



## *Arun Court School: Policy Number 13A*

# *Staff Induction and Continuous Professional Development / School Workforce Development Plan*

*Arun Court School – last updated December 2021*

*Ratified by main EMAT meeting: .....*

*Signature (+ date) Chair of EMAT: ..... Mr Paul Phillips*

*Signature (+ date) Proprietor: .....Mrs Beverley-Sarah White*

*Signature (+ date) Principal of School .....Vicki Williams*

*Date of next review: August /September 2022 (Reviewed annually)*

### **Context**

*We pride ourselves on the quality of the teaching, therapeutic and pastoral care provided to our pupils, and this can only be achieved if we nurture staff who genuinely want to make this industry their career. We have high expectations around our staff engaging with opportunities to develop themselves further and in turn provide many different opportunities throughout the year.*

*Our young people can lack aspiration and opportunity, it is therefore essential that all our staff personally demonstrate a love of lifelong learning and development themselves.*





## Induction

Our staff induction programme is comprehensive in supporting new members of staff at Arun Court to feel confident in their role and the expectations of them in their role.

The programme is based around a bespoke booklet which is the responsibility of the new employee to complete, with support from their induction mentor and should constitute the reading of policies, discussions with senior staff, more experienced colleagues and observations of a variety of routine situations within the school, completing them in a supported manner. Staff only work with children once the safeguarding induction training has been completed.

New staff are encouraged to ask questions about their role and how systems in the schoolwork, while being given the opportunity to evaluate their own working practices in our unique setting.

All of our contracts include a 3 month probationary period and during this time the school, or the employee, can give notice of just one week if either party feels the role is not working out. This is important as the school is unusual and the roles may not be right for everyone.

### For staff new to working in education:

In terms of policy the core safeguarding ones are the focus of this initial period of 3 months along with the staff code of conduct which all staff sign in the first week of term. During this time all other policies can be accessed by staff via the website or the folder of policies within the staff room / medical room. We expect staff to be proactive in reading policies and asking questions.

When we feel the staff member understands their core role, the core safeguarding policies and code of conduct, we will start to introduce more curriculum policy expectations to their role. During this time, depending on how we feel things are going, we may extend the probationary period for a further 3 months. After 6 months our expectation is that the staff member is fully inducted.

Young people, new to the world of work, need to understand that being spoken to verbally about expectations is a regular occurrence within education and business settings – it requires maturity and professionalism to take things on board and make changes. Verbal warnings are not recorded, they are just that, verbally being reminded about expectations. If you are frequently verbally reminded about the same thing this is when things could escalate, and you should read the disciplinary and grievance policy accordingly, but this is highly unusual. Staff normally respond to being asked to do something verbally by changing their practice.

Sadly, some young people new to the world of work struggle with being asked to change certain behaviours or to look back to their code of conduct. They start to behave in a way that escalates an informal situation into a formal one or become defensive. We aim to acknowledge that this is because they are new to the adult world of work as much as possible, but we do need them, for the sake of the vulnerable young people we work with, to quickly understand the formal nature of the workplace. It is important that they remember they are joining a profession and as such they must meet professional standards.

We expect people to be reflective during and after verbal informal discussions – this is not school or university, these conversations are not about whether somebody likes or dislikes you, it is about you meeting the standards for your role. We encourage people new to the world of work to discuss things with their line manager in a reflective manner.

#### Qualified staff new to this setting:

Our expectations for fully qualified teachers and other educational staff are different. Many of the safeguarding structures are industry standard and we expect this information to be quickly understood and adhered to. Once this is understood, within week one, and the staff code of conduct signed, we expect these staff to regularly read the ethos document as the basis for their practice,

and to ensure that aspects such as curriculum and marking policy is understood quickly also. We still reserve the right to end the contract within the 3 month probationary period, for any reason, and also to extend the probationary period. In turn, the staff member is also able to give a one week notice without necessarily giving a detailed reason why, within this time. As the staff member is experienced within the adult world of work, we expect a high level of reflection, especially during verbal informal discussions around issues as they arise.

### Information about children

If the appointment happens at the start of the year, the Proprietor leads a long discussion about student backgrounds, academic achievement and teaching styles they respond to, at the start of each year. If the appointment happens later in the year, then this will be done over several induction meetings, along with staff reading confidential background information whilst on site in their PPA time.

### Morning and Afternoon Briefings

Policies can't include everything and job descriptions, no matter how comprehensive, will also not include everything. People working in any workplace are also expected under law to adhere to expectations that are 'inferred' or verbally delivered. This is important as policy can alter for specific scenarios. Saying that something was not specifically in a policy or job description as a 'defence' against being spoken to about needing to change your practice is not acceptable if it was discussed at a briefing, said to you directly, or is a common expectation within the setting.

At Arun Court School there are usually 2 briefings a day, at least 3 days of the week. These add up to a period of 1 hour per day of extra induction and continuous development time, or around 6 hours per week.

These briefings will include reminders about core policies – often in response to aspects that the SLT have noticed being carried out especially well, or causing concerns as they monitor regularly.

They include up to date information on student need, suggested ways to support students, and academic success or difficulties.

They include support for aspects such as writing risk assessments as well as a run-down of activities happening during the day. At the end of the day the briefings are a chance to reflect on the day, ask for any help you may need for tomorrow, and share information about the students.

We are very proud of our daily briefings, they go above and beyond what happens usually in schools, and most staff find them very useful time.

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We aim to provide CPD opportunities to all, but we especially look to spot talent and develop it. Those who are committed and loyal to the school will be supported financially and professionally to achieve their wider aspirations and can go on to hold positions in other associated services and companies.

## General CPD for all staff

### INSET DAYS

The proprietor INSET day happens at the start of the academic year and sets the tone for the school year, including the strategic development plan. It is a chance for the founder of the setting to also discuss wider projects in her other companies and highlight opportunities.

4 further INSET days are organised and led by the Principal of the school. They will use some of this time to also gather the staff to help prep the setting or to contribute to aspects such as end of year reports. These INSETs may involve face to face training or online learning.

### WEEKLY STAFF MEETINGS

Alternate staff meetings are led by the Proprietor and are linked to the SDP. This allows her to either use her own consultancy knowledge and experience or to buy in other professionals, ensuring that the training is delivered practically. The impact of the training can then be observed during monitoring visits.

Alternate staff meetings are led by the Principals of school and will have a relevant agenda. Some of the agenda may be given to peer coaching and catching up on general business items.

Staff are sometimes required to read articles or information ahead of staff meetings. This is important to 'level up' the staff, so that they are not at different starting points before the meeting starts.

Sometimes in line with our ethos staff meetings will be practical and could involve yoga, standing meetings or meditation techniques to improve understanding and concentration.

#### SUBJECT LEADERSHIP & CURRICULUM MEETINGS

The proprietor will lead these on a fortnightly basis, with alternate weeks being given as extra preparation time when ever ratios allow. These meetings are collaborative in nature with leaders working on the SDP as a team. Sometimes they are information sharing or discussions, sometimes they are practical such as portfolio construction or collaborative levelling of work.

#### HALF TERM Deputy DSL MEETINGS

These are run by Nickie and allow non-SLT staff to ask any safeguarding questions in a supportive and non-judgemental environment. It is a recommendation of the NSPCC that all institutions should have open safeguarding supervision meetings to ensure a safeguarding culture. These meetings are in addition to daily safeguarding practices in place at Arun Court School. All safeguarding concerns should be raised to the DSL/ Deputy DSL as outlined in the safeguarding policy.

## SUPERVISION

We aim to provide bespoke supervision space depending on the needs of the role. This can be individual, paired or as a group. The supervision programme aims to be set and published by November each year.

## LINE MANAGEMENT

Your line manager also carried out your performance review and will meet with you formally at least 4 times a year to set targets, discuss further training you may need, and to review your evidence folder.

## ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING

All staff are expected to take SG level 3 which has a final exam that must be passed. After doing so you will be expected to carry out the update training on a regular basis. Annually all staff discuss the 'What to do if' procedures and ensure that they are up to date.

## CASPAR

The NSPCC regular updates are printed and discussed at staff meetings. Staff sign to say that the deputy DSL has provided a staff room copy and relevant training for the points raised.

## FIRE MARSHAL AND FIRST AID

All staff are fire marshals, and all staff have first aid training. This is essential as our setting is so small. This training is usually every 2-3 years depending on the level of certification. In addition there is a lead member of staff for each area who undertakes additional training.

## FUTURELEARN / UDEMY / HIGH SPEED TRAINING

There are many excellent online certifications available, and we regularly send out opportunities that we encourage staff to take part in. We are not able to offer the time to carry out the course, again due to the small nature of the school, but we are happy to fund the courses.



## OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOSE WHO FEEL THEY ARE READY

Some staff really want to further their career in a meaningful way and each year we offer the following to those who are willing to give the extra

### BIG BEAR COURSES

Big Bear Bespoke Education brokers training that often has spaces available and the school can then access these. This training is often more holistic in nature such as meditation teacher training, massage training and holistic health training.

### NEW ROLES

Each year people retire or move in different directions, and we can then develop new roles attached to the school with opportunities to train as career officer, forest school leader, home link worker or other developing aspects of the SDP when these duties become vacant. Such roles often come with an increase in pay also.

## SPECIALISTS

We encourage all our staff to talk to us about becoming specialist and exemplar practitioners once they have reached the top of their current career pathway. We have supported staff to finance degrees, further study and specialist assessment in the past and continue to do so, as long as we have an agreement in return as to longevity of the role within our settings.

### School Workforce Development Plan

In line with published guidance by the DFE in 2018

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/737168/Workforce\\_planning\\_guidance\\_August\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/737168/Workforce_planning_guidance_August_2018.pdf)

we seek to ensure that our continuing professional development is planned for the long term benefit of the students and the school. We aim to retain good staff, developing them and ensuring their workload is manageable. Within this however, we have to ensure enough flexibility to meet the changing needs of the brokering LEAs. As a result, our workforce plan has had to change considerably in the last 2 years. This has particularly been affected by changes in the LEA where a previous willingness for NMIs to provide mental health specialist support under education funding has been replaced by a requirement for detailed breakdowns of therapeutic intervention which they feel should be funded by the NHS. As a mental health recovery school with a blended approach, this has proved particularly difficult for us and resulted in a complete alteration of our long-term staffing plan and strategy.

Covid has also affected both the retention and recruitment situation for Arun Court School, with some staff leaving the profession unexpectedly following the pandemic and the requirement for us to stay open, which some perceived as an unreasonable risk.

In turn, we have needed to recruit from other areas of education in order to maintain staffing numbers within a national teaching shortage – these candidates have not always worked out, as it is very difficult to move from higher education for example to our setting.

The recruitment pool for Arun Court School is always much smaller than in a larger mainstream or specifically SEND setting. Despite offering competitive salaries, shorter working hours and lots of support we struggle to recruit, especially within teaching and leadership positions, as potential candidates see working with 20 students as a backward career step on their C.V, preferring to be able to use terms such as 'department head' and to show leadership within a much larger context as a route to senior leadership in the secondary sector.

Our setting is ethos led, and our ethos is very clear and specific – it is unique – making recruitment and retention even harder, as no matter how well articulated, staff may feel that they can't fully buy-in to the level of passion and dedication that a truly blended mental-health / education approach requires. In other settings, whilst the teaching, SEND, and mental health departments will be working collaboratively they are usually quite autonomous – not fully blended as is our approach.

Those from a SEND background tend to not wish to engage fully with the mental health aspects, those with a mainstream teaching background find both the SEND and mental health aspects challenging, and those from a mental health background may not have the understanding of academic rigour required to fully support the young people back into mainstream. We have therefore come to realise that we retain better when staff come from an upper KS2 background, as in primary the role of class teacher is more blended across these areas, or from developing support staff into a teaching route.

In addition to the issues above, the constant changes within leadership and organisation within our main brokering authority, Surrey LEA has led to a lack of consistency for staff and an increase in administrative paperwork. Over the last 3 annual commissioning meetings the paperwork requirement has suddenly changed, for us later to be told that other NMIs have objected, and it will be altered again. Annual and emergency reviews are not run consistently between different areas of the LEA, or from case worker to case worker. As a very small setting we are finding it incredibly difficult to cope with the changing focus, emphasis and requirements of the Local Authority. The percentage of our budget now going on administration and outsourced support is very high, but we feel this will be essential for the school to continue.

## Key Foci for the next 5 years

2021 - 2026

Objective	Details
Continue to recruit those on the Open University new Teacher Training route. Continue to develop our position as a potential placement setting.	This will enable us to mould individuals into the type of blended practitioners we need for our unique setting – training them across the 3 aspects of rapid academic progress, catering for SEND and mental health practice.
Recruit primary practitioners returning to work who are looking for a new challenge (from child rearing, returning after a career break, returning from retirement)	Primary practitioners need to be developed educationally to deliver secondary areas effectively. They often have the right level of pastoral understanding which can be further developed via courses
We always aim to not use supply agencies due to the nature of our children. With Covid this has been more necessary. We therefore aim to use regular supply agencies, but especially BBBE and ETeach, whose checking practices firmly match ours, in order to ‘try out’ staff in context.	<p>Our ethos is unique. Whilst we carry out long interview processes it is not the same as working with us – we need to make sure new staff fully understand what is required of them. This will reduce those leaving at the end of their probationary period.</p> <p>Probationary period to remain, as although unusual and potentially off-putting to potential candidates, we believe it to be essential to safeguard our young people.</p>
Build leadership capacity, whilst at the same time being mindful that we often have to pay more than comparative-sized settings as shown by the finance review carried out in 2019/2020.	<p>Support those wishing to move into leadership through part funding masters degree or leadership training.</p> <p>The finance review caused a lot of upset and uncertainty, partly leading to our then deputy head leaving the profession, however if we are to pay higher we in turn need to expect that leaders are exemplars and evidence their capacity – we need to ensure that staff at all levels understand that, which is why we introduced the standards record sheet for all staff</p> <p>Leadership capacity, in a setting of this size, also has a teaching and delivery responsibility that puts off external candidates so there is a need to develop leadership from within. The paperwork and administrative requirements are increasing at a rate that is also off-putting to those considering leadership (see below)</p>
Increase expenditure on administrative, legal and other support to ensure the capacity of leadership is not undermined	This is an unfortunate requirement as we are very aware that these services do not charge less due to the size of the setting. However, our requirements also are not less due to only having 20 students. Therefore, we have to accept that whilst this takes funds away from the curriculum coal-face, it is necessary for the institution to continue to function and carry out the good work that it does. Over the coming 5 years we will increase expenditure to 25% of total staffing budget, enabling curriculum staff to be curriculum focussed.

