

Highland Council Workload Control Agreement

1. Background

1.1 The 2013 Report of the Curriculum for Excellence Working Group on Tackling Bureaucracy, and the follow-up Report in 2015, identified the main drivers of excessive workload in schools, and areas where changes need to be made. The Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) recognises the main drivers of excessive bureaucracy in the Report and is committed to strengthening extant mechanisms to control teacher workload. Its advice to Local Negotiating Committees for Teachers (LNCT) on Tackling Bureaucracy supplements existing guidance on Working Time Agreements (*Part 2 Appendix 2.18 Working Time Agreements - Managing Teacher Workload*). This document therefore supplements, and should be read in conjunction with, LNCT 17 - Agreement on the 35 Hour Week for teachers (revised 2015)

2. Introduction

2.1 Highland's approach to teaching and learning is about empowering teachers and professionals in order to improve outcomes for learners. This new approach is bringing real benefits. However, there is a continuing need to guard against excessive paperwork and overly complex processes which militate against best practice in teaching and learning. Everyone has a part to play in tackling bureaucracy and excessive workload. The SNCT defines excessive workload as:

'Anything that makes it impossible for teaching staff to complete their duties within the 35 hour week.' (SNCT Handbook Part 2 Appendix 2.18 Working Time Agreements - Managing Teacher Workload)

3. Key Principles

3.1 As part of our duty of care to staff and learners, we recommend the following best practice principles. These principles should be used to inform practice in all schools:

- **Professional dialogue** is key to improving learning and managing workload. Paperwork should be kept to the minimum required to support this. Time should be set aside to facilitate this important process.
- **Documentation** should be concise and relevant.
- **Planning** should be proportionate and based on local guidance (Planning in Primary School LNCT 31).
- **Monitoring, tracking, recording and reporting** systems must be time-costed and fit-for-purpose. Reports should be relevant, personalised and meaningful for learners and parents/carers, and prepared by staff within agreed allocations of time.
- **IT Systems** and software should support effective learning and teaching and their use should be guided by the principles of:
 - i. Continuity
 - ii. Accessibility

- iii. Ease-of-use
- iv. Removal of duplication

4. Working Time Agreements

4.1 The school Working Time Agreement is an important means of controlling and limiting workload. The Code of Practice on Working Time Arrangements, set out in Appendix 2.7 of the SNCT Handbook, requires agreement to be reached within each educational establishment through the school's consultative machinery. LNCT 17 (Agreement on the 35 Hour Week for Teachers) contains specific advice on reaching agreement at school level. Working Time agreements require account to be taken of school improvement plans.

5. School Improvement Plans

5.1 The impact of change should be reviewed and evaluated by all stakeholders before the curriculum is subject to further change. Areas for development set out in school or department plans should be costed in terms of time as well as resources. Developments must be set out in the school's Working Time Agreement and all activities should be capable of being undertaken within the allocated time. School Improvement Plans should set out agreed actions to reduce bureaucracy and tackle workload.

6. Mechanisms for Review of Workload Concerns

6.1 While LNCTs can set out mechanisms to assist and manage workload, each teacher has a responsibility to examine workload demands critically, to exercise professional judgement on workload issues and to raise concerns when demands are unreasonable. Schools should ensure that there are effective mechanisms in place for dealing with workload concerns.

6.2 School leaders and other promoted staff have a direct influence on the workload of teachers and have a responsibility to work collegiately to tackle bureaucracy and reduce workload.

6.3 Wider bureaucracy and workload concerns will be raised at LNCT, and addressing these will be integral to its continued annual monitoring of Working Time Agreements.

6.4 If there is an indication of workload drivers being generated by external factors e.g. school inspections, SQA, these should be reported by the LNCT Joint Secretaries to the SNCT.

Signed on behalf of the Council

Signed on behalf of the Teachers' Side

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