



Dedicated Headship time

An Exemplar Policy for Croydon Schools

This guidance was commissioned by the local Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group (WAMG) – Hedley Shaw, chair

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Context

Phase three of the National Agreement places the responsibility on governing bodies for:

- Ensuring that “their headteacher has a reasonable workload, in support of a reasonable work/life balance, having regard to their health and welfare”
- Providing headteachers with “dedicated time that recognises their significant leadership responsibilities for their school”

It is expected that Dedicated Headship time will provide some of the time needed for Headteachers to discharge the responsibilities outlined in the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document – in particular those which make the Headteacher responsible for the leadership, internal organisation, management and control of the school. The aim is to free Headteachers to think, analyse, plan or carry out any of the associated activities so that the school has a direction.

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the Headteacher has dedicated headship time within the school sessions and has the necessary support to take up the entitlement outlined in the SPCD 2005 (para 61) ‘a reasonable amount of time during school sessions, having regard to his teaching responsibilities, for the purpose of discharging his leadership and management responsibilities.’ It is particularly important for governors of schools where headteachers are identified as having a significantly heavy teaching commitment or higher-than-average management responsibility to ensure that they play an active role in monitoring use of this time. This is particularly highlighted in the case of small schools where the workload of headteachers can be prohibitive in terms of non-contact time.

There is no national statutory guidance on the appropriate amount of dedicated headship time. Croydon local authority recommends governors to ensure that a minimum of **ten per cent** of the hours during which the school is in session (the pupil day) is taken by the headteacher as dedicated headship time. This must be taken during school sessions and should be identified on the school timetable. It is also recommended that the headteacher takes this time as a single block, so as to have a reasonable length of uninterrupted time in which to concentrate on leadership and management responsibilities without being distracted by routine operational matters.

For example if the pupil day is six hours i.e. thirty hours a week, the headteacher’s dedicated headship time would be ten per cent of thirty i.e. three hours per week. It is recommended that a single block of time should be identified, preferably on the same morning or afternoon each week.

The provision of dedicated headship time can help school leaders focus on:

- school improvement
- raising standards
- school development
- improved monitoring and evaluation
- improved well-being of staff and pupils.

During dedicated headship time the headteacher **will** not be

- required to deal with routine matters
- asked to take telephone calls, or deal with enquiries in person
- expected to cover for absent colleagues
- required to meet parents, governors or other visitors to the school

(Details of the contractual change on headship time appear in section 4 of the School teachers' pay and conditions document).

It is recommended each year the Clerk to the governing body ensures that the Chair places on the agenda an item under which the headteacher will confirm to the governing body that he or she has taken dedicated headship time in accordance with the school timetable, or otherwise advise the governing body of any difficulties which may have arisen. It is not for the governing body to specify what the headteacher does during dedicated headship time, but the headteacher may usefully share with governors some information on the activities undertaken over the past year. A fuller report may also form part of the annual review of the headteacher's performance by appropriate committee of the governing body.

What could dedicated Headship look like?

How this will work in practice will differ according to the varying needs of individuals but it is essential that "...*dedicated time to lead...*" is kept to the fore. This will vary considerably from Head to Head but the following are some thoughts and ideas about how it could look. These are neither exhaustive nor directive but are rather put forward to stimulate thinking and discussion.

Individual time

- Time to read, reflect and interpret Government documents and what the implications of any National Agenda could be for an individual school
- Time to consider the broader strategic aims for the school and how these match up to both National and local agendas
- Taking the time to raise your head *above the parapet* to look further forward and consider what other initiatives are on the horizon and how best to lead the school to meet these future challenges

With a partner

- Head and Deputy together taking time to ‘unpick’ some of the broader strategic goals for the school. This may well follow the Head’s individual time for reflection and could involve some of the smaller more tactical type of planning. e.g. ‘this is the big picture, how do we plot the small steps that allow us to realise our broader goals’
- The Head and Chair of Governors. A similar activity as conducted with the Deputy but this time considering the implications for the Governing body and their key responsibilities in taking these issues forward

With other Headteachers

- Finding a place away from school to ‘bounce’ ideas and views off a trusted and respected Headteacher colleague. This could also present the opportunity to have some of the ideas and plans devised (during the previous dedicated time) to be tested by challenging ‘what if..’ types of questioning
- As a small group, sharing their views of what the current National and local agenda could mean and how best to meet the challenges. This could also be an opportunity to share ideas and practices already in existence in colleagues schools, that could evolve further to meet local / National priorities
- Attending conferences to help maintain a fresh ‘bigger picture’ view of the broader educational setting

With a coach

- With a suitably trained and experienced Leadership / Executive coach, use the process to deal with a key issue that may be problematical and to agree a commitment to action to address this

In summary

It is of paramount importance that Headteachers (and through them, the Governing Body) seize the opportunity of dedicated Headship time. In the same way that teacher’s PPA time will (where used effectively) significantly improve the quality of outcomes for children, dedicated Headship time provides the opportunity to significantly improve the leadership of the whole school. This will only occur if Heads themselves take and shape dedicated Headship time to meet their individual needs. Remember “*Headteachers must have dedicated time to lead their schools, not just manage them.*”

Dedicated Headship Time: A Statement of Intent

The Governing body of [redacted] School is committed to ensuring that the Headteacher receives an appropriate entitlement of dedicated headship time within which to work without interruption upon the strategic responsibilities of leadership.

Provision of time

Dedicated Headship Time in this school will comprise of [redacted] *(for example one half day per week, 10% of the Head's time, three days per half term..... depending upon the needs and circumstances of the school.)*

The time will be allocated during the school sessions and identified on the school timetable.

Dedicated Headship time is separate from and additional to any guaranteed time for planning, preparation and assessment to which the Headteacher is entitled commensurate with his/her teaching commitments.

During Dedicated Headship time the Headteacher (*may work at home or offsite*) will NOT be required to deal with routine matters, take telephone calls or deal with enquiries in person, be expected to cover for absent colleagues or required to meet parents, governors or other visitors to the school.

Appropriate arrangements will be made for dealing with these matters similar to those which apply when the headteacher is off the premises attending meetings or visiting other schools.

Resources

Any cost implications will be considered when the school budget is set and the resources necessary to enable the Headteacher to take up the entitlement to dedicated headship time will be identified.

Review

The provision will be reviewed [redacted] (*eg annually, prior to the start of each academic year, as part of the Headteacher's annual review, in the light of any changes to the school's circumstances*) to ensure that the priorities of the school AND the statutory requirements of the national agreement can continue to be properly delivered.

The Governing body will ensure that the Headteacher has an appropriate opportunity (*eg by including Dedicated Headship Time as an annual agenda item at a governing body meeting... or other...*) to confirm that he/she has taken dedicated headship time in accordance with the school timetable or advise the governing body of any difficulties which may have arisen [redacted] (*and to indicate, if he/she wishes, the activities undertaken.*)

The appropriate committee of the Governing body may receive feedback on the use of Dedicated Headship Time as part of the Headteacher's performance review.

This policy will be reviewed on [redacted] (*date*).

Signed: _____ (Head) _____ (Chair)