

HR Matters

Issue #10

Summer 2017-18



An overview of key HR issues for schools to consider and review over the Summer Term 2018



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Introduction

At the beginning of the Summer Term there is always a lot to focus on in the many different areas of school life.

In terms of the workforce, recruitment is often at the forefront of everyone's mind – with the nagging question of whether there will be any 'surprise' resignations just before the teacher resignation deadline at the end of May.

For maintained schools, the start of term brings a new financial year, and we know there are ever increasing pressures on school budgets. Sometimes, the only solution is to restructure, and this can be a daunting task. There are concerns for the people involved, unions to deal with and the knowledge that processes have to be compliant with employment law. Having someone to support you through this time who is also able to ensure that any restructure is carried out properly is invaluable. I would encourage you to keep your HR consultant involved throughout any restructure process.

This year, the start of the Summer Term is going to bring the particular challenge of GDPR. GDPR affects all areas of school life, not just HR – and as with all organisations across the country, schools will be working to implement the new regulations.

There is plenty to think about! The regulations are accompanied by new legislation and the data protection bill is still going through Parliament. Consultations continue, and the Information Commission's website is still regularly being updated with the information organisations need in order to implement GDPR. There are still areas where guidance is awaited which only adds to the challenge ahead.

There is the question of understanding what needs to be done, and then that of making sure everyone in school is going to be compliant with new ways of working.

To help schools, Octavo is going to be running a GDPR course which will combine input on the principles of GDPR with time to think in a very practical way about how to make them a reality in school.

There is plenty to occupy us before we reach the summer holiday period, and you can have a well-deserved rest!

We look forward to working with you in the coming months.

The Octavo HR team



Website

We have been keeping you updated about the changes to the way you access information through our website. We have now completed the process of migrating all the HR information that schools have accessed through our dedicated schools HR website to the Octavo website. To access the information, you will need to visit the Resources section of the Octavo website - <http://www.octavopartnership.org/resources/>. The site has an easy search mechanism which will assist in finding information.

The Resources section can be found on the landing page of our website, and there is no need to log in to the Octavo website to access the HR resources.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

This term will see a particular focus on GDPR and the need to make sure that there is greater transparency about the personal data that schools process, the legal reasons for processing that data and how long personal data is retained.

The Information Commission website - <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/> is where all the relevant information is being published. The DfE has applied this to schools, and published a toolkit to assist them prepare for GDPR - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-protection-toolkit-for-schools>

What is clear from the documents on the website is that while undoubtedly all organisations have to meet the same standards, what it will look like in practice will need to be tailored to the organisational context.

The very nature of schools means that they have rich depositaries of personal data.

To assist schools as they rise to the challenge of GDPR, Octavo will be running a course on from 9.30 – 12.00 on 3 May: **GDPR Principles and Practicalities**. It will have a practical focus and will apply the underlying principles of GDPR to the practical steps that need to be taken to ensure they become a reality for data management in school.

The course objectives are:

- To understand the principles of GDPR
- To review the latest advice from the Information Commission's Office (including Special Category and Criminal Records Data)
- To look at data management processes in school
- To consider IT protections of data
- To understand what compliance will look like in your school and the role every member of staff has in achieving this

To book a place go to <http://www.octavopartnership.org/courses/gdpr-principles-and-practicalities-70707/>



Recruitment

The start of the Summer Term can be a very busy time for recruitment.

Advertising

Finding the best way of attracting applicants is the inevitable starting point for all recruitment.

Applicants need to be clear about the role that is available – this both encourages applications from those with the right skills who are excited by the opportunity and deters those who are not interested in the role. Getting the job description and person specification right are key to ensuring this objective is met.

Finding the right place to advertise is a vital part of the process – and with advertising costs rising, finding cost effective ways of doing this is an important consideration.

One of the options available for advertising roles is to use Croydon schools dedicated schools recruitment website - www.croydoneducationjobs.org. The website is owned by CHTA as part of a joint initiative to promote Croydon as a place to teach and is searchable via google.

All schools can use the website, either by purchasing an annual recruitment SLA from Octavo – in which case there is unlimited advertising available on the website, or through purchasing a one-off advert.

For more information about the website, contact Christine Lonsdale, Christine.lonsdale@octavopartnership.org.

Selection

Selection takes time, but it is time worth investing to ensure that the right appointment decisions are made. As the deadline for teacher resignations on May 31 looms, there can be increased pressure on the whole process, and it is important to avoid the temptation of taking short cuts.

Selection works best when the panel members have had training, and understand the importance of:

- Using the appropriate selection methods to test the skills that are needed for the role (and know how to choose those selection methods!)
- Linking decisions to the criteria on the person specification
- Designing effective questions to test applicants
- Ensuring that all applicants are treated in an equal manner
- Ensuring that the principles of safer recruitment are applied

It is a legal requirement that one member of every panel has undertaken safer recruitment training.



NQTS

For the majority of NQTS, the Summer Term will be the last term of their induction year. This is an important time for making sure everything is in place so that the statutory induction process is completed. By the end of term, you will need to be working with your Appropriate Body so that your recommendations are verified and submitted to the Teacher Regulation Agency within the necessary timescales.

Teaching Regulation Agency

The NCTL (National College of Teaching and Leadership) has been disbanded, and its functions split between the DfE and a new body which will be known as the Teaching Regulation Agency.

The NCTL's work in attracting people into the teaching profession and supporting teachers at every stage of their career will now be led within the DfE.

The Teaching Regulation Agency will support employers, schools and headteachers with safeguarding responsibilities. This will include taking action on allegations of serious teacher misconduct and helping employers to complete pre-recruitment checks to ensure that they are employing teachers who are appropriately qualified for their role.

The Teaching Regulation Agency will continue to host the employer access function so that schools can carry out their normal checks on staff - <https://teacherservices.education.gov.uk/>.

Training Programme

We know that managing people can at times be challenging. Effective training can help give you the confidence to manage people issues well, and our training programme is aimed at doing just that. Ultimately, our goal is to equip school leaders with the skills needed to lead the whole school workforce in a manner which ensures they are delivering high quality educational outcomes.

We have a number of courses planned for the coming months, and the details can be found at the back of this newsletter.

We can also organise training on request on the full range of HR issues, for example recruitment and selection, restructuring. As well as delivering to groups of senior and/or middle leaders, we can deliver to all staff in a school and are aware that schools have sometimes found this useful in the past to ensure that there is a consistent whole school understanding e.g. on sickness management and discretionary leave.

Our courses can be booked via <http://www.octavopartnership.org/courses/>.

Contact us on 020 8241 5483 or at hrservices@octavopartnership.org to discuss your specific training needs.



NJC Pay scales

Schools, and the majority of academies, use the NJC pay scales for support staff salaries.

Agreement about the new pay scales was reached on 24 April.,

The headlines from the settlement are that it covers two years, with a 2% pay award from 1 April 2018 and a further 2% from 1 April 2019. The uplift is greater for those on lower spinal points in order to meet the new hourly rate of the national living wage. In 2018, all those on spinal points up to point 20 will receive a greater uplift than 2% from 1 April 2019 there are adjustments to the spinal points to accommodate the changes associated with the national living wage, with increases greater than 2% for those on the lower spine points.

New pay scales will be made available to schools shortly on the Octavo website.



HR Focus - Managing Sick Absence

We have decided to introduce a series, called 'HR Focus', as part of the newsletter. This will be a slightly longer article, looking at the practical implications of HR matters. This term we are focusing on the management of sickness absence. Talk to your HR Consultant if you think there would be a topic that would be useful to include.

Introduction

Of all the employment procedures, managing sickness absence often proves to be the most tricky to handle. It is important to respond sensitively when a member of staff is unwell; however, this does not mean ignoring the absence. Staff who are unwell will appreciate supportive and understanding contact with the school. Taking prompt action is not synonymous with a lack of sensitivity: indeed, a failure to follow up on an absence could be interpreted as a lack of care. Experience has shown that it is very easy for cases to consume inordinate amounts of time and become almost unmanageable: this can be avoided by proactive management. The commentary below is intended as a form of prompt to help managers achieve this.

Lest We Forget

An employee enters in to an agreement (a contract) with their employer to attend for work for certain hours on certain days each week in order to carry out the work described in their job description. Illness is an unpredictable, yet also inevitable, part of life. In some instances, it will be life threatening, and sadly we are aware of occasions when colleagues have died in service. In other instances, there will be members of staff who have repeated short spells of absence – and, there is everything else between. Add to this occasions where absences are linked to a disability with the resulting need to consider reasonable adjustments and it is easy to understand why this topic can become so complex. Schools all need a managing sickness absence policy or procedure to provide a framework for the approach they will take, and which will enable them to handle the wide range of situations that may occur. They also need to follow that procedure, and ensure it is well understood by all staff.

The overall aim of a Sickness Absence procedure is to assist the employee to return to work as quickly as possible. It should be solutions orientated and acknowledge the value of input from professional medical opinion.



Factors cause a sickness case to become difficult to manage

- Inaccurate recording of all 'absence' and the reasons for that absence
- A lack of monitoring against sickness triggers
- A failure to receive Fit Notes in accordance with absence timescales
- Return To Work meetings not conducted and/or not used as an *opportunity* to discuss potential attendance problems *and* solutions
- Failure to engage with, and follow, the formal process
- Formal absence meetings reaching inadequate conclusions in regard to the need for management intervention
- OH referrals and the ensuing advice does not aid management decisions

Case Review

A case review is best conducted with the support of an HR provider. They provide the opportunity for management to take a 'step back' from the case and consider:

- What is happening here?
- What interventions were needed and with what objective?
- Have those interventions been made and were they effective?
- Is there any other action we could take to assist with the Return To Work?
- Is the employee clear about the expectations on them?
- Where is this case going?
- Is it time to consider whether the employment can continue and moving to a final hearing?

Case Management and further support

Case management involves having difficult conversations. They are necessary, and they must have a decisive outcome if the case is to be progressed. Both manager and employee must be clear about what happens next.

Talk to your HR Consultant if you would like more support with handling sickness absence. Your HR Consultant will also be able to advise you if you need to enter into any formal processes with a member of staff.

Some schools have found it helpful to either have training for managers on sickness management or whole staff training about the school's approach to sickness absence and management. We also run courses on sickness management and handling difficult conversations.



HR Professional Development Programme for School Staff 2018

18 June 12.30 – 3.30	Essential People Skills for Line Managers (module 1)
21 June 1.00 – 4.00	Essential People Skills for Line Managers (module 2)
22 June 9.30 -12.30	Disciplinary Processes and Investigation Skills
28 June 9.30 – 12.30	Difficult Conversations and How to Manage hem
2 July 9.30 – 12.30	How to run an effective appraisal process
17 September 9.30 – 4.30	Safer Recruitment
25 September 9.30 – 12.30	How to run an effective appraisal process
5 October 9.30 – 12.30	Disciplinary Processes and Investigation Skills
1 November 1.00 – 4.00	Difficult Conversations and How to Manage Them
2 November 9.30 – 12.30	Essential People Skills for Line Managers (module 1)
2 November 1.00 – 4.00	Essential People Skills for Line Managers (module 2)
26 November 1.00 – 4.00	Disciplinary Processes and Investigation Skills

For more information about our courses and to book a place, visit to <http://www.octavopartnership.org/courses/>.

Remember discounts of 30% apply to schools in our Enhanced Employee Relations contract and 20% apply to schools in our Core Employee Relations contract.

All our courses can be delivered for a group of staff at your school. If you would like training on a specific HR subject not listed above, we can organise a bespoke course for you. Contact hrservices@octavopartnership.org with your enquiry.

Other courses we could run include:

- Restructuring and Redundancy
- Recruitment and Selection
- Contracts of Employment: Getting it Right



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)

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>

Public Sector Equality Duty and Schools

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/public-sector-eq>

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>



Contact Details

Octavo HR

Advice Line:	hrservices@octavopartnership.org	Tel: 020 8241 5483
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
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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
Angel Brown, HR Adviser:	angel.brown@octavopartnership.org	

Brokered Services

David Wiggs, HR & Finance Service Centre Support Officer:	croydonschools@croydon.gov.uk or; david.wiggs@croydon.gov.uk	Tel: 020 8604 7251
Recruitment Queries		
Teach in Croydon website:	www.croydoneducationjobs.org	
Adverts on Croydon Council website:	vacancies@croydon.gov.uk	Tel: 020 8667 8337;
DBS Queries:	schoolsdbcs@croydon.gov.uk	Tel: 020 8667 8337
Occupational Health:	ohreferrals@croydon.gov.uk	Tel: 020 8760 5768 x62138 or 61609;
Teachers Pensions:		
Diane Whyte	pensions@croydon.gov.uk	Tel: 020 8604 7058
Vicki Langston:	teachers.pensionsteam@croydon.gov.uk	Tel: 020 8604 7190;
Local Government Pension Scheme:	pensions@croydon.gov.uk	Tel: 020 8760 5768 x 62892;



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

Catherine O'Regan: 0208 603 3423