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All Headteachers and Chairs of Governors

Dear Headteacher or Chair of Governors

### **Adoption of employment related policies and procedures**

Schools People Net was introduced in November 2010 and we continue to develop content, taking account of known gaps and feedback from users. All the primary employment related policies and procedures are now in place and your governing body will need to formally consider whether or not they will adopt these models for use in your school. There are two main options available.

The first is for the governing body to simply make a resolution to use the latest version of the Local Authority models as published on Schools People Net. All policies and procedures published on Schools People Net have been the subject of consultation with the recognised trade unions and professional associations, and meet legal requirements and good practice expectations. They will be updated in line with any further changes in legislation and statutory guidance, and through a programme of regular review with the unions and associations. By resolving to follow the published policies and procedures, a governing body will need do nothing further to ensure employment related policies and procedures for their school are secure. It would, however, be useful to discuss this option with school union representatives so they are aware of the governing body's intention. This is the approach we recommend.

The alternative option is for a governing body to agree their policies and procedures locally. This could mean adopting the Local Authority models individually, using a Local Authority model as the basis for an amended policy or procedure, or creating a policy or procedure by other means. Governing bodies would need to note that with this alternative approach, local consultation would need to take place (unless the

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Local Authority model is simply put onto school headed paper with no other changes) in order to avoid challenges or difficulties at the time when that policy or procedure needs to be used. Also, the governing body would need to establish a mechanism for ensuring policies and procedures are kept up-to-date and in line with legislative requirements. If the Local Authority models are not used, employees will need to be informed of this and advised not to refer to those policies or procedures (or associated guidance) on Schools People Net.

The above guidance applies to almost all the core employment policies and procedures that employers, generally, are required to have in place, specifically those covering disciplinary, capability and grievance issues. It also covers the models the Local Authority has provided for ill-health absence management, dignity at work (harassment and bullying), staffing adjustments and equal opportunities in employment. Through Schools People Net, the Local Authority also gives guidance on time off work, flexible working and a range of other employment related topics. A governing body will need to be clear with its employees where guidance other than that issued by the Local Authority will be followed (and will, clearly, need to ensure that such other guidance is compliant with legal requirements and does not cut across entitlements an employee may have through a local or national agreement).

The exception to this is the Pay and Performance Management Policy (including Pay Appeals) which is a statutory requirement for schools. The Local Authority provides a model Pay and Performance Management Policy which reflects changes in school teachers' pay and support staff pay arrangements. Governing bodies need to make decisions within the Pay and Performance Management Policy around the discretions available to them, consulting locally with staff as appropriate on any changes.

I hope this is helpful. If you have any queries regarding adoption of employment related policies and procedures, please do not hesitate to contact me.

As a final point, you may be interested to know that work continues on adding and updating content to Schools People Net:-

- Statutorily required policies on Discipline and Grievance have been rewritten and are available on the site as have policies/procedures on Capability and Dignity at Work.
- New Improving Attendance/Managing Ill-health Absence Policy and a detailed Recruitment and Selection Policy are about to be added.
- In the near future, updated guidance on Induction and a support staff Appraisal Scheme will be available.
- A fully revised Staffing Adjustment Policy and related documentation will be available for any adjustments in the coming year.
- We are working on a Persistent Complainants Policy for Schools (which will outline steps for dealing with third parties – parents, carers, etc – who are causing distress to employees). Some guidance is given in the new Dignity at Work Policy on this but a detailed policy will allow schools to share with persistent complainants how they will be 'managed'.

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- FAQs continued to be added, adjusted or removed to ensure they are appropriate and we are grateful for all comments and suggestions received from schools on this.

It is hoped that Schools People Net is increasingly being recognised as a useful resource and that you and your colleagues in school are making good use of it. Please keep comments coming by using the 'website feedback' facility. The aim is to ensure we provide a site that fulfils your needs and so we need to hear from you about how further improvements can be made.

Yours sincerely

Ian Cooper  
Employee Relations Manager