



T&L Times

Edition 3

Welcome

Welcome to our very first newsletter of 2020. On behalf of the whole Rivermead Inclusive Trust we wish you a very happy and prosperous 2020 both professionally and personally. We start off our new year newsletter with a very relevant quote.



"I hope that in this year to come, you make mistakes."

Because if you are making mistakes, then you are making new things, trying new things, learning, living, pushing yourself, changing yourself, changing your world. You're doing things you've never done before, and more importantly, you're Doing Something.

So that's my wish for you, and all of us, and my wish for myself. Make New Mistakes. Make glorious, amazing mistakes. Make mistakes nobody's ever made before. Don't freeze, don't stop, don't worry that it isn't good enough, or it isn't perfect, whatever it is: art, or love, or work or family or life.

Whatever it is you're scared of doing, Do it.

Make your mistakes, next year and forever."

Neil Gaiman

Fantastic Finance

MoneySense is a free financial education programme that aims to help 5-18 year-olds in the UK and Republic of Ireland towards a better financial future. It uses the key money moments in a young person's life – starting to save their pocket money, opening a bank account or getting their first mobile phone – to make learning about money feel relatable.

There are dedicated areas on the site for four different groups of users: young people, teachers, parents and employees of RBS plc. Young people can find videos, games and other content to help them discover money in the Students section. Teachers have access to a range of classroom resources for teaching financial education in both the Teachers and Workshops sections. There are all kinds of activities for families and young people to explore in the Parents section. Employees of RBS plc can volunteer to help deliver MoneySense workshops in schools, and manage their interaction with the programme in the Workshops section.

MoneySense workshops involve specific sets of resources for teachers to use in the classroom, with the support of bank employee volunteers. Our dedicated MoneySense Support Team will work with you to organise your workshop, and locate nearby volunteers who are ready and waiting to come into school to help you. Our workshops are designed to be teacher-led and supported by the volunteer(s)

You need to be a registered teacher or volunteer to access the resources in the Teachers and Workshops sections –

They are all completely free!



[Click here for the Money Sense Website](#)

Top Tips

Top
Tips

Parental communication can sometimes be an area that causes staff a great deal of worry and stress. We bring you this week 5 top tips for effective parent communication so your communications are positive and effective.

Talk about the positive, not just the negative

You don't want parents to dread getting a phone call or email from school.

Encourage teachers to talk to parents about the positive things, and not wait until there's an issue or a child is in trouble. More regular communication about both the good and the bad helps turn parents into partners. Pupils spend most of their time outside of the classroom, so having parents as partners is critical. It may be time-consuming, but the time spent is well worth it.

Email is fine, but phone calls are better

Phone calls feel more personal, and there's less opportunity for misunderstanding. Parents are also more likely to mention useful bits of information over the phone, which a teacher wouldn't otherwise get in an email.

If you do need to send an email, read it carefully beforehand to catch anything that might be misunderstood.

Set clear guidelines so school communication is consistent

Dealing with parents, especially if they're demanding, can be intimidating for staff.

Set clear guidelines for what good communication with parents looks like, and train your staff on these. This will help them feel more confident in difficult conversations.

It'll also help you achieve consistency, limiting the number of instances of "But the other teacher said..." and helping develop relationships with clear boundaries.

Good communication means:

- The interests and voice of the pupil are central to every conversation
- Conversations are clear, direct and focused on facts
- Addressing issues proactively wherever possible
- Being solution-focused
- Staff have well-balanced relationships with parents

Staff use these guidelines whenever they communicate with parents.

It can help to use a simple framework for helping staff respond when parents are upset or becoming overbearing. For example:

The 4 Fs

- **Facts:** repeat the facts the parent has told you (to demonstrate you're listening) and document these clearly
- **Feelings:** show that you understand how the parent feels
- **Fix:** let them know what you're going to do to help address the issue, even if it's just talking to the right person
- **Future:** explain what the parent can do if they have a similar issue in the future

LAST

- **L**isten: without offering suggestions or excuses
- **A**pologise: for the frustration/stress/inconvenience/etc.
- **S**olution: what would resolve this for the parent? How can you help? What can you realistically do?
- **T**hank you: make sure the parent feels like you value their feedback and experiences

Train staff regularly

How regularly will depend on how much routine contact they have with parents.

It can also help to schedule training around key events like parents' evenings, so the guidance is fresh in their minds.

Your training should help staff understand the kinds of conversations they're likely to have with parents, and how to manage these. You can use it to reiterate the guidelines you've set about what good communication with parents looks like.

For example:

- Role play scenarios where parents are upset or aggressive with staff
 - Provide examples of what good interactions look like
 - Help staff understand how to have well-balanced relationships (not too firm, but not too accommodating either)
 - Give clear guidelines about what staff can and can't disclose to parents about other staff and pupils
- It may also help to provide resources staff can keep at hand, such as template emails with polite-yet-firm sample text. There are no hard-and-fast rules that will help your staff get it right every time. So...

Put the right support in place

Especially for NQTs or recently qualified teachers. No one is going to get every conversation right every time. Make sure your staff:

- Know who they can call on for support if they're feeling concerned or out of their depth
- Can talk honestly to senior leaders about conversations that haven't gone well

If staff feel like they'll be blamed every time a parent escalates a complaint or gives an angry response, they're less likely to communicate in the effective, consistent way your school needs to maintain good relationships. By providing regular training, and supporting with difficult conversations when needed, senior and middle leaders in particular can help their staff feel more supported and confident.

Digestible Documents

This week we take a one page look at PPA and what it could and should look like for you:

Principles of PPA time

Under the [School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document \(STPCD\)](#), all teachers with timetabled teaching commitments are entitled to at least 10% of their timetabled teaching time as planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time.

This time must be allocated during their timetabled teaching time, in blocks of at least 30 minutes. Timetabled teaching time refers to the teaching hours available for individual teachers, before PPA time is subtracted.

Entitlements to PPA time

All teachers with a teaching commitment are entitled to PPA time. This includes:

- Teachers paid on the leadership pay range who have teaching commitments
- Part-time teachers

Cover teachers (including those employed solely to provide cover)

Use of PPA time

The STPCD says that the purpose of PPA time is to enable teachers to discharge their professional responsibilities of teaching and assessment. It is up to teachers to decide how best to use their PPA time. Teachers cannot be required to carry out any other duties during their PPA time. This includes providing cover.

Covering PPA time

Schools determine for themselves how to provide cover for PPA time. Support staff, such as higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs) could be asked to provide cover.

Scheduling and rescheduling PPA time

PPA time must be scheduled within timetabled teaching time.

However, there is no requirement for PPA time to be taken at the same time every week, so long as the entitlement is still met.

If a teacher misses their PPA time, it should normally be rescheduled.

Possible Predictions

We take a quick look at some possible predictions for what might happen in the educational landscape during 2020

Education will be low on the political agenda

With the Brexit deadline looming, we predict that most of the government's attention will be focused on dealing with the realities of leaving the EU, and not on education sector reform.

The Conservatives didn't make any grand plans in their manifesto, so for the next couple of years we predict any changes will feel more like fiddling around the edges than visionary steps forward.

Curriculum, curriculum, curriculum!

Developing a high-quality curriculum is a long-term project and a lot of work.

Even if schools aren't redesigning their whole curriculum or making lots of changes, getting clarity on what you teach, when and why is more important than ever, given that the new Ofsted framework puts a particular spotlight on your curriculum. And achieving that clarity involves focused, careful thinking and buy-in from across the school community. We predict that curriculum will be the focus of nearly every school's attention and will have implications for everything: school improvement planning, staff training and development, performance management, and even school spending decisions.

More focus on mental health and wellbeing for staff and pupils

There's already been movement on this:

The DfE is encouraging schools to designate a mental health lead

Ofsted's new framework includes more focus on teacher workload and wellbeing

We expect mental health and wellbeing (including workload) to be a key focus in 2020, and for more schools to take radical steps to reduce workload and promote staff mental health.

