



Warrington Primary Academy Trust
Managing Employee Performance (Capability) Procedure
Ratified: December 2023
Next Review Date: December 2025

Policy Responsibilities and Review

Policy type:	Trust Wide
Issue number:	V2
Guidance:	Adopted from WBC Procedure
Committee responsible:	Standards Committee
Related policies:	Appraisal Policy 2021
Chair of Trustees signature:	
Changes in latest version:	Minor wording amendments agreed following JCNC 23/11/21
Review frequency:	Biennially

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Scope of the Procedure	3
3. Setting Standards	4
4. Support	4
5. Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT).....	4
6. Formal Capability Meeting – Stage 1.....	5
7. Formal Review Meeting – Stage 2.....	7
8. Capability Hearing – Stage 3.....	7
9. Appeal	8
10. General Principles	9
11. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review	9
12. Further Information.....	9
Appendix 1- TIMESCALES FOR TEACHERS FORMAL PROCESS	10
Appendix 2 – MANAGING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE (TEACHERS)	12
Appendix 3 – PROCEDURE FOR STAFF DISMISSAL / APPEAL HEARINGS	13

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The School and its Governors recognise that its employees are its best asset and encourage improved performance by putting into place a range of policies, practices, procedures and systems that are vital in achieving excellence in teaching and learning.
- 1.2 This procedure has been designed to complement other School policies, procedures and initiatives aimed at developing employees and improving performance management.
- 1.3 The procedure sets out the steps to be followed by the Headteacher or other nominated person when an employee seems to be experiencing difficulties in carrying out his/her job.
- 1.4 A clear distinction is drawn between poor performance due to circumstances that lead to not attaining and maintaining the required standard (after any external mitigating circumstances have been considered) and conduct that would be dealt with under the School's Disciplinary Procedure.
- 1.5 The procedure focuses on helping the employee to achieve appropriate levels of work performance through training, coaching, target setting and monitoring. It is therefore essential that the employee receives appropriate support and guidance both on a work based and personal level.
- 1.6 The procedure contains the steps to be taken in cases where the employee's performance does not improve, for whatever reason, and further action may be required. Due account must be taken of the circumstances of any disabled employee whose situation may be unique and requires consideration of their condition in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.7 Effective management, clear expectations and appropriate support will go a long way towards addressing weaknesses in performance. Early identification of problems through appraisal and review will help avoid the need for the implementation of formal capability procedures. In some cases an improvement may be achieved informally with a minimum of support and attention.
- 1.8 This procedure should only be invoked once **the 'teachers experiencing difficulties in section 12 of the appraisal policy has been exhausted.**

2. Scope of the Procedure

- 2.1 This procedure applies to Teachers (including the Exec. / Headteacher) within schools and should be adopted by the Governing Committee accordingly.

Role of Governors

- 2.2 Governors will not normally be involved with the Managing Employee Performance capability procedure before the Capability Hearing. The exception to this is when an Exec / Headteacher is the subject of the procedure when the chair of governors will be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of performance.

- 2.3 Governing Committees must by law have procedures for managing the performance of staff. They must have regard to guidance from the Secretary of State in determining staff performance. This document is compliant with this statutory guidance.

3. Setting Standards

- 3.1 The statutory framework for Appraisal / performance management in England is set out in The Education (School Teacher's Appraisal (England) Regulations 2012.
- 3.2 Each teacher should receive a written appraisal report at the conclusion of the appraisal cycle. This should be compiled with reference to the employee's objectives, the employee's performance against those objectives, training and development needs and a recommendation on pay.
- 3.3 Teachers are bound by the professional standards expected of a teacher. They are also bound by the terms contained within the School Teachers Pay and Conditions document. Clear job descriptions and clearly defined expectations will assist in establishing clear performance standards.
- 3.4 Exec / Headteachers must ensure that employees are aware of the expected level of performance and agree targets to achieve the required goals.
- 3.5 The nature of any performance concerns, their level of seriousness and causes must be investigated and identified by structured information gathering and systematic recording e.g. a review of workload to ensure there is reasonable time to fulfil the duties or whether personal circumstances are impacting on their performance.

4. Support

- 4.1 Individuals should be encouraged to contact their trade union or professional association for advice and guidance. All employees have a legal entitlement to be accompanied by a colleague or union representative at any formal meeting under this procedure. Best practice would recommend that there be an opportunity for an employee to be accompanied at informal meetings, if agreed by all parties.
- 4.2 Those monitoring the performance should offer feedback and instruction to help the employee improve performance; this should be done in line with the school's appraisal process. If training courses or assistance from colleagues would be helpful, these should be arranged as soon as possible but should not interrupt the timing of the procedure.
- 4.3 A referral to Occupational Health should be considered when reviewing the health and welfare of the employee during this process. (Also see Section 12 of Appraisal Policy)

5. Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT)

- 5.1 In such instances where there are serious concerns regarding the teaching of a NQT, the Exec / Headteacher may wish to consider instigating this procedure at any stage before the end of the induction period, which may lead to dismissal before the end of

the induction period. This provides structured advice for supporting and monitoring performance.

5.2 If this is the case, for as long as the NQT remains at the school the induction procedure continues concurrently and in parallel with the Managing Employee Performance procedure

5.3 Before initiating a Managing Employee Performance procedure, it is important that the Exec / Headteacher is assured that the following has taken place;

- The NQT's performance has been monitored
- The NQT has been clearly advised about the aspects of their practice which are causing concern and understands the improvements expected.
- A reasonable and time limited period (at least 4 weeks) of careful and structured support/training, monitoring, evaluation and evidence gathering has taken place, giving the NQT an opportunity to improve.
- The NQT has been informed that failure to improve may lead to entry into the formal Managing Employee Performance procedure and that this may lead to dismissal.
- Refer to the Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (England) Regulations 2008.

5.3.1 If an NQT is dismissed on the grounds of unsatisfactory work performance before the end of the induction period, they may seek to complete induction at another school. The Headteacher and appropriate body will, however, need to pass on any induction records and documentation to the new school and Appropriate Body.

Note:

This procedure should only be invoked once **the 'teachers experiencing difficulties' found in the appraisal policy has been exhausted.**

6. Formal Capability Meeting – Stage 1

6.1 This procedure applies only to teachers or Exec / Headteachers where there are serious concerns about their performance that the appraisal process has been unable to address.

6.2 At least ten working days' notice will be given of the formal capability meeting. The invitation will contain sufficient information about the concerns about performance and their possible consequences, to enable the teacher to prepare to answer the case at a formal capability meeting. It will make reference to any written evidence; the details of the time and place of the meeting; and will advise the teacher of their right to be accompanied by a work based colleague or trade union representative.

6.3 The formal meeting is intended to establish the facts. It will be conducted by the Exec / Headteacher/Nominated person for all teachers within the school; however if the Exec / Headteachers performance is in question, this meeting will be conducted by the chair of governors who will be supported by a suitably skilled and or qualified external adviser / SIP and the CEO of the Trust. The meeting allows the member of

staff / Exec / Headteacher, to respond to concerns about their performance and to make relevant representations. This may provide new information or a different context to the information/evidence already collected.

6.4 The person conducting the meeting will:

- Identify the shortcomings, for example which of the standards expected of the Teachers are not being met;
- Give clear guidance on the improved standards of performance needed to ensure that the teacher can be moved out of the formal capability procedure. This may include the setting of new objectives focussed on specific areas of concern that need to be addressed, any success criteria that might be appropriate and the evidence that will be used to assess whether or not the necessary improvement has been made;
- Explain any relevant training and support that will be available to help the teacher improve their performance, in line with the Teachers Professional Standards;
- Set out the timetable for improvement and explain how performance will be monitored and reviewed.
- Confirm that the normal appraisal process will be suspended from the point of the Formal Capability meeting.
- Due regard should be made to the health and welfare of the individual and consideration given to a referral to the Occupational Health Service;
- The detail should be brought together in an action plan; templates can be sourced from WBC Human Resources.
- Consider a workload impact assessment based on a clear directed time statement.

6.5 A timetable for this process will depend on the individual circumstance of each case, it should be between four and twelve weeks; it is for the school to determine the time period taking into consideration that it should be reasonable, proportionate, but not excessively long (a 4 week period should only be set in exceptional circumstances); it should also provide sufficient opportunity for improvement to take place. Teachers and Exec / Headteachers must be advised at this stage, that failure to improve within a set time period could ultimately lead to dismissal.

6.6 The employee will be informed in writing of the matters covered in the bullet points above and given information about the timing of the review stage. The action plan should be included with the letter, ensuring it is clear what programme of action and support is to take place, the monitoring and timescales and the possibility of terminating the employment of the employee should sufficient improvement not be made.

6.7 It may be the case, that following discussions held through the course of the meeting that the person conducting the meeting may conclude that there are insufficient grounds for pursuing the capability issue and that it would be more appropriate to

continue to address the remaining concerns through the appraisal process. In such cases, the capability procedure will come to an end. The person conducting the meeting may also adjourn the meeting if they decide that further investigation is needed, or that more time is needed in which to consider the additional information. Again, the employee should be informed in writing if this is the case. In these circumstances the teacher will not be considered to have entered formal capability.

7. Formal Review Meeting – Stage 2

- 7.1 At the end of the formal performance monitoring and review period the employee will be invited to a formal review meeting.
- 7.2 The employee should be given at least ten working days' notice of the meeting in writing which will provide details of the time and place of the meeting and will advise the teacher of their right to be accompanied by a work based colleague or trade union representative.
- 7.3 If, following a review of progress against the action plan, the person conducting the meeting is satisfied that the employee has made sufficient improvement, the capability procedure will cease and the appraisal process will re-start.

NB: It is important to note that if the employee's performance causes concern within 12 months of returning to the appraisal process, they will again return to the capability procedure at the point from which they left it.

- 7.4 If no, or insufficient improvement has been made during the monitoring and review period, the employee will be invited to a Stage 3 capability hearing.
- 7.5 As before the employee will be sent a letter, which will inform, in writing, that failure to achieve an acceptable standard of performance (within the set timescale), may result in dismissal and given information about the handling of the further monitoring and review period and the employee will be invited to a capability hearing.

8. Capability Hearing – Stage 3

- 8.1 A capability hearing will be arranged where an employee has made no, or insufficient improvement during the monitoring and review period and the Exec / Headteacher/ nominated person will make a recommendation to the Governing Committee that the employee should be dismissed. In the case of unresolved Exec / Headteacher underperformance the Trust CEO will make recommendations to the Trust Board.
- 8.2 As with the formal capability meeting and formal review meeting, employees should be given at least ten working days' notice of the Capability Hearing, which will give them details of the time and place of the meeting and will advise the teacher of their right to be accompanied by a work based colleague or trade union representative
- 8.3 The recommendation will be presented by the person who has undertaken the formal capability and review meetings or such other person with sufficient knowledge.

- 8.4 If it is deemed that an acceptable standard of performance has been achieved during the monitoring/further monitoring and review period, the capability procedure will end and the appraisal process will re-start.

If, however, a decision to dismiss the employee is made, voluntary aided schools are advised to discuss the matter with the local authority, community and voluntary controlled schools must discuss the matter with the local authority. The power to dismiss staff in WPAT schools rests with the Local Governing Committees and the WPAT Trust Board

Once the decision to dismiss has been taken, the Local Governing Committee (Dismissal Panel) will dismiss the employee with notice. Similar arrangements are made by LGC for Exec / Headteachers and the Trust Chair in the case of CEO. (See appendix 3 for guidance on procedures for staff dismissal / appeal hearings.)

The employee will be informed as soon as possible of the reasons for dismissal, the date on which their employment contract will end, the appropriate period of notice and their right of appeal.

- 8.5 The power to dismiss staff in school rests with the Trust and The Governing Committees. In community and voluntary controlled schools this will need to be confirmed with the local authority. The Trust and The Governing Committees will dismiss the teacher on the grounds of capability giving the member of staff the appropriate notice.

9. Appeal

- 9.1 If a Teacher/Exec / Headteacher or CEO feels that a decision to dismiss them is wrong or unjust, they may appeal in writing against the decision within ten working days of receiving written notification of the decision. They must set out in their appeal letter the grounds on which they wish to lodge an appeal. The grounds for appeal may include for example: the severity of the outcome, new significant evidence coming to light or alleged procedural deficiencies.
- 9.2 The decision of the Appeals Committee will be final. A statutory right to access an Employment Tribunal is not affected.
- 9.3 Appeals will be heard without unreasonable delay and where possible, at an agreed time and place. As before, staff should be given at least ten working days' notice, which will give them details of the time and place of the meeting and will advise the teacher of their right to be accompanied by a work based colleague or trade union representative.
- 9.4 The Appeals Committee of the Governing Committee will hear the appeal. The Appeals Committee will consist of a minimum of 3 Governors who were not involved in the previous decision making. The Appeal Committee will review all evidence presented by the Exec / Headteacher/Governing Committee and employee and should have access to impartial advice from a HR Business Partner (who has not been involved in the case previously). The procedure to be followed is set out at Appendix 1.

10. General Principles

- 10.1 **Grievances** - Where a member of staff raises a grievance during the capability procedure the capability procedure may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance. Where the grievance and capability cases are related it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently.
- 10.2 **Sickness** - If long term sickness absence appears to have been triggered by the commencement of monitoring or a formal capability procedure, the case will be dealt with in accordance with the school's managing attendance policy (*e.g. referred immediately to the occupational health service to assess the member of staff's health and fitness for continued employment*).
- 10.3 **Consistency of Treatment and Fairness** - the Governing Committee is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness and will abide by all relevant equality legislation.
- 10.4 **Definitions** - unless indicated otherwise, all references to "teacher" include the Exec / Headteacher.
- 10.5 **Delegation** - normal rules apply in respect of the delegation of functions by governing bodies, Headteachers and local authorities.

11. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- 11.1 The Governing Committee of the School has specific responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of this procedure. This procedure is monitored, evaluated and reviewed annually to ensure it is kept up to date and meets legislative and best practice requirements. This will be undertaken in consultation with the appropriate negotiating bodies.
- 11.2 To ensure we are applying our policies and procedures fairly and in line with any relevant legislation, statistical information will be collated and kept. No personal details will be used inappropriately or made available to other sources except to report on the overall numbers relating to disability, ethnicity and gender of employees who have been involved with the Managing Employee Performance Procedure.
- 11.3 All recorded data is stored and handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
- 11.4 Key information derived from evaluating this procedure will be collated for monitoring purposes and will be analysed in conjunction with service specific action plans to obtain an understanding of how our policies and procedures work in creating equality of opportunity. Appropriate action will be taken to address any particular obstacles or difficulties that are identified.

12. Further Information

- 12.1 Further advice and guidance on this procedure or a specific case can be obtained from HR Advisory Service.
- 12.2 If you would like to comment on the content of the procedure, please contact Finance and Operations Director

Appendix 1- TIMESCALES FOR TEACHERS FORMAL PROCESS

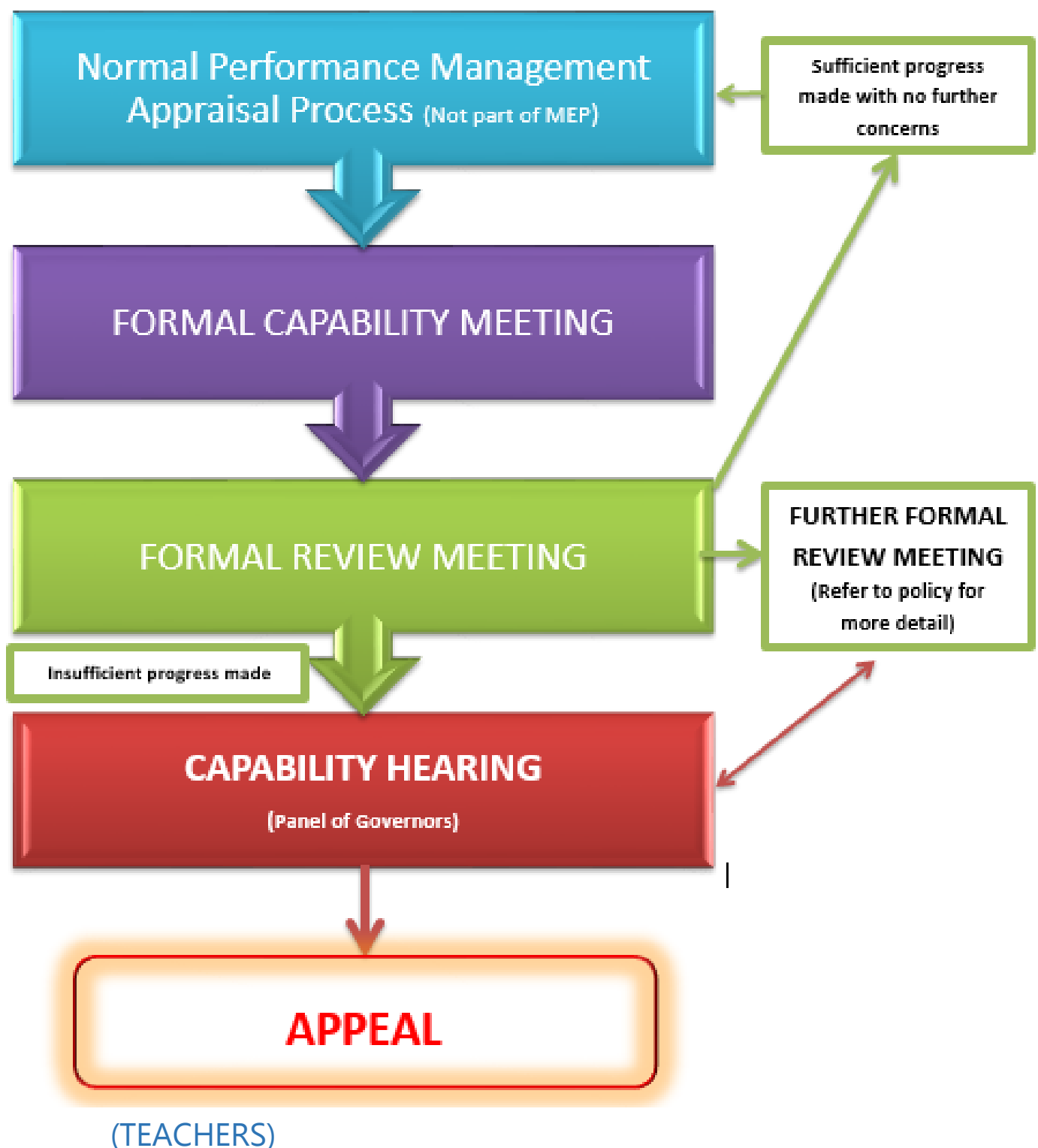
STAGE	ACTION	TIMESCALE
NOT PART OF PROCEDURE	Normal performance management appraisal process. Initial concerns raised through normal performance management appraisal process. Guidance and support provided.	Ongoing In most cases performance will improve and support will cease.
MEP PROCEDURE COMMENCES		
FORMAL CAPABILITY MEETING STAGE 1	Performance has still not improved sufficiently. Formal meeting takes place Concerns raised Action plan agreed Review to take place at end of agreed period	Review Period between 4 and 12 weeks (4 weeks should only be used in exceptional circumstances)
FORMAL REVIEW MEETING STAGE 2	Review of performance/improvement against action plan If some progress made, option to extend review period If insufficient or no progress made, teacher invited to Capability Hearing	10 Working days notice to attend
CAPABILITY HEARING STAGE 3	Recommendation for dismissal made Capability Hearing convened Recommendation for dismissal made Governors to discuss recommendation and make a decision.	10 Working days notice to attend
APPEAL	Appeal committee set up (if appropriate).	10 Working days notice to submit

These timescales are in line with the DFE Guidance on capability procedures for Teachers.

The short procedure of up to four weeks would apply in particularly serious cases where the education of children is in jeopardy. Examples of this might be where a teacher's classroom control is so poor that no order can be established to enable

teaching to take place, or where all the children under a teacher's care fail to progress in that teacher's lessons.

Appendix 2 – MANAGING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE



Appendix 3 – PROCEDURE FOR STAFF DISMISSAL / APPEAL HEARINGS

The procedure to be adopted at any dismissal or appeal hearing will normally be:

- 1 The dismissal hearing will be conducted by the Exec / Headteacher (if they have not already been involved in the process) or the Governing Committee.
- 2 One or more advisers, who may be from the Local authority, should assist the person or panel conducting the hearing in the conduct of the hearing.
- 3 The person/group conducting the hearing will be satisfied that the employee understands the purpose of the hearing, the nature of the issue(s) and the possible implications arising from it.
- 4 The case against the employee will normally be presented by the person who has investigated the matter or such other person with sufficient knowledge. The person presenting the case will describe the case and the presentation may include witnesses, written statements or other documents where these are considered necessary. (If written statements or other documents are to be presented, copies of these should normally be sent to the employee and/or their representatives with the letter convening the hearing).
- 5 The employee and/or representative will be given the opportunity to question the presenting officer as well as any witnesses who may have given evidence.
- 6 The employee or his/her representative will then be invited to respond to the case as presented. The employee may also produce witnesses, written statements or other documents in support of his/her case. (Where it is the intention to submit written Statements of Case these must be exchanged by both sides at least three working days prior to the hearing.)

Where witnesses are School or Trust employees, they should be given reasonable time off with pay to attend the hearing.
- 7 The person presenting the case will be given the opportunity to question the employee, his/her representative and any witnesses called in his/her defence.
- 8 At any stage during the hearing the person/panel conducting the hearing and any adviser(s) may ask questions of the employee, the person presenting the case or such other persons, as they may consider appropriate in order to ascertain the facts and arguments. The employee's representative should be allowed to answer on their behalf as requested. The formulation of views before the end of the hearing should be avoided.
- 9 The person presenting the case will then be invited to make a closing statement not introducing any new material.
- 10 Finally the employee or his/her representative will be given the opportunity to make a closing statement also without introducing any new material.
- 11 Both parties will withdraw to allow the person/group conducting the hearing to review and consider the evidence in conjunction with any advisers.

- 12 If the person/panel conducting the hearing require clarification of any point(s) of the case both parties must be recalled in order for questions to be asked of either side.
- 13 The person/panel conducting the hearing will then recall both parties to inform them of his/her/their decision. The decision should normally be announced personally to the parties as soon as it is possible on the day of the hearing. If it is not possible to make a decision immediately, the parties should be informed of this. In any event a decision must be made and communicated to the employee within five working days of the hearing. The decision should be confirmed in writing and delivered to the employee either by hand or recorded delivery with a copy to the trade union or other representatives.
- 14 If it is felt that the details of the case may prove traumatic for any individual involved, including witnesses, support via Occupational Health will be offered at the outset of the proceedings.

Any officer involved throughout the procedure cannot be part of the dismissal panel. This includes the Exec / Headteacher if they have been managing the procedure. Under these circumstances school may revert to the previous procedure whereby a Governing Committee Staff Dismissals Panel is formulated as well as a Governing Committee Staff Dismissal Appeals Panel. Human Resources will advise the Exec / Headteacher and governors as appropriate to each individual case.