



Introduction

Welcome to the Autumn Term newsletter. We are sorry this is being issued later than usual which has been due to some unforeseen circumstances.

We hope that the start of the new term has gone well, with all the various challenges of using space differently, revised routines, and having everyone back on site for the first time since March. The continued uncertainty about, and unpredictability of, Covid-19 means that in addition to the various workforce issues that we are used to, we will need to continue to monitor and react to government advice as it is issued and becomes available. As we move to the new three level alert system, there is an increasing emphasis on the measures that are needed locally, and as you will have experienced, our local Public Health team is keen to engage with schools. Since March we have got used to expecting the unexpected, and we will be able to support you as and when new issues emerge.

The focus on Covid-19 does not however mean that other workforce matters are off the agenda. We are pleased to feature an item from Croydon Apprenticeship Academy about the opportunities for development that they are supporting. Our annual teacher recruitment event will not be possible in the same format this year, and we are interested in finding out if you would be interested in a virtual recruitment event to raise the profile of Croydon as a place to teach. This is important, not only for this year, but also for future years.

We are following the government guidance to work from home where possible. We are also being encouraged to have virtual meetings with customers although, for essential meetings, we can come to schools and will follow the Council's risk assessment process for school visits.

Following our return to Croydon Council we have a new advice line email address which is octavo.hrservices@croydon.gov.uk, although emails to the old email address are continuing to reach us.

We are looking forward to working with you over the coming term, and seeing you, whether on site or virtually. If you have any questions about the items in the newsletter, or any other workforce matter, please do not hesitate to get in touch with your named HR Consultant.

With our best wishes for the term ahead.

The Schools HR Team

Apprenticeships



Don't miss out on the apprenticeship levy funding available to upskill existing staff and take on new apprentices!

Under the government's new apprenticeship funding system, schools now have access to apprenticeship levy money which can be used to train existing and new staff.

There are more than 450 apprenticeship standards to choose from, including up to post graduate level 8.

Many schools are already benefiting from the levy funding by offering apprenticeships in teaching, teaching assistants, sports coaches, youth coaches and higher level management and leadership qualifications for more experienced senior leaders. All staff are eligible, regardless of their role, previous qualifications or age.

Please note that Academies, Multi-Academy Trusts, Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools will manage their own schemes if their annual pay bill is over £3 million. For community schools where the annual pay bill is less than £3 million, the council can support with apprenticeship training costs.

For more information, advice and help with recruitment please contact Katie Compton or Maria Denton by emailing apprenticeships@croydon.gov.uk.

Further government guidance about the benefits of apprenticeships and how the apprenticeship levy and public sector target applies to schools, is available [here](#).

Pay Awards

Teachers

The process for the pay award for teachers was delayed this year with statutory consultation not finishing until 14 September. The final version is now available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/920904/2020_STPCD_FINAL_230920.pdf

The main changes are:

- Minimum of the MPR is increased by 5.5 per cent
- Maximum of the MPR and the minima and maxima of all other pay and allowance ranges for teachers and school leaders are uplifted by 2.75 per cent
- Advisory pay points are reintroduced on the MPR and UPR from September 2020

We are in the process of consulting with local unions in order to publish a local pay scale. Once it is agreed it will be issued as an appendix to the pay policy. Governing Boards will then need to formally adopt the locally agreed pay scales or enter into consultation with the unions about an alternative.

Schools will need to provide teachers with their annual pay statements based on the new pay scales.

Support Staff

Agreement was finally reached on the pay award for Green Book employees, and an uplift of 2.75%, backdated to 1 April 2020 was awarded for this group of staff. The national agreement is then reviewed by the Greater London Provincial Council (GLPC) who determine the rates for the *spinal* column points for staff in London.

In 2019, a new pay scale for the *grades* of support staff in Croydon was issued. All grades were retained, but the spinal points were changed. This was to accommodate the planned increases to the national living wage. The impact of the change on grades in Croydon was that there was considerable overlap in spinal points between grades 1a, 1b, 1c and 2. Following a period of consultation via schools forum, it was decided to re designate the four grades into two grades, grades 1 and 2, each with a range of three spinal points. It was also decided that grade 3 should have a range of three spinal points. This has created increased opportunity for incremental progression in grades 1a, 1b, 2 and 3. Spinal point 7 was not used previously, but is now going to be used as part of grade 3.

The revised pay scales are available on the Octavo website.

Job Descriptions

The generic Job Descriptions have been updated to reflect the changes to grades and spinal points.

Covid-19

With the full opening of schools, and the various guidance issued by the government, there is now an expectation that all staff and pupils will be in school as normal. Should there be local concerns, then restrictive measures may be introduced and in these circumstances national and local advice should be followed. As guidance is changing regularly, it is important that all workforce related decisions are taken in the context of the circumstances and guidance pertaining at the time the decision is made.

Risk Assessments

All schools will have carried out extensive risk assessment processes for their premises and will have introduced new ways of using buildings to keep staff and pupils as safe as possible. Some members of staff are potentially more at risk than others, and although government advice is that they can work, schools are encouraged to carry out individual risk assessments for those individuals. Pregnant employees should have two risk assessments – the first the general risk assessment related to pregnancy, and then a more specific Covid-19 risk assessment. Where an individual is at potentially increased risk (as opposed to a member of their household), Occupational Health advice could be helpful.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

As an additional safeguard, the HSE will be carrying out spot checks on the arrangements schools have in place to protect staff and pupils from Covid-19. A HSE e-bulletin, published on 4th September 2020, provides the following information:

- Spot checks will take the form of an initial phone call to review the measures taken for reopening, to minimise spread of the virus causing COVID-19.
- Calls made to schools will evaluate dutyholders' knowledge and awareness of the relevant government guidance – i.e DfE Guidance for full opening - School (England) and the control measures required under health and safety legislation.
- Additional COVID-19 guidance for school science and technology activities is provided by CLEAPSS (Wales and England).
- School dutyholders need to be briefed about the HSE spot checks and know about a school's risk assessment and have it to hand if they receive a call from the HSE.
- Where the initial call raises concerns about a school's approach, it will be referred for a further intervention which may include a visit to the school.
- Inspectors will check that the school has carried out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and put in place measures to make the school COVID-secure in line with the latest government guidance.

Self-isolation

All guidance about when to self-isolate should be followed. Where staff are unwell they should receive sick pay, and where they have to self-isolate in accordance with national and local guidance they should receive full pay. Where possible, staff who are self-isolating but are fit should work remotely: this will be of particular importance should there be a local lockdown and schools have to revert to remote learning.

It is now an offence for an individual who has been told to self isolate to ignore that requirement, and for an employer to require someone who has been told to self isolate to work. Both offences may lead to fines being imposed.

Quarantine

People who travel abroad may be asked to quarantine on their return. Schools will need to consider the particular circumstances where an individual returns from abroad and is required to quarantine. Considerations should include the reason for the trip (e.g. was it a holiday or was it as a result of a family emergency) as well as whether the country visited was on the government's list of 'travel corridors' and the rate of infection at time of travel (and therefore a higher likelihood of the country being removed from the 'travel corridors' list). Schools should also review whether there is work that the individual could reasonably do from home. It is likely that those who have to quarantine as a result of choices they have made may have to forego pay. The very few staff in schools who do not have predetermined annual leave could be asked to use their annual leave.

It is important that all staff are treated equitably when decisions are made.

Keeping Children Safe in Education

September saw the publication of the latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

The main changes from a workforce perspective are:

- The list of circumstances that need to be investigated as an allegation about whether someone is suitable to work with children has been updated and now includes those **who have behaved or may have behaved in a way** that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
This is where a member of staff (including supply staff) or volunteer is involved in an incident outside of school/college, which did not involve children, but could have an impact on their suitability to work with children. The reason is because of transferrable risk. For example, a member of staff is involved in domestic violence at home. No children were involved, but schools/colleges need to consider what triggered these actions and could a child in the school trigger the same reaction, therefore being put at risk.
- Added further guidance as to how schools and colleges should ensure allegations against supply teachers are handled. While acknowledging that schools are not the employer of supply agency staff they should ensure the allegation is being dealt with properly for example by contacting both the LADO and the agency if an allegation is made.

Policy update

The following policies (which are available on the Resources section of the Octavo website) have been produced or updated and agreed locally with the unions:

- Teacher Appraisal Policy
- Pay Policy (appendix 4 has been altered to reflect the revised Teacher Appraisal Policy*)
- School Discretionary Leave Policy and Guidance
- Parental Bereavement Leave Policy
- Teacher Maternity/Paternity Leave Policy

Schools may choose to adopt them, and will need to seek formal approval via their Governing Board.

A summary of the procedures that should be followed in cases of ill health retirement has been made available on the website. As this reflects pension scheme rules, it is a procedural summary and not a document that schools need to adopt.

*The pay policy will be further amended with an updated appendix 5 once local consultation about teacher pay scales has been completed.

Brexit and employment of EU, EEA and Swiss nationals

We have previously highlighted that one of the consequences of Brexit is that staff who are EU, EEA or Swiss nationals need to apply for settled status. Most will no doubt already have done so, but if you have employees who have not done so, please make them aware of the scheme. See <https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families>

From 1 January 2021, the government is introducing a new points based immigration system which will apply to EU, EEA and Swiss nationals as well as to all those currently covered by immigration rules. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-immigration-system-what-you-need-to-know>.

Training

Given the recent Government guidance on lockdown precautions we are currently working with the Council to ascertain the appropriate measures necessary to ensure that our training is delivered in a Covid-safe manner. As soon as training arrangements are agreed we will notify Schools. In the short term, training will be delivered on line.

CHTA Recruitment Event

Normally, at this time of year, the CHTA annual recruitment event is promoted. With the current situation, a virtual recruitment event could be held if you feel that it would be beneficial for your school and Croydon as a whole. If you would like this initiative progressed, please email Christine Lonsdale on christine.lonsdale@croydon.gov.uk.

CHTA Recruitment website

The CHTA job board (www.croydoneducationjobs.org) is still up and running and you are able to place an individual advert for £128. Should you not be successful in **filling your vacancy**, you can re-advertise at no extra cost. To purchase this service, please log into the portal at www.octavopartnership.org, go to Store and select HR Recruitment

Performance Management

All maintained schools must continue to adhere to the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), which includes the requirement to ensure that all pay progression for teachers is linked to performance management. We know that many academies also adopt this approach. Schools should use their discretion and take pragmatic steps to adapt performance management and appraisal arrangements to take account of the current circumstances. Schools must ensure that teachers are not penalised during the appraisal process, or in respect of any subsequent pay progression decisions, as a result of the decision to restrict pupil attendance at schools, such as where this has had an impact on the ability of the teacher to meet fully their objectives. For teaching staff the performance management process should be completed by 31 October 2020, and for headteachers by 31 December 2020.

All community schools should have performance management arrangements in place for their support staff and we would encourage all schools and academies to follow this practice. Performance years are not always the same for support staff as for teachers, but the principle of

assessing performance and the extent to which objectives have been achieved in the context of current circumstances should be applied to support staff.

Extended Probation Periods for Support Staff

Probation periods are designed to allow the employer to assess new employees and for the employee to demonstrate their suitability for their post. As a result of the Covid-19 lockdown precautions taken since March 2020 it may be that probationers have not been in a position to demonstrate their suitability and therefore it may be that Schools have chosen to extend the probationary periods, due to the unique circumstances. For those schools who extended probation periods for their support staff during the lockdown period, please ensure that final probation reviews are conducted as appropriate and staff are informed. If you are concerned about a probationer's performance, please contact your designated HR Consultant for further advice.

Schools HR team: Contact Details

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Croydon Council 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:

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