will be adjusted according to the start/duration of the contract;
- those undergoing a probationary or statutory induction period – the performance development procedure will not normally apply until this period has been successfully completed other than in exceptional circumstances.
- Early Careers Teachers will be subject to the relevant probation under the ECT scheme.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Professional Growth and Performance Reviewers

- The Trust Board will appoint a professional growth and performance reviewer for the CEO.
- The staffing structure will identify the professional growth and performance reviewer for any given employee.

The role of the professional growth and performance reviewer is to facilitate and manage the professional growth and performance process in full, ensuring it is carried out effectively and in line with Trust expectations.

3.2 It is the responsibility of the Trust Board to:

- define, communicate and monitor procedures and to ensure that they are applied in a fair and consistent manner across all schools
- will be active in quality assurance of the application and completion of the process at all levels
- ensure that systems are in place for the proper induction of new and promoted staff, and for day-to-day management, support and development of staff.

3.3 It is the responsibility of the headteacher and other managers to:

- manage professional growth and performance effectively, ensuring that staff are aware of the standards expected of them. Ensure early dialogue with staff that have emerging performance issues, with prompt support put in place to ensure they have the appropriate guidance and opportunity to improve in the relevant areas. Dealing with any minor deficiencies at the earliest stage through normal day to day supervision and probation and induction procedures
- to have regular and ongoing dialogue with staff throughout the growth cycle to support their growth, performance and wellbeing.
- facilitate regular growth check ins, making records were necessary. Reviewing and supporting staff with their ongoing professional growth and performance. Providing staff with a timeframe for review and feedback. In this instance, the term regular denotes a minimum of one conversation per term which can be facilitated in whichever format is deemed suitable and not transcribed to a formal meeting environment. The discussion points should be noted for review.

If an area of concern is identified and no improvement has been made then the decision may be taken at any point within the growth cycle to move to a process of informal focussed support and monitoring as outlined within this policy within the section marked 'Unsatisfactory Growth and Performance'.

3.4 It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- be aware of and comply with the specific standards of professional performance and development related to their area of work and workplace;
- comply fully with this procedure and to co-operate with the processes contained therein.
- actively complete, update and evaluate their personal growth plan as part of an ongoing cycle and commitment of personal development and growth. This should be completed in a timely manner throughout the cycle. Actively recording any support and guidance received from line management and/or other managers, and being proactive in identifying and raising any personal areas of concern in relation to their individual performance or development

The professional growth and performance procedure will be operated in a way which minimises additional workload on all parties.

4. Equality Act and Reasonable Adjustments

The school/Trust will ensure that this procedure is applied fairly and consistently. Particular regard will be given to any known disability, medical condition, pregnancy, menopause, wellbeing concern, caring responsibility or other circumstance that may impact performance. Reasonable adjustments will be considered and implemented where appropriate in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

5. Continuous Professional Growth and Performance

Effective professional growth is integral to achieving high performance and requires individual initiative and a collective commitment to collaboration and mutual support. The purpose of the professional growth and performance procedure is to empower staff to take ownership of their personal professional growth, rather than it being externally imposed

At Berlesduna Academy Trust, we hold ourselves to high aspirations, instilling pride in our capabilities and driven by a profound moral purpose to enhance both personal and professional competencies. We regard "Growing Great People" as critical for staff development and school improvement.

Continuous professional development and growth focuses on practices that:

- Enhance pupil and organisational outcomes.
- Develop knowledge and expertise to influence practice.
- Adopt a pointed yet impactful focus.
- Acknowledge that a uniform approach may not be effective for all.
- Ground initiatives in evidence-informed methodologies.
- Encourage collaboration among colleagues.
- Sustain efforts over time, integrating opportunities for learning, reflection, feedback, and coaching.

Staff within our Academy Trust are accountable for achieving the highest standards in their daily responsibilities. The established professional standards articulate the minimum practice expected and set a variety of expectations for professional growth and development.

Staff are encouraged to:

- Keep their knowledge and skills current, remaining self-critical and reflective.
- Assume responsibility for enhancing their craft through appropriate professional development and responsiveness to guidance from colleagues.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how pupils learn and how this influences their practices approach.
- Possess a robust grasp of relevant subject areas and curriculum specifications.

- Reflect systematically on the effectiveness of their work.
- Understand how to assess relevant subjects and curriculum areas.
- Apply professional standards to the planning, execution and evaluation of non-classroom functions, including the delivery of operational, administrative or support services essential to the school's effectiveness.
- Engage with and contribute to the improvement of centralised services, recognising their role in supporting consistency, efficiency and high standards across the Trust.

6.The Professional Growth and Performance Development Cycle

6.1 Teachers

The performance development cycle will run from September – August.

Final reviews will be completed by 30th September (31 December for headteachers)

Where agreed by both the reviewer and reviewee, in incidences where the growth goal has been completed, the final review meeting may be brought forward to the end of the academic year. This approach is to support sharing outcomes and best practise, timely reflection and effective preparation for the next growth and performance development cycle.

6.2 Support Staff

The performance development cycle will run from September – July.

Final reviews will be completed by 31st July.

7.Professional Growth Plan and Goal Setting

7.1 Professional Growth Plan

In formulating a professional growth plan, staff are responsible for taking control of their own professional learning and commitment to professional development, pedagogical excellence and effective performance. The goal set, if achieved, should contribute to the Trust's plans for improving educational provision and performance, thus improving pupil outcomes and supporting to meet the needs of the wider school community

For professional growth to be genuinely continuous and long-lasting, each staff member will devise a 'professional growth plan' that encourages reflection on their practices and facilitates focused development through sustained, intentional practice and ongoing feedback.

Early Career Teachers (ECTs) will follow a distinct programme of support and development.

This individualised plan will outline learning aspirations, intended actions, and methodologies for achieving their growth goal. Furthermore, the 'professional growth plan' requires staff to consider the anticipated impact of their work on pupil outcomes, acknowledging that changes to staff practice will enhance pupils' learning experiences.

The crux of this process remains the improvement of pupil learning; thus, our professional growth plan requires that learning be ongoing and in depth, which is more likely to establish positive influences on practice and outcomes than superficial training.

In their 'professional growth plan', each staff member, in discussion with their line manager, will establish a clear goal focused on changes or developments they wish to pursue, it is understood that affording staff the opportunity to significantly influence their own goals, practice, and inquiry serves as a powerful motivator.

The 'professional growth plan' will remain a 'live' document, subject to reflection and evaluation as necessary, while consistently underpinning our continuous professional growth objectives. Staff are encouraged to engage

in purposeful practice that challenges established routines, ensuring a concentrated focus on experimental pedagogical techniques. Furthermore, staff will be required to actively seek professional support.

Evaluating Your Progress

We aspire to instil a culture where all staff take personal responsibility for improving their practice through meaningful professional development linked to School Improvement Plan (SIP) priorities, the strategic vision of Berlesduna Academy Trust, and the requirements of the pupils under our care.

For a successful professional growth journey, the following elements must be addressed:

- Each member of staff should reflect critically on their current context, aligning with the professional standards and their practices to determine a beneficial focus for growth. Completing a reflective review document in readiness for discussion with their line manager.
- Following this reflective period, each member of staff will draft a 'professional growth plan' in anticipation of a meeting with their line manager where the focus will be finalised.
- During this meeting, typically held in October, potential focus areas will be discussed, and a growth goal refined and agreed upon, collaboratively with their line manager. In the event that a collaborative agreement cannot be reached, the line manager will determine the goal. The staff member can record their disagreement on the professional growth plan and this will be considered at the final review meeting.
- Staff will develop a conclusive version of the 'professional growth plan' based on their reflections and discussions. The growth plan should clearly describe how the growth goal will be demonstrated and the intended impact on colleagues, pupils, or the wider school community. The overarching aim is to support meaningful, relevant, and proportionate professional growth for all staff
- The success criteria linked to the professional growth goal must be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound). The nature and depth of the growth goal should be proportionate to the role, level of responsibilities, scope and nature of the work associated with the individual's role, as well as their personal aspirations and focus areas for development. While all staff are encouraged to engage in meaningful development, the scale and complexity of the goal should reflect the individual's role, influence, and capacity. Expectations will therefore vary to reflect these factors, ensuring that goals are both challenging and achievable
- The use of research-informed practice, inquiry-led approaches, or project-based work is encouraged where appropriate, with flexibility to scale these activities in line with the role and available resources. Growth goals may be pursued individually or collaboratively within teams or groups, enabling shared research, training, and outcomes. In collaborative cases, reviewers may conduct joint reflective check-ins or review meetings that acknowledge collective efforts while recognising each individual's contributions.
- The growth focus will be sustained over an extended timeframe with engagement in opportunities for continued learning, reflection, evaluation, feedback, and coaching.
- During the growth cycle, the growth goal may be adjusted by agreement with the line manager where it is identified that there is a change in individual circumstance or role that requires a new or adapted growth objective or success criteria to be set. This is inclusive of staff absence.
- Regular reflections on progress against the professional growth plan will be built into termly check-ins, with a minimum of one conversation per term. These check-ins may take the form of informal discussions, but should provide a meaningful opportunity to review progress, offer feedback, and support ongoing development.
- The culmination of the completion of this process will involve staff sharing outcomes of their focus area, developed through their growth goal. This may include contributing to collaborative learning communities and networks by reflecting on what has worked well, presenting findings from project-based work, or sharing insights via in-school networks, online platforms or Trust based forums. These opportunities support collective learning across the Trust while keeping the process purposeful, growth-focused, and proportionate to staff workload.
- All staff must actively participate in whole school initiatives and subject priorities.

- 7.2 The Trust expects all staff to take responsibility for improving their own professional growth and performance through appropriate continuing professional development. Continuous professional development (CPD) will be embedded within the growth goal setting process to support staff in fulfilling their goal and will be linked to improvement priorities and individual job roles, priorities and ambitions. Specific support, guidance and development needs will be identified through the professional growth and performance process. CPD can be completed and recognised in both classroom-based training as well as practical examples of learnings and implementation
- 7.3 The goal, if achieved, will contribute to the Academy/Trust's plans for improving educational provision and performance, improving the education of pupils and improving and developing the performance of staff. To ensure this, goals will be quality assured and moderated across the Academy/Trust to ensure consistency and fairness.

8. Monitoring and Supporting Performance

8.1 Effective Professional Reflection

Effective professional reflection is grounded in the use of professional standards as reference points to ensure that baseline expectations are consistently met. The emphasis of professional growth is building upon these standards, to deepen expertise, enhance practise and contribute more widely across the Trust.

The evidence that informs professional growth and performance is drawn from a wide and balanced range of sources, not limited to pupil attainment data or isolated observations. Our commitment is to fostering a professional culture where quality assurance is internally driven, enabling growth and improvement.

8.2 Professional Support and Feedback

Professional support is available for all staff to continue their journey of growth as great people. Such support may manifest through dialogue, collaborative planning, mentoring, coaching, feedback, and observation.

We expect staff to collaborate and forge partnerships, particularly with those holding relevant expertise, to facilitate professional growth and document their progress for monitoring and adjustment. Staff are encouraged to assist colleagues through structured opportunities for reflective discussion regarding their progress and effectiveness. Every staff member supporting a colleague is tasked with challenging and broadening thinking.

Feedback constitutes a crucial element of our improvement framework. Regular feedback on professional growth focuses fosters expertise and ensures continuous improvement. Therefore, any professional support, including observations, will be conducted in a constructive context.

All feedback will centre on the agreed-upon focus within the 'professional growth plan' and will be delivered in an appropriate manner.

8.3 Observation and Supervision

The Trust recognises observation as a valuable part of a wider approach to understanding and supporting professional practice. While not the sole measure of performance, observation offers important insights into strengths, areas for development, and the overall effectiveness of practice. All staff should expect their performance and work to be observed by their line manager, reviewer and/or senior leaders as part of ongoing professional dialogue and quality assurance.

Where appropriate, this may include both formal and informal ('drop-in') observations. These contribute to evaluating teaching and learning, or assessing the quality and consistency of professional performance across all roles, helping to ensure that high standards are established, maintained, and continuously improved. Reviewees will receive constructive feedback on their professional growth and performance throughout the year, and as soon as practicable after observation has taken place or other evidence has come to light. Where appropriate, such feedback will be confirmed in writing.

8.4 Gathering evidence over time

Active engagement in the professional growth and performance process is itself a key measure of success, along with the completion and quality of the growth goal outcome and its impact. This will form the core evidence base. Expectations of evidence and outcomes is proportionate to the nature and responsibilities of the role. Where goals are collaborative, group check-ins and shared evidence are appropriate. Evidence against the growth goal will be discussed during reviewer check-ins and may include observations, self-reflection, CPD, outcomes, planning, and professional contributions.

8.5 Check-Ins

The culture of feedback will extend to group check-ins, where collective discussions regarding progress will occur. Check-ins will enable staff members to share experiences of their professional growth, goals, barriers, and advancements, ensuring ongoing engagement.

Progress and developments made with the 'Professional Growth Plan' will be shared by staff at staff meetings, staff communities and networks at frequent and regular intervals. Monthly would be desirable but not essential.

9. Reviewing Professional Growth and Performance

9.1 All staff will be assessed on their overall professional growth and performance taking into account:

- any professional standards applicable to that role;
- the Trust vision and values and the impact these have had on the growth goal and success criteria
- performance against the growth goal and linked success criteria;
- the requirements of the job role and the degree to which staff have taken responsibility for their own professional development and growth.

9.2 Professional growth and performance priorities will be considered and addressed on a continuous basis throughout the year and there will be informal meetings/check ins as necessary to enable staff to understand their level of success towards fulfilling their personal growth goal and performance. There may be formal review meetings during the year if or as required. Professional growth and performance meetings will take place during working/directed time, excluding PPA time unless otherwise agreed.

9.3 At the end of the cycle, each reviewee's professional growth and performance will be formally appraised.

The reviewer and reviewee will meet to discuss progress against the growth goal and overall performance and professional development. The reviewee and reviewer will have an opportunity to provide and make written comment on the completed growth report, which will include:

- An assessment of the reviewee's development against their growth goal.
- An assessment of overall professional growth and performance, with reference to the appropriate professional standards and/or job description to ensure that baseline expectations were met throughout the growth cycle, and the outcome and impact on the school/Trust and their role.
- An assessment of the impact of the professional growth development undertaken, how this links to the Trust vision and values, and how it has contributed towards fulfilling the growth goal set. If meeting their growth, development and support needs, and identifying any further development needs and

actions required to support these. Assessing the impact of learning on their professional performance, pupil outcomes, and/or the wider school community. Confirming how the outcome and impact was shared within the wider school community and Trust to support sharing of best practise and improved outcomes across the Trust.

- A discussion on workload, wellbeing, working hours, flexible working opportunities, and career aspirations
- Any discussion, where relevant, to pay. In accordance with the Trust Pay Policy and Capability Procedure, an increase in pay, where eligible, will not normally be withheld unless the employee is subject to formal capability procedures.

The assessment of professional growth and performance will inform the planning process for the following appraisal period.

9.4 Absence

Where an employee has been absent during the professional growth and performance cycle, growth and performance will be assessed on the basis of any and all evidence available for the periods of attendance and where necessary on prior performance.

Where performance concerns may be linked to an employee's health, wellbeing or attendance, appropriate support will be considered including referral to Occupational Health where appropriate. The school/Trust will determine whether performance management should continue, be modified or be temporarily suspended depending on the circumstances.

10. Unsatisfactory Professional Growth and Performance

10.1 If at any point in the cycle, evidence emerges that an employee's professional growth or performance has fallen below the Trust vision and values and/or professional standards for their role, the reviewer or other appropriate manager will:

- explain the nature and seriousness of the concerns;
- detail any previous discussions/support;
- give the employee the opportunity to comment and discuss concerns.
- Inform the employee that they are going to be receiving informal support due to performance concerns;
- Give clear and specific feedback to the employee about the nature and seriousness of the concerns;
- Give the employee the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns;
- Set clear objectives and timescales for required improvement;
- Agree any support (e.g. coaching, mentoring, structured observations), that will be provided to help address those specific concerns;
- Make clear how, and by when, progress will be reviewed;
- Explain the implications and process if no, or insufficient, improvement is made – e.g. commencement of capability procedure.

The improvement plan review period will normally be a minimum of six weeks and in any case shall only be as long as is necessary to allow reasonable time for improvement and this will depend on the seriousness of the issues and individual circumstances. Regular contact will be maintained throughout the monitoring period to review and support progress.

This may also apply where employees consistently fail to develop their skills and knowledge or to sustain the expected level of performance.

- 10.2 At any point in the cycle, where performance and development concerns are serious, and/or where there has been insufficient improvement following any informal support, the professional growth and performance procedure will be suspended and the formal capability procedure will be invoked. Informal support is not a disciplinary sanction and will not result in a formal warning.

11. Confidentiality

- 11.1 A written record of all meetings or check ins conducted under this procedure may be made, either by the person holding the meeting or by an alternative person arranged to take notes. The Trust processes any personal data collected during the performance development procedure in accordance with its data protection policy. Any data collected is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of completing the performance development procedure or as set out in 10.2 below. On the conclusion of the procedure, data collected will be held in accordance with the Trust's retention schedule. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the Trust's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.
- 11.2 The professional growth and performance process and related paperwork will be treated with confidentiality. However, professional growth and development paperwork may be shared beyond the reviewer and reviewee in the following circumstances:
- with senior leaders for the purposes of quality assurance;
 - with the headteacher for the purpose of assessing eligibility to progress to the Upper Pay Range and meeting HLTA and other relevant standards;
 - where poor performance is identified;
 - with those responsible for making pay decisions for the purpose of equity, transparency and quality assurance