



**REPORT TO: EDUCATION CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON 26 NOVEMBER 2024**

SUBJECT: FEDERATION POLICY FOR SCHOOLS

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Committee approval to further review and update the Policy which was adopted by Committee in March 2024.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (D) (1) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to all the functions of the Council as an Education Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Committee considers and agrees to:**
 - i) **the proposed change in one of the principles as laid out in para 3.6; and**
 - ii) **adopt this updated policy for any future vacancies across schools from 1 January 2025.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Due to difficulties in recruiting Head Teachers (HT) to Primary Schools the Paired Head Teacher policy was reviewed and updated to a Federation Policy and agreed by the Special Meeting of this Committee on 27 March 2024 (para 6 of minute refers).
- 3.2 It has been well reported to Committee regarding the difficulties and the number of times posts have had to be re-advertised. Local mitigations include reviewing the information which is included in advertisements to better reflect the school and Moray in general, a new Aspiring Head Teacher programme, empowering Head Teachers to 'grow' leaders of the future, supporting

teachers undertaking Into Headship and continued promotion of local Leadership and Management programmes as well as signposting to national programmes of study.

3.3 Looking back over the last school academic session (2023-24) a number of Acting HT posts were advertised with many moving to be re-advertised with one of these still being vacant. Officers had to initiate exigencies of the service on various occasions to put in place arrangements to ensure continued leadership. Since August 2023, permanent HT posts have also had to be re-advertised, with exigencies of the service being initiated on various occasions.

3.4 In the current session 2024/25 there are currently the following number of HT vacancies:

- St Peter's Primary School, Buckie and St Thomas Primary School, Keith. Under the current policy and due to difficulties in filling the individual schools on a permanent basis, a pairing was initiated. However the interim Head Teacher retired and the post has been advertised twice without moving forwards. An interim arrangement is in place where the Head Teacher at Cluny Primary in Buckie, has interim overview of St Peters and the Head Teacher at Keith Primary, has interim oversight of St Thomas. The paired denominational post is currently re-advertised. The service continues to work proactively with the Catholic Church to look at options in order to secure permanent arrangements.
- Milne's Primary School, Fochabers using Exigencies of the Service, officers have an interim 3-18 campus arrangement with the Head Teacher at Milne's High School. An external consultant is currently reviewing this and a report will be presented to Committee next year.
- Burghead Primary School, Burghead has been advertised externally (3 times) and internally (3 times) with exigencies of the service being enacted to put in place an Acting Head Teacher (DHT from another school) for 23 months.
- Rothiemay primary had been vacant since 2022. This was advertised at the start of the session and is now filled on a permanent basis.
- Knockando primary is vacant and has been advertised a number of times externally and 3 times internally. Using exigencies of the service, there is an interim arrangement, under exigencies of the service, in place whereby the Head Teacher at Knockando Primary School is currently acting paired Head Teacher across Knockando and Dallas Primaries.
- There continues to be an acting Head Teacher at Lhanbryde Primary.
- Buckie High is out to re-advertisement, with an Acting Head Teacher in place since November 2023. This is now progressing to initial interviews.
- As a result of Acting Head Teacher posts, this creates subsequent backfill arrangements resulting in further recruitment and selection for Acting Depute Head Teacher or Acting Principal Teacher or on occasion, discrete supply teaching pressures as maingrade teachers are successful in Acting post recruitment. We continue to support all colleagues in pursuing Acting promoted post opportunities for career development.

3.5 The principles of the current Federation Model are as follows:

- A school will only be paired with another school from within its Associated school group so that the Head Teacher links with one secondary school, except where any pairing is two denominational schools.
- A multiple school model is considered where a pairing already exists in the Associated Schools Group. This would be an executive or multiple pairing model. This federation can be used for up to a maximum of 4 schools
- The headteachers in schools identified for pairing/executive models will have a class commitment
- A school will be paired with another where the headteacher in one school is class-committed but the other is non class-committed and either all other schools have been paired in ASG or the distance between schools is great (ie a pairing between a smaller school and a larger school)
- Where possible the schools considered for executive/multiple models as part of the federation policy should be relatively close in proximity to each other. This may not be possible in some rural areas.

3.6 Given that the service continues to face challenges in recruiting Head Teachers, particularly in primary, and given the number of alternative arrangements currently in place which are outwith policy it is proposed to further amend the Federation policy and in particular to amend the Principles for Federation as set out in para 3 of the attached policy (**Appendix 1**).

Current	Proposed
A school will be paired with another school from within its ASG so that the Head Teacher links with one secondary school, except where any pairing is two denominational schools.	Any pairing should be considered within the ASG in the first instance. A school will be paired with another school from within its ASG except under exceptional circumstances where multiple recruitment processes result in failure to fill the post a pairing will be considered with a school in an adjacent ASG depending on travel distance, school contexts and other relevant factors. Support will be provided to the paired HT to minimise workload in working with more than one secondary schools.

3.7 It is requested that Committee agree the amended policy and that this should be used for vacancies which occur from 1 January 2025.

3.7 The service will continue to attempt to fill each vacant Head Teacher position as a single Head Teacher school in the first instance, working closely with the Parent Council of each individual school affected.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

This report was informed by the priorities within the Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan and in particular to Our People, Building a better future for our children and young people in Moray.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

(c) Financial implications

The financial implications for any option will be looked at when considering is given to the pairing. Normal processes are that the posts are job sized together and then one grade is added from the Head Teacher pay scale.

(d) Risk Implications

The change to policy will reduce the number of HT posts in Moray however with posts vacant and unfilled the move to federation or additional paired headships will mitigate gaps in leadership and management with existing head teachers providing leadership across more than one school. There is an additional risk that this will impact on Teacher numbers. However with no change to the policy there are additional risks of schools being without permanent leadership arrangements which has an impact on attainment, achievement and school improvement. Given the concerns around ICT, there are further risks for paired HTs in gaining access to ICT in each school exacerbated by slow log in times etc.

(e) Staffing Implications

Staffing is allocated to any pairing or federation model according to linear formula where any joint headship is entitled to additional management posts and or time. This will differ according to individual situations.

(f) Property

There are no property issues arising from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

There are no implications arising directly from this report, however, equalities impacts and considerations have been taken into account in the previous deployment of resources to support the covid impacts and would be factored into any development of options directed by the committee beyond the budget pressures set out.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

None.

(i) Consultations

The Head of HR, ICT and OD, the Head of Financial Services, Quality Improvement Manager, Business Support Team Manager, The HTs in the Consultative Group, and Caroline O'Connor, Committee Services Officer, have been consulted on this report and agree with the sections of the report relating to their areas of responsibility.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Securing stable and high quality leadership across schools in Moray is a key priority in order to ensure that schools are well led, managed and that the needs of learners are met. With increasing difficulties being experienced in recruiting to posts, it is vital that any policy reduces the number of times exigencies of the service are enacted so that there is continuity in leadership and management across the school estate.

Author of Report: Vivienne Cross, Head of Education Background
Papers: Northern Alliance Research on Paired Headships
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