



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

LOCAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE TEACHING STAFF

Minute of Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Stornoway and through Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, 27 August 2024 at 10.30am.

PRESENT

Ms Karen Graham (Chair)
Mr Calum Maclean
Dr Frances Murray
Mr Donald A Macleod

Mr Niall Thomson
Mr Jamie Macleod
Mr Roderick MacNeil
Mr Sam Jones

APOLOGIES

Mr Paul Finnegan
Mr Iain M Macleod
Mr Angus McCormack

Ms Amanda Macdonald
Ms Catriona Campbell
Mr George Murray

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Ms Mary Clare Ferguson
Mr Neil Macleod
Ms Louise Smith

Ms Carmen Macdonald
Mr Derek Mackay
Mr Steven Ferguson

CONSTITUTION

Appointment of 1.
Chair

The Governance and Elections Manager chaired the Meeting and called for nominations for Chair of the Local Negotiating Committee Teaching Staff.

It was agreed to appoint Ms Karen Graham as Chair of the Local Negotiating Committee Teaching Staff.

MINUTE

The Chair ruled items 5, 6 and 9 as urgent to enable these matters to be considered prior to the next meeting.

Minute of Meeting of 5 March 2024 2.

The Minute of the Meeting of 5 March 2024 was **approved** subject to the following amendment at item 4(3):

delete "Learning Estate Member Officer Working Group" and insert "Violence and Aggression in Learning Settings Working Group".

EDUCATION PROVISION

Policy on 3.
Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour

The Chief Officer for Education and Children's Services submitted a Report in respect of the Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy. The Report noted that the Policy had been developed to bring it in line with current legislation, national policy and the latest understanding of best practice.

The Report stated that positive relationships in schools between learners and between staff were key to promoting positive behaviour. The Policy would replace all existing Comhairle Education and Children's Services behaviour policies other than the existing Anti-Bullying Policy (2016) and Management of Exclusion Policy (2020), both of which remain current and separate, but related, policy areas. The working group will be developing an implementation plan that will include operational guidance.

It was agreed to note the Positive Relationship and Behaviour Policy.

Mobile Phone Policy Development 4.

The Chief Officer for Education and Children's Services submitted a Report providing an update on the development of a mobile phone policy. The Report noted that the Scottish Government had published Mobile Phone Guidance for Scotland's Schools on 14 August 2024. This guidance provided schools and local authorities with advice on the development and updating of local policies relating to the use of mobile phones in schools.

It was agreed:

- (1) to appoint Mr Jamie Macleod and Mr Sam Jones to the short life Working Group developing a Comhairle policy on mobile phone use in schools; and**
- (2) to appoint representatives from Castlebay School, Sir E Scott School, and a primary school to the Working Group.**

Violence and Aggression: Behaviour Support Fund 5.

With reference to item 4 of the minute of the meeting of 5 March 2024, the Chief Officer for Education and Children's Services submitted a Report in respect of the Violence and Aggression Working Group established at the March 2024 meeting. The Report indicated that the Scottish Government had published information about work it had undertaken on behaviour in schools, including a Relationships and Behaviour Action Plan for 2024-27. The Report indicated that the Scottish Government had provided funding of £10K to support relationships and behaviour training for school-based staff.

It was agreed that:

- (1) Democratic Services would arrange the first meeting of the Violence and Aggression Working Group with the first task to agree its terms of reference;**
- (2) Mary Clare Ferguson would be appointed to the Working Group; and**
- (3) The Working Group would consider the intended use of the funding received from Scottish Government to support training for school-based staff.**

Term Dates and Effect on School Attendance 6.

With reference to item 3 of the Minute of the Meeting of 12 December 2023, the Chief Officer for Education and Children's Services submitted a Report which provided information on attendance in the context of the setting of term dates and mid-term holidays. The Report noted that at its meeting of 13 December 2023, the Local Negotiating Committee: Teaching Staff agreed to request a Report that provided an analysis of attendance over the last three years by days of the week and on weeks where there was a partial attendance due to holidays. The completion of this Report was significantly delayed by the loss of access to SEEMiS due to the cyber-attack that affected the Comhairle on 6 November 2023.

The analysis of data indicated that there can be a small degree of variation in attendance on weeks that feature holiday closure days but it is impossible to determine that this is the only contributing factor to variations in attendance on certain days of the week. The calendar of Term Dates and Mid-Term Holidays for 2025-26 has been reviewed in light of the findings of the data and whole week attendance has been considered wherever possible.

It was agreed to note the Report and to consider its findings in terms of future term date calendars.

- School Term Dates and Mid Term Holidays 2025-26 7. The Chief Officer for Education and Children’s Services submitted a Report which detailed the 2025-26 scheme of school attendance and the in-service training dates. The Report noted that the Comhairle is required to set its own school terms, school holidays and in-service training days. The school year covers 190 days for pupils and 195 for teachers.
- For 2026, Easter falls within the designated two-week holiday period so there is no need to allocate occasional days for this. As such, the pattern of occasional days has returned to being used to give a mid-term break in February and a long weekend at May Holiday. The Friday in October for the National Mod and the November weekend remain unchanged, other than to reset the November weekend back to the last weekend of the month.
- The proposed calendar has been issued to schools for consultation with staff and stakeholders. Feedback from schools will be considered in the conclusion of a final calendar for 2025-26. Account has been taken of the request to avoid part-week attendance wherever that had been possible and the majority of terms start and end on a Monday and Friday.
- During discussion it was indicated that it would be helpful to set the term and holiday on a multi-year basis.
- It was agreed to note the School Term Dates, Mid Term holidays, and In-Service days for information.**
- Sickness Absence Management 8. The Chief Executive submitted a Report which advised the Local Negotiating Committee: Teaching Staff of a review of the application of the Sickness Absence Policy. The Report noted that the Comhairle has a comprehensive Sickness Absence Policy in place to support the management of sickness levels across the workforce. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that the Comhairle maintains attendance levels and sickness absence are monitored and managed accordingly, this policy applies to all employees of the Comhairle.
- It was agreed, insofar as the Committee’s interests were concerned, to note the proposed work being undertaken regarding the improved management of sickness absence.**
- Special Leave Policy 9. The Teaching Staff Joint Secretary submitted a Report which sought an addition to the Comhairle’s Special Leave Policy. The Report noted that the current Special Leave Policy makes no specific allowance for time off for non-Christian religious holidays or celebrations. These are currently covered by section 3.2 - Family/Friendly Policies, and Section 5 – Equal Opportunities. However, Section 3 covers unpaid leave.
- It was agreed to that the Chief Officer for Education and Children’s Services would submit a Report to a future meeting in relation to the Special Leave Policy.**
- Barra Staffing 10. The Director for Education and Children’s Services provided an update in relation to staffing levels at Castlebay School.
- It was agreed to note the update.**
- PERFORMANCE MONITORING**
- Reports Outstanding 11. The Chief Executive submitted a Report which detailed the Reports Outstanding arising from decisions of the Committee.
- It was agreed to note the Report.**

