



## LNCT 02 – Code of Practice on Collegiality

December 2018

### Introduction

Collegiality is at the heart of the National Agreement “A Teaching Profession for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”. Collegiality is a process and a way of working which reflects on relationships and participation by **all** staff in **all** aspects of school life.

Collegiality depends on the existence of a climate of professional trust among the Scottish Government, COSLA directorates, school managers and school staff.

Effective collegiality will not only enhance and develop teachers’ professionalism; it will also enhance the teaching and learning environment in Scottish schools. Collegiality at Council and school levels can only exist in a climate of trust; the views of all staff are valued and respected; staff views are fully considered; staff feel able to contribute to decisions on all areas of school life comfortably, openly and with dignity; workload issues are fully recognised and dealt with. Where such a climate exists, staff are fully involved in contributing to the life of the school and the Council.

The benefits which accrue from collegiality are not only improved industrial relations and professional satisfaction for teachers, but also an enhanced environment for teaching and learning. The ultimate beneficiaries of collegiality are, therefore, the young people in schools.

There is no single model of collegiality, but the following description of good practice should be used by staff at all levels to guide and evaluate collegiate working. It is also important that time is allocated for purposeful and positive involvement in decision making and for engagement in collegiate activities.

## Collegiality at Council Level

In a collegiate Council, the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT) is a key part of the Education Service. Experience has demonstrated the value and importance of open communication between and amongst members of the LNCT in making and implementing decisions on devolved conditions of service matters. Key to this process is a need for mutual respect and trust between LNCT members to create a climate of genuine collegiality. This will involve all members in a reflective, cooperative approach to collegiality.

Where the LNCT has devolved powers, all members work together to reach agreement in a participative decision-making process. In a collegiate Council, the LNCT should also be a forum for negotiation on wider issues impacting on the Education Service.

The views of all members are encouraged, valued, respected and fully considered. Members can contribute to negotiations and discussions on all areas of Council and school life, for example, through participation in Education and school working groups. The Director of Education, Communities and Organisational Development, and the Head of Education, have a key role to play in setting the tone for the development of the culture of collegiality throughout the Education Service.

Once agreements are reached at an LNCT level, all members demonstrate joint ownership and responsibility for these agreements and communicate such. The LNCT will monitor agreements on a five-yearly cycle and issue advice when required.

Meaningful dialogue takes place between the LNCT Joint Secretaries within agreed timescales. In accordance with the Local Recognition and Procedure Agreement, members of the LNCT are well informed, thereby fostering open and honest discussion and affording all members equally the opportunity to share information responsibly and respectfully. All agreements are signed and issued on a joint basis. All LNCT members have agreed time to prepare. Agenda are agreed in advance of the meeting by LNCT Joint Secretaries and are issued in good time. Joint Secretaries ensure that matters arising, and action points, are delegated and concluded appropriately within reasonable timescales.

The LNCT recognises the value of collegiality and provides a model of such partnership working by operating in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust in the conduct of its negotiations. Issues of educational significance, including the implication of local and national initiatives, are discussed regularly and perspectives on such matters are shared between and amongst members of the LNCT.

The principles of collegiate working at Council level are reflected at school level. The LNCT has an agreed procedure for monitoring and supporting the work of school negotiating committees. It provides advice, including published guidance and other interventions, when necessary, to support negotiations in schools. It offers opportunities for joint training on aspects of its work.

As part of collegiate working, the LNCT is committed to supporting leadership at all levels in schools, including the development of associated personal and professional skills amongst all staff. Leadership in this context is distinct from management duties as set in the [SNCT Handbook Part 2, section 2 Main Duties](#).

### **Collegiality at School Level**

In schools, collegiate working is carried out within the context of the 35-hour working week.

It is important to acknowledge that every school is different and that no single model of collegiality will apply to all schools. For instance, the practicalities of collegiate working in a small school will be very different from those in a large school. Nevertheless, certain common principles should apply.

Strong, effective communication will operate within schools. The prevailing atmosphere fosters mutual respect and trust and encourages frank, open and honest communication amongst all staff. There will be evidence of a range of meetings involving the school's management team and the trade union representatives of the teaching staff. The outcomes of such meeting will be communicated to all relevant staff.

All staff contribute to the construction of the school's Working Time Agreement (WTA) through a process of consultation, professional dialogue and negotiation. This will mean that all staff have a sense of ownership of the WTA. The WTA will be transparent, will be signed by all members of the school negotiating committee and will be submitted to the LNCT by the date specified in the 35-hour Week Framework document. Once agreed, the terms of the WTA are respected by all the staff and inform the work of the school over the session to which the WTA applies.

There will be clear mechanisms in place to allow staff to participate in the school's planning processes. These will allow staff to make their views known openly and professionally and staff will know that their views are valued and are used as input into the school's improvement planning and policy development. School policies will be regularly reviewed, and all staff will participate in this review process. Any changes proposed to the plan during the session will be subject to appropriate negotiation and agreement and will take account of teacher workload at all levels.

In schools, leadership qualities are evident throughout the school. There will be a devolved and participative style of leadership and management. Staff are afforded opportunities to develop leadership skills and take advantage of these opportunities. Leadership in this context is distinct from management duties as set out in the [SNCT Handbook Part 2, section 2 Main Duties](#).

Schools should utilise and develop the skills, talents and interests of all staff and involve all staff in the key decisions affecting the life of the school. More broadly, the spirit of collegiality should extend beyond teachers and include support staff, parents/carers, pupils and partner agencies.