

## **SNCT GUIDANCE ON WORKING TIME ARRANGEMENTS AND DEVELOPMENT OF A COLLEGIATE CULTURAL CLIMATE**

The 2001 National Agreement “A Teaching Profession for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” set out requirements for the working week of teachers. In order to provide advice on this process a Code of Practice on Working Time Arrangements was agreed (Annex D of the Agreement which is now included in The SNCT Handbook of Conditions of Service: Part 2, Appendix 2.7).<sup>1</sup> This Code of Practice forms the basis for schools to reach agreement on Working Time.

The SNCT, through its Review of LNCTs Working Group, asked Local Negotiating Committees for Teachers (LNCTs) to monitor Working Time Agreements. Based on these returns the SNCT has developed advice for LNCTs.

It is hoped that this advice will be of assistance to LNCTs in taking forward the development of collegiality in Scotland’s schools and it aims to provide practical advice to complement the guidelines and principles outlined in the **Code of Practice on Collegiality (Part 1, Appendix 1.4, The SNCT Handbook of Conditions of Service.)**<sup>2</sup>

### **Monitoring Working Time Agreements**

LNCTs have developed clear systems to advise schools of processes to agree on the use of time remaining in teachers’ working hours in line with the Code of Practice on Working Time Arrangements for Teachers. Some LNCTs have developed pro formas and associated documents which provide a framework for schools to record WTAs and to facilitate the monitoring process. The SNCT commends this practice.

Good practice prevails in schools where a collegiate approach to planning is promoted and firmly set within the context of the 35 hour working week. Staff should be encouraged to monitor and audit their own workloads and to raise concerns if and when these arise. WTAs should be agreed between the Headteacher and teacher representatives and failures to agree, if any, should be referred to LNCT Joint Secretaries. Such discussions at school level should be led by the Headteacher.

The process through which LNCTs consider Working Time Agreements is crucial to successful monitoring. There is no single ‘Model of Good Practice’ but the SNCT commends the following:

- (a) Schools are given clear advice on the LNCT’s monitoring procedures and the process through which agreement should be reached.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.snct.org.uk/wiki/index.php?title=Appendix\\_2.7](http://www.snct.org.uk/wiki/index.php?title=Appendix_2.7)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.snct.org.uk/wiki/index.php?title=Appendix\\_1.4](http://www.snct.org.uk/wiki/index.php?title=Appendix_1.4)

- (b) There is a clear timetable for schools to reach agreement, to record both that agreement and the process through which agreement was reached and the LNCT has a retrieval system which pursues missing returns.
- (c) LNCT guidance is in school in good time to facilitate school discussions.
- (d) Schools undertake an annual evaluation as part of the process of reaching agreement.
- (e) School returns are co-signed by the Headteacher and a representative of the teaching staff.
- (f) School returns make provision for identifying and rectifying existing or emergent workload problems.
- (g) The school WTA is made accessible to all teachers, for example via the school intranet.
- (h) The LNCT considers all school WTAs on an annual basis or as part of a rolling-programme. It is advised that a rolling programme should take place over no more than a three year period.
- (i) The LNCT supplements paper reviews by visiting a sample of schools to assist in contextualising and verifying the paper returns.
- (j) LNCTs circulate examples of good practice and consider the publication of all WTA on the council intranet.

As part of the Quality Assurance (QA) process the development of Collegiality and Working Time Arrangements will be monitored by councils through Quality Improvement Officers (QIOs). The quality assurance framework will particularly help for preparing for HMI inspections and meeting the Quality Indicators in the revised 'How Good is Our School' (HGIOS 3). Monitoring by QIOs should send a message that the council is determined to address workload and meet obligations in establishing collegiality. However, monitoring by QIOs does not replace the need for monitoring by the LNCT and evaluation which involves teachers and teachers' representatives.

## **Workload**

Teacher workload must be managed in the context of the 35 hour week and the WTA. The monitoring of workload should be an integral part of the monitoring of the effectiveness of WTAs. School level monitoring is the essential first step in managing workload. Each school should use its negotiating group to monitor workload on an ongoing basis and to inform the annual negotiation on Working Time. A number of councils have encouraged

schools' negotiating groups to consider workload pressures within the school's annual calendar. In this way schools can gather evidence in preparation for a formal review.

An example of good practice is a pro forma to assist the annual evaluation by school consultative groups (Appendix 1). It includes a few simple questions:

- To what extent did this year's agreement allocate a realistic amount of time in relation to your professional responsibilities?
- Identify any area where the time required under any given heading has been significantly different from what was planned?
- Do any of the headings in the current Working Time Agreement require adjustment in agreed time for next session?
- Are any new priorities emerging that require an allocation of time?

A number of LNCTs introduced practical measures to deal with workload pressures. These included the establishment of a council policy group, on which unions are represented, to act as a gate-keeper for new initiatives.

Methods of consultation and communicating with all staff at school level are important in monitoring WTAs as well as in reinforcing the message that workload should be managed within the 35 hour working week.

### **Assessment of the Wider Cultural Climate**

Work on the joint evaluation/audit of working arrangements with the aim of assessing the wider cultural climate in schools is less developed than the monitoring of WTAs. There has been some use of questionnaires, based on the Joint Chairs' letter of advice, 22 June 2005<sup>3</sup> and of meetings and events across the council being held to engage directly with schools and teachers.

Work life balance and health and well being as well as workload issues should be highlighted in the message being given from councils to teachers during meetings to consider collegiate working. It is important to use meetings and events to promote the benefits of collegiate working and to stimulate debate and innovation on ways of achieving a collegiate school.

The SNCT's Code of Practice on Collegiality should have been disseminated to schools and there is a requirement to monitor compliance with this Code. This monitoring process may be achieved by a number of means, for examples; (i) feedback from meetings/events held to discuss and evaluate progress towards collegiality (at school level, cross-school or cross-council), (ii) school visits and (iii) surveys/questionnaires. The Code of Practice on Collegiality should be used to steer progress towards collegiate working within all schools.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.snct.org.uk/library/300/Joint%20Chairs%20Letter%2022.06.2005,%20Collegiality.pdf>

## APPENDIX 1

### 35 HOUR WEEK FOR TEACHING STAFF

#### \_\_\_\_\_ SCHOOL

**[Weekly Breakdown:  
Teaching 22½ hours (max)  
Preparation & Correction 7½ hours  
Balance available 5 hours per week]**

Annual time: 39 x 5 hours = 195 hours

Activity	Description	Agreed Time
Additional preparation & correction	Preparation for your teaching and ongoing correction of pupil work	
Meetings with parents	All collaborative activities involving parents including parents' evenings	
Meetings with external agencies	All case conferences, meetings with external agencies and other partners	
Staff meetings	Participation in whole school and departmental meetings, meetings of professional associations and working groups; undertaking individual collegiate tasks/management tasks	
Preparation of reports, records etc	Recording pupil information or reporting on pupil progress	
Forward planning	Forward planning and course construction	
Formal assessment	Marking of class work, exams, portfolios etc for test or examination purposes	
Professional review and development	Activities in relation to formal PRD process	
Curriculum development	Development of new courses or aspects of courses not taught before	
Additional supervised pupil activity	Any other formal contact with or supervision of pupils	
Continuous Professional Development	Any activity undertaken in the course of an agreed CPD plan for the year	
Other	Please specify (eg individual flexibility)	
	Total	

The above figures have been agreed for session \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Head Teacher) \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Teachers' representatives) \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Evaluation – to be co-ordinated by the School Consultative Group

Teachers are encouraged to evaluate their personal workload against the generic figures agreed in their school. This will enable teachers to use professional judgement in relation to how their time is being used. It will also yield information which will feed into the School Consultative Group's annual review of the Working Time Agreement.

**To what extent did this year's agreement allocate a realistic amount of time in relation to your professional responsibilities?**

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**Identify any area where the time required under any given heading has been significantly different from what was planned.**

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**Do any of the headings in the current Working Time Agreement require an adjustment in agreed time for next session?**

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**Are any new priorities emerging that require an allocation of time?**

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