

**COLLEGIALITY: BUILDING GOOD PRACTICE IN ARGYLL AND BUTE**

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to acknowledge and endorse the Code of Practice on collegiality by the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) as providing a sound basis for furthering the development of collegiality as a key element in effective professional relationships within the education authority and its schools.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The LNCT agrees that the Code of Practice provided by the SNCT on collegiality as attached at Appendix 1 be adopted as a framework for furthering the development of shared, reflective and cooperative approaches to continuous improvement of the teaching and learning environment in schools by all education staff in Argyll and Bute.

**3. DETAIL**

- 3.1 Furthering the development of collegiality in planning, providing and reviewing the effectiveness of education in schools is a key element of the National Agreement "A Teaching Profession for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century".
- 3.2 The SNCT has provided a Code of Practice on key characteristics which would demonstrate collegiality at Education Authority level and in schools, supporting shared decision making and shared ownership of authority and school policies and plans.
- 3.3 The LNCT supports and endorses this framework for development within the Education Authority and its schools. The LNCT seeks the commitment of all staff involved in education in contributing to, and actively supporting, the growth of shared and participative approaches to building the most effective teaching and learning environments for all in Argyll and Bute.

- 3.4 In considering the development of local agreements or guidance on policy and practice relating to its responsibilities, the LNCT directly, or through its sub committees, will take a lead in promoting best practice in collegiality. The LNCT will, as appropriate, take steps to review the effectiveness of the Code of Practice in informing the development and implementation of policy and practice as envisaged by the National Agreement in this area in Argyll and Bute.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The further growth and development of collegial approaches enriches the professional working environment for all in education and the LNCT in Argyll and Bute in endorsing the Code of Practice set out by the SNCT seeks the commitment of all education staff to contribute to the implementation of its principles. The LNCT will endeavor to ensure that principles of collegiality are adhered to at Local Authority and school level and that the practices outlined should be adopted and continually monitored by the LNCT.

#### **5. IMPLICATIONS**

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|-----|-----------------------------|------|
| 5.1 | <b>Policy:</b>              | None |
| 5.2 | <b>Financial:</b>           | None |
| 5.3 | <b>Personnel:</b>           | None |
| 5.4 | <b>Equal Opportunities:</b> | None |
| 5.5 | <b>Legal:</b>               | None |

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26 March 2007

Dear Colleague

## **SNCT/52 COLLEGIALITY – CODE OF PRACTICE**

1. Agreement has been reached by the SNCT on a Code of Practice on Collegiality.
2. This Code of Practice replaces the initial advice, set out in a letter from the SNCT Joint Chairs, dated 22 June 2005. That letter has no longer any authority.
3. It is for each LNCT to disseminate the Code of Practice and to monitor that schools comply with this Code of Practice.
4. The Code of Practice will be incorporated into the new SNCT Handbook of Conditions of Service.

Yours sincerely

Joe Di Paola (Employers' Side)  
Drew Morrice (Teachers' Panel)  
Stephanie Walsh (Scottish Executive)

### **Joint Secretaries**

## **COLLEGIALITY CODE OF PRACTICE**

### **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 on all aspects of school life.

Collegiality depends on the existence of a climate of professional trust among the Scottish Executive Education Department, councils, directorates, school managers and school staff.

Effective collegiality will not only enhance and develop teacher professionalism; it will also enhance the learning and teaching environment in Scottish schools.

Collegiality at council and school levels can only exist in a climate where the views of all staff are valued and respected, where staff views are fully considered and where staff feel able to contribute to decisions on all areas of school life comfortably, openly and with dignity and where workload issues are recognised. Where such a climate exists, staff are fully involved in contributing to the life of the school and the council.

Although councils and schools will be at various stages in the development of a collegiate culture, LNCTs and establishments should have made some movement in the direction of collegiate working as part of the process of implementation of the National Agreement.

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

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 progress towards collegiate working. It is also important that time is allocated for purposeful and positive involvement in decision making and for engagement in collegiate activities.

### **1. Collegiality at Council Level**

Experience in recent years has demonstrated the value and importance of open communication between and amongst LNCT members in making and implementing decisions on devolved conditions of service matters. Key to this

process is a need for mutual respect and trust between partners in order to create a climate of genuine collegiality. This will involve all partners in a reflective, co-operative approach to collegiality.

Where the LNCT has devolved powers, all parties work together to reach agreement by a participative decision making process. In a collegiate council the LNCT should also be seen as a forum for discussion on wider issues impacting on the Education Service.

The views of all participants are encouraged, valued and respected. All partners are encouraged to participate and all views are fully considered.

Participants/partners can contribute to discussions and decisions on all areas of council and school life (for example through participation in education working groups). The Director of Education (or Lead Officer for Education) has 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 LNCT level, all partners demonstrate joint ownership and responsibility for these agreements and communicate such. The LNCT monitors agreements regularly and effectively and issues advice when required.

Meaningful dialogue takes place between LNCT Joint Secretaries within agreed timescales. In accordance with the locally agreed constitution, 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 which is subject to regular review. Agendas 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 discussions and negotiations. Issues of educational significance, including the implications of local and national policy 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, as and when necessary, to support discussions and 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 out in Part 2, Section 2 (Main Duties) of the National Scheme and Annex B of the National Agreement.

In a collegiate council, the LNCT is seen as a key part of the Education Service.

## **2. Collegiality at School Level**

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

It is also 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 two or three teacher primary school will be very different from working arrangements in a secondary school with a pupil roll of 1600 and over 100 teaching staff. Nevertheless, certain common principles should apply and what follows is a description of the collegiate school.

Strong, effective communications operate within the collegiate school. The prevailing atmosphere fosters mutual respect and encourages frank, open and honest communications amongst all staff. There is evidence of a range of meetings including meetings involving the school's management team and representatives of the staff as a whole and which may include representatives of trade unions and professional organisations. The outcomes of such meetings are communicated to all relevant staff.

All staff contribute to the construction of the Working Time Agreement through a process of consultation, professional dialogue and negotiation; consequently, all staff have a sense of ownership of the Agreement. The Agreement is transparent, is signed by all members of the school negotiating team and is submitted to the LNCT by the specified date. Once finalised, the terms of the Agreement are respected by all members of staff and inform the work of the school over the session to which the Agreement applies.

All staff members recognise their responsibility to contribute to the school development process and to participate in this process in a collegiate and constructive manner. There are clear mechanisms in place to allow staff to make their views known; staff express their views openly and professionally. The opinions of staff are valued and are used as input to the school's development plan and policy development processes. School policies and decisions are regularly reviewed and all staff participate in the review process. Any changes required to the plan during the session are subject to appropriate consultation and take account of teacher workload.

Within the context of the 35 hour week and Working Time Agreements all staff in the collegiate school participate in a wide range of whole school activities, such as school committees, policy formulation, curriculum development, professional development and additional supervised pupil activity.

In the collegiate school, leadership qualities are evident throughout the school. There is 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 Part 2, Section 2 (Main Duties) of the National Scheme and Annex B of the National Agreement.

The collegiate school utilises and develops the skills, talents and interests of all staff and involves all staff in the key decisions affecting the life of the school as a whole. More broadly, the spirit of collegiality extends beyond teachers and support staff, and includes parents, pupils and partner agencies.