

GLADSTONE ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL
"Learning to Succeed"

MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY

DATE: Tuesday 12th March 2019

TIME: 6.30 p.m.

PRESENT:

Mr Ray Williamson
Mrs Jane McLeod
Mr Wayne Thickett
Miss V Lewis (Clerk)

Mr Peter Southward
Mr Keith Wright
Mrs Andrea Cowley

Additionally Present:

Mrs Caroline Sarney (School Business Manager)
Ms Jane Pepper (left at 7.20pm)

MINUTES

1. Welcome from the Chairperson (2 minutes)

AC welcomed governors to the meeting.

Action: None Required.

2. Apologies for absence; consider acceptance of apologies (2 minutes)

All committee members present.

Action: None Required.

3. Confidentiality (2 minutes)

Item 7 on the agenda was identified as confidential.

Action: None Required.

4. Declaration of Interest in any Agenda Item (2 minutes)

Item 7 was identified as of interest to staff members Clerk (VL) and JM who will absent themselves from the meeting at this point.

Action: None Required

5. Minutes of the previous meeting (13.11.18) / Matters Arising (10 minutes)

The Minutes from the meeting on 13.11.18 were presented. Proposed by JM and seconded by RW. Minutes were signed by AC and returned to the Clerk for filing as per procedure.

Action: Minutes from meeting 13.11.18 to be filed as per procedure

By: Clerk

6. Correspondence (2 minutes)

No correspondence to be discussed at this meeting.

Action: None Required.

7. Selection Committee Update re Staffing Structure Review (10 minutes)

Item 7 had been identified as being confidential and of interest to staff members Clerk (VL) and JM. They both left the meeting at this point whilst discussions took place.

Action: N/A.

8. Finance, Premises, Health & Safety: SBM Mrs Sarney (15 minutes)

CS: does anybody have any thoughts or questions regarding the summary finance information? We are currently looking at around £50k better carry forward.

Governors were asked to consider the situation moving forward in regard to training course costs, PPA provision and transport expenses. CS has discussed the options with HR. Any thoughts?

RW: will this save much money? In terms of adding another thing affecting staff morale?

CS: It costs around £400 ish for a person to attend a course when you factor in course fee, supply cover etc. Some people seem to attend lots of courses and some not many. If things are going to be tight perhaps this is an area where things need to be more consistently applied. There has also been an additional issue when staff have attended a course on their PPA time but then requested it be 'repaid'.

KW: HR advice is that if the staff member is attending the course in line with designated performance management objectives and/or the SIDP priorities then school will repay any lost PPA time. However, if the course / meeting / training is not linked to a school objective, and the staff member has personally requested to attend for their own CPD and/or interests they will forfeit any lost PPA time.

AC: happy to accept that advice.

CS: The other thing to consider is the travel claims situation. HR suggested governors could consider whether, in the interests of the budget to ask that where a journey is below 30 miles they would not put in a claim. What are governors' thoughts?

RW: not claiming for a 5-10 mile journey seems reasonable but 30 miles is different.

JM: Personally I claim to go to North Yorkshire House, as over the course of a month I may visit multiple times and this will add up to 30-40 miles. I wouldn't be prepared to cover this cost personally when I need to visit the venue for work purposes.

WT: school could ask staff to look at cheaper alternatives. For example, when I visit County Hall at Northallerton a train ticket is cheaper than a fuel claim.

RW: in East Yorkshire we use public transport when travelling over a certain distance.

KW: with regard to Ofsted, when I go on inspection school is paid an extra £65 towards transport. I also look at which options are cheapest in terms of departure point, mode of transport and times to try to get best value.

RW: would suggest accepting the following as advised but ask staff to look at the most economical options. Consider car sharing, public transport etc.:

For courses/training/meetings linked to SDP or current focus areas

- *Priority is given for covering the cost of the course and supply cover where the course is linked to the SDP/ current focus*
- *Where training is linked to the SDP / current focus, school will also cover the cost of travel expenses*
- *If the course occurs on a day when it is a member of staff's PPA, they are offered PPA at an alternative time (this would incur a further ½ day supply cover cost)*

For courses / training/ meetings staff wish to attend for their own professional development or that are not linked to an area in the SDP

- *School will cover the cost of the course and supply cover*
- *School will ask the governors to consider the likely impact of the training to school in terms of SDP priorities and therefore whether travel expenses will be covered*
- *If the event occurs on the member of staff's PPA day, this will not be repaid and staff would be expected to do the work from the PPA session in their own time*

Governors agreed.

Action: Inform staff of training / transport guidelines

By: CS

9. Schools Financial Value Standard (10 minutes)

The SFVS is the annual return completed by the school and agreed by governors using the Financial Controls Checklist as guidance. VL advised she and CS have completed the SFVS and the Checklist which supports conclusions drawn. RW will sign off as Chair of Governors at the next Full meeting on 19.3.19 and the return will be submitted before the deadline of 31.3.19.

Item 8) Update to '2018' as it says '2017'

Item 12) There is now a plan to reduce the deficit (staffing restructure) so this response should be changed to 'Yes'.

Action: Make identified changes

By: VL

Action: Forward to Governors for formal agreement on 19.3.19

By: VL

10. Review of application of Leave, Increments and Attendance Policies (adopted Autumn 2018) (15 minutes)

Leave:

CS: If we have 30% less staff from September, absence due to illness and other leave will have an even more significant impact. We need to raise the profile of issues caused by staff absence and the ways to improve attendance. Worked closely with HR to consistently follow the attendance management policy and to support staff. However, looking at the amount of time lost through medical/other appointments and dependents/other leave HR have asked why these absences have been allowed when the policy states this isn't approved leave. ie. school has adopted the policy but not enforced it consistently and fully.

CS: the intention is to encourage staff to take as many medical, dental and other appointments outside of the school day as possible. The policy states that staff should make appointments outside their contracted working hours, and any which are attended during the school day will be unpaid. The exception to this is for hospital and screening appointments which are often difficult to reschedule. If a staff member requires an 'emergency' doctor or dentist appointment there is the question of whether they should be in work in the first place.

RW: will this mean that people take more sick days?

CS: then they'll hit trigger points and be dealt with under the attendance management policy.

CS: this has been prompted by the fact staff absences are affecting the service being provided and the impact on pupils. When we started looking at the staff re-structure, the SLT were trying to evaluate the impact of having TAs in the afternoons and it was found that absences are impacting on provision. For example, a planned intervention group has never happened due in large part to the members of staff involved being out of school at appointments or on other leave. This has an impact on childrens' learning. It is about ensuring the hours a staff member is being paid for are effectively deployed and used and that absences are not impacting on provision for pupils.

AC: given the situation with the restructure it would seem prudent to start fully and consistently enforcing these policies.

CS: dependents leave is the second highest reason for absence and whilst this is difficult, school cannot sustain this level of absence. Some staff are taking several days / a week off with their unwell children.

AC: the first day of a child's illness can occur suddenly and childcare is not always easy to arrange at very short notice, but certainly, staff should be able to manage subsequent days better.

RW: do staff know the terms of the policy?

CS: yes, but we've never enforced the 2 day limit. HR have recommended that for anyone taking dependents leave over and above the designated 2 days in 12 months, consideration is given to tackling this under the provisions of the disciplinary policy.

AC: it's about whether staff are misusing the policy limits and possibly having a finance impact on school.

CS: dependents days are unpaid so the costs involved are supply (for teachers). However it is more about the significant impact on the service provision and lost learning of pupils.

KW: though not financial, there is an issue also about the impact on other staff in absentees' teams; it can cause stress, difficulties and other complications. Although this might upset people, school must look to provide best learning. Propose we look at implementing from September but make staff aware of the intention to consistently and fully implement the policies over the next term.

CS: the policy says 2 days per 12 month period, end of. To support staff would we be better to have 'trigger points' like attendance management?

AC: be guided by HR. If too prescriptive it might lead to ill feeling. But there does need to be an increased awareness of expectations.

WT: the wording says 'Under the policy, any leave exceeding 2 days in a 12 month period **may** be treated as unauthorised absence and, in line with the policy, **could** lead to disciplinary action'?

CS: so, ensure staff are aware of the intention to tighten up procedures re dependents leave but then address any significant issues separately?

AC: there needs to be a period to embed the policy and increase awareness. Initiate it and then give people time to take it on board. Deal with issues on a case by case basis for the initial period. Give it a chance to work first.

Increments:

CS: the increments policy is linked to attendance. It does state that staff can potentially drop a pay point or have one withheld if there are identified attendance issues over 12 months – 3 years. Although the policy has been adopted it has never been enforced. When I reviewed the possible impact it would apply to 4 or 5 staff.

AC: has this been approved by unions? Surely it is discriminatory?

KW: policy approved by all 4 main unions.

CS: where absences are covered by the Equalities Act (e.g. chronic conditions and illnesses such as cancer) this is taken into account. Also if there is a one off long term absence when otherwise staff have a good record, this can be considered. Perhaps it would be a better idea at this time to raise the profile of the policy again; making staff aware that this is a possible outcome of absence?

AC: I don't feel comfortable with this.

RW: seems discriminatory. And it only applies to support staff.

CS: you can add this to the general pay policy affecting teachers also, but unions don't accept this.

CS: we will look to raise the profile of the possible impact of absence but not specifically about a possible effect on increments.

Action: Raise profile of Leave and Absence policies

By: CS

11. Secure Banking Collection Service (10 minutes)

VL: best practice is that banking is transported from school to the bank branch by 2 members of staff. However, this is not always possible and will definitely pose an issue from September when there are fewer admin staff. CS had visited Barrowcliff who use a direct secure collection service provided by Lloyds. However, after doing some research this service is now not available for new customers.

VL has contacted G4S who provide a similar service. The annual costs are £178.20 for a monthly collection, £274.55 for fortnightly collections and £563.55 for weekly collections.

It is felt that a fortnightly pick up would be the most appropriate and in terms of costs and staff time, as well as security and compliance with LMS Procedure Rules, it is recommended governors support this proposal.

Governors discussed and agreed with the proposal. VL will look to put this in place as soon as practicable.

Action: Set up G4S Direct Cash Collection Service (Fortnightly) to commence ASAP

By: VL

12. Discuss GEN009 Home:School Agreement (10 minutes)

Governors considered the Home:School Agreement which is sent to new starters in the Summer Term.

They proposed that the first bullet point under 'Parent/Carer will:' should be changed to read as follows:

- *make sure that my child arrives at school on time – at 8:50am in YR/Y3 and 8:55am in Y1, Y2, Y4, Y5, Y6 in readiness to attend and learn.*

Action: Send updated Home:School Agreement to Office Manager

By: Clerk

13. Review Lockdown Procedure (10 minutes)

Governors discussed the current LA model policy which school adopted in 2017. KW will further investigate the 'alert system / word' used by other local schools and the Playcentre to see if we can put something in place which is consistent. Will feed back at a subsequent meeting.

Action: Develop Lockdown Procedure

By: KW

14. Review, agree and adopt policies (10 minutes)

ICT001 Acceptable Use Policy

INF002 Privacy Notice for Volunteers

INF003B Information Security Policy

CS: these are all model policies from Veritau which we need to have in place to ensure we are compliant prompted by a GDPR audit.

Proposed by AC and seconded by JM. *Governors agreed to adopt these policies.*

Visitor Wifi Policy

CS: There has now been a separate server and host set up for secure GDPR compliant access to the wifi for visitors, guests and other external providers. This is a completely separate secure network and does not allow any access to school / pupil data. This will be much easier for visiting professionals such as social workers etc. The document gives full policy details and login information and can be handed out to anyone relevant requesting access.

KW: Ofsted also request secure wifi access.

Proposed by AC and seconded by JM. *Governors agreed to adopt these policies.*

Action: Policies filed / displayed as per procedures

By: Clerk

15. A.O.B (2 minutes)

CS: the SICT contract with the current school website host, Cirrus, is ending so there will soon be no further updates and support available. We are being asked to move to a new host and need to decide what we would like to do in terms of the transfer of data, content and layout. We can move the whole thing as it is, or we could use this as an opportunity to review the website. If any governors would like to volunteer to assist with this and join a small working party please let CS know.

AC: suggest we reduce paper copies further, in line with budget saving.

CS: due to GDPR if parents have requested paper copies we must comply with this. Parents are asked annually which methods of communication they would like to opt for. We can perhaps revisit this in the Autumn when new letters are sent out. There will always be some families not able or willing to engage electronically. Hopefully this will be an ever reducing number, also we are hoping to roll out a 'Parent Portal' where they would access letters, parents evening appointment bookings etc.

KW: my personal opinion is that the website is compliant and familiar. If we change it now before Ofsted that might not be the best use of resources.

JM: not particularly vibrant.

KW: some are too busy to be usable. With regard to time available, this might be a lower priority.

CS: we need to decide what we would like to do in terms of moving across as is or update / change.

RW: look at the host's possible layouts etc.

KW: perhaps we could review it and then ensure doesn't go live until sure it is compliant.

RW: think it would be a missed opportunity to not look at options, especially as a key way of promoting the school.

CS: we don't want to have to 'do it twice' as there is a cost involved with design and setup. Reviewing the website would be a few weeks of work but it's important to get it right. Looking at possibly being ready to respond about our chosen way forward by Easter. If anyone has any example of 'good' school sites they have appreciated, send a link to CS.

RW and JM volunteered to be involved in the website working party,

The school Glee Club were taped by Sky TV on Monday dancing for Red Nose Day. This will be shown on Sky News at 10.30am on Saturday and Sunday.

AC: with regard to fundraising, I have been coming up with ideas to boost income and have approached several unions and other groups re donations and grants. I have also thought that running events such as 'Body Shop at Home' in the school hall on an evening could bring in extra income. Will liaise with KW and RW.

Action: Contact CS with ideas re school website etc

By: all gvs

Action: Liaise re fundraising ideas with KW and RW

By: AC

The Meeting was closed by the Chair at 8.15

Signed _____ Dated _____