

The Swanage School
MINUTES OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE
Held on Wednesday 17 June 2020

Present (via remote access): Carl Styants (Chair), William Knight, Jenny Maraspin (Headteacher), Vanessa Millman
In attendance (via remote access): Anna Carvisiglia (Business Manager), Sue Fletcher (Clerk), Kay Lawton (Acting Deputy Headteacher)

Item		Action	Lead	By
	The meeting was held by remote access due to the school closure as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.			
STF 3.1	Apologies for Absence There were no apologies for absence. Paul Angel and Tim Marcus were not in attendance.			
STF 3.2	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest. The Chair noted that Kay Lawton (Acting Deputy Headteacher) would be conflicted for his report and therefore this item would be taken last.			
STF 3.3	Minutes of the Last Meeting The minutes of the meeting held on 11 th March 2020 were confirmed as an accurate record. The minutes will be signed at a later date.			
STF 3.4	Matters Arising and Actions Where not elsewhere on the agenda. <u>STF 2.4 (STF 1.1.1) Display screen equipment assessment and claims</u> The claim form had been updated in accordance with the decisions made at the last meeting. <u>STF 2.8 Risk Register</u> The error on the Risk Register identified at the last meeting had been corrected. The Chair reminded the Committee that they had wished to review the process, and consider whether there were any lessons to be learnt, in relation to succession planning for headteacher and deputy headteacher recruitment. It was agreed a separate meeting between the governors closely involved in the process and the senior leadership team would be the best means of review.	Review	Selection panel / SLT	Autumn

	<p><u>STF 2.9 Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) – discretions</u> [Clerk’s note: the Clerk advised the Chair to report, in error, that the LGPS discretions policy had been approved by the full governing body, following the Committee’s consideration at the last meeting. Subsequently, it was realised that the approval of the full board had been overlooked.]</p> <p><u>STF 2.10 Policies</u> Following discussion at the last meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Whistleblowing Policy had been republished - The Volunteer Policy had been confirmed by Chair’s Action. The Safeguarding and Welfare Officer had confirmed that volunteers would be expected to follow the usual safeguarding procedures should a child make a disclosure (i.e. to hear the disclosure). JM confirmed that volunteers who work 1-to-1 or in small groups with students are given training; other volunteers are not on their own with students. - The Clerk confirmed that the Pay Policy must be reviewed annually. 			
STF 3.5	<p><u>Headteacher’s Staffing Report</u> A written summary had been circulated.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Starters, leavers and recruitment</u> JM reported there had been no new starters. Recruitment was currently underway for an IT Technician Apprentice, a Teacher Assistant Apprentice and for an English Teacher to cover maternity leave. Ms Sutton had retired, leaving 17th April 2020, and Ms Gething, Maths Tutor, had come to the end of her fixed term contract on 3rd April 2020. In response to a question, JM reported that the pandemic outbreak had delayed the advertising of the apprenticeship until the colleges (the training providers) were content the apprenticeships could be offered and that interviews for all posts will be held by remote video link. 2. <u>Staff absence</u> JM reported that one member of staff was shielding, three were shielding due to a high risk family member, and two (casual) staff had been furloughed. 3. <u>Grievance and discipline</u> There were no current grievance or discipline cases. 			

	<p>4. <u>Performance management / monitoring</u> The Chair asked whether it had proved possible to continue with performance management during the pandemic lock-down, recognising both the practical issues of doing so remotely, and the need to focus on other priorities. KL reported that performance management was ongoing however, in terms of assessing achievement of objectives, consideration will need to be given to what information can be used. She noted that she has been quality assuring the content that teachers have been delivering on the Teams portal, that accountability remains for meeting expectations and that support has been provided where needed.</p> <p>The Chair enquired about pressure on staff and whether the hours they had been working was on par with normal. JM reported that from the start of lock-down on 23rd March 2020 until May half-term the workload and pressure for most staff had been relentless as they dealt with the situation and switched to online systems and support. From half-term she felt it had generally started to feel more manageable. Leaders were monitoring a small number of staff who had not been available or working as might have been expected.</p> <p>JM confirmed that the Department for Education and the Dorset Hub have indicated that summer school may be put on for students, however to date there had been no suggestion that teachers would be expected to deliver this. Governors observed that whilst there might be public pressure to do so, legally the government would find it difficult to direct academies to instruct staff to work over the summer. JM reported that she had asked staff to start putting together summer packs to help students catch-up, but observed that there was a fine balance to ensure this did not demoralise students or staff.</p> <p>In response to questions, JM confirmed that Saturday school, perhaps from September, would be an opportunity to aid catch-up that would be considered alongside other initiatives to re-engage students academically, emotionally and behaviourally. AC was asked to check with the insurer if there would be any implications for opening the school to students at weekends.</p>	Check insurance	AC	ASAP
STF 3.6	<p>Chair's Report This item was taken at the end of the meeting. [Confidential Minute]</p>			
STF 3.7	<p>Staff Contracts</p> <p>1. <u>Rationale for non-standard contracts</u> It was agreed that greater clarity over contracts is required, to avoid confusion, ease administration, and as some staff were not aware of the differences between The Swanage School contracts and standard</p>			

teacher/support staff contracts applied in local authority maintained schools and adopted by some academies (Burgundy Book / Green Book). Limitations in the current staff contracts had been found, through recent examples, where unclear wording or lack of detail had created difficulties. The Chair noted that reviewing the rationale for having different contracts was a good starting point, prior to detailed discussion taking place.

WK explained that the intention of the founding governing body had been to have contracts for all staff broadly in line with, and no worse in any conditions, than the national pay and conditions for teachers and support staff, but to retain some flexibility. Given that conditions, for example in relation to sick pay, differ for teachers and support staff in the Burgundy and Green Books, adopting these would lessen the parity with which staff at the School are treated, and adoption of them would therefore counter the founding principle.

In considering the practical difficulties created by the current contracts, JM and AC outlined scenarios where issues arise and where discussion and clarification would be beneficial:

- HR support advisors can struggle to assist, even with sight of the School's contracts.
- Payroll matters can become complex due to education-specialist payroll providers being more familiar with the conditions of the Burgundy and Green Books.
- In calculating pay for part-time staff seeking to work unusual work patterns (e.g. 0.8 full time equivalent over 5 days), the lack of definition about what constitutes full time hours creates difficulties calculating a day's pay or half-day's pay. Similar difficulties exist for calculating unpaid or half-day periods of leave.
- Calculating sick pay has proven to be complex, where terms differ from standard contracts and/or are unclear in wording.
- Annual leave for support staff would benefit from consideration and greater clarity of wording (it being noted that longer leave for teachers is in recognition of their overall working patterns).
- Without reference to line management, it was not always clear who was responsible for performance management.

It was also noted that some of the cleaning staff, who transferred to school employment under TUPE, had different annual leave entitlement and that if the applicable time limits had now passed, they could be offered a transfer to school contracts.

Governors and leaders recognised a conflict between the concept of directed hours, as is found in the Burgundy Book, and treating teachers as professionals who are employed to do a job and are flexible in the

	<p>hours they work to get it done, which is the case in practice. However, it was acknowledged that the latter approach may lead to confusion when attempting to calculate a daily rate when this is required, especially if the school calendar (referenced in the school's contracts) is not clearly defined. Overly-specifying the contracts may lead to reduced flexibility, and it was agreed that it may prove more advisable to include the clarifications and specific detail in a separate document or staff-related policies.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that HR should be asked to review any changes, and discussed the role of trade unions and whether seeking their advice would be helpful. It was noted that the founding governing body made a conscious decision not to formally recognise or consult with unions, but that staff are encouraged to seek union advice if there are any issues and may be accompanied by a union representative at disciplinary and grievance hearings, for example. Some committee members felt there might be merit, however, in seeking the advice of unions if seeking to change contracts. Recognising that the involvement of unions was subject to differing personal views, it was agreed that the working group would discuss this further and ask the governing body to review its stance on union recognition and consultation if felt appropriate.</p> <p>AC noted that payroll would transfer to a new provider with effect from October 2020, and therefore it would be desirable to have clarifications in place by the end of the summer in order for the back-end of the payroll system to be set up. However, it was noted that a consultation period with staff would be required if contracts are to be changed and that this timeframe was therefore unlikely for new contracts being in place, particularly if union advice is sought, but that a guide to interpreting current contractual points should be feasible.</p> <p>2. <u>Process for review of staff contracts</u> AGREED that a working group would meet to consider each point in detail, to clarify and improve wording and to consider whether to include additional information in policies relating to staff pay and conditions (e.g. Staff Pay Policy, Staff Absence Management Policy etc). The working group would also discuss next steps in terms of staff consultation, governing body approval and whether to seek the advice of unions. CS to email the committee to seek volunteers for the working group and to set up a meeting.</p>			
STF 3.8	<p>Annual Leave Entitlement (Support Staff) This had been discussed under the item above.</p>			

STF 3.9	<p>Flexible Working (Working from Home) AC noted that working from home (necessary during the lockdown period) had worked well for some staff and that it could be advantageous for staff and the school to adopt a greater working from home culture once lockdown ends. The Chair thanked the leadership team for bringing to the Committee’s attention that this would be explored, content that it was an operational matter.</p>			
STF 3.10	<p>Staff Wellbeing Noting that this had been reported on at the last meeting of the full governing board, JM confirmed that the leadership team feel they have a good handle on staff welfare issues, and that all staff would know that support is available and who to turn to should they need. On a practical level, KL was regularly in touch with the Curriculum Area Leaders, and in turn they were in touch with their teams.</p>			
STF 3.11	<p>Policies</p> <p>1. <u>Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy</u> Noting that the policy had been deferred from the last meeting due to question relating to the need for, and purpose of, governor review of all staff suspensions (as specified in the policy), it was observed that whilst there may not be a statutory need to do so, this reflected good practice, providing the opportunity to review and reflect, e.g. on the length of the process and the support provided to the staff member concerned.</p> <p>APPROVED the policy as presented, noting that governor review of suspensions regardless of the outcome of a case, would be retained. Composition of a review panel would be as for the Governors’ Staffing Review Panel (two governors and one member of the Senior Leadership Team, subject to them being able to be independent).</p> <p>2. <u>Staff Code of Conduct</u> AGREED the Staff Code of Conduct would be approved by Chair’s Action subject to the following amendments being made, and noting that changes to the draft had been made in relation to sanctions imposed for breach of the code (replaced with a cross reference to the Discipline Policy), changes relating to receipt and reporting of gifts, and tidying up the cross-references to other policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Removal of reference to covering tattoos 	Republish	Clerk	ASAP

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changing section 7 (in relation to other employment) to reflect the current contracts which state that other work may only be undertaken with prior approval of the headteacher. - Updating section 19 (data protection) to reflect the wording of the Data Protection Policy which lists a number of reasons a member of staff may disclose information, in addition to the one listed in the draft Code of Conduct, ensuring consistency between the two documents. - Updating the governing body review frequency of the Code of Conduct to at least annually. <p>3. Staff Induction & Training / NQT Policy AGREED that the Staff Induction & Training (including NQT) Policy will be approved by Chair's Action once the contentious elements are removed. These had been identified at the last meeting and related to cited responsibilities of governors that it would not be reasonable nor practical to expect governors to fulfil.</p> <p>[Kay Lawton and Anna Carvisiglia left the meeting. The meeting continued with Item 3.6 before returning to the running order of the agenda.]</p>	Update	Clerk	ASAP
		Update	Clerk	ASAP
STF 3.12	Any Other Business None.			
STF 3.13	Confidentiality Item 3.6 would require confidential minutes.			
	Next Meeting The next meeting will be held in the Autumn Term.			
	The meeting closed at 7.25pm.			