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Introduction

Welcome back everyone and I hope that you enjoyed a break at Easter. This term is notoriously quick in passing and we always have so much to do. SATs, GCSEs, A Levels and oth-er exams are right at the front of our minds and this year there are a few other priorities too with strikes and budget matters looming.

On the issue of strikes, I plan to write from the Trust to parents to note our continuing position on this. The letter will be available to you as soon as I have shared it with several of our Trustees. The key point that I will make is that we are alarmed at the DfE's stance that pay increases can be funded by the headroom in school budgets. This headroom is a fiction and that has been one of the grounds that all the unions have relied on to reject the offer. Although we are not a direct party to the dispute, we have a real and legitimate interest in the outcome, and I hope that parents will share our concern. I'll run the draft letter past the HT reference groups tomorrow. If you would like to see a bit more about this issue, have a look at Leora Cruddas's recent blog [here](#). You may wish to skim down to the item on funding.

Today I am at Golden Valley participating in the Headteacher interviews. You will see elsewhere in the bulletin that we have made a number of appointments to central team in recent weeks. I will be able to share the name of the incoming Director of School Improvement next week, once he has communicated the news to his own staff and parents. This is an important time in building up our capacity to match the scale of our Trust. I am very excited to have been able to recruit as strongly as we have done. I would also like to congratulate my friend and colleague Tom Inman on his appointment as Headteacher at Exmouth Community College in Devon. They are incredibly lucky to have secured his services and talents and I know that he will be a superb leader there.

Lastly and most importantly, welcome to Churchill Academy and Sixth Form. Churchill joined us at the beginning of April. It will be a pleasure and privilege to work with them as full partners in LSP.

Gary



Changes in the Central Team

There are a number of changes in the Central Team to update you on:

Head of Administration

We are delighted to have appointed Eleanor Capel-Davies to our new role of Head of Administration. Eleanor is currently the Headteacher's PA at Backwell school and will start her new role in June.



Governance Professional

Chris Hills, who has been covering the role since November, has been appointed as our Governance Professional for 30 hours per week.



Senior HR Advisor

We have appointed Laura Payne as our new Senior HR Advisor. Laura is an experienced HR professional that currently works at Weston College. We hope that Laura will be starting with us in July.



Gordano School Finance Director

Natalie Fear is being seconded to Gordano School for 3 days a week to provide cover until the appointment of their new Finance Director. Some cover arrangements are being put in place but please accept our apologies if this means we don't respond quite as quickly as we normally would. To enable us to respond as quickly as possible please could you ensure that you address queries to finance@lsp.org.uk rather than directly to Natalie.

Policy consultations

We are today launching a consultation on our updated Health and Safety Policy. The proposed Health and Safety Policy is available [here](#). The consultation period will run from 18th April to 12th May. Where possible, the proposed changes have been tracked for your information.

Please note that appendices 3 to 5 will be updated once the new asbestos management surveys have been completed

We would like to encourage Headteachers and School Business Managers to participate in this consultation. We would also like Chairs of Local Governing Bodies to ensure that the consultation is reported to their LGB and any response from the LGB is noted in their minutes. Chairs may wish to identify a member(s) of the LGB to lead on making a response to share the workload and benefit from governor skills. The Headteacher and Chair of the LGB may also want to consider sharing the consultation with other stakeholders.

Please submit your comments on the consultation to Diane Logan at dlogan@lsp.org.uk. If you would like to submit changes to the policy, please highlight your changes or make them using tracked changes and also send them to Diane.

We were also due to launch a consultation on our Principal Accounting Policies. However, elements of these policies are still being considered by Trustees and new dates for the consultation will be issued in due course.

Standards Meetings - Primary Phase

As shared previously, we have had to move back standards meetings to the 17th and 18th July due to KS2 SATS results being released later than usual. Diane will be sending out Teams invites to HTs and Chair of Governors to attend, but please include other relevant members of staff and/or governors. We will prepare paperwork once the KS2 SATs results are available and get these to you before the standards meetings.

RSHE statutory guidance review

On Friday, before the Easter holidays, the DfE [announced a review into the Relationships, Sex and Health Education \(RSHE\) statutory guidance in England](#). The review will be informed by an independent panel, and the government expects new statutory guidance to be released in the coming months. It will then be subject to public consultation to conclude by the end of the year, coming into statutory force as soon as possible after that. The Secretary of State [wrote to school leaders and teachers to outline this](#).

There are two specific points to note:

The DfE is clear that parents should be able to view all curriculum materials. This includes cases where an external agency advises schools that their materials cannot be shared due to restrictions in commercial law, or a school's contract with the provider prohibits sharing materials beyond the classroom. Parents are not able to veto curriculum content, but it is reasonable for them to ask to see material if it has not already been shared, especially in relation to sensitive topics. Schools should not agree to contractual restrictions on showing parents the content used in RSHE teaching or agree to this being subject to a third party's right of refusal.

Statutory Assessment Administration Information

Please find statutory guidance below:

[SATs Administration](#)

There is a film talking through the process and the accompanying slides. You can use these as a basis for SATs admin briefings at your schools with all staff who will be involved.

Assessment Network: 24th April 1.30-3.30pm

Please find the agenda for the next assessment meeting below:

[Assessment Agenda 14-4-23](#)

We have moved this to an online meeting (the link to join is at the start of the agenda). Please can you bring copies of your report formats to share with others during the network.

Applying for additional SCA funding

A gentle reminder that any applications for additional SCA funding need to be submitted by 21st April 2023. Details of how to apply were in bulletin issue 22, dated 28 February 2023.

Energy Efficiency update

With the hopefully warmer weather post Easter, this is a great opportunity to review the heating times and controls at your school to ensure you're only using the gas/electricity you need.

We are still in the process of assessing the viability of solar across the LSP school estate. There are numerous models to review and we've been in discussions with a number of contractors. Many of the decisions hinge on the best financial decision and this is often a complex scenario to balance. Please bear with us while we continue to evaluate the best solution going forward.

LED lighting has started to be rolled out across the schools, with our first install over the Easter break. To further advance this work, contractors will be visiting to prepare a lighting review to support the scheduling of LED installations between now and next February half term. As well as the lighting, the contractors will be looking at insulation requirements following the completion of the thermography work last year. These pieces of work, together with the previous audit and carbon reduction reports already commissioned, will provide a clear prioritised plan to invest the DfE Energy Efficiency Grant, as well as supporting wider SCA funding bids, school and estate development plans.

Steph Franklin will be contacting each school individually about the scheduled contractor date. We appreciate that there have been many visits for some schools of late. Our intention is not to burden, but to support building a clear and financially backed plan of priorities to support energy reduction, and thus saving you money.

If you have any questions in the meantime, please direct them specifically to Steph Franklin.

LSP News and Photos Request

The next LSP newsletter will be going out in late May, so please send any content that you would like included to cgiordmaine@lsp.org.uk by May 2nd. Can you also send any images that we can use to refresh our photo library.

Here is a [link](#) to the last edition.

Strike calculation for part-time teachers

You will be aware in our communication to staff on 19th January, that for full-time teaching staff the deduction for a strike day is 1/365th of the annual salary, and for part time employees the deduction is pro-rated. The calculation used for the deduction of a part time teacher, as confirmed by our solicitors is:

Step 1: Pro-rate 365 days for the proportion of full time that the part-time member of staff is contracted to work. E.g. for a 0.6 full time equivalent member of staff, this would be $0.6 \times 365 = 219$ days.

Step 2: Apply the deduction rate to the worker's (already pro-rated) annual salary. E.g. $\pounds 30,000 \times 1/219 = \pounds 136.99$ daily deduction.

Payroll has been informed of this calculation, so part-time staff may notice slight adjustments in their pay, to ensure the strike deductions from February onwards are correct.

We will be sending out a letter for SBMs to pass to their part-time teachers to clarify the calculation and to inform those that work irregular hours that they can contact their SBM to recalculate their strike day deductions, if it does not appropriately reflect the hours they would have worked.

Changes to April pay for support staff

There are a number of changes taking effect in April's pay for support staff. These are:

Increase in holiday entitlement

As agreed by the NJC pay agreement in 2022 an increase of annual leave by 1 day (pro rata for part-time workers). This affects factors for staff who do not work all-year round. The Central HR team have notified payroll of the changes to factors in time for April payroll deadline, and iTrent will be updated centrally. Where there are queries on factors for any staff member within your school, the Central HR team have contacted the School Business Manager (SBM) via Egress notifying them of the query. **Can SBM's please ensure that responses are provided to hr@lsp.org.uk by Wednesday 19th April in order to make amendments for April payroll.** Any responses after this date will be made in the following month and backdated accordingly.

Support staff pay award (prior to the national agreement)

Colleagues may be aware that the recent support staff pay offer, of $\pounds 1,925$ on scale points 2 to 43 has been rejected. As a Trust we are very much aware of the increase in the cost of living to our staff, and we would like to be able to offer support staff, who are due a pay award in April, to receive an increase of $\pounds 1,925$ (pro rata for part time employees), so colleagues can receive an uplift in their pay while the national negotiations continue. We have consulted with unions over the Easter break and are making the pay uplift in time for April payroll.

We have assured unions that when the national agreements are reached we will pay them in full at the earliest possible date and backpay if they are higher than what we have paid. This will ensure that the Trust is not sitting on earmarked pay rises for colleagues when colleagues would benefit from the increase in their salaries. We have reassured the unions that we would be clear to staff that the award being paid would not affect their ability to object to the offered award, or to respond or contribute toward any action being considered by their union.

Support staff pay progression

Pay progression spreadsheets have been received by the Central HR team. These are being loaded into iTrent in readiness for payroll.

Support staff letters

Letters to staff with the details of the pay award, holiday entitlement (factor) change and pay progression will be sent to School Business Managers on 27th April via Egress. Any queries please contact the Central HR team.

Pay Policy

The pay policy has been updated with the uplifted pay scales for support staff, increase to annual leave entitlement (factor examples include increase to annual leave) and strike calculations for part-time teachers.

Statutory Increases - April 2023

National Minimum Wage/National Living Wage

New National Minimum Wage rates were announced on 17 November 2022 for the tax year beginning 1 April 2023. The rates are as follows:

- Workers aged 23 and over: £10.42 an hour (National Living Wage)
- Workers aged 21-22: £10.18 an hour
- Development rate for workers aged 18-20: £7.49 an hour
- Young workers rate for workers aged 16-17: £5.28 an hour

Apprentice rate: £5.28 an hour.

Statutory maternity, adoption, paternity, shared parental and sick pay rises

On 2nd April 2023 statutory maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental pay rises from £156.66 to £172.48 a week.

Also on this date, statutory sick pay rises from £99.35 to £109.40 a week.

School Rates

From April 2023, both NSC and BANES are moving to a new system of the billing authority claiming non-domestic business rates (NNDR) relief directly from the ESFA wef 1st April 2023 thereby precluding the need for the Central Team claim rates relief on your behalf. North Somerset Council have continued to take Direct Debit payments for April, but these should be refunded shortly.

Please continue to send the finance team copies of your 2023-24 NNDR bills. However, for 2023-24 budget planning purposes, you do not need to include an amount for rates expenditure or rates relief. If you have a schoolhouse, you will need to continue to budget for Council tax for this property in the usual way.

Devolved Capital Funding

Provisional Devolved Capital Funding amounts for schools for 2023-24 (paid in June 2023) have now been published and have been downloaded into [Foldr](#) for information.

These allocations will be estimated by IMP based on pupil numbers and this allocation will be projecting in the 2022/23 financial year. The estimated income will be accurate enough for budget planning purposes and need not be amended until actual allocations are confirmed and paid.

Please be advised that we would encourage schools to spend DFC within 3 years (April to March rather than September to August) to avoid clawback. Year one will be the fiscal year in which the payment is made. **For example, the allocation to be paid in June 2023 (for the year April 2023 to March 2024) should be spent before March 2026 and all funding received in or before June 2020 should have been spent by end March 2023.**

Pupil Premium Allocations 2023-24

Initial Pupil Premium allocations for April 2023 based on pupils recorded on the October 2022 census have now been published and downloaded to [Foldr](#).

Allocations will be confirmed in June 2023, before the first payment in July 2023 which will be the payment for April, May and June 2023. Please review these for both budget monitoring and budget planning purposes.

Please note that where a pupil is recorded as LAC and FSM Ever 6, the pupil will be included only in the LAC count for the local authority allocation. This means the school's PP final grant allocation will not include a payment for that pupil. As a result, the update in December 2023 may have an impact on some schools' PP grant allocations as those recorded as LAC and FSM Ever 6 will be excluded from the schools PP grant allocation.

Mainstream Schools Additional Grant - 2023-24 Budget Planning

As you are aware, the Mainstream Schools Additional Grant will be given to schools from April 23 until August 2024. Our budget assumptions guidance advised schools to ensure that this additional funding was not projecting into future years. However, as the expectation is that this grant will be subsumed within GAG funding for future years, we have revised our budget assumptions guidance to advise schools to include this funding across all years until further information is available. We have made the appropriate amendment on IMP so that your estimated MSAG is projecting correctly. The revised guidance is available to download from [Foldr](#).

School Financial Benchmarking Comparisons for 2023-24 Budget Planning

There are tools available to help you see how your school spends its money and the outcomes it achieves against other schools. As part of your 2023-24 budget planning, we would recommend that you review the Self-assessment Dashboard for your school(s) and use the benchmarking comparisons to investigate those areas where your school's data on your dashboard suggests your school is significantly out of line with schools with similar characteristics.

The DfE changed the format for these reports last year, so we are unable to provide a spreadsheet with your dashboard alongside those for other schools in the Trust. However, we have downloaded both your dashboard for your 2021-22 budget and have prepared data for you to input to enable you to produce a second dashboard based on your 2022-23 Submitted budget. This is more straightforward than it sounds and will enable you to save a report with the dashboards side by side for direct comparison and ease of sharing with your governors responsible for finance. We have been unable to provide this additional information for schools joining the Trust during 2022-23. Please see the guidance available to [download](#) in Foldr.

We have also downloaded two sets of benchmarking charts for your school - one with the benchmark set of schools suggested by the tool based on academies with similar characteristics, and another with schools of a similar size within the Trust. These are available for you in [Foldr](#) for you to review, use for reporting and share with your governors. The dashboards for 2021-22 will be shared with Finance Trustees.