

# Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers

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Dear Colleague

## COLLEGIALITY

Collegiality is at the heart of the National Agreement, "A Teaching Profession for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century".

The Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers has been developing work on collegiality and, following feedback from representatives of Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers, the SNCT sets out an initial statement on collegiality. However, the SNCT believes that this statement will form part of an evolving process with local authorities and schools before the SNCT produces a finalised position statement as part of the Review of the Agreement.

Collegiality is a process and a way of working which reflects on relationships and participation by all staff on all aspects of school life. Collegiality depends on a climate of professional trust that must extend from the Scottish Executive Education Department to Local Authorities and from Directorate level to both school managers and staff. Effective collegiality will not only enhance and develop teacher professionalism: it will also enhance the learning environment in Scottish schools.

There is no single model of collegiality but the aspirations of a collegiate school would include:

- Staff should be valued and respected.
- Staff views, expressed orally or in writing, should be fully considered.
- Staff should be able to contribute to decisions on all areas of school life comfortably, openly and with dignity.

Structures should encourage participative decision making thus developing a shared commitment to ownership of school and authority policies and plans. It is worth highlighting that involvement in decision making requires a commitment of time within a school's collegiate time.

We believe that the following characteristics if demonstrated at Local Authority, LNCT and school level would show a genuine movement towards collegiality. The purpose is to develop a reflective, cooperative approach to collegiality.

## **Collegiality at Local Authority Level**

1. All LNCT agreements are 'launched' by a joint circular. Where appropriate there will be the facility for both management and union representatives to present agreements at joint meetings of head teachers and school union representatives.
2. LNCT agreements are monitored effectively by LNCTs which require regular reports on their application from schools. Where appropriate joint Authority meetings, involving school management and union representatives, will be part of the monitoring process.
3. The Local Authority invites Teachers' Side representation, nominated by the LNCT, on all education Working Groups (eg 5 – 14 Assessment).
4. Both Local Authority senior managers and Teachers' Side representatives regularly endorse LNCT agreements as integral to the effective functioning of the Local Authority and its schools.
5. There are regular joint training opportunities on issues arising from LNCT work where school managers and union representatives are trained together.
6. Training in negotiating skills is recognised and valued as a CPD activity.
7. Regular LNCT Joint Secretaries' meetings take place.
8. Meetings of the LNCT are conducted with respect from both sides and all participants are afforded parity of esteem.
9. Adequate facility time is provided for preparation as well as participation for Teachers' Side representatives.
10. Items for LNCT agendas are treated with equal importance, regardless of which side raised them.
11. Issues are addressed diligently and not allowed to drag on from meeting to meeting.
12. LNCT sub-groups or informal LNCTs are used to develop particular aspects of LNCT business and to report back.
13. There is agreed guidance for schools on how to conduct negotiations on working time arrangements.
14. The LNCT seeks to publicise good practice and demonstrate collegiality in all aspects of its work.
15. The LNCT supports and monitors collegiate working at school level.

## **Collegiality at School Level**

1. There are regular meetings of all staff, set in the calendar of working time arrangements with published minutes.
2. There are regular timetabled meetings of managers with union representatives with published minutes.
3. Managers recognise and acknowledge staff views during discussions and negotiations.
4. All staff can contribute to staff meeting agendas.
5. Other mechanisms are in place for all staff to make their views known and to contribute to the decision making process.

6. Staff are encouraged to consider, evaluate and comment on current or proposed arrangements. Such comments should be made in an appropriate professional manner, within the context of the issue under discussion.
7. Staff recognise and acknowledge the views and contributions made by colleagues within the context of professional debate.
8. School agreements are signed by management and unions, are accessible to all staff and copies are sent to the LNCT.
9. Construction of the Working Time Agreement involves all staff.
10. Working time agreements are adhered to by both sides and the integrity of the 35 hour working week maintained.
11. The times allocated in the school's working time agreement to certain tasks is realistic and subject to ongoing review.
12. Involvement in decision making requires a commitment of time within a school's working time agreement.
13. Construction of the Development Plan and its annual review involves all staff.
14. The workload requirements of the School Development Plan reflect the realities of the 35 hour working week and the working time agreement.
15. All staff will have the opportunity to be involved in making school policies, which take account of the Authority's policies and procedures (eg absence cover and devolved budgets) and in all areas of school life.

These practices are strongly recommended by the SNCT.

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