NORTH LANARKSHIRE JNCT

Agreement on Workload Control

1.1 In March 2015 the JNCT held a series of events for all establishments where participants were encouraged to report identified workload drivers to the JNCT, in order that advice could be given to establishments which encompassed Appendix 2.18 of the SNCT Handbook (Working Time Agreements – Managing Teacher Workload).

1.2 Key sources of evidence in relation to workload drivers are:
Summary of North Lanarkshire Collegiality Conferences (July 2015)
Education Scotland Curriculum for Excellence: A Statement for Practitioners from HM Chief Inspector of Education (August 2016)
Education Scotland: Review of local authorities' actions to tackle unnecessary bureaucracy and undue workload in schools (September 2016)

1.3 Evidence from across the country, and from within North Lanarkshire, points to the following areas as the most important when seeking to tackle unnecessary bureaucracy and undue workload in schools:

- forward planning in primary schools
- reporting to parents
- approaches to self-evaluation
- planning for improvement; and
- whole-school reporting on standards and quality

2. North Lanarkshire has an overarching strategy group and a number of working groups constituted to address the important aspects underpinning delivery of Curriculum for Excellence (see Appendix 2).

3. The constitution of working groups will be adapted to meet the demands of local and national priorities as they evolve and develop e.g. the National Improvement Framework.

4. Working groups will produce concise and relevant guidance on implementing policy and practice which takes full account of unnecessary bureaucracy and undue workload in schools (see Appendix 2).

5. Taking full account of guidance produced, Staff Representative Groups (SRGs) should review bureaucracy and workload annually as part of the Working Time Agreement (WTA) process to include:

i) Formal assessment
ii) Tracking, monitoring and reporting (including formats for reporting to parents)
iii) Time for professional dialogue amongst teaching staff.
iv) Forward and curriculum planning.
v) ICT systems.
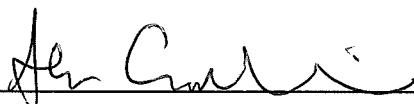vi) Other drivers of bureaucracy and workload identified by the JNCT as part of the annual review.

6. SRGs will report to the JNCT on specific actions taken in WTAs and School Improvement Plans (SIPs) to reduce bureaucracy and workload as part of the cycle of annual surveys.

7. On an annual basis the JNCT will assess the impact and effectiveness of agreements on workload control measures from the surveyed establishments and review advice to establishments on best practice.

8. On an annual basis the JNCT will produce a report on the impact of workload control measures which will be available for review by the SNCT on request.

9. SRGs will report to JNCT Joint Secretaries any workload drivers generated by external factors such as school inspections or SQA procedures. These will be investigated by the Joint Secretaries and, if necessary, forwarded to the SNCT which may offer supplementary advice.

10. Should there be a failure to agree either a SIP or WTA at establishment level, representatives of the SRG will enter the conciliation and dispute resolution processes as defined in the JNCT Agreement on Working Time Arrangements.
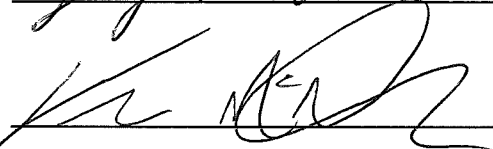
(Signed by)
Joint Secretary to the Teachers' Side

Convener of the Teachers' Side

Joint Secretary to the Management Side

Convener of the Management Side

Date: **22nd February 2017**

APPENDIX 1

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

TACKLING BUREAUCRACY - KEY PRINCIPLES

The approach of the Education, Youth and Communities Service to teaching and learning is about empowering teachers to improve outcomes for learners. Too much paperwork and overly complex processes can get in the way of teaching and learning. Everyone has a part to play in tackling excessive bureaucracy. Excessive bureaucracy can be defined as:

- Anything that makes it impossible for teaching staff to complete their duties within the 35-hour week.

As part of our duty of care to staff and learners, we recommend the following best practice principles. These principles should inform future practice in all schools and should be used to test current practice against.

2. PRINCIPLES

2.1 Professional dialogue is key to improving learning. Paperwork should be kept to the minimum required to support this. Time should be set aside to facilitate this important process.

2.2 Documentation should be concise and relevant i.e. policy documents should be no more than 2 sides of A4 and strategic school policies should be no more than 4 sides of A4.

2.3 Planning should be proportionate and based on local policy documents.

2.4 Monitoring, tracking, recording and reporting systems are fit-for-purpose. Reports should have a clear purpose and be relevant and meaningful.

2.5 IT systems and software should support effective learning and teaching and their use should be guided by the principles of: a. Continuity; b. Accessibility; and c. Ease-of-use.

2.6 Communication should be clear, concise and relevant. Staff should reflect, when using electronic communication, who the intended recipients are and whether this is the most appropriate form of communication.

2.7 Quality assurance should be robust, evaluative and supportive and should build on professional self-evaluation, through a collegiate approach. The impact of curricular innovation should be fully evaluated by all stakeholders before being subject to further change.

KEY MESSAGES FROM TACKLING BUREAUCRACY FOLLOW UP PAPER

The most significant progress in tackling bureaucracy is through taking a collegiate approach.

Specific areas where changes need to be made to tackle unnecessary bureaucracy include forward planning; assessment; self-evaluation and improvement processes; and monitoring and reporting.

The best way to ensure that Curriculum for Excellence focuses on high quality Learning and Teaching rather than the fruitless management of pointless paperwork is through simplifying processes and focusing on key priorities.

Forward Planning

Forward planning should be proportionate: there is no need to plan, assess, record and report at the level of each and every Experience and Outcome. It is almost always better to group together related Experiences and Outcomes and focus on the most significant aspects of teaching and learning.

Forward planning should support professional dialogue rather than simply fulfil an audit function.

Schools and local authorities should simplify their procedures to ensure that forward planning is high-level and less time consuming. In particular, forward planning should not be undertaken at the level of each and every Experience and Outcome.

Assessment

Assessment judgements, particularly within broad general education but also in the senior phase of CfE, should be based on evidence drawn mainly from day-to-day teaching and learning. Tracking pupil progress and moderation is important; however, there is no need to produce large folios of evidence to support this. Assessment within CfE is based on the exercise of professional judgement.

In the broad general education, schools should focus on assessing progress in significant aspects of learning rather than at the level of individual Experiences and Outcomes.

In the senior phase, SQA and local authorities should continue to streamline assessment and national and local quality assurance processes for National Qualifications and ensure that these are aligned and proportionate.

Self-evaluation and Improvement Planning

Whole school approaches to self-evaluation play a key role in improving performance but over-reliance on audit and "tick box" approaches can distract from high quality teaching and learning. Self-evaluation should focus only on the key information required to support improvement.

Local authorities and schools should review their approaches to self-evaluation and improvement planning to ensure that these are proportionate. Improvement plans should focus on a manageable number of priorities that clearly show better outcomes for learners.

Monitoring and Reporting

ICT planning and reporting systems should be used with caution. There should be a realistic evaluation of the time required to utilise such systems and this should be factored in to school improvement plans. Just because such systems can support very detailed planning and reporting, does not mean they should be used in that way. What matters is that systems are used effectively to support and protect time for professional dialogue.

Parents are looking for reports that give a clear, rounded personalised summary of their child's learning and progress. They want good quality conversations with teachers that feel personal and specific to their child. The paperwork needs to support this rather than becoming an end in itself. Report card formats and other arrangements for reporting should avoid jargon and "tick box" approaches such as covering each and every Experience and Outcome.

Local authorities and schools should focus on providing robust, concise information drawn from day-to-day learning and teaching that gives a clear picture of progress and achievement.

Local authorities and schools should regularly review the efficacy of ICT systems for planning and reporting to ensure that they are fit-for-purpose and do not unnecessarily take time away from teaching.

Schools should involve parents in developing more simple and effective means of reporting that emphasise quality of engagement rather than reams of paperwork.

APPENDIX 2

NLC CfE Working Groups (Guidance on Policy and Practice to follow)

CfE Strategy Group (oversight of progress in Working Groups)

Learning & Teaching Approaches
Curriculum Framework BGE
Curriculum Framework Senior Phase
Assessment & Reporting
School Improvement
Improvement Planning/Improvement Reporting
Career Long Professional Learning & PRD