

PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

**Guidance
For
Governors and Principals**

Principles and Procedures

Performance Review and Staff Development Scheme

1. Context

- 1.1 The Performance Review and Staff Development Scheme (PRSD) applies to principals and teachers employed in grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland.
- 1.2 The Performance Review and Staff Development scheme (**the scheme**) sets out the procedures associated with the annual review cycle which every principal and teacher is required to participate in. The reviewee is the person being reviewed; the reviewer is the person conducting the review.
- 1.3 The School Development Plan (SDP) is an integral part of a strategic approach to development and continuous improvement at both school and individual level. The review process will be firmly focussed on this plan.
- 1.4 The scheme provides a continuous and systematic process to support principals and teachers with their professional development and career planning. It also provides a framework to help ensure that in-service training and other development provision matches the complementary needs of both the individual and the school.
- 1.5 The scheme enables principals and teachers to determine their priorities and objectives for the future both in the context of the school's development plan and their own personal, professional and career plans.
- 1.6 The scheme also enables school management to demonstrate its commitment to the professional and personal development of its teachers and facilitates them in their planning to meet identified development needs. The process will encourage regular professional dialogue between teachers throughout the school.
- 1.7 For the scheme to work effectively it is necessary to foster an environment in which :
 - the scheme is an integral part of the school's culture;
 - the scheme is seen to be fair and open;
 - the scheme is agreed and understood by all;
 - the scheme is based on a shared understanding of its purposes;
 - there is a commitment to its rationale and purposes by all involved in the process;
 - there is clarity of roles and responsibilities;
 - there is an agreed action plan with timelines in the school for the operation of the process;
 - there is agreed documentation for use in the school;
 - there is an understanding of its contribution to continuous improvement.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1 **The Board of Governors** has a strategic role and is responsible for adopting a PRSD policy for the school (see paragraph 3.4) and for monitoring its implementation. It is responsible for nominating the reviewers of the principal. Detailed guidance and training will be provided for governor reviewers and principals.
- 2.2 The **principal**, on behalf of the Board of Governors is responsible for implementing the school's policy in accordance with the requirements of the scheme. This responsibility includes cooperating with any agreed quality assurance arrangements relating to the scheme.
- 2.3 **Principals and teachers** will be reviewed annually in accordance with the scheme and the school policy.
- 2.4 **Employing Authorities** have a responsibility to provide guidance and support to schools on the scheme and to monitor and evaluate the operation and effectiveness of the scheme at school level. They have a responsibility to appoint and deploy external advisers (where appropriate) and for providing them with appropriate support, information and advice in relation to the conduct of the scheme. They also have a responsibility to monitor, assess, review and ensure that the scheme is compliant with current employment and equality legislation, including their section 75 responsibilities, both in its operation and outcomes.
- 2.5 **External Advisers** (where appropriate) will provide high quality, objective and focussed advice to the reviewers of the principal on the setting of objectives and will support them in evaluating the extent to which objectives have been met. An external adviser will meet with the governor reviewers and principal as an integral part of the scheme. Governor reviewers and the principal will be provided with detailed guidance and training on the role and function of an external adviser.
- 2.6 The **Advisory and Coordinating Group** which is representative of the employing authorities and teachers' unions will provide advice and guidance on the operation of the scheme.

3. Application of the Scheme

Eligibility for Participation

- 3.1 The principal and all qualified teachers employed in the school, including teachers who are employed on part-time and temporary contracts are subject to the scheme. Teachers excepted from this provision are teachers in their induction year and those participating in the EPD programme.

The School Development Plan

- 3.2 The School Development Plan forms an integral part of the scheme and school management should ensure it has a plan that is up-to-date, is in accordance

with relevant regulations issued by the Department of Education and has taken account of any advice or guidance prepared by the employing authority. The plan should be made available to all teachers.

Training

- 3.3 Ongoing training will be provided to support:
- governor reviewers to fulfill their role;
 - principals to develop their understanding of the principal process;
 - principals and where appropriate senior staff, to fulfill their role in implementing the scheme and leading training for teachers in school;
 - teachers to participate in the process;
 - external advisers to fulfill their role.

The School Policy

- 3.4 Each school is required to have a written policy. The school policy must reflect the requirements of the scheme and take account of any specific guidance prepared by the employing authority, after consultation with the Advisory and Coordinating Group. Teachers must be consulted about the policy before it is adopted. A model school policy is attached to this document.

Appointment of Reviewers

(a) Principals

- 3.5 The Board of Governors will designate two of its members as reviewers of the principal. One reviewer will be nominated as a point of contact for administrative purposes. **Bearing in mind the responsibilities of the Board of Governors in relation to making decisions on the pay of the principal, care needs to be taken in the appointment of reviewers to avoid a potential conflict of interest arising. For example, a teacher governor or any other member of staff at the school must not participate in the review of the principal.** To support governor reviewers in the review of the principal an external adviser may be deployed through the employing authority. A reviewer or external adviser may be replaced at any time where circumstances dictate this to be necessary and the review cycle will continue as if there was no change. Governor reviewers **should** participate in the training programme provided to enable them to fulfill their role. Principals may also attend this training to develop further their understanding of the principal process.

(b) Teachers

- 3.6 The principal is responsible for appointing the reviewers of teachers, including the teachers in the leadership group. In smaller schools the principal will normally be the reviewer. In larger schools the reviewer will normally have management and/or curricular responsibility for the teacher but in circumstances where this is not appropriate, it is a matter for the principal, in consultation with the senior management team, to determine who is best placed to undertake the role. The principal will normally be the reviewer of the vice-principal(s). In exceptional circumstances, the principal may appoint a new reviewer at any time and if it is necessary to appoint a new reviewer once a review cycle has begun, the cycle will continue with the new reviewer as if

there had been no change. Teachers will be provided with a school-based training programme that will help them participate effectively in the scheme.

The Review Process

- 3.7 For both principals and teachers the annual review process has three stages:
- **Planning and preparation:** at the beginning of the cycle a reviewee and reviewer(s) meet to agree and record the objectives for the year ahead, reflect on possible outcomes and agree how best to keep progress under review during the year.
 - **Monitoring:** during the year a reviewee and reviewer(s) will meet on at least one occasion to keep progress under review and take any supportive action needed. Monitoring will also include observation of the reviewee in his/her work situation.
 - **Review discussion:** at the end of the review cycle a reviewee and reviewer(s) meet to review achievements over the year and to discuss overall performance against the agreed objectives.

Setting/Evaluating Objectives

(a) Principals

- 3.8 At the start of the review cycle, the reviewers of the principal, the principal and the external adviser (where appropriate) will meet to agree objectives for the year ahead and to review objectives for the year just ended. The objectives of the principal should reflect the School Development Plan and the personal and career development of the principal.

- 3.9 There should be three objectives agreed between the reviewer and the principal. However, if the reviewers and the principal cannot agree on objectives it is the responsibility of the reviewers to set them. A reviewee is entitled to record in writing his/her comments in such circumstances. The role of an external adviser (where appropriate) is to provide professional advice and support rather than to determine objectives; this is the responsibility of the reviewers. Training will be provided for reviewers.

(b) Teachers

- 3.10 At the start of a review cycle the reviewer and reviewee will meet to agree three objectives for the year ahead and to review objectives for the year ended. The agreed objectives should reflect the School Development Plan and the personal and career development of the teacher. However, where a reviewer and reviewee cannot reach agreement it is the responsibility of the reviewer to set the objectives. A reviewee is entitled to record in writing his/her comments in such circumstances.

Observation/Monitoring

- 3.11 Progress towards achieving objectives should be monitored over the review year and the arrangements for monitoring, including observation, need to be agreed at the planning stage. Observation related to the objectives is an essential requirement of the scheme. The arrangements for observation should be planned and agreed in advance.

Review Discussion

- 3.12 At the end of the review cycle there will be a review discussion. At this discussion the reviewer(s) and reviewee and the external adviser (where appropriate), in the case of principals, will consider the reviewee's performance towards achieving the objectives. This meeting will also be used to provide principals and teachers with an opportunity to discuss their career aspirations, their personal and professional development needs related to their objectives and identify the action needed to achieve them.

Review Statement

- 3.13 The outcome of the review discussion will be recorded in a review statement. This should be brief and precise and be written within 10 days of the meeting. Development and training needs will be recorded in an annex to the statement. The annex forms a part of the review statement.

Use of a Review Statement

- 3.14 A review statement is a confidential document and should be treated as such. It should always be kept in a secure place and access to all or part of it must be restricted to only those entitled to such access. The annex to the review statement shall be made available to persons or bodies responsible for the provision of training and development of teachers. Information from the review process may be used in matters related to the provision of development and support for teachers or principals. In matters regarding disciplinary or dismissal procedures a review statement should not be used. Relevant information from a statement may be taken into account by school management as part of its functions relating to the effective management of the school. Review statements shall be taken into account by those responsible for taking decisions or making recommendations about the pay or performance of teachers.

Complaints Procedure

- 3.15 Complaints in respect of principals and teachers will be dealt with in accordance with the Grievance Procedure.

Equal Opportunities

- 3.16 All teachers must be treated in accordance with current equal opportunities policies and must not be discriminated against on the basis of age, disability, gender, nationality, race, religion or sexual orientation and whether they are full-/part-time staff. The review process should be used to promote equality of opportunity by encouraging all participants to fulfill their professional potential. It is vitally important to be aware of the potential for unconscious discrimination and to avoid assumptions about individuals based on stereotypes. Particular care should be taken not to disadvantage teachers who are absent from school, for example on:

- Maternity Leave;
- Sick Leave;
- Career Break;
- Secondment etc.

Quality Assurance and External Monitoring

3.17 The Employing Authorities will put in place procedures and processes to monitor and evaluate the operation and effectiveness of the scheme.