

# Lancashire Schools Forum

## eNewsletter

• Issue 105 • April 2020 •

# Fair Exchange?

Welcome to Issue 105 of 'Fair Exchange?' a Post-Forum Edition of the eNewsletter of the Lancashire Schools' Forum.

## Schools Forum March 2020

Due to the current COVID-19 situation, the Schools Forum had to conduct the March 2020 business electronically, using the Forum's Urgent Business Procedure, hence this issue of Fair Exchange is being issued a few days later than usual. Key issues agreed using this process included:

### **Clawback of School Balances at 31 March 2020**

Due to a number of issues associated with the current COVID-19 situation, the Forum have agreed to suspend the application of the clawback policy on school balances at 31 March 2020. This means that no clawback will be applied to 2019/20 year end balances at any school regardless of the level of balance.

### **Supply Cover Insurance & Maternity Scheme for Lancashire Schools and Covid-19 Advice for Scheme members 2019/20 and 2020/21**

A number of COVID-19 related questions linked to the Lancashire supply scheme rules have been received and the Forum supported the proposed update to rules for applications. A copy of the advice is attached to the newsletter at Appendix A.

### **Inclusion Hub Funding**

Funding for inclusion hubs was allocated on a 'pump priming' basis of £80k per district in 2019/20, but it was agreed that a more targeted allocation methodology should be introduced to fund the hubs for 2020/21, to reflect the different sizes and characteristics of districts. The 2020/21 methodology will use pupil numbers and a deprivation factor to calculate the allocations.

### **High Needs Commissioned Places**

Following comments received in the last Schools Budget setting round, the LA has been reviewing the communication process around commissioned place numbers. In future budget rounds, the LA intends to write out to HNB schools at the end of the summer term setting out the number of places that it is proposed to commission in the following years budget. This will provide the May census number for special schools and three census average for PRUs figures.

This should provide more certainty and transparency as to the number of places to be commissioned and allow an opportunity for schools to make any representations around any other factors that should be considered in addition to the application of the agreed methodology on an individual case basis.

### **Academy Access to LCC Vacancy Site**

Confirmation has now been received from BTLS that Academies within Lancashire who do not purchase BT Lancashire Services Payroll and Recruitment can now advertise on the Lancashire Teaching/ Non-Teaching vacancy site and will be charged £100 per advert. A communication has been sent via a Schools Portal posting to Academy Headteachers.

## WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING?

### COVID-19

We hope you are safe and well in these unprecedented times.

Remember that the county council is providing regular updates on the COVID-19 response, and the government advice is available online.

- The county council information is available via the Schools Portal [here](#) (Schools Portal login required)
- Government Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for schools and other educational settings is available [here](#)

## FORUM MEMBERSHIP

Brendan Hassett, Headteacher of Carter's Charity Primary School has recently resigned from the Forum, and leaves with the thanks and best wishes of members.

The county council will make arrangements to appoint a replacement primary school Headteacher, as part of the Forum annual membership review.

A full list of Schools Forum members as at March 2020 is available [here](#)



### QUESTIONS?

Remember, if you have any questions about the Schools Forum, please contact Paul Bonser, Forum Clerk, 01772 531815, or email [schoolsforum@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:schoolsforum@lancashire.gov.uk)

### Supply Cover Insurance and Maternity Scheme for Lancashire Schools and Covid-19

#### Advice for Scheme members 2019/20 and 2020/21

Where staff were absent from work due to sickness relating to Covid-19, the following cover will be provided where the school is incurring additional costs by covering the absence. Normal scheme rules / thresholds apply, reimbursements will be paid for whilst schools remain open.

Staff who self isolated but are not ill are not actually being recorded as sick and officially the scheme only covers sickness absence. However, in recognition of the current unprecedented circumstances, the scheme will cover these staff absences, where the school is incurring additional costs by covering the absence as if staff were off ill, subject to the normal scheme rules, for example the waiting periods chosen by the school and subject to the school remaining open.

Following the Government instruction for all schools to close for an extended period of time, subject to making provision for vulnerable children and the pupils of key workers, then supply cover would not normally be necessary, so there would be no need to make any supply scheme claims, subject to those supply staff with long term contracts to cover existing extended periods of absence. We will consider any request from schools for supply cover reimbursement due to exceptional circumstances, and a school must be able to evidence that they have incurred additional costs.

Again, where schools making provision for vulnerable children and the pupils of key workers over the Easter holidays, the scheme will consider any request from schools for supply cover reimbursement, and a school must be able to evidence that they have incurred additional costs.

Some schools have been asked by their supply agencies to commit to continue paying supply staff in the event of a Government instructed extended closure period. It is for individual schools to decide their position on this, but it should be remembered that the agencies are legally the employers of these staff, and reimbursement from the Lancashire supply scheme would be subject to the rules above.

All these responses are subject to regular review and change, especially in the event of any specific guidance from central government.