

LEWISHAM SCHOOLS FORUM			
REPORT TITLE	Schools Forum Constitution		
KEY DECISION	Yes	Item No.	5
CLASS	Part 1	Date	4 February 2016

1. Purpose of the Report

At the Schools Forum meeting on the 1 June 2015 a new constitution was agreed. At the time there was a discussion about members attendance at Forum meetings. Since then the various constituent groups have discussed their appointed membership and the use of substitutes and their status on the Forum. This report looks at this and proposes further amendments to the constitution.

2. Recommendation

2.1 The forum agree to

- i. Allow substitutes to speak at the Forum meeting
- ii. Allow substitutes to vote on Schools Forum matters
- iii. Names of substitutes must be confirmed to the Clerk of the Forum prior to the meeting
- iv. Each voting member will be provided with a nameplate to clarify who has voting rights.
- v. To confirm observers can be invited to the table by the Chair to speak at the Forum
- vi. Update the constitution as set out in Appendix B

3. Details

- 3.1. The regulations governing the arrangements for a Schools Forum were published by the Department for Education (DfE) in 2014. They provide details of the membership, meeting protocols and conduct of business.
- 3.2. At the Forum meeting in June a revised constitution was agreed and the attendance of members was discussed. The constitution agreed in June is shown in Appendix 1.
- 3.3. It was agreed that if a member was absent from a meeting then apologies had to be sent together with the reason for absence which the Forum would accept or not.

- 3.4 The working practice adopted at that meeting was if a member has not attended a meeting in the last 6 months then a reminder will be sent to the member, if the member does not attend for 9 months the nominating body will be notified, in order for them to consider whether they want to appoint an alternative member.
- 3.5 Following that discussion the matter of substitutes was discussed due to the pressure on members time and the need for meeting to be quorate. Subsequently, Primary Heads have agreed a list of known substitutes. Members were encouraged to send substitutes if they were unable to attend but this had to be a fellow Headteacher or Governor.
- 3.6 Under our current constitution substitutes have observer status and observers have no right to vote but can speak at the Forum.
- 3.7 The Primary Leadership Forum have held discussions and would like to encourage substitutes and also encourage a buddying system whereby a volunteer Headteacher was linked to a member of the Forum. This would enable them to understand the workings of the Forum with a view they could become the members of the Forum when current members came to the termination of their office.
- 3.8 To avoid the situation whereby substitutes only have observer status at the meeting it is proposed to amend the constitution to give named substitutes full voting rights and to sit at the table to speak. To avoid confusion as to who has voting rights any member who wishes to be represented by a substitute needs to inform the Clerk to the Schools Forum prior to the meeting commencing. All members who have voting rights will have a nameplate provided to them which will confirm their status for that meeting.
- 3.9 Observers at the meeting will have no right to speak at the Forum, however they may request to speak through the Chair. If the Chair is in agreement the observer will be invited to the table to speak.
- 3.10 As an alternative the Forum may wish to consider whether rather than have substitutes a member could vote by post prior to the meeting. The disadvantage of this is the member concerned will not be present for the full debate which may bring out some important points that could inform a voting decision. Postal votes may also increase non-attendance. For these reasons postal voting is not recommended for normal business.

4 Conclusion

The revised draft constitution is shown in Appendix 2. These changes will help clarify the working practice of the Forum.

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