

Committee(s)	Dated:
Establishment Committee	27 January 2021
Subject: Notice period for non-teaching staff in the three City Corporation schools	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	8
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	n/a
What is the source of Funding?	n/a
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	n/a
Report of: Director of Human Resources and the Bursars at the three City of London Schools	For Decision
Report author: Tracey Jansen	

Summary

This joint report addresses the issue of notice periods applied to staff in non-teaching roles in the three City schools (City of London Freeman's School, City of London School and City of London School for Girls). The report outlines the operational difficulties that can be experienced by the schools when non-teaching staff resign from their position on the City's contractually standard one term's notice period and require replacement. The industry standard for teachers and also many key non-teaching roles is a term's notice. This ensures that service provision is not disrupted and/or is minimised during the course of the academic year.

Recommendation(s)

Members are requested to approve flexibility for the three City schools to apply a term's notice to non-teaching posts which provide key services during the academic terms as and when such posts become vacant. The Head Teacher may also, in specific circumstances, seek a voluntary change to notice periods for individuals currently employed in critical roles.

Main Report

Background

1. The Establishment Committee received a resolution of the Finance, General Purposes and Estates Sub Committee (Board of Governors of the City of London Freeman's School), concerning notice periods for some non-teaching staff at the school. Separately to this the City of London School reported to its Board regarding the same matter and the City of London School for Girls has experienced similar issues at their school as well. Members of the

Establishment Committee asked the respective bursars, supported by colleagues in HR, to report back with an agreed position and a range of options for Members to consider.

Current Position

2. Notice period for employees and which apply to the non-teaching staff in schools are grade related as follows:
Grade A – E 1 month's notice
Grade F and above 2 months' notice
3. This compares to the teaching staff who are required to give, prior to the first teaching day of any term, not less than one full term's notice. Teachers are familiar with this arrangement and the cycle for posts being advertised, interviewed for and appointed. This applies across the school sector and it is also industry norm for key non-teaching posts in schools to require a term's notice to avoid the issues of having vacancies and disrupted and often reduced services during the school term.
4. All three of the City Schools have experienced difficulties in providing a continuous non-teaching staffing provision. The notice period of 1 month is applicable to most non-teaching staff in schools, but 2 months' notice applies in the more senior roles. Key vacancies can require cover for the interim period at a premium rate and results in additional training and handover for the interim worker and then the newly appointed employee.
5. It is accepted that such pressures do not apply to all roles. The schools do not intend to change the notice period for current staff. However, for some critical roles they may enter into discussions with the individual to seek a voluntary change to the notice period. A longer notice period does not necessarily have a negative impact on staff and any employee appointed on or whose notice period is changed, and is later given notice will be entitled to a term's notice.

Proposal

6. The issue of notice periods for non-teaching staff has been raised by all three schools. The proposed approach to review notice periods when an employee leaves does not impact on current staff. However, if the proposal is agreed, the Head Teachers may review critical roles in the schools and ask particular staff to voluntarily accept the longer notice period of one term. The option is to retain the current notice periods that apply across the City Corporation but this will not meet the needs of the schools. The option to identify all posts now and either seek voluntary agreement to increase notice periods or serve notice to change them is not considered appropriate or necessary by the Head Teachers.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

7. Strategic implications

This matter has arisen as result of difficulties raised by the three City schools to their Boards of Governors and aligns with the Target Operating Model, recognising enhanced autonomy whilst sharing the goals of the City Corporation as a whole.

8. Legal and risk implications

The proposal is to allow flexibility to address service deliver requirements. There is no intention to have an across the board revised notice period for all non-teaching staff, but it will be considered for particular roles. Changes will be achieved as a result of turnover or by agreement with current staff if appropriate.

9. Equalities implications

There are no specific implications arising from this decision. The areas of concern raised by the City schools relate to service delivery issues. The three City schools are provided with their monthly dashboard as are all departments and they are aware that there is a need to take into account equality consideration in their decision making which includes those relating to staffing matters.

10. Financial & Resource, Climate, and Security Implications – no direct implications

Conclusion

11. This report was requested by the Committee following concerns raised by the Board of Governors of the City of London Freemen's School. The recommendation provides for the flexibility needed in the school setting. The trade unions have been consulted and understand the need for flexibility in the three City schools with regards to notice periods of staff.

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