

EAST RENFREWSHIRE LNCT AGREEMENT

COLLEGIATE WORKING

1. The LNCT has engaged senior staff and union representatives in discussions on collegiality. Seminars took place in June 2005 and in November 2006.
2. Since then, a national code of practice on collegiate working has been agreed. A copy of the code has been incorporated into this LNCT circular.
3. Also included in the circular is a summary of the helping and hindering influences that were generated by those present at the November seminar.
4. It is hoped that this circular will help to promote further reflection on the practice of collegiate working.

Ginny Thorburn

Ginny Thorburn
Joint Secretary, Management Side

Alan Munro

Alan Munro
Joint Secretary, Teachers' Side

June 2007



Education Department

Education

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Our Ref: GT/PC
Your Ref:
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Dear Colleague

COLLEGIALITY IN PRACTICE

In East Renfrewshire, the Education Department is committed to the collegiate approach which is at the heart of the National Agreement 'A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century'. We are committed to the fostering of a climate of professional trust and openness, where views, ideas and opinions are welcomed and respected.

I value the collegiate approach that characterises our work with the trade unions. The LNCT acts as a very useful forum for making decisions on devolved conditions of service matters and for discussing wider issues that impact on Education.

Our head teachers and our staff are invited to participate in discussion and policy formulation and I value greatly the contribution that they make. Our schools are working hard at being collegiate schools where the skills, talents and interests of all staff are developed and where all staff are involved in the key decisions affecting the life of the school as a whole. Everyone in the school community is empowered and shares responsibility for key areas of school life. More broadly, this spirit of collegiality extends beyond teachers, managers, and support staff and includes parents pupils and partner agencies.

I commend to you the nationally agreed code of Practice on Collegiality, and I hope that you are able to make use of it as you determine how far you have yet to travel to become a truly collegiate school.

Yours sincerely

John Wilson

John Wilson
Director of Education



Collegiality at School Level

Communication and Consultation

Helpful Influences

- Regular, planned staff meetings take place.
- Appropriate advance notice is given of all meetings.
- The purpose of a meeting is well understood beforehand.
- Time is made available for staff contributions at staff meetings.
- Holding staff meetings on specific topics.
- Holding team meetings for each nursery class.
- Team meetings include support staff.
- There are regular, timetabled management / TU meetings.
- Management /TU discussion include school planning issues.
- There is a staffroom board to itemise topics for discussion at staff meetings.
- Minutes of meetings are made available to all staff.
- A staffroom filing cabinet contains minutes of meetings including minutes of management meetings
- There is a school staff only website which includes for example the school plan, minutes, in-service presentations, working time agreements, CPD opportunities.
- All staff feel responsible for fostering an atmosphere conducive to the development of collegiality.
- There is active encouragement of discussion and debate.
- The use of email is a major communication method.
- Facility time for reps and ULRs is agreed in June for following school session, as appropriate/as need.

Hindering Influences

- Not enough time for collegial practices to develop.
- Job sharers and supply teachers miss meetings.
- Not all staff have same lunchtimes.
- Priorities change throughout the session.
- The WTA is too tightly specified, so time for discussion limited.
- Staff views are not considered at meetings because they are AOCB and time often runs out.
- Time to complete minutes is not provided.
- TU reps. not given time for duties.
- There are clashes of school and authority meetings / CPD activities.
- The raising of issues at whole staff meetings can be unhelpful and daunting.

Shared Decision Making

Helpful Influences

- Facilitated by use of email.
- If opportunities are given at stage meetings.
- Facilitated by use of class contact reduction time.
- Project leadership can contribute in this area.
- If there is honesty about 'how' not 'what' we are required to do.
- There is ownership of operational plan.
- There is an open door policy by management.
- There is involvement in school planning & departmental planning.
- There is a culture of self evaluation – creating awareness and thus meaningful discussion.

Hindering Influences

- Lack of focus and clarity in discussions.
- Staff apathy – 'someone else will do it'
- Support staff working hours
- Jargon laden planning.
- Not enough time given.
- Staff reluctance to be involved due to lack of confidence.
- Staff unwillingness to be involved in issues not directly related to their own teaching.

Workload Control

Helpful Influences

- Good planning.
- Effective prioritisation of tasks.
- Sharing of tasks.
- Teachers co-operating is norm.
- Sharing of initiative introduction.
- Identifying individual strengths.
- Effective use of support assistants.
- Access to ICT resources from home e.g. Click and Go.
- Smaller class sizes.
- Sharing good practice within school and across authority.
- AifL
- Efficient use and organisation of resources.
- ACfE – decluttering of curriculum

Hindering Influences

- Intrusion of new local and national priorities in planning processes.
- Delegation of decision making seen as 'passing the buck'.
- Lack of absence cover for PSAs.
- Disproportionate workload burdens between certain staff, depts., sectors.
- Time demands of NQT and student support and assessment.
- Poor deployment of support staff.
- Too many initiatives – no overall control.

COLLEGIALITY CODE OF PRACTICE

Introduction

Collegiality is at the heart of the National Agreement “A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century”. 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 the existence of a climate of professional trust among the Scottish Executive Education Department, councils, directorates, school managers and school staff.

Effective collegiality will not only enhance and develop teacher professionalism; it will also enhance the learning and teaching environment in Scottish schools.

Collegiality at council and school levels can only exist in a climate where the views of all staff are valued and respected, where staff views are fully considered and where staff feel able to contribute to decisions on all areas of school life comfortably, openly and with dignity and where workload issues are recognised. Where such a climate exists, staff are fully involved in contributing to the life of the school and the council.

Although councils and schools will be at various stages in the development of a collegiate culture, LNCTs and establishments should have made some movement in the direction of collegiate working as part of the process of implementation of the National Agreement.

The benefits which accrue from collegiality are not only improved industrial relations and professional satisfaction for teachers, but also an enhanced environment for learning and teaching. The ultimate beneficiaries of collegiality are therefore the young people who attend school.

There is no single model of collegiality but the following description of good practice should be used by staff at all levels to guide and evaluate progress towards collegiate working. It is also important that time is allocated for purposeful and positive involvement in decision making and for engagement in collegiate activities.

1. Collegiality at Council Level

Experience in recent years has demonstrated the value and importance of open communication between and amongst LNCT members in making and implementing decisions on devolved conditions of service matters. Key to this process is a need for mutual respect and trust between partners in order to create a climate of genuine collegiality. This will involve all partners in a reflective, co-operative approach to collegiality.

Where the LNCT has devolved powers, all parties work together to reach agreement by a participative decision making process. In a collegiate council the LNCT should also be seen as a forum for discussion on wider issues impacting on the Education Service.

The views of all participants are encouraged, valued and respected. All partners are encouraged to participate and all views are fully considered. Participants/partners can contribute to discussions and decisions on all areas of council and school life (for example through participation in education working groups). The Director of Education (or Lead Officer for Education) has a key role to play in setting the tone for the development of the culture of collegiality throughout the Education Service.

Once agreements are reached at LNCT level, all partners demonstrate joint ownership and responsibility for these agreements and communicate such. The LNCT monitors agreements regularly and effectively and issues advice when required.

Meaningful dialogue takes place between LNCT Joint Secretaries within agreed timescales. In accordance with the locally agreed constitution, members of the LNCT are well informed, thereby fostering open and honest discussion and affording all members equally the opportunity to share information responsibly and respectfully. All agreements are signed and issued on a joint basis. All LNCT members have agreed time to prepare which is subject to regular review. Agendas are agreed in advance of the meeting by LNCT Joint Secretaries and are issued in good time. Joint Secretaries ensure that matters arising and action points are delegated and concluded appropriately within reasonable timescales.

The LNCT recognises the value of collegiality and provides a model of such partnership working by operating in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust in the conduct of its discussions and negotiations. Issues of educational significance, including the implications of local and national policy initiatives are discussed regularly and perspectives on such matters are shared between and amongst members of the LNCT.

The principles of collegiate working at council level are reflected at school level. The LNCT has an agreed procedure for monitoring and supporting the work of school negotiating committees. It provides advice, including published guidance, and other interventions, as and when necessary, to support discussions and negotiations in schools. It offers opportunities for joint training on aspects of its work.

As part of collegiate working, the LNCT is committed to supporting leadership at all levels in schools, including the development of associated personal and professional skills amongst all staff. Leadership in this context is distinct from management duties as set out in Part 2, Section 2 (Main Duties) of the National Scheme and Annex B of the National Agreement.

In a collegiate council, the LNCT is seen as a key part of the Education Service.

2. Collegiality at School Level

In schools, collegiate working is carried out within the context of the 35 hour working week.

It is also important to acknowledge that every school is different and that no single model of collegiality will apply to all schools. For instance, the practicalities of collegiate working in a two or three teacher primary school will be very different from working arrangements in a secondary school with a pupil roll of 1600 and over 100 teaching staff. Nevertheless, certain common principles should apply and what follows is a description of the collegiate school.

Strong, effective communications operate within the collegiate school. The prevailing atmosphere fosters mutual respect and encourages frank, open and honest communications amongst all staff. There is evidence of a range of meetings including meetings involving the school's management team and representatives of the staff as a whole and which may include representatives of trade unions and professional organisations. The outcomes of such meetings are communicated to all relevant staff.

All staff contribute to the construction of the Working Time Agreement through a process of consultation, professional dialogue and negotiation; consequently, all staff have a sense of ownership of the Agreement. The Agreement is transparent, is signed by all members of the school negotiating team and is submitted to the LNCT by the specified date. Once finalised, the terms of the Agreement are respected by all members of staff and inform the work of the school over the session to which the Agreement applies.

All staff members recognise their responsibility to contribute to the school development process and to participate in this process in a collegiate and constructive manner. There are clear mechanisms in place to allow staff to make their views known; staff express their views openly and professionally. The opinions of staff are valued and are used as input to the school's development plan and policy development processes. School policies and decisions are regularly reviewed and all staff participate in the review process. Any changes required to the

plan during the session are subject to appropriate consultation and take account of teacher workload.

Within the context of the 35 hour week and Working Time Agreements all staff in the collegiate school participate in a wide range of whole school activities, such as school committees, policy formulation, curriculum development, professional development and additional supervised pupil activity.

In the collegiate school, leadership qualities are evident throughout the school. There is a devolved and participative style of leadership and management. Staff are afforded opportunities to develop leadership skills and take advantage of these opportunities. Leadership in this context is distinct from management duties as set out in Part 2, Section 2 (Main Duties) of the National Scheme and Annex B of the National Agreement.

The collegiate school utilises and develops the skills, talents and interests of all staff and involves all staff in the key decisions affecting the life of the school as a whole. More broadly, the spirit of collegiality extends beyond teachers and support staff, and includes parents, pupils and partner agencies.