



GEP ACADEMIES WEEKLY BULLETIN WEEK COMMENCING 12th OCTOBER 2020

Reminders for this coming week:

GEP ALL HEADS MEETING

13.10.20
08:00 – 11:00

ALL SBMS MEETING

14.10.20
09:00 – 10.30

Forthcoming meetings:

GEP/AST JOINT SENIOR TEAM MEETING

19.10.20
10.00 - 11.30

GEP BOARD MEETING

19.10.20
13.00 - 15.30

GEP AUDIT COMMITTEE

05.11.20
13.00 - 15.30

MATHS SCHOOL WORKING GROUP

06.11.20
15.30 - 16.30

GEP/AST JOINT EXECUTIVE MEETING

09.11.20
10.00 - 11.30

Two ears and one mouth...

... for a reason.

The old adage 'we have two ears and one mouth for a reason' is one that leaders at all levels can look to embrace more often. I know I need to remember this more often than I currently do. We can become all too obsessed with directive styles of leadership, falling into the trap of providing all the answers, when on many occasions, leadership needs to manifest itself differently.

As I tour around schools, socially distant, I am reminded by observing our headteachers, business leaders, teachers and governors that leadership is not always about issuing instruction. Indeed, in this Autumn term like no other, the time for communicating regulations and local arrangements has faded slightly. At the start of term, quite rightly, school communities needed direction and clarity. As circumstances change within schools this requirement remains, however, I have noticed a depth of leadership within our schools that is also required and two weeks before half term, is perhaps required more than ever. Listening. Presence.

Listening and presence are two unsung, but critical factors in effective leadership. Shoe leather is thin on the ground in our leaders' shoes currently. We are seeking to provide a constant presence in our schools, a calming figure on the playground at drop-off, a supportive smile on playground duty and a nod of encouragement before a colleague presents at leadership team, a governors meeting or an on-line parent forum. We are being present. Our school communities need this. Walking alongside is just as much a leadership action as leading from the front.

Often this shared path and side-by-side leadership requires us to listen more than we speak. We are all aware that the challenge for teachers in the classroom is real and palpable currently. The continuous classroom movement, lesson by lesson and day by day, often, but not uniquely, by our secondary colleagues, is exhausting. The sharing of lesson resources online and in the classroom is new. It is appropriate and being undertaken without question, but it is different and occupies 'bandwidth' amongst our staff. We recognise this effort. We appreciate this effort. As leaders we stand beside and listen. Staff aren't always after solutions, or quick wins. They are after solidarity. They need presence and someone to listen.

This week sees us begin more structured listening. As we consider the future direction of the trust and explore a potential future relationship with Athena, we are seeking to be consultative listeners. In our headteachers and business managers meetings this week we are looking to ask what it is that we need to consider and remember that makes GEP, GEP. Do we want to come together as trusts? What might be the benefits and what might be the risks? Is this a path we wish to take? This activity is going to be undertaken with a variety of stakeholders across the coming weeks so as to allow the

board to effectively listen and consider the direction of our next strategic challenge. Thank you all for taking part.

We have two ears and one mouth for a reason. Sometimes the balance of twice as much listening and speaking gets lost. For now, we remember to lead through presence and listening.

Have a good week and get those ears working.

Actions for Heads:

- Please keep sharing your attendance returns to the DfE with Gaby this week to allow a trust oversight
- Please complete the Annual Report template and return to Ali Larcombe Fish by October 21st. This will be discussed during the heads meeting tomorrow and the template has been provided in the papers for the meeting

Actions for Governors and Trustees:

Remember to book yourselves onto some of the many courses available through the [joint training programme](#). The next course is entitled [premises and buildings: school estate management](#) and is taking place on Wed, 11 November 2020 at 6.30pm.

The DfE have confirmed that trust board meetings are covered by both the education exemption and by the workplace exemption. Therefore, the rule of six does not apply, should you wish to meet face to face.

School Improvement Update:

The **Confederation of School Trusts (CST)** has provided invaluable support for trusts and to school leaders since March. In the early stages of school closure, they were providing daily bulletins to school and trust leaders with an update of latest policy changes. Their weekly webinars were regularly attended by over 100 Trust leaders across the country offering support, discussions and representation to central Government. Below is a link to their latest Trust Journal which I hope you will find helpful.

[Confederation of School Trusts' Journal](#)

Children and young people's mental health and wellbeing

On Saturday, DfE published a report about children and young people's wellbeing to coincide with World Mental Health Day. This report offers an analysis of available data in the March to August period during the COVID-19 pandemic. Click on the following link to read the report: ['State of the nation' research report](#)

Other sources providing very useful insights into the experiences of children and young people in 2020 can be found by clicking on the following links:

- [Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families](#)
- [What Works Centre for Wellbeing](#)
- [Public Health England COVID-19: mental health and wellbeing surveillance report.](#)

It is too early to know how temporary the observed signs of difficulties or psychological distress in some children and young people will be. However, the return to school has the potential to reverse some

declines in children's wellbeing, addressing their worries about missing school and being isolated from their friends and enabling schools to offer both education and pastoral support.

Resources to support children's mental and emotional wellbeing

Mentally Healthy Schools

Mentally Healthy Schools is a [website](#) for primary schools, run by the Anna Freud Centre. It provides free, quality-assured resources and guidance to school staff on mental health and wellbeing. The website provides the following:

- Free resources specific to the curriculum in England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland
- A resource library filterable by country
- Detailed guidance on a whole-school approach to mental health

You can sign up to their [mailing list](#) to stay updated and to receive resources and toolkits.

Additional mental health resources are available from the [Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families](#) and [Place2Be](#).

The Wellbeing for Education Return Programme

The [Wellbeing for Education Return programme](#) is a joint initiative from the Department for Education, Department of Health and Social Care, Health Education England, NHS England and Public Health England. The programme supports staff working in schools and colleges to respond to the additional pressures some young people may be feeling as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as to any emotional response they or their teachers may be experiencing.

School Operations:

Pay Policy 2020/21

The Pay Policy consultation period ended on Friday 9 October, the feedback will be considered this week with a view to implementation of the revised policy at the end of this week.

There are revised appraisal forms available for completion following feedback that teaching and support staff forms should be split out into separate documents. These are available in GEP Shared Documents. If you have already started the process using the previous forms, this is not a problem. There is no need to change to the new form.

Special Leave Policy

The new GEP Special Leave is now live and will be available on GEP Shared Documents shortly.

New Immigration rules

From January 2021 free movement will end and the UK will introduce a new points-based immigration system meaning that anyone coming to work in the UK will need to apply for permission in advance (excluding Irish citizens).

The new system will not apply to EU citizens living in the UK by 31 December 2020, they and their family members are eligible to apply to the EU settlement scheme and have until 30 June 2021 to make an application.

HR Compliance

As a reminder, we must ensure full compliance for all staff members regarding the below areas:

- Safeguarding, data protection, health & safety, first aid – initial and update training

- single central list
- declaration of interest for relevant staff members and 2019-20 gift declarations - see finance policy

Close contacts

Please be reminded that students and staff who have had close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 need to self-isolate for 14 days, due to the incubation period of Covid-19. This applies even if those students and staff have tested negative for COVID-19 themselves.

Close contacts are defined as follows:

- a person who has had face-to-face contact (within one metre), with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, including:
 - o being coughed on
 - o having a face-to-face conversation within one metre
 - o having skin-to-skin physical contact, or
 - o contact within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
 - o a person who has been within 2 metres of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes
 - o a person who has travelled in a small vehicle with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or in a large vehicle or plane near someone who has tested positive for COVID-19
- Where an interaction between 2 people has taken place through a Perspex (or equivalent) screen, this would not be considered sufficient contact, provided that there has been no other contact such as any of those indicated above.

Priority Testing

Please be reminded that staff are considered essential workers and can follow either of the test routes below:

- 1) Employer referral (contact gsutton@gepacademies.com or swright@gepacademies.com, as GEP have registered and are eligible for this service
- 2) Self-referral through website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/> (indicating you are an essential worker)

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Jack's visits and meetings this week:

Meeting with RGS	12.10.20	14:00 – 15:00
Meeting to update GEP Members	12.10.20	15:30 – 16:30
GEP All heads meeting	13.10.20	09:30 – 11:00
Loseley Fields HTPM	13.10.20	12:30 – 14:00
SBM's meeting	14.10.20	09:00 – 10:00
Best Practice Network	15.10.20	15:00 – 16:00
JDG meeting	16.10.20	08:30 – 10:00
Diocese and Newark trust	16.10.20	12:00 – 13:00
Sandfield School Visit	16.10.20	14:00 – 15:00