The Polesworth School
ENSURING EXCELLENCE

Support for Professional Qualifications Policy

Member of leadership team with lead responsibility for oversight and update of policy	FOR
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Contents

Purpose 3
Main Principles 4

Priority One: 4

Priority Two: 5
Application Procedures 5
Additional Costs 6
Commitment 6
Monitoring 7
Decision Making 8
Learning Agreement for Accredited Qualifications 9
Evaluation of learning 13

Purpose

Ensuring Excellence details our commitment to '*develop and support others'* and to '*ensure staff have access to relevant and appropriate CPD'*. Our policy on the support for professional qualifications is entirely consistent with these values, within the context of the operational, strategic and financial framework of the school.

This policy will provide guidance to all staff (teaching and non-teaching) wishing to access resources to follow a professional development activity that results in an accredited qualification. These procedures are not applicable where the requirement to obtain a qualification is within a contract of employment. In addition, these procedures do not apply to courses that enable staff to carry out their day to day job role or courses that are statutory requirements; these will be paid from the relevant training budget. Priority in the budget will be assigned to mandatory courses.

Accredited qualifications can be gained through Further or Higher Education or Vocational routes. Examples of accredited qualifications are: NVQ, Degree, Postgraduate certificate, ECDL, CLAIT, NPQ, ILM, NPQ etc.

The aims of the policy are:

- To ensure that completion of the accredited qualification supports the school's priorities. The acquisition of academic and professional qualifications will align to the needs of the school first and then to the personal development of the individual second.
- To promote equality of access, fairness and transparency.
- To ensure that resources are properly managed.
- To ensure staff receive the support needed to perform their role.
- To promote succession planning.

The objectives of the policy are to:

- support the implementation of The School Development Plan by synchronising requests within the framework of the Trust's Growing Great People (GGP), professional coaching model;
- ensure flexibility exists to redirect resources when urgent or unforeseen activity is required.
- encourage employees to seek continuous improvement in their own skills, knowledge and capabilities;
- provide equality of opportunity for all employees (teaching and non-teaching) to develop and use the skills and knowledge gained through the awarding of an accredited qualification.

Main Principles

Initially, GGP coaching discissions should be used as a starting point for professional discourse relating to the acquisition of accredited qualifications. To assist in identifying potential area(s) for development, consideration should be given to:

- What benefits will this qualification bring to the individual, the team and/or the school?
- How does it relate to the individual and/or team/department objectives?
- How does it relate to The School Development Plan and wider whole school priorities?

The School recognises that many of its staff will have aspirations to further themselves in their career, in their role and/or as an individual. How we as an employer support staff in reaching their goal is encouraged and should be recorded during GGP discussions, although support cannot always be guaranteed. All decisions will be reviewed annually in line with the school's financial capacity to support and manage.

Sponsorship (financial support) for an accredited course will be considered where the activity relates to:

- Priorities described in The School Development Plan;
- Priorities identified by a department/subject/team;
- Induction (for new, newly promoted and staff returning from a long absence).

AND

- The need is appropriate to the job and role;
- The level (academic, skill, depth of knowledge) of the activity is appropriate to the individual and to their role.

Where the number of expressions of interest received exceeds the resources available, selection criteria will be applied as follows:

Priority One:

- Required for post
- Required to retain professional status
- Subsequent year of course already funded by School

Priority Two:

- Standard defined for team/service
- Career progression
- Personal development that has the potential for benefit to the school

Where needs have been identified and remain unmet, the requirement for the activity must be reviewed during SLT link conversations and ongoing through GGP discussions.

Application Procedures

Applications for sponsorship for accredited courses will only be considered once a year as part of the GGP cycle. This is formally captured using the 'Lessons Learned' goal setting software completed by all staff annually. Applications to pursue an accredited course must be discussed in SLT link meetings and with the Deputy Headteacher (Teaching Implementation and Staff Development).

In each academic year, applications should be made from September 1st to October 31st, in order for potential funding to be considered. Applications will not be considered outside this window unless critical to the school business case.

Applications for sponsorship should be made on 'Learning Agreement for Accredited Qualifications' (Appendix 1). The form requires statements by both the applicant Line Manager. Applicants for sponsorship for Level 4 courses or above will be invited to attend a meeting with the Deputy Headteacher (Teaching Implementation and Staff Development) to discuss their request.

Funding decisions will be made on the strength of the business case and the importance of the qualification to the post i.e. where the qualification is for example mandatory, priority will be given for funding purposes.

The criteria as described under 'Main Principles' must be satisfied but additionally the following may also be taken into account:

- Recruitment and retention issues.
- Development of the individual's skills base. The Deputy Headteacher (Teaching Implementation and Staff Development) needs to consider the value that this type of development will add at individual, team and school levels.
- A strong link to the job and future development of the role should be identified.
- Courses at this level require a high level of input outside the normal working day; when approving requests, the Deputy Headteacher (Teaching

Implementation and Staff Development) must be satisfied that the individual is committed to the course and in a position to make this necessary contribution.

- Approved time-off can be considered for day release and exams only.

Additional Costs

When considering the need for an accredited qualification, the Line Manager should have regard to both the actual cost of the activity and that of the additional costs (This includes time costs and potential cover implications).
It is advisable that the Line Manager understands what additional funding may be required and identify where the funds will be found before approving an expression of interest.

Commitment

Learning and development is critical to the success of the School, once participation in an activity has been approved and a place booked both the Line Manager and individual have made a firm commitment to the activity taking place.

Cancellation policies normally apply for accredited courses and when enrolling a formal and binding agreement is made with the provider. In principle no cancellations should be made. Any cancellation fee must be paid by the individual. If the school cancels the agreement the individual will not be responsible to repay the fee.

The school budget will be set annually by the Headteacher. As such any commitment to course funding is bound by this time frame. Courses that are approved beyond this time frame will only carry guaranteed part or full school funding for 12 months. Additional school financial support may be provided beyond this time frame but will be subject to financial reappraisal.

Sponsorship not approved
Sponsorship may be refused. The individual can ask for the decision to be reviewed by the Headteacher, who will consider the appeal and, will within one month of such appeal advise the applicant of the decision. This decision is final.

Monitoring

Formal monitoring will take place as part of the GGP annual cycle and will include a statement of progress. Any training that is not progressing along courses guidelines must be the subject of a formal action plan. Applicants who receive support for training may be asked to share their learning with others across the school/Trust, through a variety of communication mechanisms e.g. Professional Learning Journal, staff training workshop. No additional payments will be made in this respect, but the school/Trust will ensure that delivery of such training will not be too onerous. This is explicit within the signed Learning Agreement.

Decision Making

When reviewing applications. The following matrix will be referred to:

	Criteria 1	**Criteria 2**
NQF Level	**Budget**	**Relevance**
Level 8 Doctorate	Allocation to professional development is funds limited. Applications will be assessed on a priority basis and some applications may be declined on the basis of no funds being available. (All decisions will carry a maximum term of one year regardless of course duration. This will we revaluated annually)	For relevance to the school plan, funding up to 100% For relevance to current individual need, funding up to 66% of
Level 7 Master's degree Postgraduate certificate NVQ NPQ		
Level 6 Bachelor's degree NVQ		
Level 5 HND NVQ Higher diploma		
Level 4 HNC Key Skills NVQ		
Level 3 AS and A level Advanced NVQ Advanced diploma		
Level 2 GCSE Key Skills NVQ		
Level 1 Key Skills NVQ Foundation diploma		

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Learning Agreement for Accredited Qualifications

Use this form if you are applying for financial support for a course of study leading to a nationally recognized, professional or national vocational qualification.
The form should be completed in full with your Link Manager.

APPLICANT DETAILS	
Name:	Payroll No.
Job title:	Work Address:
Department/team:	

QUALIFICATION DETAILS			
Title of Qualification			
Name of Provider			
Method of study (e.g. day release/evening, please identify which days etc.)			
Length of course:	Start date:		Completion date:
Costs	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Tuition Costs			
Exam Fees			
Membership/Registration Fees			
Other costs			
Total			

DETAILS IN SUPPORT OF APPLICATION
Why is this course appropriate to your role and the work you do?
How will you use the learning in your role?
How will the school/Trust benefit from the learning you gain from completing this qualification?
Have you previously been sponsored by this or another school? YES/NO

If YES *please give details*	
Agreement to repay – complete the agreement on page 3	
REVIEWER/LINE MANAGER STATEMENT	
Name of Link Manager	
Business Case (to be completed by Link Manager):	
I *support/do not support this application because:	
Why is this course and qualification the most suitable? What alternatives are there in meeting the learning? Why is the alternative not appropriate in this case?	
I confirm that I am fully aware of the course content, syllabus and its relevance to the post. I will review progress on a regular basis with the employee. I am able to support the employee appropriately and provide opportunities to consolidate and apply the learning. I am prepared to support time allowances/exam leave in accordance with the recommendations of the School. Should I leave the school, voluntarily request to formally end the training before the completion date or not remain in the employment of the school (or Community Academies Trust) for the period of two years from the date the training ends I agree to the terms as outlined in the conditions of funding agreement.	
Signed (Link Manager)	Date
Signed (Applicant)	**Date**
Signed (DHT Staff Professional Learning)	**Date**

Funding Approved	***Yes/No**
If 'No' give reason	

Agreement to repay (see 'Conditions of Funding')

I ..... (insert name), undertake to comply with the conditions set out below which I acknowledge to be a part of this undertaking.

Signed: ..... Block Capitals: .....

Date: .....

Link Manager: ..... Block Capitals: .....
Date:

Copy of this agreement to be held by:
The employee
Link Manager
The Deputy Headteacher, Staff Development & Teaching Implementation
School HR manager (for Personnel File)

Conditions of Funding – please read carefully

The Employee shall remain in the employment of the school (or Community Academies Trust) for the period of two years from the date the training ends.

If the Employee, of their own volition, leaves the school's (or Trust's) employment before the end of two years from the date the training ends (whether successful or not in gaining the qualifications), then a percentage of the monetary grants in respect of fees and expenses shall be repaid by the Employee to the school as follows:

0 – 6 months - Full repayment
7 – 12 months - 75% repayment
13 – 18 months - 50% repayment
18 – 24 months - 25% repayment

Where the Employee leaves the school's (or Trust's) employment before completing the course, then the whole of the monetary grants in respect of fees and expenses shall be repaid by the employee to the school.

The Employee shall be liable for repayment should they not complete the approved development opportunity or gain the qualification.

The Employee shall not be liable for repayment of the fees and expenses in the event of the employment ending due to death, ill health or compulsory redundancy.

Any refund due from the Employee to the school under this agreement shall be recoverable as a simple contract debt. This may be deducted by the school from any salary, wages or other payment due to the Employee.

Nothing contained in this Agreement shall prevent the school terminating the employment of the Employee at any time in accordance with the terms of the Contract of Employment.

The school will review this agreement at least annually and it may end without notice before the completion of the training course.

Evaluation of learning

(To be logged within the employee's staff file)

Post training summary of learning/benefits (to be completed by the colleague who has undertaken the training).	
Impact of learning on school and school/team objectives (to be completed by Link Manager/DHT).	
Agreed strategy for sharing of learning.	
How satisfied were you with the support you received by the course provider? Would you recommend the provider?	