

National Framework
Agreement
between the
Schools Co-operative
Society
and UNISON



1. Introduction

UNISON and the Co-operative movement share many common values and principles. We believe passionately that equality, solidarity, democracy and social responsibility are the principles that should underpin our education system.

Whilst both parties hold different policy positions on the issue of Community schools we however, have a strong common interest in working together to promote good employment and governance practices in schools.

To this end the Schools Co-operative Society and UNISON agree to work together to produce a model national framework for the employment of school support staff in Co-operative schools.

Co-operative schools share an ethos based on the co-operative values and principles as defined in the International Co-operative Alliance Statement on the Co-operative Identity (appended) and a governance structure that engages key stakeholders including parents/carers, staff, learners and the local community through membership.

2. Parties

This agreement is between the following parties:

- The Schools Co-operative Society – on behalf of all Co-operative Schools; and
- UNISON – the recognised union for school support staff.

3. National Joint Forum

To facilitate joint working UNISON and the Schools Co-operative Society agree to establish a National Joint Forum (NJF).

4. The NJF will produce model support staff agreements and good practice policies for implementation by Co-operative schools locally

The Schools Co-operative Society and UNISON will actively promote the implementation of these national agreements/policies by Co-operative schools. Both parties agree that there should be full implementation of all NJF agreements.

5. Mechanics of the National Joint Forum

The NJF will meet not less than twice a year and will be made up of an equal number of representatives from both the Schools Co-operative Society and UNISON. (numbers to be determined at a later date).

Both UNISON and the Schools Co-operative Society will each nominate a person to act as Joint Secretary to the NJF.

The Joint Secretaries will be responsible for producing draft model agreements and good practice policies for discussion by the NJF.

Before national agreements/policies are agreed by the NJF they will be subject to ratification by the appropriate lay committees in each organisation.

Once agreed the national agreement will then be sent to all Co-operative schools with a clear recommendation from both parties that they should be implemented, as a minimum, locally.

6. Principles and coverage

The NJF will have the remit to produce model agreements and policies covering, but not exclusively, the following support staff issues:

- terms and conditions of employment
- pay structures
- pensions
- employment policies and procedures
- matters of health and safety
- staff training and development
- professional issues
- equal opportunities matters
- trade union recognition and facilities

In regard to these items UNISON and the Schools Co-operative Society agree to recommend that all Co-operative Schools employ support staff on, as a minimum, the national terms and conditions applicable to support staff (currently NJC Green Book).

Both parties also agree to recommend that Co-operative Schools abide with, as a minimum, the existing local agreements and policies (negotiated by UNISON and their Local Authority) currently in place for school support staff.

It is also agreed that all Co-operative Schools should ensure continued access to the Local Government Pension Scheme for all support staff – on the same terms applying to those school support staff employed by the Local Authority,

No member of staff employed by a Co-operative School should suffer any detriment in relation to their terms and conditions of employment when compared against those school support staff employed by the Local Authority.

7. Support staff membership of Co-operative Schools

UNISON agrees to encourage all support staff working in Co-operative Schools to become a member of the Trust.

8. Procedure for dealing with unresolved issues

In the event of the NJF failing to resolve an issue within its defined remit, representatives of UNISON and the Schools Co-operative Society can, if they mutually agree, refer the matter for conciliation, arbitration or any other form of assistance.

In the event of local disagreement at a Co-operative school concerning the interpretation or implementation of an NJF national agreement, the NJF Joint Secretaries will be available to assist in resolving that disagreement if both local parties agree to refer the matter to them.

9. Variation

Variation to this agreement will be by agreement between the Schools Co-operative Society and UNISON.

Either the Schools Co-operative Society or UNISON may terminate this agreement by giving twelve months notice in writing to the other party.

The Schools Co-operative Society and UNISON accept that the terms of this agreement are binding in honour upon them but do not constitute a legally enforceable agreement.

Appendix

Co-operative statement on the Co-operative identity as approved at the ICA Congress, Manchester, September 1995

DEFINITION

A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically controlled enterprise.

VALUES

Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others.

PRINCIPLES

The co-operative principles are guidelines by which co-operatives put their values into practice.

1ST PRINCIPLE: VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP

Co-operatives are voluntary organisations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.

2ND PRINCIPLE: DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL

Co-operatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary co-operatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote), and co-operatives at other levels are also organised in a democratic manner.

3RD PRINCIPLE: MEMBER ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Members contribute equitably to, and -democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is

usually the common property of the co-operative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any of the following purposes: developing their co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

4TH PRINCIPLE: AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organisations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organisations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.

5TH PRINCIPLE: EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

6TH PRINCIPLE: CO-OPERATION AMONG CO-OPERATIVES

Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the Co-operative Movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7TH PRINCIPLE: CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

UNISON
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