

## **MNCT Agreement on Teacher Exchange**

### **Introduction**

1.1 As a result of the reduced number of permanent contracts and advertised positions, there are fewer opportunities for permanent teachers to apply for positions within other schools. Teachers therefore have reduced opportunities to develop professionally within different teaching contexts. Given this situation, Midlothian Council too has limited opportunities to build capacity within its teaching staff.

1.2 While it is recognised that not all teachers wish to progress through the management structure of schools i.e. Principal Teacher, Depute Head Teacher, and Head Teacher, feedback from class teachers indicates that this lack of vacancies results in some cases in a degree of professional frustration.

1.3 It has been agreed that one way of offering the opportunity for professional development is to establish a teacher exchange scheme within the authority.

1.4 This policy is a separate policy to the MNCT Compulsory Transfer Policy and the Career Break policy. It also does not cover any redeployment situation which may arise from reasonable adjustments being required to be made on medical grounds, or transfers arising exceptionally due to irretrievable relationship breakdown or arising out of disciplinary action.

### **Eligibility**

2.1 The requirements for a primary or secondary class teacher seeking a teacher exchange are:

- at least 2 years' continuous employment, on a permanent basis within a Midlothian nursery/ primary / secondary school
- being in a non-promoted post or being in a promoted post the remit of which has been changed due to management restructuring but its salary is conserved currently
- a supporting statement of suitability and agreement for placement from the Head Teacher (confirming that there is no ongoing formally-established competence process underway)
- a willingness to teach at any stage from nursery to P7 if seeking a primary exchange

2.2 Teachers who are on maternity, paternity or adoption leave, and who otherwise meet the criteria set out in paragraph 2.1 above, may apply for an exchange.

2.3 Further advice will follow in respect of any implications for teachers who are about to embark on the final 'signing off' stage of Professional Update in session 2015-16.

2.4 Within a 20 year service period in Midlothian, a teacher may be granted the opportunity of 3 other exchanges within Midlothian schools. The teacher must undertake a minimum of 2 years' continuous service within one Midlothian school between such exchanges.

### **Application, Decision and Appeal**

3.1 Teachers should submit their application (see attached form) for an exchange in August 2015 to the Education Support Officer by 24 April 2015.

3.2 Thereafter individuals will have an informal discussion with her and the Quality Improvement Manager.

3.3 The process of matching exchange teachers will be managed by the Education Support Officer, in conjunction with the relevant Schools' Group Manager.

3.4 A match cannot be guaranteed in every case – it will depend on the suitability of all applicants and the needs of schools and the service.

3.5 Teachers will be given a written response, setting out the decision in principle normally within four working weeks of application. Where the decision taken has been to refuse the request for an exchange, the council will set out the reasons for this decision in writing.

3.6 A teacher who has been granted an exchange and who, prior to the date of commencement, decides not to proceed must give the council 4 working weeks' notice.

3.7 Where a teacher has made an application for an exchange and that application has been rejected, the employee may appeal against this decision through a properly constituted appeals committee of the council. There is no right of appeal to the SNCT.

### **Post-Matching**

4.1 Once a match has been agreed, the exchange will proceed as follows:

- Primary Teachers will go to their exchange schools for 4 Fridays (or in the case of part time teachers on a pre-agreed day) in May/June in order to get to know the exchange school by undertaking a programme of suggested activities there. (Teachers and Head Teachers will work together to ensure that any Friday afternoon commitments fall within the teacher's own school's Working Time Agreement. Any time spent in the exchange school over and above this collegiate time can be counted as annual CPD.)
- The class teacher in each school will continue to plan for her/his own class for these Fridays.
- Any matters arising from teachers or Head Teachers during the course of the Fridays can be discussed in the first instance with the Education Support Officer.
- A Secondary Teacher's exchange may follow the above pattern, depending on the timetable requirements of both schools. Individual arrangements may require to be put in place.

## **The Exchange**

5.1 The full-time exchange will take place for a school session from the start of the session in August. (In the case of a secondary teacher it may occur at the change of timetable should that be earlier)

5.2 The exchange teacher will plan for their exchange class/es for this period and will assess and evaluate as required by the exchange school.

5.3 Teachers on exchange may be subject to the terms of the Planned Classroom Visits policy, where this is part of the exchange school's SIP.

5.4 Any matters arising from teachers or Head Teachers during the course of the placement can be discussed in the first instance with the Education Support Officer.

5.5 At the end of the placement, teachers should be willing to produce an informal verbal or a short written report of their experience, detailing how it has enhanced their professional development and how they believe the experience has benefitted the exchange school. A number of staff will be invited to share their reports at authority level.

## **Conditions of Service**

6.1 There will be no effect on pay, including any conservation of salary, incremental progression where it applies, or contractual status. The exchange will be treated as continuous service for statutory and contractual purposes.

6.2 The majority of the Annual CPD Plan will be agreed with the exchange school prior to the start of the academic session. 7.2 below indicates why some time should remain unallocated.

6.3 As the exchange is for a year, a teacher will follow the parents' evening arrangements in her/his exchange school.

6.4 The teacher will be entitled to apply for early return from an exchange should there be unforeseen difficulties which can't be resolved satisfactorily. In this circumstance, s/he should contact the Education Support Officer. Where s/he is a member of a recognised trade union it is advisable to seek the advice of the relevant local secretary as soon as issues arise.

6.5 A teacher will return to the post which s/he held prior to the exchange. If the exchange ends earlier than anticipated, return to the home school may not be possible until the end of the session. The best arrangements for an individual teacher will be sought in such a circumstance.

## **Contact with Home School during Exchange Period and Preparation for Return**

7.1 Prior to the commencement of an exchange, the Head Teacher/manager and the teacher will meet to agree the nature and frequency of contact with the home school.

7.2 The Head Teacher/manager will in the later stages of exchange (i.e. from April 2016) advise the teacher of any in-service, staff/dept/stage meeting or CPD course which teachers in home school will be undertaking and which might be helpful to the teacher prior to her/his return.

7.3 Teachers who have been exchange partners will exchange their classes for a maximum of 4 Fridays (or in the case of part time teachers on a pre-agreed day) in May/June in order to re-familiarise themselves with their home school. The teacher in each school will continue to plan for her/his own (exchange school) class/es for these Fridays. Timetable requirements in secondary schools may require a more individualised arrangement to be made for secondary teachers. Those who began exchanges early may need to return to their home schools before the end of the session.

7.4 Where Friday CAT sessions occur in June, teachers will consider which school's CAT best meets their needs at that time. Any time spent in either school over and above the hours agreed at the start of the exchange can be counted as annual CPD.



Head Teacher's supporting statement of suitability and agreement for placement (confirming that there is no ongoing formally-established competence process underway)

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Date.....

Signed (applicant).....

Signed (Head Teacher).....

**Applications to be returned to Sharon Smith, Education Support Officer,  
Fairfield House by Monday, 26 March 2018**

Received .....