

Minute of Meeting Renfrewshire Council Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff

Date	Time	Venue
Tuesday, 01 September 2020	14:00	Teams Meeting,

Representing Renfrewshire Council Management

Councillor Paterson; G McKinlay, Head of Schools, J Calder, Head of Service (Curriculum and Quality), J Colquhoun, Education Manager (Development), A Hall, Education Manager (Development), H Paterson, Head Teacher, Heriot Primary School, M A Renfrew, Head Teacher, Trinity High School, and M Thomas, Education Manager (Development) (all Children's Services); and L Mullin, Principal HR & OD Advisor (Finance & Resources).

Representing Renfrewshire Council Teaching Staff

K Fella, C Carson, A Howie, Y Murray, D Tollan, JP Tonner and J Welsh (all EIS); J Liston (SSTA); L Gibson (NASUWT); and S McCrossan (Adviser to Teachers' Side).

In Attendance

T Slater, Senior Committee Services Officer (Finance & Resources).

Apology

Provost Cameron.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest intimated prior to the commencement of the meeting.

1 Appointment of Chairperson

In accordance with the terms of the local recognition and procedure agreement, which stated that the Chair of the Committee should alternate between the two sides comprising the Renfrewshire Council Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff, it was agreed that J Welsh would chair this meeting of the Renfrewshire Council Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff.

DECIDED: That J Welsh chair this meeting of the Renfrewshire Council Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff.

2 Minute of Previous Meeting

There was submitted the Minute of meeting held on 2 June 2020.

It was noted that J Liston had replaced S Dargie as the SSTA District Secretary and was now the SSTA representative on the Renfrewshire Council Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff.

New members were welcomed to their first meeting of the Committee.

DECIDED:

(a) That the update be noted; and

(b) That the Minute be approved.

Sederunt

J Liston and Councillor Paterson joined the meeting during consideration of the following item of business.

3 Absence Statistics - Quarter 4 of 2019/2020

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the Council's absence statistics for the period 1 January to 31 March 2020. The report provided information in relation to absence targets and how services and categories of staff had performed against them. An analysis of the reasons for absence for the period was included in the report. Information was also provided on supporting attendance activity.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

4 Amendment to School Holiday Arrangements School Session 2020/2021

Under reference to Item 3 of the Minute of the meeting of the Education and Children's Services Policy Board held on 20 August 2020, there was submitted a report by the Joint Secretary (Management Side) relative to the requirement to amend school holiday arrangements for school session 2020/2021.

The report advised that, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Scottish Government Guidance Document entitled “The Strategic Framework for the Reopening of School and ELC Provision” confirmed that the start date of the new term would be standardised to 11 August 2020 across all councils in Scotland on an exceptional basis for the purposes of managing Covid-19.

The report further advised that, following consultation with staff, parent councils, pupil councils, teaching and other trade unions, arrangements were made that required teachers to return to work on Monday, 10 August 2020 and pupils returning to school on Wednesday, 12 August 2020. The additional two days worked in August would be moved to the Christmas break. The Policy Board report on the amended school holiday arrangements was attached as an appendix to the report.

DECIDED: That the revised school holiday arrangements for academic year 2020/2021, as outlined in the appendix to the report, be noted.

5 School Holiday Arrangements School Session 2021/22

Under reference to Item 4 of the Minute of the meeting of the Education and Children’s Services Policy Board held on 20 August 2020, there was submitted a report by the Joint Secretary (Management Side) relative to the agreed local school holiday arrangements for the school session commencing in August 2021.

The report intimated that, in line with the normal consultation arrangements, three potential options had been circulated to staff, parent councils, pupil councils, teaching and other trade unions for consideration. These proposals were detailed in the report approved by the Policy Board, attached as an appendix to the report.

The school holiday proposal preferred by the majority of those who had submitted responses to the consultation was detailed in Appendix 1 to the Policy Board report, with Appendices 2 and 3 outlining the proposals less favoured and Appendix 4 providing a summary of the consultation responses.

DECIDED: That the school holiday arrangements for academic year 2021/2022, as detailed in the appendix to the report, be noted.

6 Responding to the Pandemic and Reopening Schools

There was submitted a report by the Joint Secretary (Management Side) relative to the work undertaken in response to the Covid-19 pandemic to protect and support employees, communities and the vulnerable.

The report highlighted the commitment and resilience shown by colleagues across the council in delivering essential services, volunteering to support frontline services and helping others to remain safe at home.

The report provided information on the work undertaken by teachers and other school and Children’s Services staff throughout the period of lockdown to support learning from home and ensure the safety and wellbeing of the most vulnerable children and young people. Information was also provided on the ongoing collaborative engagement with professional associations to ensure the safe reopening of schools and the role of the JNC in continuing to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all employees.

The Joint Secretary (Management Side) acknowledged the work and effort that everyone had made during this time and expressed his thanks for this. This was echoed by Councillor Paterson.

Following discussion on various issues, it was agreed to distribute risk assessment information to members.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

7 Digital School: Primary

There was submitted a report by the Head of Service (Curriculum and Quality) relative to the development of an online Digital School to ensure continuity of learning for any children or young people required to self-isolate.

Children and young people would be able to access learning via either Microsoft Teams or Google Classroom and would be supported by another teacher who was currently shielding and working from home.

The report advised that ongoing evaluation of this provision would be necessary, and it was intended to provide similar support to secondary school pupils, with the details on this were still to be finalised.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

Sederunt

H Paterson left the meeting during consideration of the following item of business.

8 Covid Health and Safety

There was submitted a report by the Joint Secretary (Teachers' Side) relative to concerns about the maintenance of health and safety mitigations to minimise the risk of Covid infections within Renfrewshire schools.

The report requested that a proactive approach be taken which could be achieved by encouraging the establishment of weekly school Health and Safety Committees with a particular focus on Covid mitigations.

Following discussion, it was agreed that Children's Services approach had been proactive in dealing with issues quickly and engaging with trade unions. The Joint Secretary (Management Side) agreed to remind and encourage Head Teachers to engage proactively and, if possible, this could be done through Health and Safety Committees, however, highlighted that this avenue may not be appropriate for every school.

DECIDED: That the Joint Secretary (Management Side) would encourage Head Teachers to continue to engage proactively with teachers and trade unions, which could be undertaken through the establishment of Health and Safety Committees, where appropriate.

9 Working Time Agreements

There was submitted a report by the Joint Secretary (Teachers' Side) relative to school Working Time Agreements.

The report advised that school Working Time Agreements existed to manage excessive workload demands and ensure that the tasks required of teachers by management were able to be completed within the contractual 35 hour week. The report intimated that, although Renfrewshire JNC had an existing agreement, the mitigations in place to address the threat of Covid-19 would have an impact on some of the activities that would normally form part of a Working Time Agreement and would have implications for the operation of non-class contact time (NCCT).

The report referred to SNCT guidance in JS/20/79 and requested that discussions take place between Management and the Teachers' Side to agree a temporary adjustment to the agreed protocols on Working Time Agreements and NCCT during the Covid-19 crisis on the understanding that the extant arrangements would be reinstated once the Covid-19 mitigations were no longer required.

Following discussion, the Joint Secretary (Management Side) agreed that there had to be flexibility and that this had been communicated to Head Teachers.

DECIDED: That discussions take place between Management and the Teachers' Side to agree a temporary adjustment to the agreed protocols on Working Time Agreements and NCCT during the Covid-19 crisis on the understanding that extant arrangements would be reinstated once the Covid-19 mitigations were no longer required.

10 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 10 November 2020 at 2.00pm via Microsoft Teams.

DECIDED: That it be noted that the next meeting of the Renfrewshire Council Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff would take place on Tuesday, 10 November 2020 at 2.00pm via Microsoft Teams.