

Wyvern Academy: Clarification on expectations of Parents receiving *Direct Payment* work for their child from Wyvern staff.

Introduction

Wyvern Academy staff represent a local and highly trained and trusted source of potential employees for parents wishing to use their Direct Payments (DP) to gain support or respite at home, out of school hours. There is no contractual or ethical reason why staff should not provide this service and this guidance just seeks to give parents clarity over some typical questions that may get asked when engaging a member of staff; it is based on the guidance that we give out to our staff.

Points to note

- Staff members undertaking DP work are responsible for establishing their working hours and pay rates in negotiation with parents. Under the Working Time Regulations 1998 there is a requirement that employees do not work more than 48 hours a week, unless they have chosen voluntarily to sign an opt-out agreement. If we believe that the staff member's own or others' (in particular our pupils') health and safety is being adversely affected by having two jobs, steps would have to be taken to reduce this risk, for example asking the staff member to work less hours.
- When staff members take up DP work with a family it is common for their relationship, outside of the school setting, to become more informal and even seem like becoming part of the family. This might include knowing all sorts of details about the family members' lives they might otherwise not know. It is also possible for boundaries to become blurred and so it is essential that the strictest confidentiality around information is maintained, out of the home and especially in school. The only exception to this would be if the staff member had safeguarding concerns which would need to be addressed through the child protection procedures.
- Any staff undertaking DP work for a Wyvern family has to make this known to the senior leadership who will keep a register in line with the Working Time Regulations duty. Any difficulties or breakdown in relationship with the family should also be confidentially reported. The reason for this is that cases can sometimes spill over into school work which is potentially compromising for the staff member and might bring up issues around the pupil. Senior leadership may be required to become involved to support the staff member. It can also have an effect on which classes staff are placed in at school when relationship confusions might affect the pupil.
- On taking up DP work it will be necessary for the staff member to make sure the family understands the need to maintain a clear separation of business between the two employments. It is not inappropriate to answer questions about the school or how things work in classes as long as no other individual pupils or staff members are discussed. This will mean establishing that they cannot become a route for official communication between home and school (this should go through Home-School Diaries or contact with the Office). If a family has any kind of complaint or grievance about school it is not the staff member's duty to defend school practices and decisions. If this situation arises the family must contact school directly and speak to the class teacher or the Headteacher.

- Communication with the family will naturally be necessary for day to day arrangements. Whilst there is clear guidance in place around staff use of mobile phones in school, this will often be the most convenient method to make arrangements. As senior leadership will be informed of any potentially inappropriate contact with families, this is another reason why making sure any DP work is known to them.
- Within the scope of communication is the use of social media, pictures and videos. It is entirely possible that the family worked for are frequent users of social media websites and apps and that staff members may appear in them from time to time. Here again openness about DP work will make sure anything reported to senior leadership is known about. Staff members are reminded about the school's rules on the appropriateness of photos. Whilst these rules are not enforceable outside of school business, as common-sense advice they are completely relevant in terms of avoiding unwelcome comments or accusations.

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March 2019