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## Introduction

The last few weeks have seen very different circumstances for us school by school. COVID is still disrupting education significantly in some schools. The latest to have a spike is Blagdon, where one class has almost as many pupils at home as in school. In other schools COVID has become a more background issue. In the central team we have been occupied getting ready to fill two Headteacher vacancies, at Gordano and at St Peter's. Running these campaigns is a very major piece of work and I hope that schools will see that support as one of the significant (and hopefully infrequent) benefits of being in a strong Trust.

You will see later in the bulletin that this morning's Trustee's Finance Committee accepted our recommendation for us to pay the Support Staff pay rise that is held up in national negotiation. We cannot imagine that the offered figure will decrease and by paying the backdated sum now we will help address some of the cost of living issues for colleagues and avoid them paying additional National Insurance on the backpay after April. Our Trustees have also agreed to pay an additional £1 payment to each teacher and leader to address an abstruse issue of indexation in the Teachers' Pension Scheme. The sum is paltry but we are told that it will avoid all sorts of complexities for some staff. If you have any questions Louise or Tania might be able to explain - I certainly cannot!

Lastly, I have another change in leadership and increase in capacity to tell you about. Janine Ashman applied for the Deputy Director role at the end of last year and was interviewed along with Debbie Coker and several other candidates. We felt that both Debbie and Janine would add enormously to the role of our Education Team and it seems right to take this opportunity to bring Janine's work directly into the Trust central team. I am therefore delighted to tell you that Janine has been offered and accepted the additional role of Deputy Director of Education. She will continue to provide leadership on curriculum and assessment, will participate in our school improvement offer and will, of course, play a key role in CPD and the English Hub. Janine will take up her new post in September.

With best wishes,

Gary

## Core Services charge consultation

On 19<sup>th</sup> January we launched our consultation on the Core Services Charge for 2022-23. The papers are available on Foldr [here](#).

The Trustees will agree the Core Services Charge for the 2022-23 financial year at their meeting on 2nd March. This is in order to ensure that you have this information in time to prepare your budget through your Local Governing Body and to submit this information to the Board of Trustees by 17th June 2022.

To inform the Trustee's decision making, and to enable you to influence the arrangements for the future, this consultation will run from 19th January until 5.00pm on 15th February. [A Microsoft form](#) is available for you to respond. The results of the consultation, following the decisions of the Board of Trustees, will be issued on 3rd March.

I would like to encourage you to engage with this consultation and to ask any questions or clarifications that you need to enable you to respond.

*Louise Malik*

## Support staff pay award

The support staff pay award for April 2021 has yet to be agreed. Normally the pay award would not be paid to staff in the Trust until it has been agreed, however, the Finance Committee have agreed to pay the award offered by the employers (with effect from 1 April 2021, an increase of 2.75 per cent on NJC pay point 1 and an increase of 1.75 per cent on all NJC pay points 2 and above) to support staff in the Trust in March 2022 along with back pay to April 2021.

They have agreed to take this step in recognition that some staff may well be facing financial pressures in the context of the high cost of living. In addition, employees national insurance contributions are due to increase in April 2022 and if the delay in implementing the pay award, and providing back pay to April 2021, goes beyond this point in time, it could negatively impact the financial benefit that staff receive.

A letter will be issued to schools to share with the relevant staff in due course.

## Teachers pay adjustment for pension purposes

An issue has been identified that relates to indexation in the final salary section of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS). The pay freeze in the 2021-22 financial year means that there could be a pension loss for teachers and school leaders in certain circumstances.

The Finance Committee has agreed to pay a one off payment of £1 to all staff that are paid on the teacher and leadership spines in March 2022. This would be sufficient to trigger TPS indexation and avoid any pension loss as a result of the pay freeze. The issue caused by the pay freeze will only affect those teachers who will retire in the next 10 years, who will rely on the best three in ten calculation and who have a true zero increase. However, the Finance Committee has agreed that the payment is made to all staff that are paid on the teacher and leadership spine for the purpose of both fairness and simplicity.

A letter will be issued to schools to share with the relevant staff in due course.

## School Leaders' Meetings

We hope that we will be able to meet together for the remainder of our School Leaders' Meetings this year. The dates for the rest of the year are:

- 9 March (term 4 starts 28 February)
- 18 May (term 5 starts 25 April) (SATs week 9 May)
- 15 June (term 6 starts 6 June)

We are booking Nailsea Baptist Church as the venue for this as this allows us all to meeting together but to also have venues for separate items for Secondary and Primary Leaders.

Please make a note of these dates as they have not been published before.

## Internal Scrutiny

Our programme of internal scrutiny this year has been driven by our risk register. The following internal audits have been arranged:

### Budgetary Control

- 10th Feb Central Team
- 7th March Backwell School
- 16th March Flax Bourton School
- 23rd March Winford School

### Business Continuity and Risk Management

- 9th June High Down Infant and Juniors Schools
- 20th June Yatton Infant and Juniors Schools

If these dates are not convenient, please let us know and we will see if it can be swapped.

In addition to the audits above, One West are also working with us to review the Business Continuity and Critical Incident Plan template and to review our cyber and data security arrangements. Further information on our cyber and data review will be provided in due course.





## BANES Schools Safeguarding Audit

I understand that BANES issued all their schools with Section 175 Safeguarding Audits at the beginning of this term. Please could you ensure that you send a completed copy of your audit to the Trust by forwarding to Diane Logan at [dlogan@lsp.org.uk](mailto:dlogan@lsp.org.uk). Thank you.

*Sharon*

## Admission Consultation Update

The Admission Consultation finished on 19<sup>th</sup> January. Please remove any links on your school website. Thank you.

## School Term Dates 2023/2024

North Somerset Council is consulting on proposed school term and holiday dates for 2023/2024.

Please click on the link below to view full details.

[https://n-somerset.inconsult.uk/SchoolTermDates2023\\_24/consultationHome](https://n-somerset.inconsult.uk/SchoolTermDates2023_24/consultationHome)

To reach as wide an audience as possible, please feel free to circulate and share this with anyone who may be interested in the proposed dates and wish to comment.

The consultation will close on 20 February 2022. The feedback to the consultation will be reviewed before a final decision is made.

*Janice Allen  
School Organisation Officer  
North Somerset Council*

## Trustee Update

Rachel Forbes will be leaving her role as Trustee and Chair of Staffing committee at the end of her term of office on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022. Rachel joined us four years ago as a recruitment through Academy Ambassadors, with a wide breadth of commercial and military experience but no direct school governance experience.

Rachel was a very quick study, learning rapidly but also bringing a different lens to things we might have just accepted as normal in our sector. Chairs of Governors will have met Rachel at Chairs Development Group meetings where she was a regular attendee. Trustees have greatly benefited from Rachels questioning in meetings along with her proactive leadership of the Staffing committee. Thankfully we will not lose all her skill and knowledge as Rachel has kindly agreed to remain a non-Trustee member of staffing committee.

Trustees thank Rachel for her commitment to the Board over the last four years, she leaves an important skills gap in our board which we will be seeking to recruit in coming months.

*Adele Haysom, Chair of the Board of Trustees*



# PARENT CARER COFFEE MORNING

The Whiteoak Academies  
of Hannah More Infants  
& Grove Juniors

Wednesday 2nd February  
9.30am-11am



LIGHTHOUSE  
SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP



SAY  
SEND AND YOU  
SENDIAS

Come and meet other parent carers of children with additional needs and/or disabilities, share your experiences & see what support & information is available

Please can all schools in the Backwell hub share the following information with their parents and carers:

Are you a parent or carer to a child/young person with an additional need or disability (no diagnosis needed). If so, come and join us for an informal coffee morning on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 9.30-11.00.

The coffee morning is attended by North Somerset Parent Carers Working Together (NSPCWT) and they will be able to signpost you to relevant organisations and listen to your experiences.

Due to the current COVID situation, all attendees will need to complete a negative lateral flow test before arrival and wear a face mask whilst not eating or drinking. Book a place in advance [here](#).



## LSP Jigsaw Refresher on line training - 1st February

We are pleased to offer a Jigsaw online refresher session on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> February from 3.30 - 5.30 pm.

Jigsaw focus on training, support and teaching and learning programmes specialising in Religious Education (RME) and Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE). This session will provide a refresher on all aspect of personal development, social skills, emotional/mental health that fulfil statutory requirements (RSHE, HWB and RSE).

This training is open to all staff but particularly PSHE leaders.

Please share with colleagues in your school who would be interested in attending. Booking is through the following link - click [HERE](#). Please book by Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> January.

## Boolean Maths Hub Primary and Early Years Bulletin - latest issue and booking information

Click [here](#) to view the latest bulletin from the hub with information on new Work Groups. Should you have any questions, please contact [booleanmathshub@clf.cabot.ac.uk](mailto:booleanmathshub@clf.cabot.ac.uk)



### Updated Risk Assessment template

We have updated our [template risk assessment](#) following the Government's announcements last week and this now reflects the updated template from Delegated Services. Please note, however, the Government has not yet fully updated a lot of its advice and we are yet to hear from either Bath and North East Somerset or North Somerset Directors of Public Health about whether they are planning to reinstate any additional control measures due to local circumstances.

Please now go ahead and update the template risk assessment to meet your circumstances (including any specific advice that you have been given for your individual school from Public Health). Please then consult with your staff and publish the updated risk assessment on your website before the start of the school day on Thursday. We will share the updated template with the Employee Liaison Committee.

Please let us know if you have any questions or need any support.

## FINANCE UPDATES

### Change in timing for Budget Monitoring

As you are aware, in previous years the Trust had to submit Budget Forecast Returns to the ESFA - a Budget Forecast Return Outturn (BFRO), usually collected at the end of March (which determined the timing of the budget monitor required from schools in April that is reported to Trustees) and a Budget Forecast Return three year (BFR3Y) at the end of July (which determines the deadline for submitted budgets). Last year, Academies were advised that these reports had been combined into a single form, and we felt it prudent to move the final budget monitor reported to Trustees from March to April.

We have just been advised that there will now only be a single budget forecast return (BFR) and that Academy trusts are no longer required to submit a separate budget forecast return outturn. This is a permanent change.

Therefore, we are requesting that from now on the Spring budget monitors will be based on 'spend to date' information as at 30 April rather than 31 March. For 2021/22, the monitoring report will need to be provided to your LGB and marked for review by the Central Team by **Friday 20 May**. This change will move the budget monitor away from the Easter break, and also provide you with a more up to date projected outturn for your 2022/23 budget plans. We will update the Annual Planner accordingly, but you may like to advise your LGB of this change. Apologies for any inconvenience caused. Next year's Annual Planner will obviously reflect this permanent change.



## Governance Update

1. NFER Report: The Landscape of Disadvantage [Changes to FSM eligibility will make tracking progress of disadvantage pupils 'almost impossible'](#) - NFER (NGA)

2. A Level & GCSE Exams to go ahead as normal

3. Academies Budget Forecast Return - There will now only be a single budget forecast return (BFR) and Academy trusts are no longer required to submit a separate budget forecast return outturn. The outturn information is now permanently included within the budget forecast return. Updated guidance can be found [here](#). The Trust's Annual Planner has been updated in line with this change and is available [here](#).

4. The Key:

- Ofsted back to full team of Inspectors from 31/1 (Schools Week)
- Pupils will study reformed language GCSEs from September 2024 (Gov.UK)
- Academics call for a reform of how young people are taught to read (Guardian)
- New self-harm guidance to include Schools and colleges (BBS News)

5. New Suite of National Professional Qualifications is now available for teachers and leaders who want to develop their expertise in leadership and specialists areas of teaching practice. Fully funded training scholarships available.

