Appraisal and Employee Development Policy

Our Mission Statement

Our mission is to create a community of schools, built in solidarity and operating by subsidiarity, to give our pupils all they need to grow. Our schools model unity in diversity, together but unique (***'Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ'*** – 1 Corinthians 12) and work for the formation and achievement of all their pupils (***'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart'*** – Colossians 3).

Commitment to Equality

We are committed to providing a positive working environment which is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation. We are also committed to the formation and flourishing of all employees.

We have developed a number of key policies to ensure that the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in relation to human dignity and dignity in work become embedded into every aspect of school life and these policies are reviewed regularly in this regard. We recognise the importance of:

- respecting the rights and dignity of employees
- supporting the flourishing and formation of all members of the community
- providing opportunities for all to participate and contribute
- recognising talents and valuing contributions.

This appraisal and employee development policy was approved and adopted by the Saint John Southworth Catholic Academy Trust on 14 October 2026.

© The Catholic Education Service

A flourishing school is one that recognises the gifts of its members and provides opportunities to allow them to flourish for the common good of all[1].

Principles of Appraisal and Employee Development

Catholic schools are called to be *"places of human flourishing in which we will realise the fullness of our potential in all its dimensions[2]"*. We are committed to creating an environment which encourages human flourishing for both pupils and employees and this appraisal and employee development policy forms part of that commitment.

Our aim is for employees to work with us to create an environment in which all staff feel supported, where professional dialogue can take place, where accountability is welcomed, and where appraisal will be experienced as constructive, developmental and encouraging – a process rooted in trust and a shared commitment to our collective mission in Catholic education. Challenge is at the heart of the Gospels. Christ challenged all whom he encountered, each according to their needs and readiness. All employees are recognised as children of God, made in his image, empowered to make decisions, be creative, to lead and to grow.

The provision of Catholic education and formation, as a *"work of love, requires a radical commitment and service….The Church looks upon you as co-workers with an important measure of shared responsibility…To you it is given to create the future and give it direction by offering your students a set of values with which to assess their newly discovered knowledge. You are called to bring professional skills and competence and a high standard of excellence…But your responsibilities make demands on you that go far beyond the need for professional skills and competence…Through you, as through a clear window on a sunny day, students must come to see and know the richness and joy of a life lived in accordance with Christ's teaching, in response to his challenging demands"*[3]. We recognise the challenge for all employees in carrying out their 'work of love' and we are committed to nurturing them throughout their professional careers.

The appraisal and employee development process is rooted in the following commitments to all employees:

- All achievements will be celebrated

  "Each "star" has its own brightness"[4]
- All employees will be supported in their vocation, and we will assist them in gaining the skills needed to carry out their role effectively and grow professionally
- Annual reviews, which assess the contribution of employees to our shared mission in Catholic education, will be clear and consistent and will nurture a spirit of formation and professional growth in order to assist all to flourish in their work

  "together they chart a course"[5]
- We will support consistent and equitable formation and professional development within the context of our plan for improving educational provision and performance

[1] *Called to Flourish in Faith and Hope (Catholic Education Service 2024)*
[2] *Called to Flourish in Faith and Hope (Catholic Education Service 2024)*
[3] *Christ at the Centre – a summary of why the Church provides Catholic Schools – Bishops' Conference and Catholic Education Service*
[4] *Drawing New Maps of Hope, Apostolic Letter, Pope Leo XIV (27 October 2025)*
[5] *Drawing New Maps of Hope, Apostolic Letter, Pope Leo XIV (27 October 2025)*

© The Catholic Education Service

- The Christian qualities of honesty, self-knowledge, respect for others and their gifts, recognition of the needs and achievements of others, challenge of self and others, personal growth and openness will be valued
- Appraisal and employee development will offer opportunities to ensure justice for employees and pupils alike
- We will always be ambitious for the future for our pupils and our staff
- We are committed to the enhancement of professional practice for all in our *"educational constellation"*[6]
- Regard shall be had to any relevant standards and applicable codes of practice (including, but not limited to, the Teachers' Standards, the Headteachers' Standards and the SEND Code of Practice and for non-teaching staff, any code of practice applicable to their employment as referenced in their job description), but these shall not be used as a checklist against which to assess performance
- We are committed to ensuring respect, objectivity, belief in the dignity of the individual, consistency of treatment and fairness
- We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating unlawful discrimination
- We will provide a supportive environment in which employees are secure in the knowledge that their progress and commitment are acknowledged
- We will support employees to feel able to take the next step in their career
- There will be an assumption that all employees are doing their job well. Any concerns about performance will be addressed using the informal support and capability policy and that policy will only be invoked if there is clear evidence of sustained underperformance that has not been addressed through the appraisal and employee development process
- We will apply this policy in a consistent and fair way whilst monitoring the impact on workload
- We are committed to forming, nourishing and sustaining existing leaders and creating the leaders of the future
- Formal and informal observations of professional practice (teaching and non-teaching) will not form part of the appraisal and employee development process without prior notice and discussion. Informal observations of work in practice, informal drop-ins and learning walks may be conducted, in accordance with our established self-review processes, as part of our ongoing commitment to professional development and the sharing of effective practice, but these will be used solely to provide support, offer help and most importantly to celebrate strengths
- We encourage peer to peer support and collaborative working as a means to drive improvement. Peer to peer observation and collaboration is welcomed
- We will endeavour to provide all employees with time within their working hours to prepare for appraisal meetings whether as the appraiser or the appraisee.

1. Application

a. Subject to Paragraph 1(b) below, this policy applies to all employees and workers (for the purposes of this policy, the term employee will be used).

[6] *Drawing New Maps of Hope, Apostolic Letter, Pope Leo XIV (27 October 2025)*

© The Catholic Education Service

b. This policy does not apply to individuals employed under a contract of employment which is due to last for less than one term, those on an apprenticeship, those on probationary periods, Early Career Teachers and individuals who have been informed that their performance is causing concern and that they are therefore subject to the informal support and capability process.
c. This policy does not form part of any other procedure but relevant information on appraisal, including appraisal reports, may be taken into account in relation to the operation of other policies.
d. An employee is entitled to have access, by arrangement, to their personnel file and to request the deletion of time-expired records.
e. Appraisal and employee development is delegated by the board of directors in the manner set out in this policy and any relevant provision in the scheme of delegation.

2. The Appraisal Period

a. For teaching staff the appraisal period will run each academic year from 1 October to 30 September, and for non-teaching staff the appraisal period will run each calendar year from 1 September to 31 August. If you are unsure as to the appraisal period applicable to your role, please ask your line manager.
b. Employees who are employed on a fixed-term or temporary contract of less than one year will have their appraisal managed in accordance with the principles underpinning this policy. The length of the appraisal period will be determined by the duration of their contract.
c. Where an employee works part-time, this will be considered by the appraiser. This may mean, for example, that a part-time employee may not have the same number or weight of objectives as a full-time employee with comparable experience and responsibilities. Objectives for part-time employees will be proportionate and commensurate with the number of contracted hours worked. Part-time employees will not, however, always have fewer objectives than full-time employees.
d. Where an employee starts their employment part-way through the appraisal period, the appraiser shall determine the proportionate length of the appraisal period for that employee with a view to bringing their appraisal period into line with the usual appraisal period as soon as possible.
e. Where an employee transfers to a new post part-way through an appraisal period, their objectives will be reviewed by the appraiser in consultation with the employee in order to ensure that they remain appropriate. In such circumstances, a change of appraiser may also be necessary.

3. Appointing Appraisers

Appraisers will be appointed as follows:

Role	**Appraiser**
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	A panel appointed by the board of directors and usually supported by an external adviser. The number of panel members will usually be three and must include a majority of foundation directors
Other members of the Executive Team	The CEO

© The Catholic Education Service

Headteacher / Principal / Head of School / Executive Headteacher or equivalent	The CEO or a person appointed by the CEO
Teachers and support staff working in schools	A person appointed by the Headteacher / Principal / Head of School / Executive Headteacher or equivalent, usually their line manager
Teachers and support staff working in the Shared Services Team	A person appointed by the CEO, usually their line manager

a. Appraisers of teachers will generally be qualified teachers with current or recent teaching experience.
b. Where an external adviser is appointed to support appraisers, such individuals will be skilled, experienced and independent and they will have an appropriately robust background / track record in education.
c. In accordance with the diocesan protocols, the diocesan director of education / diocesan schools commissioner or their appointee will be invited to take part in the appraisal of the CEO.
d. Appraisers will be responsible for the setting of objectives and determining whether such objectives have been met referring to relevant evidence in their decision.
e. Appraisal panels may seek advice from external sources including, but not limited to, their diocese.
f. Where it becomes apparent that an appraiser will be absent for the majority of the appraisal period, another appraiser will be appointed, and this will be discussed with the employee.
g. Where an employee has a reasonable objection to the appointed appraiser, an alternative appraiser will be appointed where it can be reasonably accommodated. Where there is a question as to whether such objection is reasonable, the matter will be referred to a more senior member of staff than the appointed appraiser. For headteachers / principals / heads of school / executive heads the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Board of Directors. For executives appraised by the CEO, and the CEO, the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Board of Directors. Any decisions made as a result of such referral will be final.

4. Appraisal Objectives

a. Appraisal objectives will:
- Ensure that our Catholic ethos is preserved, developed and maintained
- Reflect our Catholic identity and mission
- Aim to support formation and professional development and assist employees with their career aspirations
- Be measurable
- Encourage a commitment to professional excellence, pedagogical excellence and effective performance
- Not be solely based on numerical data measures, including pupil achievement data
- Support employees in their work to further the mission of the Church in education

© The Catholic Education Service

"Christian education is a collective endeavour: no one educates alone. The educational community is a "we" where teachers, students, families, administrative and service staff, pastors and civil society converge to generate life[7]"

- Align with any development priorities and plans shared with employees and contribute to our plans for improving educational provision and the progress and attainment of our pupils
- Contribute to the well-being of our pupils and their spiritual, moral, social, emotional and cultural development
- Be the result of a professional dialogue
- Be challenging, specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound and include success criteria and appropriate milestones
- Be appropriate to the employee's role and level of experience
- Be driven by self-reflection, with employees contributing to discussions so that the objectives set are right for them
- Be consistent between employees of similar experience and levels of responsibility
- Reflect work/life balance and well-being considerations, individual circumstances and any disability requiring the implementation of reasonable adjustments.

b. Employees will usually have up to four objectives, but more than four objectives may be agreed if the professional development aspirations of the employee require this. One of the objectives will relate to Catholic life.

c. Objectives may be revised during the appraisal period following consultation with the employee if circumstances change (for example in cases of illness or where there is a change in role), and any revised objectives will be recorded in writing and added to the appraisal documentation.

d. Objectives will usually be personal and individual, but an objective for all employees or for a group of employees may be set if this is appropriate.

e. A system of moderation will be carried out in order to ensure that all appraisal is carried out in a consistent manner. Any system of moderation will be workload impact assessed.

f. Appraisers will take into account the formation and professional development aspirations of employees and will agree personalised formation and professional growth and development opportunities.

g. Appraisers will seek to agree objectives with employees, but should objectives not be agreed, a record of the employee's comments in relation to the objectives set shall be added to the appraisal documentation. The final decision on objectives set shall rest with the appraiser and for the avoidance of doubt, there is no right of appeal following the setting of objectives.

h. Objectives will usually be set at the beginning of the appraisal period.

i. When objectives are set, it will be made clear how the meeting of the objectives will be evidenced and what evidence may be provided by either the employee or the appraiser at review meetings.

5. Review Meetings

a. For most employees, one review meeting will take place during the appraisal period. Appraisers will determine the appropriate time for this meeting during the academic year.

[7] *Congregation for Catholic Education, Instruction "The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue", (January 2022)*

© The Catholic Education Service

This will be communicated to employees as required. Feedback during this review meeting will be essential because providing feedback to an individual on their progress towards achieving their objectives increases the chances of success. Employees will be given at least 10 school days' notice of review meeting.

b. There is no requirement for employees to present written evidence at review meetings unless they wish to do so. If they do wish to provide written evidence, it should be provided at least 5 school days prior to the review meeting in order to allow the appraiser time to review it.

c. At review meetings, employees will be expected to discuss with their appraiser progress towards their objectives, and they should expect to be involved in a two-way supportive and professional conversation.

d. Appraisers may also present evidence either verbally or in writing during review meetings. If the appraiser is going to present written evidence, it should be provided to the employee at least 5 school days prior to the review meeting.

e. Any evidence provided by the appraiser will usually be gathered through line management activity and should not therefore ordinarily come as a surprise to the employee.

f. During the process of setting objectives, the collection of specific evidence may be agreed, and this should be recorded in writing in the appraisal documentation. The collection of evidence will not increase employee workload unnecessarily.

g. If circumstances beyond an employee's control have made it difficult to make progress towards meeting objectives this will be discussed and considered in the review meeting and appropriately documented.

h. Objectives may be revised in consultation with the employee if circumstances change, for example, if an employee will be absent for a period of time due to ill-health or because they go on maternity leave.

i. Review meetings will form part of a supportive process which will be used to inform employees' formation and professional development. We would like to encourage a culture in which all employees take responsibility for improving their practice through appropriate professional development and such development will be linked to specific improvement priorities.

6. Annual Review

a. The end of the appraisal and employee development process will be the annual review meeting which will take place after the end of the Appraisal Period. Where external reviewers are appointed, they will be invited to the annual review meeting and the Diocesan Director of Education / Diocesan Schools Commissioner or their representative will also be invited to attend the annual review meeting for the CEO.

b. Sufficient time will be scheduled for annual review meetings and appraisers will use their best endeavours to prevent interruptions during annual review meetings.

c. Although the annual review meeting is the end point, performance and development priorities will be reviewed throughout the year at the review meetings described in paragraph 5 above and additional review meetings may be scheduled during the year if additional support is required to assist the employee in meeting their objectives. Where additional support is required, the nature of this support and the reasons for it will be discussed and documented and clear and reasonable timescales for improvement will be set.

© The Catholic Education Service

d. At the annual review meeting, the appraiser and the employee will seek to reach a professional consensus about whether or not the objectives have been fully or partially met, or if they have not been met, and an appraisal report will be generated during the annual review meeting. The appraisal report will include details of the employee's objectives, an assessment of the employee's performance against their objectives and any relevant professional standards, and an assessment of the employee's formation and professional development needs.
e. Where it has not been possible for an employee to fully meet their objectives, the reasons for this will be discussed at the annual review meeting and a note will be made of the reasons on the appraisal report. The appraiser will take into account and document any circumstances that were beyond the employee's control. The appraiser and the employee should ensure that there is an open dialogue during the year so that circumstances of this nature do not come as a surprise.
f. For the avoidance of doubt, not meeting objectives in full will not preclude a successful annual review.
g. Employees are encouraged to discuss any workload or wellbeing issues in the annual review meeting or at any point during the year, and this may lead to a workload impact assessment.
h. Employees are also welcome to engage in an informal flexible working discussion during the annual review which can then be followed up using the appropriate flexible working process.
i. Employees are also encouraged to discuss any support needs, including any reasonable adjustments at their annual review meeting.
j. At the end of the annual review meeting, the appraisal report will be signed by the employee and the appraiser. The employee can comment on the appraisal report in writing at that point if they wish to do so.
k. If it is not possible to reach an agreement as to the contents of the appraisal report, then the employee can appeal in accordance with paragraph 7 below.
l. All review meetings and the annual review meeting will, unless there are exceptional circumstances, take place within an employee's directed time and/or normal working hours (as appropriate) but shall not be within Planning, Preparation and Assessment time.
m. The appraisal outcome and any appraisal documents will remain confidential between the employee, appraiser and relevant senior members of staff.
n. Any link between appraisal and pay progression will be set out clearly in the pay policy. Where required in accordance with the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), recommendations on pay will be made in writing as part of an individual's appraisal report. Where applications are made to be paid on the upper pay range, in accordance with the STPCD, decision makers will have regard to appraisal reports where appropriate.
o. The informal support and capability process will only be invoked if there is clear evidence of sustained underperformance that has not been addressed through this appraisal and employee development process and any support provided in accordance with paragraph c above.

7. Appeals

a. Employees have a right of appeal against any of the entries in the appraisal report.

© The Catholic Education Service

b. Appeals should be made in writing to the Clerk to the Board of Directors within 10 school days of the annual review meeting.
c. Appeal letters must set out the grounds of the appeal in detail.
d. An appeal meeting will normally be held within 20 school days of an appeal letter being received. You may be accompanied by a companion at an appeal meeting provided that you let the person convening the meeting know the identity of your companion at least one school day before the appeal meeting. If your companion is not able to attend the scheduled appeal meeting every effort will be made to reschedule it, but if they are unable to attend the rearranged date the meeting may be held in their absence or written representations may be accepted. Any evidence to be relied on by either party must be submitted to the other at least 5 school days prior to the appeal meeting.
e. If you require any reasonable adjustments to enable you to attend an appeal meeting, you must let the person convening the meeting know as soon as possible.
f. Appeals will be heard by a more senior member of staff than the original appraiser and this individual must not have had any involvement in the appraisal up to that point. For headteachers / principals / heads of school / executive heads appeals may be heard by a panel appointed by the board of directors and the members of the panel will not have had any involvement in the appraisal up to that point. Appeals from executives appraised by the CEO, and any appeal by the CEO will be heard by a panel appointed by the board of directors and the members of the panel will not have had any involvement in the appraisal up to that point.
g. The outcome of the appeal will be confirmed in writing within 5 school days of the date of the appeal meeting. The decision reached is final and there will be no further right of appeal.
h. The possible outcomes of an appeal meeting are as follows:

- the appeal is not upheld and any disputed entries in the appraisal report remain as originally recorded
- the appeal is upheld and any disputed entries in the appraisal report are referred back to the original appraiser with instructions as to the action that should be taken.

8. Companions

a. Employees may bring a companion to an appeal meeting as provided in paragraph 7 above. Companions should not be brought to review meetings or annual review meetings unless this is necessary because the employee requires a reasonable adjustment.
b. Where a companion attends an appeal meeting, they can address the appeal meeting in order to:
    - put the case
    - sum up the case
    - respond on behalf of the employee to any view expressed in the appeal meeting
    - ask questions on behalf of the employee.
c. Companions can also confer with the employee during an appeal meeting.
d. A companion has no right to:
    - answer questions on the employee's behalf
    - address the appeal meeting if the employee does not wish it
    - prevent the employee from explaining their case.

© The Catholic Education Service

e. A companion can be a willing work colleague not involved in the substance of the employee's appeal, a trade union official, an accredited representative of a trade union, or a representative of any professional association of which the employee is a member.

9. Timing of Appeal Meetings

The aim is that appeal meetings will be held at mutually convenient times but depending on the circumstances, meetings may:

- need to be held when an employee is timetabled to teach or timetabled to work (in which case cover will be arranged)
- exceptionally be held after the end of the school day, including in directed time
- not be held on days on which the employee would not ordinarily work
- be extended by agreement between the parties if the time limits cannot be met for any justifiable reason.

"Be servants of the world of education, choreographers of hope, tireless seekers of wisdom, credible creators of expressions of beauty"[8]

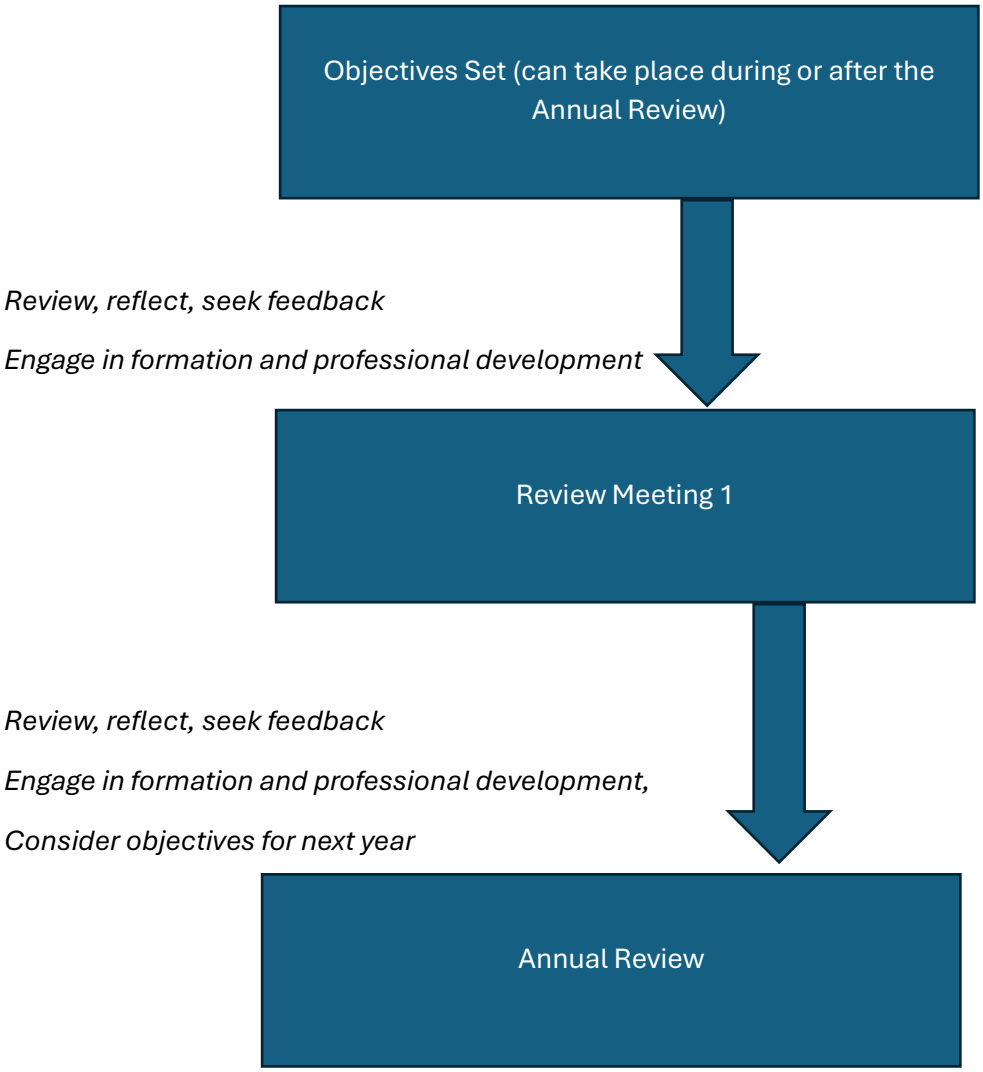
Where timescales are set out in this policy the term "school day" has been used. For staff who work all year round, it may be necessary to use working days rather than school days in order to ensure that the process is completed as soon as possible. If working days are to be used the employee will be informed that this is the case.

This policy will be reviewed as required and employees will be consulted before any revised policy is adopted.

[8] *Drawing New Maps of Hope, Apostolic Letter, Pope Leo XIV (27 October 2025)*

© The Catholic Education Service

Appraisal and Employee Development Cycle



© The Catholic Education Service