

# The Grove School

## Staff

## Handbook

## Professional Learning Community

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Dear Staff,

I would like to warmly show my appreciation to all existing members of staff who have helped me to develop this Staff Booklet whilst also warmly welcoming new members to our staff team. I hope that you all enjoy a long and happy career working at The Grove School.

This information has been compiled to be used as a helpful reference guide by providing clear guidelines and expectations for all Grove School employees. We aim to review this information regularly and everyone's support to ensure that existing details are updated and new areas are included as necessary would be much appreciated.

Whilst we are a relatively small school, in the context of our pupil numbers, because of the children's/young people's complexity of learning needs we have a relatively large staff team. Additionally, we are supported by a number of multi-professionals, some work on a weekly timetabled basis in school, some hold regular clinics, others support on a request/referral basis and there are teams of staff in both Northumberland and Scottish Borders Councils with whom we have regular contact. We are also frequently contacted by other schools to share our practice with regard to children/young people who have complex additional needs whose learning placement is within a mainstream setting. Therefore, we are a very busy school with many additional activities, meetings and visits etc occurring as a normal part of our daily practice.

To ensure that our staff team is collectively able to effectively meet the many complex demands made of us all, with the optimum balance of consistency and flexibility, we aim to ensure that every staff member feels valued and supported to grow confidently in their role through continuing to learn and develop both personally and professionally. Achieving the highest standards across our whole school is embedded within the values underpinning our whole school culture and ethos and is highly dependent upon everyone working well together, supporting each other and feeling happy and fulfilled in the work that they do.

My door is always open for every member of staff to discuss any concerns they may have and likewise please do so with Lee, Valerie and Lorna who will listen to and ensure that your thoughts are discussed at a senior level and appropriate support/action is put in place.

Working in The Grove School is a highly demanding job whilst equally being a highly fulfilling one, please always be assured that every staff member's commitment and dedication is recognised, valued and appreciated.

Thank you for all you do to enrich the children's/young people's lives throughout their learning with us.

*Penny*

### Our Ethos

We are a happy, safe and supportive school where everyone is equally valued and nurtured to thrive.

### Values

We:

- value learning with, from and on behalf of each other
- value flexible, creative and open thinking and approaches that are solution focused
- value and respect everyone equally whilst acknowledging individuality and diversity
- value, listen to and respect each other's opinions
- value and care about the environment and are actively involved in our community
- support, nurture and care for each other
- are kind, thoughtful and considerate to each other

### Our Aims for Everyone in Our School Community

- To provide the highest standards of teaching and learning through setting challenging educational experiences that recognise everyone's potential, develops from their needs and builds on their success.
- For teaching and learning to be fun, enjoyable, motivating and meaningful.
- To encourage and develop independence for each child/learner and for all involved in school to have a 'voice' that is valued.
- To create and maintain an environment and approach to learning where there is equality of access and opportunity for all and where inclusion within our local community and beyond is prioritised, especially with our Partnership of Schools and Business and Community Partners.
- To build a strong partnership with parents.
- For our working surroundings to provide a happy and safe environment and for healthy lifestyles to be encouraged and supported.
- To treat everyone with respect and dignity and to encourage a respect for the school environment and for the wider community. To provide a welcoming and supportive environment for everyone.

### Our Class Staffing Arrangements

Whilst staff may be based in one class/department for one or more years we do change staff bases for several reasons to ensure that every child's/student's needs are met in the best way possible. These changes support both staff development as well as our School Development Plan ensuring that we sustain and further develop the most highly skilled and flexible staff team possible. Whilst some staff may work exclusively, in one base others may support two or more groups and many staff work out of school too.

All staff are appointed to work within The Grove School, not to support a specific class, there is a general expectation of staff that they are open and flexible about their timetable, which is reviewed at least each July/September and more frequently when necessary.

The needs of individual children/young people change as therefore do the requirements of support in classes which consequently impacts upon where staff skills, experience and expertise can best be optimised.

We support the positive acceptance of and preparation for timetable/class base changes through within school Learning Visits (refer to CPD for more details) which aim to widen everyone's experience base and comfort zones, especially as in some circumstances staff members may have been working in one class base for a number of years before the opportunity has arisen to further develop their experience and expertise in another class base.

### Our Staffing Structure

We have developed a career path for Teaching Assistants based upon increasing levels of responsibilities which is aligned to Northumberland County Council's Single Status generic job descriptions and person specifications whilst also including some unique job descriptions and person specifications too. In addition to this handbook we have a Staff Roles and Responsibilities list which summarises how we organise our school on both an individual class/departmental level and on a whole school basis. Everyone's reference to both handbook, list and our School Booklet for Parents is essential to support an in-depth understanding of how our school works - of how it is lead, managed and organised including everyone's personal dispersed leadership and management roles and responsibilities.

We very much encourage distributed leadership with everyone being supported to develop aspects of leadership within their own role as well as having distinct Middle and Senior Leadership and Management Teams.

### Our senior management Team is:-

Headteacher - Penny                      Deputy Headteacher - Lee  
Class/Senior Teacher - Valerie  
Office Manager - Lorna

### Our Middle Management Team is:-

Helen - Class teacher  
Margaret - Class teacher  
Hannah - Class teacher  
Amanda - Class Manager

### Staff Contracts

All qualified teachers are employed under the Department for Education national guidelines and legislation.

For support staff we have two main types of contract.

### Term-time only plus five days

These contracts vary from several part-time hours to a full time, 37 hours per week post. Everyone is paid to attend the five staff training days although if these are scheduled by the LA to be in the school holidays we transfer these sessions and arrange three/four twilights, after school day,

sessions instead. Holiday entitlements are paid pro-rata to each individuals contracted hours. The salary is then equated over the year into twelve equal monthly payments to ensure that staff members have a regular rather than fluctuating income.

The individual nature of each staff member's roles and responsibilities and contracted hours means that there are a range of start and finish times to the working days.

### Supply Assistants

Our Staffing Structure supports cover for Class Leads when they are absent either through illness or because of other school commitments and/or for CPD. Experience shows us that this arrangement provides the very best for the children/young people because the staff covering have the essential, bespoke, knowledge of each individual pupil as well as the skills, experience and expertise necessary to sustain our high standards.

To backfill for any loss of pupil to staff ratio we may employ staff on a supply basis too although the cost of doing so is becoming too expensive for our budget to meet and as far as possible we need to organise cover that limits incurring any additional expense. We have insurance cover that will meet most of the expense of covering a long-term absence, after twenty-one working days have been missed. Therefore, for the first three weeks we increasingly need to backfill by being flexible with staff timetables, roles and responsibilities.

### Temporary Contracts

If we can anticipate that an employee on a permanent contract is going to be off work for a set period we will make arrangements to fill this post with a temporary contract, for example for a maternity leave. When the permanent employee returns to work the temporary employee's hours/contract consequently stops.

Temporary contracts have been previously filled by staff already working in school on a temporary basis but not exclusively so.

### Salary Payment Queries

Everyone's salary details are known by Penny and Lorna who keep these details confidential, they are not shared with any other members of staff or with The Governing Body. When the Governing Body ratifies the budget overall staffing figures are discussed not the specific salaries of individual



staff members. However, when posts are advertised salary details are always included which are open and available to the public which therefore includes all governors, staff and parents too.

Anomalies with staff salary payments have occurred and staff have been requested to pay back any monies over paid to them. It is the responsibility of every staff member to check that their monthly salary is correct and if there is any unexplained over or under payment to ensure that this is considered immediately.

The school pays NCC to arrange every staff member's salary payment, considering that the NCC employ over fifteen thousand people and that temporary staff often work in their payroll department it is understandable that mistakes may happen. These mistakes can only be rectified if the staff member to whom it has happened informs Lorna of the situation as soon as possible.

We have contacts in County Hall who support our budget planning and management of staff salaries and depending upon the query either a staff member themselves or Lorna may contact them for information and advice. There is our School Support Officer, Payroll, the Finance Department and our school accountant.

#### Job Descriptions (JD) /Person Specifications (PS)

Every member of staff has a job description and person specification, JD/PS, which is reflective of their roles and responsibilities within school.

The job description summarises the main responsibilities of the post holder and the person specification details the main qualifications and personal qualities necessary to enable the staff member to fulfil these responsibilities to an optimum standard.

All qualified teacher posts have national guideline expectations which are agreed between the DFE and the teaching unions. Additionally, each QTS has a specific Grove School JD/PS which details their specific Grove School role and responsibilities.

All support staff, which means all staff employed in school who are not employed through QTS conditions of employment, have JD/PS's that have been aligned to NCC's response to Single Status. Single Status has been in the process of implementation for over a decade and some staff member's contracts were altered by NCC several years ago. During 2010 through to 2012 all support staff's JD/PS's were analysed and assessed by NCC against the new Single Status pay banding structure.

Whilst support staff members have a Grove School JD/PS this is also aligned with NCC pay band JD/PS.

Some staff's JD/PS did not fit into the generic NCC JD/PS's and their Grove School JD/PS had to be rewritten into the NCC format and then forwarded for assessment onto the new NCC pay bands. The process was diligently followed to ensure fairness and equality for all staff. Whilst protracted negotiations took place most staff retained their existing salary and several were supported to have their salary enhanced.

Contracts relate to job security and employment law and rarely change unless there is an agreed permanent change in working hours between the school and the staff member or an existing staff member is successful in their application for a promoted post. If the school needs to re-organise its staffing structure for financial or other reasons, this reorganisation will follow Local Authority guidelines and procedures. Areas for consideration may include a reduction in hours contracted to work and/or changes in roles and responsibilities which may impact upon the band at which a salary is paid and therefore a reduction in annual salary.

### School Policies

Our school policies summarise our principles and protocols, they are guidelines to support our agreed priorities and consistency across all areas.

Safeguarding/Child Protection and Health and Safety are key policy documents for all staff for which initial and regular, update training is essential. Manual Handling, First Aid in the workplace and Infection Control may require staff to attend training at different times. Staff Code of Conduct policy which is supported by the LA Personnel Department and additional staff related policies are key documents to which ongoing reference is encouraged.

Learning based policies include PHSE, SMSC, subject areas the curriculum, assessment and the recording and reporting of achievements guides the implementation and direction of the children and student's progress and development. Our teaching methodology is supported with a key policy - Learning and Teaching, which is a core policy for all class based staff to follow.

The Governing Body review, modify and adopt policies on a regular basis some are supported by the Local Authority e.g. personnel, Leave of Absence, pay whilst others are completely developed within school.

Attached is an appendix of a list of school policies. Regular training sessions focus upon reviewing and updating these on a rotational basis whilst some are prioritised annually.

Our policies are working documents which are in place to support and guide practice, in all areas of school life, to ensure that we are reliably consistent and reasonably adaptable.

Every individual member of staff must adhere to our policy documents and to ensure doing so either by reading them directly or by following through with the guidelines as informed by a senior member of staff.

Policies are developed and changed to reflect the changing nature of the demands made upon the school staff team nationally, regionally and locally and we very much welcome suggested changes from all staff members to ensure that our policies are a true reflection of what we do.

### **Accidents**

If a child has a minor accident, it must be reported in the accident book by the adult who supported them. The accident book kept in the school office. Treatment should be given by an appointed First Aider following school policy guidelines which are in the Health and Safety files in the main office. The First Aid Box is kept in Mrs Heather Cornish's office and she is responsible for maintaining supplies. There is an additional first aid box in the school office, as well as emergency inhalers and adrenaline pens. We also have a defibrillator which is situated in the school office.

Parents should be given details of what has happened either by telephone, diary book, a note, accident report form or when they collect their child from school.

If there are, any serious injuries an Accident at Work form needs to be completed forms will be sent to the L.E.A personnel department. Mrs Derries or Miss Waugh will complete these forms with your support. Reporting accidents must occur at all times. Mrs Penny Derries has responsibility for health and safety in school, concerns maybe reported using the appropriate forms.

## **Timetable**

A copy of the Whole School Timetable is available in your class planning files, or from the school office. Included on the timetables are details of: -

- Which staff are with which class group
- Which staff are with smaller groups
- Which children are swimming, riding, environmental/social skills work on a weekly basis
- When visiting multi-professional regularly work with the children.

## **The School Day**

Pupils are in school from 9.00am to 3.00pm each day.

Most staff have very individual contracted hours and therefore work to different expectations.

However, good practice is encouraged and before lessons begin, we welcome support from all staff to set up and organise equipment and resources. This is especially important at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions.

## **Staff Training Days**

All staff attend staff training days as part of their contract, supply staff may to attend and claim additional hours.

## **Fire Drill**

1. On noticing any smoke or a fire immediately put into action evacuation of the school, ensuring that the emergency bag goes out of school with a member of staff, this bag is in the school office.
2. Calmly ring the nearest fire bell to alert everyone to the danger.
3. Everyone must leave the building by the nearest outside door, closing interior doors where possible and assemble in the school yard.

4. Keep in class groups and take the register from your class if you have it if not the school secretary or key staff will bring this out with them.
5. The lead member of staff in school that day will check the registers and the visitor's book.

### **Fire Drill - Hydrotherapy**

On hearing the fire bell, (1 continuous ring and red flashing light), remove children as quickly as possible from the pool without using the hoist, you will need to use the slip sheets and manual handle the pupils for their safety and your own this would only happen in an emergency, we do not practice this. Wrap them in towels getting them into their chairs and leave by the Hydrotherapy pool, going through the gate and round to the main yard.

### **Guidance on Staff Absence**

We have a whole school pay and conditions policy which guides the procedures we use for staff absence. Many of the regulations are set by the L.E.A. through what can and cannot be covered through the supply scheme, which insures us and provides for supply staff to be employed.

If ill health prevents you being able to come to work, please make contact as soon as possible.

My mobile number is 07821 722 529 and I am happy for you to ring me any time, if I am driving to work I will get back to you as soon as possible. If you cannot contact me for any reason, please phone school as soon as you can.

Leave of absence forms are in the staff room information file, please do not hesitate to come and discuss events that you are likely to wish to have time off for, we will try and fairly support all staff whilst ensuring that the school can run effectively and that the requests fall into the Leave of Absence policy that has been agreed with the governors.

### **Emergency School Closure/Weather Conditions**

There are times when the weather is so severe that it may be necessary to close the school. All staff need to ensure their safety and must therefore decide within their own location if it is safe to come to work, please let me or school know if you cannot come to school.

In the event of severe weather, I will liaise with the Senior Leadership Team and decide to close the school if the number of pupils and staff that cannot make it in means that opening the school would risk people's well-being and safety.

We will then use the telephone tree to contact all staff and parents to inform them of this decision.

### **GDPR**

Due to the new data protection guidelines we would like all staff to be aware that as a school we will:-

- Protect all data it holds in an appropriate and secure manner
- Will only retain data on pupils and staff that is current and necessary
- All other data will be deleted from electronic storage or destroyed.

If you would like more information on the data we hold about you, please ask Lorna or Penny.

### **Code of conduct/staff behaviour**

The Grove School believes that our pupils/students, parents, partners and the public is entitled to expect the highest standards of behaviour from our staff.

The Grove School is committed to providing a professional and ethical working environment which serves and protects The Grove School's community.

To read more our full guidelines can be found in our Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct)

### **Whistle blowing policy and procedure**

The right to 'blow the whistle' applies to all employees, if you have concerns about the conduct of a staff member then please follow our Whistleblowing policy which is available in the school office.

### **Allegations of abuse**

The Grove School will provide a safe environment in which pupils/students can learn and is committed to providing the highest possible level of care for both our pupils/students and our staff.

The Grove School will take allegations of abuse made against a member of staff seriously.

For further information please see our 'Allegations of Abuse Policy'

### Abbreviation Definitions

Ch/YP	Child/children young person/young people
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DFE	Department for Education
ELSA	Emotional Literacy Support Assistant
HLTA	Higher Level Teaching Assistant
JD/PS	Job Description/Person Specification
LA	Local Authority
NCC	Northumberland County Council
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status