

Head Teachers' Bulletin – 4th October

Upcoming Events

14 th Oct	SEND Network Meeting – 2pm @ Pastoral Centre
16 th Oct	Maths Subject Immersion @ Holy Rood
17 th Oct	Trust Mass – 10am @ St Marie's Cathedral
24 th Oct	History Subject Immersion @ St Catherine's
7 th & 8 th Nov	Heads' Conference
14 th Nov	DSLs network – 12.30 @ Pastoral Centre
21 st Nov	Music Subject Immersion @ St Mary's
26 th Nov	Senior Leaders' Group 1.30 @ Pastoral Centre

Actions

Share the instructions for the Maths Immersion day with the member of your staff who is attending.

New Updates (since last bulletin)

Nursery planning

We will be picking up the work of our nursery planning group this half term. Those of you in schools who are looking at new or expanded nursery provision will have received an invitation to a meeting on Fri 18th October.

This meeting is to enable us to coordinate support for planning of these projects in their different stages and to share practice and experience across our schools. By the time of this meeting, we may have more details on the additional funding that the government have promised to make available to support the development of new and expanded nursery provision in our schools.

If you are already working on a project to add new or expanded nursery provision, or are considering this and you haven't had an invitation to the meeting, please let Anita know.

Admissions consultation

Thank you to colleagues who have made sure that we have been able to launch consultation on admissions arrangements. The policies for consultation should now be available on your websites.

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We have set up an MS form to gather from you a record of the people and organisations that you have notified of the consultation. We will combine this with records of the organisations that we have notified centrally and will keep it as a record of the consultation in case we need to track back to evidence of what we did in future years. We will also use this information to cross check to make sure we have not missed anyone that we should be notifying.

If you get any responses to the consultation, please do keep them collated together, acknowledge them and respond where it is meaningful to do so. Please get in touch via Lindsay Graham if you need any advice in relation to any responses. We will collate responses toward the end of the consultation period and will review these in our admissions meeting next half term to make sure that the consultation informs any changes to our proposed policies before they go to governors for approval in the Spring Term.

Maths Subject Immersion Day 16th October – Holyrood School, 9.30-2.30

We are looking forward to the first of the subject immersion days. There will be an opportunity to network, visit lessons and to engage with the evidence base around features of a high-quality Maths education.

The overall theme of the day will be the following two questions:

- What represents a 'solid foundation' in Maths?
- Why are you teaching this content, to those pupils, at this point?

In terms of logistics:

- Please arrive at Holyrood from 9.15. Parking is in Horizon car park or on street (please be mindful of residents access).
- Please bring your lunch – tea and coffee will be available
- Please bring with you a selection of pupil Maths books from your school

SCA funding update – how it will work this year

I have received questions from a couple of colleagues about how SCA funding will be deployed this year.

The 'bid' procedure used last year was an interim measure to make use of funding prior to having completed the condition improvement surveys.

Those surveys have highlighted some priority areas of work which will account for the majority of SCA funding over this year and the next two. We will reserve some funding for development projects and some other funding for emergency response.

We are in the process of developing a draft spending plan to address the priorities identified through the condition surveys which we will then publish for review and input by you and other colleagues in schools. We will then add to the plan agreed development projects.

Moving forward, we intend to work through a review process where, at two points during the year, we will seek information about any changes that you wish to propose for SCA spending plans in relation to your school which we will review in line with the SCA policy. The intention here is to ensure that you are clear at

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any given time what the longer term plan is for SCA funded projects that relate to your school and that you are able to have input into review of this plan.

Purchase Order Compliance

As you will be aware, purchase orders need to be raised as part of the purchasing process. These are important as they give advanced sight of planned spending. This enables forecasting to be accurate which in turn means that decisions in school and across the Trust are properly informed. Low compliance with POs also reduces the effectiveness of invoice matching software which, if enabled to work well reduces the number of administrative tasks needed to be done manually.

Our Purchase Order (PO) Compliance has significantly weakened during the course of the 2023/24 academic year. The table below shows how compliance has dropped. The % shows the proportion of invoices that had a pre-existing approved purchase order.

	Period	Compliance %
PO Compliance	Sept 23 – Oct 23	78%
PO Compliance	Feb 24 – Mar 24	61%
PO Compliance	July 24 – Aug 24	40%

Initially, PO compliance was strong, however, it was quickly identified that PO's were being created retrospectively, evidenced by the large number of PO's dated after the actual invoice date. When this was identified, the finance team provided training and instruction to all SBM's, making it clear that POs should not be created retrospectively.

It is also clear that there has been reoccurrence of staff expense claims being used to procure curriculum and estates and facilities items. We can't process staff expense claims if we believe they are being used instead of the required procurement procedures.

We must take active steps to improve our overall compliance and your support with this will be appreciated. The shared services team will be providing a refresh to SBM's during their next briefing meeting, providing general procedural guidance as well as supporting any direct requests for training/guidance from schools.

Items from previous bulletin for reference

Heads Forum

The main follow up from the meeting is to use the high-performance triangle questions and the linked approach to goal setting as the format for your appraisal meetings with teachers this half term. Remember that pay progression is assumed (where relevant) and so you are free to focus on this being a really high-

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quality conversation, which helps teachers to identify and set really impactful objectives with you. We will use our experience of this approach to feed into our revised appraisal policy in time for this time next year.

Request from Learn Sheffield for photos (Sheffield schools)

Learn Sheffield have asked if Sheffield schools can share any photos of pupils that they can use in their material as the current material is now quite out of date. As always, we need to be sure that any pupils featured have given consent.

You can get in touch with Learn Sheffield directly, or you can send photos to us to pass on, whichever is more convenient.

Declarations of Business, Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest

At the start of each year, there are a group of staff, governors and directors who need to review and update their declarations of business, pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests. This is in compliance with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook 2024 and will be checked during our statutory audit which begins soon.

The ESFA have made changes this year to the information required and who it is needed from. It is much more extensive than in previous years, covering a larger number of people and a broader disclosure requirement. At school, the people who need to make declarations are Headteachers, School Business Managers and all members of local academy committees.

In order to assist colleagues we have produced a policy document which is available on Governor Hub. The policy document explains the disclosures that are needed.

What we are asking you to do:

- **Heads – please update your Declaration via the facility on your profile page on Governor Hub**, using the policy document to guide you as to what you should be covering when considering if there is anything you need to disclose. If you have already updated your declaration this term, please take a moment to check the updated policy to make sure you have covered everything you need to. **Please update your declaration on Governor Hub by Fri 27th Sept.**
- **Please also alert members of your Local Academy Committee that this updated policy is on Governor Hub and that they should use it to guide them in updating their declarations.** Where Local Academy Committee members have already updated their declaration, again we are asking that they check the update policy to ensure that they have declared everything that is needed. **We ask Local Academy Committee Members to complete their declarations by Friday 4th October.**

We will also ask Learn Sheffield Clerks to highlight the revised policy and to remind Local Academy Committee members to use it to update their declarations.

We will brief Business Managers on what they need to do at their briefing next week.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Adnan Bashir via email.

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