

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR TEACHERS – 5 OCTOBER 2005

JNCT CIRCULAR 12:

STATEMENT ON COLLEGIALITY

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. BACKGROUND

Collegiality is at the heart of the National Agreement, “A Teaching Profession for the 21st 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.

2. THE PROCESS OF COLLEGIALITY

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 and should extend across all participants in the process. 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.

3. COLLEGIALITY AT LOCAL AUTHORITY LEVEL

1. All JNCT 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. JNCT agreements are monitored effectively by JNCTs 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. East Ayrshire will normally invite Teachers' Side representation on all education Working Groups (eg 5 – 14 Assessment).
4. Both East Ayrshire senior managers and Teachers' Side representatives regularly endorse JNCT agreements as integral to the effective functioning of the education authority and its schools.
5. There are regular joint training opportunities on issues arising from JNCT 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 JNCT Joint Secretaries' meetings take place.
8. Meetings of the JNCT 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 JNCT 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. JNCT sub-groups or informal JNCTs are used to develop particular aspects of JNCT business and to report back.
13. There is agreed guidance for schools on how to conduct negotiations on working time arrangements.
14. The JNCT seeks to publicise good practice and demonstrate collegiality in all aspects of its work.
15. The JNCT supports and monitors collegiate working at school level.

4. COLLEGIALLY 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 JNCT joint secretaries.
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 School Improvement Plan and its annual review involves all staff.
14. The workload requirements of the School Improvement 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.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The above practices are strongly recommended by the SNCT and the JNCT.

John Mulgrew
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