

Colyton Grammar School

Minutes of the Staffing Committee – Part One

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 12 October 2016

Venue: Headteacher's Office

Present:

Governors	Dr C Bastin, Mr A Eaton-Hart, Mr M Goscomb, Mr T Harris (Headteacher), Mrs L Linnell, Mr B Salter and Mrs V Wells (Chair)
Staff	Mr S R Cook and Mrs J Wainwright
Visitors	None
Secretary	Mrs A Robinson

Mrs Linnell opened the meeting by reporting that new Trustee, Mrs Nickells, will be joining the Staffing Committee. She also welcomed Mr Harris to his first Staffing Committee meeting.

Mrs Robinson took the chair for Items 1 and 2.

1. Disclosure of Interest

Mrs Wainwright and Mr Cook declared an interest in Items 10 and 11. Mr Harris declared an interest in Item 11. There were no other declarations of interest.

2. Election of Chair

Mrs Robinson reported that no nominations had been received for the post of Chair. Mrs Linnell nominated Vice Chair, Mrs Wells, who agreed to stand. Mrs Wells left the room. The Committee discussed Mrs Wells' experience as a member of the Governing Body, and her excellent work as Vice Chair, and unanimously agreed her appointment as Chair of the Staffing Committee.

On her return to the room, Mrs Wells thanked the Committee. She confirmed that Mrs Linnell has agreed to support her in this role. Mrs Linnell will complete the work, already started, on the recruitment of the Business Manager. Mrs Wells chaired the Committee meeting thereafter.

3. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr Merrett and Mrs Nickells

4. Election of Vice Chair

Mrs Robinson reported that no nominations had been received for the post of Vice Chair. Mrs Linnell and Mrs Wells nominated Mr Eaton Hart, who agreed to stand. Mr Eaton Hart left the room after reminding the Committee that he only has one year left of his current term of office as a Parent Trustee.

In response to a query from Dr Bastin, Mr Goscomb confirmed the expectation, agreed as part of the governance review, that the Vice Chair should step up into the role of Chair, subject to re-election. He reminded the Committee that the Governance Review recommends that a balance should be maintained between Trustees who have previous contact with the school and those that don't. It was confirmed that, if necessary, Mr Eaton Hart could be elected under Article 50. Mr Goscomb reminded the Committee that the Governance Review discourages recycling of existing Trustees, but added that this would be appropriate where a Trustee has specific, required skills.

The Committee unanimously agreed to appoint Mr Eaton Hart as Vice Chair of the Staffing Committee.

5. Approval of Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 8 June 2016

These were approved and signed.

6. Matters Arising

a). Item 4c: Data Report – Hirewire Diversity Statistics

Mr Cook reminded the Committee of the agreement at the June Staffing meeting, to monitor diversity through the TES Hirewire system. He confirmed that it is too early for any meaningful statistics and that he will report back at the next Staffing meeting.

In response to a query from Mrs Linnell, Mr Cook reported that any applications that are not made through Hirewire are noted and are added to the statistics. Mrs Wainwright confirmed that the majority of recruitment does come through Hirewire. Mr Salter clarified that the School will not reject applications that are not received through Hirewire, as there are genuine circumstances where a candidate may not be able to use the system.

Action:

Mr Cook to report Hirewire statistics at the next Staffing Committee meeting.

b). Item 11: Recruitment Policy

Mr Cook reminded the Committee of the agreement, at the previous Staffing meeting, to amend the Recruitment Policy to reflect the benefit of occasional recruitment of non QTS staff. He drew the attention of the Committee to the amended policy circulated prior to the meeting which states that: *(for teaching staff, in exceptional circumstances, consideration may be given to employing without Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Examples might include a modern foreign language teacher from abroad or an appropriately qualified sports coach).*

In response to a query from Mr Harris, Mr Cook confirmed that the new Funding Agreement allows for the appointment of non-QTS staff.

Proposed by Mrs Wells, seconded by Mrs Linnell and unanimously agreed that the amended Recruitment policy be adopted.

7. Policies for Review:

Prior to considering the policies under review, the Committee discussed the key objectives of the regular and thorough review of School policies. Mr Goscomb reminded the Committee of the Governance Review recommendations including:

- Querying whether the policy is meaningful and fit for purpose
- Moving the policy review earlier in Committee agendas to reflect their importance and give time for thorough consideration
- The addition of hyperlinks to referenced material
- The addition of a list of related policies
- The addition of a statement on how often the policy is reviewed, who reviews it and who is consulted during the review process. Mr Goscomb explained the link between equal opportunities and the consultation process, stating that those affected by the policy should have some opportunity to comment.
- The importance of looking at both what we do and, how we do it
- The importance of asking the right questions to ensure the policy is enhanced and developed.

Mr Goscomb reported that the Government envisaged that a regular review of policies be part of a self-assessment, self-improvement process, where each review will improve the policy and ensure they remain live documents.

Mr Eaton Hart commented that the temptation when reviewing policies is to focus on the red (amended) sections. In response, Mr Goscomb reminded the Committee of the importance of considering the policy as a whole, not just whether it is still required, but also how it operates. He cited the example of the Staff Absence Monitoring policy, explaining that it is the Committee's responsibility to check not only that such a policy exists, but how sickness data is reported to the SLT and how it is reported to the Committee in a way that ensures absence is not getting out of control.

Mr Cook expressed his view that this discussion had been helpful and confirmed his intention of adding the suggested standard items i.e. consultation information

a). Long Service Awards

The Committee considered the Long Service Award policy circulated prior to the meeting, focusing on:

- whether such a policy is common place and whether a certificate of long service, signed by the Chair and Headteacher, should replace the existing practice of awarding £100.
- how well received two recent awards had been and the potential negative effect on staff morale if awards were to be withdrawn
- whether the additional day's holiday could be continued beyond the year of the award
- the frequency of Long Service Awards. Mr Cook confirmed there had been 3 or 4 in the last five years and the awards are therefore not a huge draw on the school budget
- why this policy is only applied to support staff and the importance of showing equal appreciation of all staff
- Mr Cook confirmed that the current policy meets HMRC requirements for these types of awards
- whether the School can justify the expenditure on staff, rather than students, and the importance of staff morale
- whether the monetary award should be stopped and the holiday extended to all staff. Mr Cook explained this is not possible due to teaching staff contracts
- alternative ways of marking long service, including gifts and celebration events
- the impact on the School budget of extending the monetary gift to teaching staff
- whether wording of the award should be amended to 'up to a value of £100' to allow for the alternative purchase of gifts. Mrs Wainwright explained that the purchase of gifts had been considered, but it had been agreed that purchasing vouchers was both easier and fairer.

Proposed by Mr Salter, seconded by Mrs Wells and unanimously agreed that this policy should be amended to a single £100 award, to be presented at the end of term event, to both support and teaching staff after 20 years' service. Additional leave will be removed from the policy. In response to a query from Mrs Linnell, Mr Cook agreed to investigate the number of teaching staff who have exceeded 20 years' service and to consider backdating the award.

Action:

Mr Cook to amend this policy as suggested

b). Monitoring Diversity

Mr Cook drew the attention of the Committee to the paper circulated prior to the meeting. In response to a query from Mrs Wells, Mr Cook explained that legislation now requires written reference to gender reassignment.

Mrs Linnell commented that the policy feels too recruitment focused and should be widened to cover promotion and development. Mr Goscomb concurred and enquired whether equality data is kept up to date beyond the recruitment phase. Mr Cook confirmed that periodic reviews do not take place. Mrs Linnell commented that if information is not current, it is difficult to check whether the School is compliant and suggested the policy requires a wider perspective.

Action:

Mr Cook agreed to update this policy in the light of these discussions and re-present to the Committee at the next meeting.

c). Payment of Support Staff

With reference to the paper supplied prior to the meeting, Mr Cook reminded the Committee of the changes agreed at the previous meeting, concerning the National Living Wage. He explained that these changes have impacted on this policy, as it has to reflect the current status from April 2016 and also, the changes which will come into effect from April 2017.

Mrs Linnell queried whether the statement at point 5 should have additional reference to the ability of the school to pay an increase, in the event that there are insufficient funds to do so. The Committee agreed that, as this was not a concern at the present time, this should not be added, but should be considered when the policy is next reviewed.

Mr Goscomb suggested that 'subject to a recommendation from the Headteacher' should be added to the second bullet point in section 3. This was agreed. Mr Goscomb also drew the attention of the Committee to the percentage figures in section 5 and proposed that these should be linked to an explanation of how these are calculated. He also pointed out a minor typographical error and asked for the policy review period to be stated within the policy.

Action:

Mrs Robinson to ensure Mrs Linnell's comments concerning point 5 are considered when the policy is next reviewed.

Mr Cook to make minor changes as requested by Mr Goscomb

d). Payment of Teaching Staff

Mr Cook reminded the Committee of the major changes made by the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) three years ago. Prior to this review, the STRB report specified not only minimum and maximum pay levels, but also levels in between. These interim levels have now been abolished and schools are free to interpret them as they wish. The Trustees previously agreed to retain the points structure, and anomalies in the old system have been dealt with.

In response to a query from Mrs Linnell, Mr Cook clarified the difference between points 2a and b explaining that the STRB makes it clear these are two separate points. He also agreed to amend a minor typographical error in section 3a.

Action:

Mr Cook to amend minor typographical error.

e). Safeguarding Children

Mr Cook drew the attention of the Committee to the paper circulated prior to the meeting and pointed out the minor changes. He explained that the procedure for, and recording of actions taken following a positive disclosure is now the responsibility of the School and has only rarely been used.

In response to a query from Dr Bastin, Mr Harris confirmed that the Attendance policy will be amended to include un-explained, non-attendance. Mr Harris confirmed that in addition a Missing Pupil policy will be presented to the ALS Committee for review.

Mrs Linnell queried whether the policy should state the related responsibilities of the Staffing Committee and how it is monitored by them. Mr Cook confirmed that the policy will make reference to the Safeguarding report presented to the Governing Body.

The Committee discussed the contentious use of Social Media during the recruitment process. It was agreed that this is a grey area, without clear guidance. Although an applicant's digital footprint may give rise to queries about their suitability for a post, equally, reference to this could be construed as an infringement into their personal life. Additionally the accuracy of social media is often in question. Mrs Wainwright commented that most serious safeguarding issues are largely kept hidden on social media. Mr Cook suggested that, in the context of safeguarding, this area could be explored with the candidate at interview. He also reminded the Committee that if an applicant has gaps in their C.V. which they cannot explain, then these are explored.

In response to a query from Mr Eaton Hart, Mr Cook clarified that information relating to the completed health questionnaire of a job applicant is considered after an offer is made after interview, but before a contract is issued. An offer can only be withdrawn if reasonable adjustment cannot be made to accommodate the applicant's needs. Dr Bastin commented that the reliance on self-disclosure can be a problem. Mr Cook clarified that the health questionnaire is a requirement when employing staff in a school. Currently, Dr Bastin reviews these medical questionnaires when required and it was agreed that ideally, an alternative means should be identified for the future.

Action:

Mr Cook to ensure the Safeguarding Children policy makes reference to the Safeguarding report presented to the Governing Body.

Mrs Robinson to ensure that the Missing Pupil policy is presented to the ALS Committee for review

Mrs Robinson to add medical questionnaires to the spring term Staffing Committee agenda

f). Staff Absence Monitoring

Mr Cook drew the attention of the Committee to the policy circulated prior to the meeting. He reported that this policy has been used rarely, but has worked effectively on those occasions. He confirmed that provision should be made to ensure that the Governing Board can confirm the procedures in this policy are being followed.

Mr Goscomb raised two matters for discussion:

1. Whether the policy should outline separate provision for staff who are absent due to stress or a similar condition. Mr Goscomb expressed his view that the level and nature of support for stress is different to that for a staff member reporting an absence due to a minor condition, such as a cold.
2. Clarification on timescales for contact with someone who has become sick. Mr Goscomb expressed his view that early contact should be specified to establish the nature of the staff's illness, any immediate support that can be offered, and any work issues that need to be addressed.

Mr Harris and Mr Cook confirmed that, in practice, early contact is made with absent staff, as teachers set work for their students and support staff make arrangements for any urgent issues to be dealt with. Mrs Wainwright reported that teaching unions frown on frequent and early contact with staff members that are absent through illness, as this could be interpreted as hassling them back to work. She confirmed that in practice contact is made in a measured way, by a person known to them, and feedback on this has been positive. Mr Goscomb commented that a balance needs to be struck between early enough contact to give time for support processes to be put in place, and neglecting a duty of care by delaying contact too long.

Mr Cook agreed to add a section which covers the points raised in general terms, acknowledging expectations and provision of support. He added that when the policy has previously been used for staff members with mental health conditions, feedback has been extremely positive.

In response to a query from Mrs Linnell, Mrs Wainwright confirmed that the process of what to do in the event of absence through illness, is outlined in the staff handbook.

With reference to the Return to Work section of the policy, Mr Harris reported that in a previous school, staff members were expected to complete a 'return to work' form with their line manager. This focused on the cause of their absence and recorded any measures of support agreed. He added that this had proved useful as evidence, for example, when persistent short term absence was investigated.

In response to a query from Mr Salter, Mr Cook confirmed that a short return to work conversation is routine practice.

Mr Cook agreed to redraft this policy, in light of these discussions, for presentation at the next Staffing Committee meeting. He will also update reference in the policy to the 1995 Disability Act as pointed out by Mr Eaton Hart.

Action:

Mr Cook to redraft policy in the light of these discussions

g). Staff Development – Teaching Staff

Mrs Linnell suggested that this policy be extended to include detail on embedding learning after staff attend external training, including a process for dissemination. Mr Cook explained that all staff have to fill in an evaluation of their training and are encouraged to share their learning. He agreed that further instruction should be added to the policy, including sharing the training evaluation with Heads of Department. Mr Harris reported that this would fit well with the School's objective to look at, not only what has been done, but what impact it has had.

Mrs Wainwright pointed out that the reference to Building Leadership Capital on page 2 should be removed as this no longer exists.

Action:

Mr Harris to amend Staff Development – Teaching Staff as agreed.

h). **Staff Induction – Teaching Staff**

This policy was agreed.

Proposed by Dr Bastin, seconded by Mr Eaton Hart and unanimously agreed that, subject to the agreed amendments, the Payment of Support Staff, Payment of Teaching Staff, Safeguarding Children and Staff Induction – Teaching Staff policies be approved.

8. Staff Changes

In response to a query from Mrs Wells, Mrs Wainwright and Mr Harris reported that all the new staff have settled in well and that they have received good feedback from their peers and students. Mr Cook confirmed equal satisfaction with the new support staff. He suggested that Mrs Styles, the new part-time Development Officer, be asked to make a presentation to the Governing Board.

In response to a query from Mrs Wells, it was confirmed that Psychology will be covered by the Lead Governor for Science.

The remainder of Item 8 is recorded under Part Two minutes.

Action:

Mr Cook to ask Mrs Styles to make a presentation at the next Governing Board meeting

9. New Staff Report

This was considered under Item 8.

Mrs Wainwright and Mr Cook left the room prior to Item 10.

10. Review and Setting of SLT Targets

Item 10 is recorded under Part Two minutes

Mr Harris left the room prior to Item 11.

11. Headteacher Performance Management Review

Item 11 is recorded under Part Two minutes

12. School Improvement Plan

Mr Harris drew the attention of the Committee to the School Improvement Plan circulated prior to the meeting. He reported that the aim of the plan is that everyone clearly knows the School's aims, how these are met and monitored and who is accountable. A traffic light system will be used to indicate progress with each priority and he confirmed that this will be updated each time the plan is presented to the Committee, to reflect the current status. The addition of pictures to the plan is intended to reflect the experiences of the students and to mirror wider practices.

Mr Harris expressed his view that the plan will form a good basis and guidance to the Trustees as recommendations from the governance review are implemented. He also

reported that the Headteacher's report will mirror the headings from the School Improvement Plan.

The Committee considered the threat of another selective school opening in Exeter, in response to the new government policy on the expansion of selective schools. This included the difficulty in journey times from Exeter to Colyton, the government identified closest 'opportunity area' being West Somerset and the opportunity for Colyton to expand.

13. Governance Review

In response to a query by Mrs Wells, Mr Cook confirmed that he and Mr Harris will consider changes to Mrs Robinson's terms of employment and job description in light of the recommendations by the Governance Review.

14. School Business Manager Recruitment

Mrs Linnell reported that the working group had met yesterday and now have an updated advert, person specification and job description for the School Business Manager recruitment. She confirmed that the advertisement will be placed early next week with a request for applications by the end of half term. Interviews will take place in early November.

15. Trustee Training

Mr Cook reminded the Committee that previously, at the autumn meeting, the Staffing Committee would consider and suggest training for the Trustees and calendar them for the year. Mr Goscomb reminded the Committee that the Governance Review recommends that each Committee set aside a period of time during their summer meeting to reflect on achievements, consider changes to Terms of Reference and also look at succession planning and training needs. Mrs Robinson will then co-ordinate the training for the year ahead.

The Committee discussed ideas for the calendared November training evening and it was agreed that training relating to the Risk Register is a priority. In response to a query from Mrs Linnell, Mr Goscomb reported that he considered basic training would be useful prior to the drafting of a Risk Policy. Mr Cook confirmed that the School still has access to the risk management training materials provided by Zurich Municipal. Mrs Wainwright suggested that red and amber risks may well prompt ideas for future training.

Action:

Mr Cook to deliver a training session on Risk Management at the Training Evening to be held on Wednesday 23 November 2016.

16. Gender Equality Duty Action Plan Update

Mr Cook reminded the Committee of the School's current equality objectives, relating to the specific duties required by the Equality Act 2010, and reported on progress:

- Admissions: the ALS Committee has been updated on the changes to admissions arrangements and a progress report will follow later
- PSHE: review work under the guidance of Amelia King continues
- Review of examination results at Key Stage 4 & 5: to be discussed at the next ALS Committee meeting
- Careers Information, Guidance and Work Experience: not yet started

In response to a query from Mrs Wells, Mr Cook confirmed that these targets cover a standard 4 year period.

17. Risk Register

Mr Cook reported that the presentation of the Risk Register has now been refined and drew the Committee's attention to the three papers circulated prior to the meeting:

1. A paper explaining the Risk Register and suggesting key review questions
2. The Risk Register, filtered to only show risks pertinent to the Staffing Committee and colour coded as previously agreed
3. A Review Report showing the elements that have changed on the Risk Register since the last review.

Mr Cook explained that he has changed the score boundaries between red and amber, to bring them in line with the School's standard risk assessments.

Mr Cook outlined the changes in the Risk Register since the previous meeting:

- The impact of not being able to recruit staff for SLT positions has been increased to level 4

Mr Cook reported that this serious risk will now be monitored by the Staffing Committee. In response to a request from Mr Eaton Hart, Mr Cook agreed to log more specific detail on the change to a risk i.e. in this case, that the risk has been raised from 3 to 4.

- An additional control: *All successful applicants must be DBS checked with appropriate references, as per the Safeguarding Children: Protocol for Pre-Employment Checks*, added to the risk of the employment of staff unsuitable to work with children.

Mr Cook confirmed that this additional control has not changed the likelihood or impact scores.

- An additional control, requiring the Headteacher and Business Manager to ensure they are up-to-date on HR issues as they affect schools, added to the risk of staff matters not being referred to HR professionals, possibly leading to tribunals

Mr Cook reported that this additional control does reflect current practice and that he attends a bi-annual Human Resources Conference.

- An additional control added to the risk that senior management of the charity are seen by the public to be paid high salaries. This clarifies that SLT salaries are determined according to the Teachers' Pay and Conditions document
- An additional control added to the risk of failure in compliance with employment law, stating that the Governing Body should ensure that, if at all possible, HR knowledge and skills are represented in the Governing Body membership.

Mr Goscomb requested that where additional controls have been added, as in this case, the notes column should indicate that there has not been a change in likelihood and impact scores as a result of the new control. In response to a query from Mr Eaton Hart, Mr Cook confirmed that it is his responsibility to assess the scores. Mrs Linnell reflected that failure to comply with this risk could have a high impact on finance, yet the likelihood is low. Trustees agreed that this control is a very clear aim for the Staffing Committee.

Mr Cook explained that item 2.2.7 on the Risk Register report has appeared *in error*.

- A new control added to the Appraisal / Assessment risk, confirming that Trustees must have an oversight of the Performance Management process
- A new control added to the Training Risk, confirming an updated figure for the annual CPD budget

18. Safeguarding

Mr Cook reminded the Committee that Safeguarding is now a standard item on all Committee agendas. He drew the attention of the Committee to the summary safeguarding audit supplied by Mr Bush. Mr Cook explained that Babcock had audited the School's safeguarding arrangements in July and detailed their report's recommendations. The School is implementing all of the recommendations.

In response to a query from Mr Goscomb, Mr Cook clarified that the recommended protocol for mobile phone use relates, in particular, to the taking of photographs within the School. Mrs Wainwright confirmed that all mobile phones should be switched off whilst on School premises and that the receptionist will remind visitors of this rule.

Mr Cook reported that the standard Annual Safeguarding report will be presented at the next meeting.

19. Any Other Business

There was no other business reported.

20. Next Meeting: Wednesday 8 February 2017

Signed:	Vick. Ward	(Chairman of Committee)
Date:	8/2 February 2017	