



LOCAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR TEACHERS

WTA Planning- Recovery from the Pandemic

Key Principles and Guidelines for School Negotiating Committees

Working Time Agreements 2022-23

There is still a degree of uncertainty over what will happen in the coming months. Although it is anticipated that Covid restrictions and self-isolation rules may be relaxed/removed, constraints may remain on school improvement planning for 2022-23. However, all learners have been significantly impacted by the pandemic, and adverse outcomes are particularly significant for our most disadvantaged learners. Decisions made need to prioritise the council's key objectives of reducing poverty, improving equalities and wellbeing, and building sustainability, acknowledging the rights of young people and thus seeking to minimise the impact of any further restrictions.

A starting point for discussions at school level should be a systematic review of how schools operated during 2021-22, and consideration of the ongoing impact of the pandemic. Operational constraints may well remain, requiring the ongoing routine reviews of school risk assessments. Secondary schools will also need to be cognisant of approaches to national assessments/SQA requirements. Pupil and staff wellbeing will also continue to be a focus and the SRP and WTA should reflect this.

Key principles for annual calendar and WTA for session 2022-23

Schools are being issued with a core WTA LNCT agreement that covers the full 2022-23 session. However, schools will need to be mindful of the need to allow for changes in circumstances.

- Schools should plan for the entire session, but may choose to put a large number of the 195 hours into flexibility. The SNC can then reconvene later in the autumn term to agree how those hours should be used, as they see how the situation develops. If this approach is adopted, it will be essential for the SNC to regularly monitor how flexibility time is being used, in order to manage workload.

The following points should be borne in mind when drawing up the WTA and calendar:

- Time for regular reviews of risk assessments must be built in. This needs to include time for all staff to become familiar with any changes to protocols.
- School H&S committees have been extremely effective during this session. They should be maintained moving forward – they have a remit to cover within H&S, which includes aspects of wellbeing beyond coronavirus, such as their pivotal role in implementing CEC’s approach to Behaviours of Concern.
- There is still uncertainty as to what is going to be allowed as regards things such as school concerts, fairs etc. Schools should continue to exercise caution before committing to such events – even if regulations allow for them. Hard choices will need to be made regarding priorities, and it might be that some activities must be set aside to allow a focus on core work.
- SNCs should look at whether there are some aspects of current working that should, in fact, be maintained. Schools should reach collegiate decision about things such as remote meetings and remote parents’ & carers’ consultations.
- The principles of managing workload are more important than ever, in view of the absolute need to protect staff health and wellbeing. When looking at WTAs and also School Recovery and Improvement Plans, it is important that schools do not try to deliver everything, but focus on those priorities that will bring most benefit to pupils. This is more likely to result in genuine and sustained improvement in outcomes.
- All WTAs and calendars must be negotiated collegiately and any changes to these must also be the result of collegiate negotiations. A record of the agreed changes should be kept.