

WORKLOAD AGREEMENT

This agreement by the Management and Teachers' Sides of the Teachers' Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee recognises the importance of the role of the professional teacher in ensuring that the educational needs of young people are met as fully as possible. Both Sides agree that the needs of the learner should be at the centre of the education process and that teachers should be free of all unnecessary workload demands in order to focus on their pupils. It is therefore important for Boards of Governors to ensure that the workload of all Principals, Vice Principals and teachers is managed fairly and consistently to ensure that all teaching professionals can discharge their roles and responsibilities effectively for the benefit of the teaching and learning of pupils.

1. Introduction

The central purpose of this agreement is to enable Principals, Vice Principals and teachers to achieve the following objectives:

- a. to maintain and enhance the quality of teaching and learning;
- b. to preserve, in so far as this is possible, the flexibility of the contractual framework and the professional autonomy of staff;
- c. to ensure that members of staff are able to observe their contractual requirements, pursue their careers and undertake their day to day duties without unfair and unreasonable requirements being placed on them in relation to those duties and with sufficient time to enjoy a reasonable work/life balance;
- d. to protect and enhance the professional relationships within a school;
- e. to ensure that Boards of Governors as employers are aware of and in a position to meet their legal obligations with respect to employment matters and to operate within the spirit of the legislation governing Working Time and Health and Safety.

2. Principles and Key Entitlements

- 2.1 Parties to this agreement accept and acknowledge that teaching staff have the right to:
 - i. reasonable workloads;
 - ii. a fair distribution of work within the school and to raise concerns where this is not the case;
 - iii. carry out their duties within socially acceptable working hours;
 - iv. regular daily, weekly and annual breaks from work;
 - v. enjoy other rights as specified in contractual terms and conditions and in other agreements without pressure to rescind or restrict these rights other than on a temporary basis.

- 2.2 Arising from the principles above and fundamental to this agreement, are **four** entitlements applying to all staff:
 - i. That workloads will continue to be managed in an open, fair and equitable way at departmental/school level and that staff are able to challenge unfair and/or unreasonable distribution of workload.
 - ii. That workloads will be such that contractual duties will normally be completed within contractual hours. Actual work patterns may vary to meet the needs of the school, the department and, if appropriate, the individual but

will not involve regular directed working during unsocial hours except by agreement.

- iii. Staff are required to have a break of a minimum of 30 minutes between 12 noon and 2pm.
- iv. Where a teacher and his or her line manager fail to reach agreement on any of the above, in the first instance the teacher should raise the matter informally and may refer the matter to the Board of Governors using the agreed grievance procedure.

3. The Jordanstown Agreement, Working Time and Health and Safety Regulations

While good working relations cannot be achieved simply by the adherence to rules and regulations, it is important to take cognisance of a number of important pieces of legislation and formal agreements which specify what may and may not be required of staff.

- 3.1** The Teachers' (Terms and Conditions of Employment) Regulations (NI) 1987 (no. 267) as amended by The Teachers' (Terms and Conditions of Employment) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 1988 (hereafter referred to as the "Jordanstown Agreement") sets out the requirements for teachers in terms of annual hours etc. Up to date guidance on the interpretation of the agreement has been developed by Management and Teachers' Sides working together.

The Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended) cover five main areas:

- 1. Minimum daily and weekly rest periods;
- 2. Rest breaks;
- 3. Paid annual holiday;
- 4. Limits on the average number of hours which can be worked in one week;
- 5. Restrictions on hours worked at night.

- 3.2** The parties to this agreement accept that the Working Time Regulations provide minimum standards of employment and that good employers may improve on these minimum standards. They also agree that, in circumstances where the precise monitoring of working time is difficult, the spirit of the Regulations will nevertheless apply.

- 3.3** The Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1976:
Employers have a general duty under Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1976 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their employees at work. It is in the spirit of this agreement to ensure that Health and Safety requirements are met.

- 3.4** The health and well-being of teachers is a prime concern for all involved in the education process. It is recognised by this agreement that purposeful work to promote teachers' health and welfare must be sustained to the greatest effect possible within available resources.

4. Managing Workload

- 4.1** Excessive workload within a school can result from various causes, for example:
- i.** external and/or internal pressures which require the school and its employees to discharge their roles, responsibilities and duties differently in order to meet particular demands;
 - ii.** unfair or unreasonable distribution of work within the school or department.
- 4.2** Each school should establish a workable and transparent mechanism for distributing work fairly between staff members. The agreed distribution of work between staff should be made available to all staff in the school.

The parties to this agreement recognise that a variety of matters may impact on the workload of Principals, Vice Principals and teaching staff. A range of guidance has been prepared by the Management and Teachers' Sides of the Teachers' Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee, aimed at assisting school communities in developing sound policies and practices.

5. Review

This Agreement will be reviewed by the Teachers' Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee at the end of the first academic year of operation, that is, during June/July 2012 and biennially thereafter.

6. Annex

The attached Annex contains a list of guidance documents which supplement this Agreement.

Supplementary Guidance Documents

1. Appendix I: Guidance and Advice on the Allocation and Operation of Cover Arrangements.
2. Appendix II: Model School Cover Policy.
3. Appendix III: Time Budgeting.
4. Appendix IV: Directed Time Budget Sample Pro-forma.