

**ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES: EDUCATION
LOCAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR TEACHERS**

KEEPING IN TOUCH DAYS

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This paper describes the means by which arrangements for Keeping In Touch Days for teachers, music instructors, educational psychologists, quality improvement officers and education support officers will be introduced in Argyll & Bute.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT) is asked to approve the contents of this paper.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers' (SNCT) document SNCT/49 (Maternity and Adoption leave and Pay) set out contractual changes to maternity and adoption pay and leave.
- 3.2 As part of the Government's policies on work and families the concept of keeping in Touch Days has been introduced. The SNCT also considered further advice on Keeping in Touch Days from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). The SNCT then produced further advice which was sent to Councils as SNCT/51 – Code of Practice – Keeping in Touch Days
- 3.3 Under the terms of SNCT/8 and the Local Framework, Recognition and Procedure Agreement the LNCT should adopt the Code for those employees detailed in paragraph 1.1 above.

4. DETAIL

- 4.1 The Council should have clear arrangements for maintaining contact with employees on maternity and adoption leave.
- 4.2 Prior to the commencement of maternity or adoption leave a meeting should be arranged to discuss how contact can be maintained. Both the Council and the employee should have a clear understanding of the nature and frequency of the contact.

- 4.3 Communication may be facilitated by home computers where employees on leave can exchange emails with colleagues at work and access the council's intranet. For employees who have no home access to emails then communication by letter or telephone should be agreed.
- 4.4 The Council has a responsibility to ensure employees on maternity or adoption leave have information on vacancies and promotion, including acting appointments, and in-service or other CPD opportunities. The employee should also be apprised of changes to the workplace or work organization which may impact upon her or him.
- 4.5 Keeping in Touch Days are formal arrangements to allow employees to undertake work of some kind during maternity or adoption leave. An employee cannot be required to take up Keeping in Touch Days – participation is not compulsory.
- 4.6 Up to 10 Keeping in Touch Days will be available for each period of maternity or adoption leave. The number of days and the activity to be undertaken must be agreed between the employer and the employee, taking account of the wishes of both parties. If the employee works for part of the day that will count as 1 Keeping in Touch Day. Payment will be based on the actual hours worked as set out in para 4.12 below.
- 4.7 The purpose of Keeping in Touch Days is to keep the employee informed of what is happening in the workplace. A Keeping in Touch Day should not be used for the person to undertake normal contractual duties.
- 4.8 Argyll & Bute Council recommends the following as examples of good practice which may be undertaken in Keeping in Touch Days.
- (i) Attending INSET days, as set out in the school calendar.
 - (ii) Team teaching with the teacher covering the leave, particularly in the weeks preceding the date of return.
 - (iii) Attending CPD events, including participating in annual review events.
 - (iv) Attending team or departmental meetings.
 - (v) Work shadowing a colleague or liaison with a colleague.
- 4.9 Where the employee on maternity or adoption leave holds a promoted post the employee will not resume those duties for Keeping in Touch Days or break the contract of the person who had taken the post of temporary responsibility. This would not preclude a Keeping in Touch Day being used for work shadowing or liaison, as set out in 4.8(v) above.
- 4.10 The regulations make it clear that an employer and employee are allowed to make reasonable contact during maternity leave to discuss such issues as

return to work. This would not constitute 'work' and would not therefore count towards the 10 days.

- 4.11 Normal contractual pay will be paid for Keeping in Touch Days, which will be an amount inclusive of SMP, SAP or Maternity Allowance, where these are still being paid.
- 4.12 Where a teacher is in attendance for the whole of a school day, payment will be in accordance with SNCT/26 (1/261 and 0.3385 for holiday pay). Where the period worked is less than a full day, the teacher shall be paid an hourly rate (calculated on the basis of 1/1827 of the annual rate of salary) with pro rata holiday entitlement, as set out in SNCT/28.
- 4.13 Keeping in Touch Days shall normally be recorded on an individual basis within the school.
- 4.14 It is acknowledged that circumstances may change and it must be open to both parties to review arrangements.
- 4.15 It is expected that keeping in Touch Days will be subject to amicable agreement. However, in the unlikely event that agreement cannot be achieved through informal discussion it will be open to employees to invoke the formal grievance procedures of the Council.

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