



HR Matters

**Your termly update on HR issues from the
Octavo Partnership**



Autumn Term 2018

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Introduction

Welcome back! Hopefully the summer holidays are not too distant a memory, and all your new pupils and staff are settling into your schools and academies.

The start of the Autumn Term sees the publication of the new pay and conditions document (STPCD), and one of the challenges at the start of this new academic year is the late publication of the document. At the time of writing, we are still waiting for STPCD 2018 and anticipating that it will be accompanied by an announcement about funding the pay award. Once we have this we will be having local consultation and updating our pay policy.

The pay awards for both teachers and support staff, coupled with the tightening of school budgets, are impacting on the financial operating environment for education. All of these impact on people – on pupils, on their families and on staff.

Our role in HR is to support you with the impact of changes on staff. Potentially this could involve reorganisations, but it is also about helping you maintain and grow cohesive and motivated staff groups. It is about recognising and acknowledging individuals and their achievements. It is about addressing issues as soon as they arise rather than letting them fester. It is about delivering difficult messages in an appropriate way.

The issue of how we deal with people is coming ever more under the spotlight. In part this has been caused by the decision to drop the fee to apply to an employment tribunal. Tribunals are very concerned about the processes that are followed in order to reach a decision. They may conclude that an employer has made a reasonable decision (what is known as a decision that falls within the 'band of reasonable responses') but if they don't feel a fair process has been followed then an employer can be penalised. This shouldn't stop employers from tackling difficult issues, but it does mean that you must do so in the right way. Getting professional advice at the earliest opportunity has never been more important

This term's newsletter contains a range of information. If you have any questions about any of the topics in our newsletter, or on any other matter, please contact your HR consultant. You can still contact us even if you are not in an HR contract with Octavo as we can provide advice on an ad hoc basis. The easiest way to contact us is via our advice line - 020 8241 5483 or email us at hrservices@octavopartnership.org

We look forward to working with you over the coming term.

The Octavo HR team

Teachers Pay

Once the new pay and conditions document is issued, schools will need to make the necessary determinations about pay and backdate them to 1 September 2018. We will be consulting locally and updating our pay policy. We are aware that some schools have their own payscales and they will need to review these and consult with the unions. All schools will need to discuss the pay scales with their Governors and academies will need to follow their own governance processes with regard to making any changes.

Once schools have made their decisions about pay scales they will need to inform their payroll provider. Teachers should be issued with a pay statement and template pay statements are available from Octavo HR. The pay statements should be issued by the 31st October each year, but given the late publication of STPCD, we appreciate there will be some challenges to meet the timescale this year.

HR Training

Bespoke Courses

We recognise that handling people matters can sometimes be quite tricky, and to assist schools we can offer a variety of training courses. These can be aimed at supporting school leaders in their people management roles, or at helping the whole school workforce understand an element of HR processes. We can work with you to create bespoke training that can be delivered in your school and is focussed on your school's particular needs. We have evidence that many schools have found this beneficial in terms of collectively moving forwards with effective staff management. If this is something that you feel could be helpful, then please contact us.

Some of the sessions we have run in the past include

- Handling Difficult Conversations;
- Performance Management;
- Sickness and Discretionary Leave;
- Restructures and Redundancies;
- Investigation Skills;
- Essential People Management Skills.

As a team we have a wide range of experience and would be able to deliver courses on the full range of HR matters.

Our style of training is interactive, and as well as helping you understand the importance of following process we also look at the more difficult issues that are caused by handling situations where there is no easy answer or where there is underlying conflict.

Central training programme

In addition to our bespoke training session, we run a central programme of HR related courses. The programme is:

1 November 2018: Difficult Conversations and How to Manage Them

2 November 2018: Essential People Management Skills for Line Managers (modules 1 and 2)

26 November 2018: Disciplinary Processes and Investigation Skills

Courses can be booked via our website – www.octavopartnership.org

Safeguarding

Recent headlines in the papers have reemphasised the extent of, and ease of access to, material that has harmful intentions towards children. It serves as a reminder of the importance of ensuring ongoing vigilance on all matters with regard to protecting the children and young people in our care.

Part of that process is acknowledging that schools are environments that will attract potential abusers, and there is a need for an ongoing culture of vigilance.

Safer Recruitment

Our [Safer Recruitment training](#) looks at what can be achieved via the recruitment process to deter unsuitable applicants. At the very least one member of every recruitment panel should have had the safer recruitment training, and it is useful for all those involved in recruitment, including those who will be organising all the pre-employment checks to understand these processes.

Keeping Children Safe in Education

A new version of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) was issued and came into effect from **3 September 2018**. The principles remain constant, but there have been a number of changes, and it has been organised differently from previous versions. The main changes are listed on page 103 of the document.

In particular we would draw your attention to paragraph 222 which highlights the need to agree and record the rationale and justification for any employee suspension in relation to safeguarding matters, and that this should include what alternatives to suspension were considered and why they were rejected.

A written risk assessment should be undertaken for volunteer recruitment, giving details of the rationale for determining if a volunteer should have a DBS check, and if so at what level. We are expecting further guidance to become available about this requirement shortly.

The new version of Keeping Children Safe in Education also clarifies the requirement to check whether maintained school governors have been barred from school management (a section 128 direction) and these checks can be carried out via the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA). This information can (and should) be requested as part of the DBS check for governors/directors of academies, but can only be included on the DBS check of governors of maintained schools if they are also engaged in regulated activity. A separate check via the TRA is therefore needed for governors of maintained schools not engaged in regulated activity.

[Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006](#)

There has been a change in legislation with regard to [Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006](#) that came into effect on 31 August 2018. This has significant implications for schools and academies, and new statutory guidance has been issued as a result.

The Childcare Act continues to apply to all early years settings (up to and including reception classes in education settings) and to childcare settings for under 8s (this does not include education but does include for example breakfast clubs and after school clubs for the purposes of childcare).

The disqualification by association provision has however been removed where childcare is provided in non-domestic settings and where safeguarding measures are well observed and followed. **Therefore, schools and academies are no longer required to establish whether a member of staff providing, or employed to work in, childcare is disqualified by association.** From 31 August schools must not ask their staff questions about cautions or convictions of someone living or working in their household.

The other provisions with regard to disqualification under the Childcare Act continue to apply, and schools and academies will need to have processes in place to carry out these checks, and to remind staff to let them know if their circumstances change.

Schools and academies which have used a form to obtain the information will need to update their form and/or contact their HR Provider for an updated form.

Schools and academies should review their safeguarding policies to take account of this change and to ensure that they are still compliant with Keeping Children Safe in Education. It is also important for schools to make clear the expectations they place on staff with regards to relationships and associations that may impact on children in their care and to create an environment where staff feel comfortable to raise matters and concerns connected with relationships outside work.

As a supportive measure, the Department for Education will also continue to provide a helpline and mailbox for schools, academies and their employees to help them with the new arrangements.

The new guidance can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006>

NQT Induction

Getting NQT induction right is an important element of establishing new teachers in their career and providing the foundation for retaining them in the profession.

Octavo Partnership will continue to act as an Appropriate Body for NQT Induction, providing a service that guarantees your teachers are supported from the very beginning of their induction year, through to final assessment and certification from the Teacher Regulation Agency (TRA). We work with many schools across London boroughs which means that we can provide a consistent benchmarking standard for NQT induction training across school sites.

Unique to the service is the support available when NQTs experience difficulties. Octavo's NQT team has extensive experience meaning that, whatever situation arises, you can feel confident that you will be supported from start to finish to ensure the best outcome. **For full details of our AB Induction Service click, please click [here](#).**

Primary Newly Qualified Teachers CPD Programme

An important element of NQT induction is making sure the right CPD programme is in place for them.

This year, Octavo are pleased to announce the bespoke, NQT programme run by the Chipstead Valley Teaching School Alliance and the Catholic Primary Schools Umbrella Trust, in partnership with Octavo.

The 17 schools and academies which make up the partnership span from the North of Croydon to the furthest school South of the borough and are committed to providing a fully comprehensive induction programme for NQTs and excellent CPD opportunities. The partnership is based on positive relationships, mutual respect, high expectations, a pursuit for excellence and a detailed and up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the theory and practice of teaching.

For full details of the CPD Programme and how to book, please click [here](#). You can also book via Chipstead Valley Teaching School Alliance's course booking page via their website, <http://www.valleytsa.com/course/nqt-programme-2018-19/> and completing the online booking form.

SWLSEP Leadership Programme

The SWLSEP Leadership Programme has been running for the last 12 years. It is targeted at both senior leaders who are keen to start applying for headship in the very near future, as well as at leaders who are at different stages of their journey to headship.

The programme covers a whole range of workshops to provide the participants with the skills and confidence to consider taking the next steps. It includes sessions on school finance, HR issues, difficult conversations, leadership skills, the recruitment process and other themes relevant to supporting all those who attend the course.

All participants will be allocated a Local or National Leader in Education who will act as a mentor in both small groups and 1:1 sessions.

Further information can be obtained from Christine Lonsdale at christine.lonsdale@octavopartnership.org.

New Staff

All new staff, and not just NQTs, need support as they settle into their new schools. The more support you give the easier it will be for them to work effectively.

New staff need to quickly become familiar with your ways of working and to understand key policies, especially behaviour management, the code of conduct, how to report absence and, of course, safeguarding.

Make sure that all your pre-employment checks have been completed and create time to chase any information that is slow in coming back. This is important from a safer recruitment perspective (and not just so that you can demonstrate thorough record keeping if you have a safeguarding audit). If difficulties arise you may find that you need to rely on your pre-employment checks which is another reason for making sure they are in place.

If you find that one of the checks isn't satisfactory, then contact your HR provider for advice about how to proceed.

Some staff will have appointments that are dependent on the satisfactory completion of probation. You need to make sure that you have proper probation arrangements in place for them – and, again, contact your HR provider as soon as concerns arise during the probationary period.

Thinking of restructuring ?

We are aware that many schools are having to think about how they structure their workforce. Getting this right is important in terms of outcomes for pupils as well as ensuring that the staffing structure is affordable.

The DfE has reissued its workforce planning guidance, to help schools as they consider the various issues – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-workforce-planning>

When it comes to introducing change, it is very important to ensure that a proper process is followed and you are advised to use an HR provider to support you through what can be a very difficult time.

Retention and Staff Wellbeing

Despite the financial pressures, we know that recruitment and retention continue to be challenges in the sector. The retention of staff is important in terms of maintaining stability within schools and has the benefit of reducing recruitment pressures. Research has shown that across the country one of the main reasons that staff are leaving is workload, and the DfE have therefore produced a toolkit to help schools examine how they organise work and whether there are any changes that they could introduce. The toolkit can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/reducing-workload-in-your-school>. The toolkit is designed to assist in the analysis of work, and could also help schools as they consider their staffing structures and the most effective ways of deploying staff to impact on pupil outcomes.

The [workload reduction toolkit](#) has been developed with teachers, school leaders and technology experts and offers a suggested three-stage process which includes:

- advice and workshops for leaders to use with their staff to streamline processes and therefore reduce workload;
- ready-made tools to help schools cut down on time-consuming tasks including through use of technology; and
- a series of case studies to share knowledge of how a range of schools have reduced workload for their staff.

There is no obligation for schools to use the toolkit, although the DfE is encouraging schools to take a look and consider how it could be incorporated into existing and new plans. All of the workshops and tools can be easily adapted according to individual school contexts and needs.

The team is keen to receive feedback on the toolkit and is looking for schools to help them in their user research during the year – if you would like to get in touch, they can be contacted at Workload.SOLUTIONS@education.gov.uk.

Recruitment Fair

Croydon schools, in partnership with Croydon local authority and Octavo partnership will be hosting their annual Careers/Teacher Recruitment event on **Saturday, 2 February 2019** and we would be delighted if you could represent your school/academy. The fair is taking place at Croydon Park Hotel and will run from 10am to 1pm.

We will be advertising this event both locally and regionally and are hoping to attract talented people into the profession. We have also actively promoted to universities/teacher training colleges via attendance of recruitment fairs/job boards etc.

In addition, a series of informative and inspiring workshops will be running to support attendees, whether they are entering the profession, progressing their career or returning to teaching.

For further information or to discuss further, please contact Christine Lonsdale at christine.lonsdale@octavopartnership.org.

Agency Staff

The DfE have been working on reducing costs and improving arrangements for schools when they use agencies, and to this end have brokered a deal with listed agencies. The aim has been to source agencies where schools get value for money, avoid fees and can be assured that thorough background and safeguarding checks have taken place. More information can be found at the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/deal-for-schools-hiring-supply-teachers-and-agency-workers?utm_source=a999d163-9ff1-4682-be49-9f0d68064afa&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

There is an online tool to access the list of agencies covered by the deal which has been emailed to all schools. If you have not received your link, then you should email supplyteacher.deal@education.gov.uk using your school email address listed on [get information about schools](#).

Data Protection

The DfE has updated its data protection toolkit which can be found at [Data protection: toolkit for schools](#). Along with the toolkit there is a separate annual review checklist.

Octavo processes information on behalf of its customers, and we provide general information about how we do this on our website - <http://www.octavopartnership.org/privacy-notice-complaints/>. If you have questions or want to discuss your individual contractual arrangements in more detail then please let us know.

Support for premises management

Schools may find the website <https://www.thecaretakers.co.uk/CMS2/> helpful in their management of premises issues.

There are a whole range of guides related to premises e.g. asbestos management, European Technical Guidelines for the Prevention, Control and Investigation of Infections Caused by Legionella species, access to on line training and a job board where vacancies can be advertised free of charge.

Updates and new resources

The DfE has updated its [guidance on apprenticeships](#) in schools which can be found at [guide to apprenticeships for the school workforce](#).

Following the introduction of [gender pay gap reporting](#), the government has produced guidance about how to narrow the pay gap which can be found at <https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/actions-to-close-the-gap>.

ACAS has produced guidance about how to avoid [discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief](#) which can be found at - <http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1856>.

Contact Details

Octavo HR: Contact Details

Advice Line: 020 8241 5483 hrrservices@octavopartnership.org

Cathy Brearley – Head of HR - catherine.brearley@octavopartnership.org

Mobile: 07920657772

Mark Langston – HR Consultant - mark.langston@octavopartnership.org

Mobile: 07920657754

Cynthia Henry – HR Consultant - cynthia.henry@octavopartnership.org

Mobile: 07920657758

Gordon Mackenzie – HR Consultant - gordon.mackenzie@octavopartnership.org

Mobile: 07920657757

Fiona Evans – HR Consultant – fiona.evans@octavopartnership.org

Mobile: 07920657755

Julian Roche – HR Consultant - julian.roche@octavopartnership.org

Mobile: 07983225175

Christine Lonsdale – Recruitment and Development Consultant –
christine.lonsdale@octavopartnership.org

Mobile: 07920657797

Brokered Services: Contact Details

David Wiggs – HR & Finance Service Centre Support Officer -
croydonschools@croydon.gov.uk or; david.wiggs@croydon.gov.uk 020 8604 7251

Recruitment Queries:

Teach in Croydon website: www.croydoneducationjobs.org.

Adverts on Croydon Council website: 020 8667 8337; vacancies@croydon.gov.uk

DBS Queries: 020 8667 8337; schoolsdb@croydon.gov.uk

Occupational Health: Ritika Singh - Ritika.Singh@croydon.gov.uk

Teachers Pensions: Vicki Langston – 020 8604 7190; Julia McDougall – 0208 604 7383;
teacherspensionsteam@croydon.gov.uk

Local Government Pension Scheme: 020 8760 5768 x 62892; pensions@croydon.gov.uk

Liberata Payroll

All payroll data should be sent to: liberataschoolspayroll@liberata.com

Technical support: LiberataSchoolsTechnicalSupport@liberata.com

Team:

Richard Heywood - 0208 603 3340

Paul Baylis - 0208 603 3335

Mary Rides - 0208 603 3343

Ann Smith – 0208 603 3352

Useful Links

Staffing and Employment Advice for Schools

General: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staffing-and-employment-advice-for-schools>

School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD):
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-teachers-pay-and-conditions>.

Implementing your school's approach to pay:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reviewing-and-revising-school-teachers-pay>

Chapter 6.5 (Staffing and Performance Management) of the Governance Handbook -
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>

Teachers Standards: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards>

Headteacher Standards: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standards-of-excellence-for-headteachers>

Disqualification under the Childcare Act -
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006>

Keeping Children Safe in Education

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

NQT statutory induction guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/induction-for-newly-qualified-teachers-nqts>

Employee Support

The Education Support Network provides free telephone support and counselling to all school staff - <https://www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk/>.

Severance Payments and Academies

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academies-severance-payments>.

Teacher Status checks

(to check that teachers have QTS and whether they have been either banned from teaching or banned from management)

<https://teacherservices.education.gov.uk/>

DfE: “Schools’ guide to apprenticeship reforms” -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-reforms-guide-for-schools>

Teacher Workload

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-workload-poster-and-pamphlet>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-teachers-workload/reducing-teachers-workload> (has links to the reports on Marking Policy; Planning and Teaching Resources and Data Management)

Workload reduction toolkit - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/reducing-workload-in-your-school>

DfE: Flexible Working Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flexible-working-in-schools>

DfE: School Workforce Planning

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-workforce-planning> (includes link to curriculum planning tool)

Gender Pay Gap Reporting - <http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=5768>

IR35 and offpayroll working in the public sector

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/off-payroll-working-in-the-public-sector-reform-of-intermediaries-legislation>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-authorities-using-a-personal-service-company>

DfE: Advice on Handling Strike Action in Schools

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/handling-strike-action-in-schools>

ACAS Guidance (A-Z list of topics)

<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1390>

Domestic Abuse – Croydon Council toolkit

<https://www.practitionerspacecroydon.co.uk/domestic-abuse-and-sexual-violence-2/domestic-abuse-and-sexual-violence>

Support for staff with cancer

<http://www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/organising/work-and-cancer/if-youre-an-employer>