



Burford School and the Marlow Education Trust

FAQs re: HR and staff development

How would this affect contracts, terms and conditions (including sick pay)?

Staff would follow a TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings – Protection of Employment) process where all contracts, terms and conditions are transferred. TUPE protects staff from any detrimental effect of moving to a new contract. No member of staff would be paid less than they currently are.

It is likely that the MET would look to follow a process of moving the support staff to the National Joint Council (NJC) arrangements for pay and conditions, to align with the other schools in the Trust (subject to consultation). Due to the TUPE protections this can only take place where the move results in the same benefits or improved benefits for the staff member. (The National Joint Council for Local Government Services is the largest negotiating body in the UK, covering over 1.4 million local government and school workers. It is composed of representatives from the Local Government Association and the UNISON, GMB and Unite unions.) Support staff at Burford are currently under Bucks Pay employment conditions. The pay, terms and conditions under the NJC arrangements are slightly more favourable than Bucks Pay.)

What would be the impact on continuous service?

No impact on continuous employment as this would be recognised and honoured by the MET.

What would be the impact on maternity pay?

No anticipated changes to maternity pay.

Do pay scales differ from DfE pay scales in the current MET?

Teachers in the MET are paid according to Teachers' Pay Scales (the same as Burford teachers). Support staff – see above re possible move to the National Joint Council pay scales rather than Bucks Pay, which should result in marginal salary increases.

How would this affect future pay progression?

Future pay progression would follow the same or a very similar process to the current school approach.

How would this affect pensions? Would we stay in the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS)? Could the employer contributions change?

Pensions would stay the same. The MET subscribes to the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) and the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), making the contributions as defined by these schemes (the same as Burford does).

How would a TUPE process work?

This is a legal framework to protect the rights of staff as they transfer to a new employer, and ensure that unilateral and detrimental changes to staff contracts by the new employer cannot be made. The following information must be provided in good time before the transfer: the proposed date of the transfer; any changes in working practices that are envisaged either by the current employer pre-transfer or by the new employer post-transfer; and any legal, economic or social implications of the transfer. Employers must consult the relevant unions about any changes to working arrangements that are being considered. The TUPE consultation would happen after the Regional Schools Director (RSD) approves the transfer in principle.

In our staff's MET contracts, would it state that Burford is their named school?

Upon transfer into the MET, all staff would become employees of the MET, with a contract that would allow for staff to work in other schools *if* they wanted to move. But their contract would state Burford as their named primary location. The MET have assured us that it is their intention to meet employees' wishes and no one would be 'forced' to work in another school as that would not be good for the children or the staff member. They see the flexibility being used as a staff retention and development opportunity (see below).

Would staff ever be expected to work in other schools within the trust? If so, would this be voluntary or compulsory?

Should a member of staff wish to move to another school within the MET, then this would certainly be considered if an appropriate position was available. This flexibility is one of the potential benefits of joining a MAT: wider career opportunities for our staff. If the MET wanted to second a Burford member of staff to another school, they would approach the Headteacher, who would then speak to the member of staff. The move would only happen if it was what the member of staff wanted. Any moves would be entirely voluntary.

How might this affect staff retention and development? / Will current staff have access to new training or promotion pathways?

One of the aims of the MET is to improve staff retention by providing increased career development opportunities. For example, we have in the past sometimes lost a talented member of staff because they were looking for a role that Burford couldn't offer at the time. Perhaps as part of the MET a member of staff in that position could be offered that role at another local school in the Trust.

Would there be changes to performance management or the appraisal processes?

Yes, but with the intention of aligning where appropriate the processes across schools to positively impact on wellbeing and workload and to ensure that consistent reporting feeds into the Trust's 'people' strategy.

What steps do the MET take to support staff wellbeing and manage workload?

Wellbeing and workload management are key responsibilities of all leaders, trustees and local governing bodies who design, implement and interpret the policies, procedures and processes. The MET provides access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) called Health Assured and carries out an annual wellbeing survey to inform areas of strength and areas for improvement. The bringing together of a group of local schools has the ability to support the schools to more effectively and efficiently manage many of the issues that contribute to workload and wellbeing issues.

Will there be joint staff meetings with all schools in the MET to share cost and have in some great CPD?

Yes, when and where appropriate. The CEO and Director of School Improvement would proactively look for opportunities to do this in a meaningful way.

In terms of CPD, what would this arrangement offer that we can't access through collaboration with local primaries? We could organise shared sessions and split the cost without joining a MAT and this is something that could easily be developed. Would MAT membership actually enhance this?

Being part of the MET would give the opportunity for the existing collaboration to be more regular, structured and focused. Often in very busy schedules this is an area that is missed despite the best of intentions. By being part of the MET greater rigour would be applied in this area.

Could we be required to adopt Trust-wide policies for recruitment?

Yes, but with the flexibility that the school's leadership and governors have to retain their individuality and responding to the unique needs of our school. The Central HR Team at the MET would give a lot of support with the admin side of recruitment.

Would we retain our current HR systems and processes, or be required to adopt the MET's centralised systems?

We would have to adopt the MET's HR policies and processes.

Are teachers in an academy required to have the same level of qualifications as those in maintained schools?

In maintained schools, teachers have to either have Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) or be working towards it (with certain exceptions). At the moment, academies don't have the same requirement. However, the government's Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill proposes that this changes.

What is the current staff turnover rate across the MAT, particularly at Beechview?

Since September 2024: GMS – 15% all employees (teachers 5%); Borlase – 13% all employees (teachers 10%); Beechview – 22% all employees (teachers 11%); Central Team – 0%. To put the figures in context: 11% of teachers at Beechview equates to a single teacher leaving.

Would joining the MET mean our Headteacher would spend a lot of time off-site, e.g. in Trust-wide meetings? How much time are other Headteachers in the Trust spending in their schools?

The Headteachers of the MET schools are in their own schools 5 days a week.