



Guidelines for Staff Meetings



As no two schools are the same, it is not possible to provide a template that will work in all schools to ensure appropriate and effective collaborative practice at staff meetings.

Each staff should review and address their staff meeting protocols regularly. It is important that protocols are discussed and agreed by staff and that there is a commitment to their implementation.

Some suitable guidelines to assist members in ensuring that there is collaborative and effective practice at staff meetings are as follows:

Norms and expectations

- Staff meetings should be characterised by professionalism, collegiality, and respect. People should feel safe to express their views and be listened to.
- Staff should develop a protocol to ensure everyone has an opportunity to speak.
- Staff should develop a protocol to ensure no one party dominates the time.
- Staff should develop a protocol to ensure that every contribution is listened to without interruption.
- The Chair should ensure that the context of issues is clearly outlined, that contributions are made by the maximum number of people, that side conversations are not being conducted and that decisions are clearly expressed and understood. The Chair should summarise the generality of contributions rather than engaging in dialogue on each contribution. It should be agreed that contributions should be confined to one per item on the agenda by anyone seeking to contribute.

Collaboration

- Every effort should be made to achieve consensus in decision making.

Communication

- A "Draft Agenda" should be circulated seven school days before the scheduled meeting with an invitation for other items which may be added.
- The final "Agenda" for the staff meeting should be circulated/posted not later than three days before the meeting.
- Consideration should be given to split the agenda into information-giving items and discussion items.
- Alternatively, items on the agenda should be identified as being for information, discussion, consultation, or decision.
- Where a meeting of ASTI members precedes a staff meeting and generates items for placement on the agenda of a staff meeting, the School Steward should bring them to the attention of the principal. A joint approach with TUI colleagues is to be encouraged in dual union schools.
- Staff may decide that certain items such as Attendance, Minutes, Matters Arising, Correspondence, Teaching and Learning, AOB and Date of Next Meeting are to be standard items on every staff meeting agenda.
- Draft minutes of any staff meeting should be circulated promptly (i.e. within a few days). Minutes should be re-circulated at the same time as the agenda for the next meeting. Minutes ought to include information on each item of the agenda, what was agreed, what was to be done, by whom and for when. Minutes should be clear and factual.

Roles

There should be agreement and clarity on;

- who calls and organises meetings
- who chairs meetings
- who records meetings
- whether roles are fixed or rotating

ASTI recommends that the chairing of staff meetings should be rotated among staff members.



Time

- Meetings should have a clearly defined venue, start time and end time. They should begin promptly as scheduled and end at the appointed time.

After the meeting

- Draft minutes should be issued as soon as possible after the meeting. There is less chance of errors, omissions, disagreements over what was agreed etc if they are issued promptly.
- Ensure that agreed-upon action points from the meeting are tracked and followed up on.
- Keep minutes and follow-up actions on file to provide a record of the meeting's outcomes.

Conclusion of meeting

- At the end of the meeting, it is a good idea to summarise the decisions reached during the meeting and outstanding matters to be dealt with before the next meeting (and by whom).