



Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust

The Diocese of Chelmsford
Vine Schools Trust
Information, Consultation and
Facilities Agreement

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A: Information and Consultation

1. Introduction

The Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust (hereinafter the Trust) aims to communicate information and consult with employees on Trust activities on a regular basis, and to encourage employees to feedback to the Trust. The Trust believes that a regular flow of information from management to employees and vice versa will enhance the overall performance and effectiveness of the Trust. The table below sets out the specific mechanisms used by the Trust for consulting and communicating with employees.

Communication and Structure

Information Methods – Managers	Consultation Methods – Professional Associations/Unions	Information Methods – Employees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) • Health & Safety Committee • Trust Meeting Cycle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Whole staff ○ Senior Leaders ○ Middle Managers ○ Teams • Trust e-message board • E-mail messages • Agendas and minutes of Local Governing Body/Trust meetings • Notice Boards • One to one meetings • Unions representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) • Health & Safety Committee • Informal meetings with professional associations/trade unions/representatives • Formal meetings with professional associations/trade unions on specific workplace issues e.g. restructuring • Consultation documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) • Health & Safety Committee • Trust Meeting Cycle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Whole staff ○ Senior Leaders ○ Middle Managers ○ Teams • Surveys • One to one meetings • Unions representatives

2. What is the Scope of this Agreement?

The Agreement covers all Trust employees.

3. What is the Purpose of the Agreement?

The Agreement aims to set out the processes and mechanisms used within the Trust for informing and consulting with employees and to provide clarity on the types of issue that may be the subject of information or consultation.

4. How does the Trust Communicate with the Workforce?

The vehicles used by the Trust for communicating with employees are set out in the table above. The particular method of communication used at any point in time will depend on the topic for communication.

Examples

- Changes to Trust policy affecting the terms and conditions of employment of all employees, e.g. changes to the Code of Conduct, policies: meeting cycle, documents, JCC.
- Major change issues affecting the whole organisation such as structural change, e.g. a consultation to involve employees in determining the organisation's values, staffing structure: meeting cycle, consultations documents and formal meetings.
- Information regarding statutory notices e.g. Health and Safety Codes of Practice, fire regulations: Health & Safety Committee, notice boards, meeting cycle.

5. How does the Trust Consult with the Workforce?

Consultation with the Trust's workforce currently takes place through trade union representatives of the unions recognised by the Trust. As part of its collective bargaining arrangements the Trust adopts a JCC structure. The Trust recognises the following trade unions: UNISON, GMB and VOICE for support staff and NUT, ATL, NASUWT, NAHT and ASCL for teaching staff. The Trust offers regular (termly) opportunities for discussion between the Trust Management and trade unions on key issues, including those made by the JCC.

In addition, ad hoc meetings are arranged with trade union representatives on specific issues as and when they arise. Consultation does, however, also take place directly with employees and union representatives.

Examples

- Proposed changes to terms and conditions of employment affecting all employees, such as changes to car mileage rates.
- Operational HR issues affecting specific employee groups, e.g. recruitment and retention issues, organisational change in specific work areas.

6. How can Employees Communicate with the Trust?

The Trust believes that it is important for employees to have opportunities to make their views known to management on issues that affect them and therefore sees effective communication and consultation arrangements as being important contributors to organisational performance. The formal vehicles which can be used for employees to feed views in to management are set out in the table above.

7. Are there any issues not covered by the Agreement?

The following issues are excluded from the scope of this Agreement as they are covered by separate arrangements:

- Reorganisation and restructuring issues where collective redundancy situations might arise.
- Business transfers in line with the Transfer of Undertakings Regulations.
- Individual employment/grievance issues which are covered by the Trust's Grievance Procedure.
- Issues relating to national pay and conditions which are negotiated at national level e.g. the annual pay award.

Confidentiality

In the spirit of mutual trust and understanding, and in order to facilitate effective discussions on key issues, this Agreement contains a two way understanding:

- (i) The Trust undertakes to provide information to trade union representatives through the consultation process in an open way and to withhold information only where there are good commercial reasons for doing so;
- (ii) the union representatives undertake to be bound by a confidentiality obligation wherever this is explicitly asked for by management. In such circumstances, management will provide reasons as to why the information is to be treated as confidential.

Review Period for Agreement

This agreement will be reviewed 12 months after the date of signing and in the context of on-going, developmental work for a strategy for employee engagement.

B. Facilities Agreement

1. Facilities

The Trust agrees to provide appropriate facilities, at individual academies, to trade union representatives and members to enable them to discharge their union duties and undertake trade unions activities to facilitate the objectives of effective communication and consultation with employees and their representative as set out in the agreement.

The Trust will provide the following facilities to trade union representatives:

- Reasonable accommodation to hold meetings and interview members in a confidential environment
- Confidential access to, and reasonable use of telephone, fax, email, computing and photocopying facilities
- Sufficient notice board space
- All relevant documentation

2. Time Off

The Trust will permit trade union representatives reasonable time off with pay during their normal working hours for the purpose of carrying out trade union duties including preparing for and attending meetings, consultation with paid officials, training and attendance at conferences. Agreement on what is reasonable will be agreed between the Trust and employee before any time off is taken.

Trade union representatives will give as much notice as possible of time off requirements.

The trade unions will provide appropriate training to their representatives.

The Trust will seek to ensure that all meetings convened by the Trust and involving trade unions representatives will take place during normal working hours.

The Trust will participate in arrangements within the local area with regard to time off with pay for any employees who are local, regional or national representatives.

3. Meetings

The Trust will allow trade union members to hold meetings on the premises outside normal working hours, including at lunchtimes and following the end of the student day. The union will give as much notice as possible of such meetings to the Trust. The Trust will not seek to restrict the number or frequency of such meetings or to the attendance of employed officials or local representatives at such meetings.

The Trust will allow trade union members to hold and attend meetings during normal working hours, where appropriate to the nature and urgency of the matters to be discussed.

Trade unions and members must give as much notice as possible of such meetings. The Trust will not unreasonably withhold consent for such meetings.

SignedChair of Trust Directors

Dateon behalf of the Trust

SignedCEO

Dateon behalf of the Trust

Signed.....

Date.....on behalf of UNISON

Signed.....

Date.....on behalf of GMB

Signed.....

Date.....on behalf of NUT

Signed.....

Date.....on behalf of ATL

Signed.....

Date.....on behalf of VOICE

Signed.....

Date.....on behalf of NASUWT

Signed.....

Date.....on behalf of NAHT

Signed.....

Date.....on behalf of ASCL