



مدرسة جلوبال الإنجليزية- العين

GLOBAL ENGLISH SCHOOL – AL AIN

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Policy:	Managing Underperformance of Teachers
Date Published	September 2019
Evaluation & Review:	Reviewed in March 2023, April 2024, April 2025 and February 2026. Next review : February 2027
Rationale:	Establishing effective performance management systems can have significant benefits for a school as it can lead to happier, more motivated and better performing employees. Reviewing, refining and implementing performance management systems are ways of helping achieve these significant benefits.
Roles of Responsibility	Principal, SLT, HoDs & Heads of School, Staff

What is underperformance?

Underperformance or poor performance can be exhibited in the following ways:

- unsatisfactory work performance, that is, a failure to perform the duties of the position or to perform them to the standard required
- non-compliance with workplace policies, [SEP] rules or procedures
- unacceptable behaviour in the workplace
- Disruptive or negative behaviour that impacts [SEP] on co-workers.

Underperformance is not the same as misconduct. Misconduct is very serious behaviour such as theft or assault which may warrant instant dismissal. In cases of misconduct employers should seek specific advice about how to proceed before taking any action.

What are the reasons for underperformance?

There are many reasons why an employee may perform poorly. Some of the common reasons include:

- an employee doesn't know what is expected because goals and/or standards or workplace policies and consequences are not clear (or have not been set)
- interpersonal differences
- there is a mismatch between an employee's capabilities and the job they are required to undertake, or the employee does not have the knowledge or skills to do the job expected of them
- an employee does not know whether they are doing a good job because there is no counselling or feedback on their performance
- lack of personal motivation, low morale in the workplace and/or poor work environment
- personal issues such as family stress, physical and/or mental health problems or problems

- with drugs or alcohol
- cultural misunderstandings
- Workplace bullying.

Underperformance should be dealt with promptly and appropriately by an employer, as employees are often unaware they are not performing well and so are unlikely to change their performance. Best practice employers understand that issues that are not addressed promptly also have the potential to become more serious over time. This can have a negative effect on the business as a whole as it can affect the productivity and performance of the entire workplace.

Step 1 – Identify the problem

It is important to understand the key drivers of performance or underperformance within the School.

It is also important to correctly and specifically identify the problem.

Step 2 – Assess and analyse the problem

The line-manager or Principal should determine:

- how serious the problem is
- how long the problem has existed, and
- how wide the gap is between what is expected and what is being delivered.

Once the problem has been identified and assessed, the appropriate line-manager or Principal (referred to as Line-Manager for clarity) should organise a meeting with the employee (teacher or school support staff) to discuss the problem.

The line-manager should let the employee know the purpose of the meeting in advance so they can adequately prepare for the meeting.

The employee should be allowed to bring a support person of their choice to the meeting. It is important that the process is, and appears to be, transparent and fair.

Step 3 – Meet with the employee to discuss the problem

It is important that the meeting takes place in private and in an environment that is comfortable and non-threatening, away from distractions and interruptions.

The line-manager should begin by holding a discussion with the employee to explain the problem in specific terms. From this conversation, the employee should be able to clearly understand:

- what the problem is
- why it is a problem
- how it impacts on the workplace, and
- why there is a concern.

The line-manager should discuss the outcomes they wish to achieve from the meeting.

The meeting should be an open discussion and the employee should have an opportunity to have their point of view heard and duly considered. The line-manager should listen to the explanation of why the problem has occurred or to any other comments the employee makes.

When having this type of meeting, it may be useful in facilitating discussion to refer to recent positive things that the employee has done to show them that you also recognise and appreciate their

strengths.

Key points for line-managers to remember when holding the meeting are to:

- talk about the issue and not the person
- explore the reasons why there is an issue
- clarify details
- stay relaxed and encouraging, and
- summarise to check your understanding of the situation.

And, when discussing shortfalls in any area, it is important to check that the employee:

- is aware that it is a task that is required of them
- has been shown what is required, and
- understands the gap between what is happening and what is required.

Step 4 – Jointly devise a solution

Where possible, it is important that a solution is jointly devised with the employee. An employee who has contributed to the solution will be more likely to accept and act on it.

When working out a solution, the line-manager should:

- explore ideas by asking open questions
- emphasise common ground
- keep the discussion on track
- focus on positive possibilities, and
- offer assistance, such as further training, mentoring, or redefining roles and expectations if and where this is appropriate.

A clear plan of action should be developed with the employee to implement the solution. This can be in the form of a performance agreement or action plan. A performance agreement or action plan can:

- reflect an understanding of performance expectations and what is to be achieved over the specified time period (performance improvement milestones)
- clarify roles and responsibilities of the employee
- include strategies for training
- include timeframes for improvement
- reinforce the value and worth of the role being performed.

A date should be set for another meeting with the employee to review progress and discuss the employee's performance against the agreed action plan.

The line-manager should keep a written record of all discussions relating to underperformance in case further action is required.

Helpful hint

When devising a solution, make sure it is clear and easy to follow and does not rely on 'performance-management speak'. Use everyday language to avoid alienating both managers and employees. For example, if terms such as 'KPIs' (Key Performance Indicators) aren't part of everyday language, don't use them in performance discussions and agreements.

Step 5 – Monitor performance

The employer should monitor the employee's performance and continue to provide feedback and encouragement.

A meeting to review and discuss the employee's performance should be held even if there is no longer an issue. This enables both parties to acknowledge that the issue has been resolved. The employer should provide both positive and negative feedback to the employee and should work with the employee to ensure that performance improvements are sustained.

More serious action may need to be taken if the employee's performance does not improve including further counselling, issuing formal warnings and ultimately if the issue cannot be resolved, termination of employment.