

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP POLICY

RATIONALE

West Dunbartonshire is committed to providing high quality outcomes that maximise the potential of the young people we serve. Our long term aim to raise standards of attainment requires a committed, highly skilled workforce.

Excellence in the profession requires commitment to a robust model for continuous professional learning and Professional Update with a revitalised system of Professional Review and Development a common strand.

A commitment to building the capacity of our service for continuous improvement will be strengthened by a culture of shared leadership through the development of Professional Learning Communities. These communities will form partnerships with staff, schools, partner agencies, national organisations such as GTCS and Universities to both support and challenge.

Our mission, to enable our young people to reach their full potential requires high quality leadership of excellent teachers and educators who are confident and creative in the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence. This has been strengthened through the *National Partnership Group* report in response to *Teaching Scotland's Future*.

BACKGROUND

This Professional Learning and Leadership Strategy is designed to support West Dunbartonshire Council's transformation and modernisation programme to be a more streamlined, modern organisation. Our provision is required to be fit for purpose, have a committed and dynamic workforce, with constructive partnership working and joined-up service delivery to achieve the Council's aspiration to improve the life chances for children and young people in West Dunbartonshire.

A central professional and policy concern of Government is that education anticipates and addresses the rapidly changing and variable needs of learners in a highly competitive, technologically and sophisticated, interdependent world. Educators require skills to teach, engage with and impact upon, the wider children services agenda. (Teaching Scotland's Future - National Partnership Group, 2012). This strategy is designed to offer advice and guidance to establishments on how to create high performing collegiate cultures with continuous professional learning a fundamental aspect of improvement planning. Schools/establishments should review their own practice against the advice given in this document.



It is recognised that our staff are highly committed professionals who are dedicated to delivering the best possible outcomes for our children and young people. As professionals they have an entitlement to and an expectation that they will undertake, continuing professional development.

Expertise and experience across all areas of their professional practice will be improved through appropriate and sustained career-long professional learning.

AIMS

- A high quality and skilled workforce
- Excellent leaders, teachers, educators
- High quality experience of CfE
- Partnership working as communities of learning

This will be achieved through:

- Attracting the very best new teachers into the profession
- Commitment to high quality career long professional learning.
- A supportive but challenging leadership framework which provides opportunities for leadership growth at all levels.
- Professional learning communities
- Internal and external partnership such as other Councils, Universities, and the emerging national College for Educational Leadership

VISION AND LEADERSHIP

All teachers should have opportunities to be leaders (GTCS, 2012). West Dunbartonshire Council is committed to a supportive but challenging leadership framework which provides opportunities for leadership growth at all levels.

We expect teachers to:

- lead learning for, and with, all learners for whom they engage with a clear focus on improving outcomes for all
- develop the capacity to lead colleagues and other partners to achieve change through specific projects or development work
- participate in a range of professional learning activities including individual, group, local authority, university and national opportunities

We expect middle managers to:

- be responsible for leading curriculum, departments, specific school improvement priorities.
- assume line management responsibility for individuals and teams.

Appendix 1

- work and contribute to the school improvement agenda
- support leadership development in others and contribute to building a learning culture
- refresh and enhance their practice and seek new challenges to further professional development

We expect HT's to:

- sustain and enhance a culture of learning
- be accountable for ensuring the context and culture is set for others to lead effectively
- ensure there is a clear and agreed focus on self-evaluation and improvement
- play a crucial role in supporting leadership development in others and build leadership capacity in the system
- refresh and enhance their practice and seek new challenges to further professional development

Attracting the very best new teachers into the profession

We will work closely with our university partners to offer students teaching experiences in our schools of a type that are high quality, progressive, and built on innovative practice. These new teachers will enjoy a range of experiences in and beyond the classroom.

We are committed to working with local universities to develop formal and informal partnerships that go beyond simply the placing of students for teaching experience. We are committed to an induction year in WDC schools that is second to none and which encourages these teachers to plan a career in WDC in the long term. Through the teacher induction scheme we will attract the best quality entrants to denominational and non- denominational schools, ideally many who have experienced WDC as a student.

We will work closely with GTCS to ensure that national standards and policies are met so that our new teachers are well placed to begin their professional journey

Career long professional learning

WDC is committed to promoting a strengthened model of career- long professional learning. Within this there are responsibilities on the teacher and the authority.

Professional Learning has four key components: reflection on practice, experiential learning, social learning processes, cognitive development. It will be developed using various formats including school based opportunities, action learning, coaching and mentoring schemes, in service days, courses leading to recognised qualifications. The GTCS professional update is an integral part of this process.

Teachers have an entitlement and obligation to participate in the on-going process of PRD. The PRD process should be both challenging and supportive.

WDC will set Improvement Planning Priorities which will along with financial planning, inform opportunities. Collaborative approaches with other Councils and professional associations will take place where relevant and where added value accrues.

WDC will work closely with professional associations in continuously monitoring and developing policy and opportunities for staff.

Leadership framework

WDC is committed to a supportive but challenging leadership framework which provides opportunities for leadership growth at all levels.

WDC recognises that leadership takes place at different times of a career and in varying circumstances, but building the confidence and skills for leadership roles is critical.

Again with PRD as the basis, WDC will encourage reflective professionals to explore different leadership practices with lessons from our successful SLDP programme giving some direction.

Internal leadership networks across the service will provide collaborative working and professional development opportunities for staff.

Professional learning communities

WDC is committed to collaborative professional development which provides sustained opportunities to develop the 'teacher as local expert model'.

Learning communities of teachers will provide opportunities for staff to consciously develop, practise, reflect, refine.

Learning communities of Head teachers will provide opportunities for practicing heads with local talent, expertise and resources to share collectively.

Internal and external partnership

West Dunbartonshire is highly committed to lateral capacity building. We endeavour to work with multiple partners for varying purposes involved in planning and delivering opportunities across the service.

Some will be internal partners such as schools and corporate organisational development, while others will be external partners such as other Councils, Universities, and the emerging national College for Educational Leadership.