

HR Headaches for Schools

29th June 2023 – Kettering Park Hotel, Northampton

1. Mr McKenzie, Headteacher at Rudge Park School, has just been informed that Phil Gilbert, English Teacher, has been arrested for having indecent images on his laptop. He denies the allegation and has been bailed. The police investigation is ongoing.
What action, if any, can Mr McKenzie take?
2. Mrs McClusky, Headteacher, is not happy with the quality of the cleaning at Grange Hill by the cleaning contractor, Tye Deeit Ltd. The contract is coming to an end and Mrs McClusky wants to bring the cleaning in-house and employ new cleaners.
Is Mrs McClusky able to do this?
3. Doris Johnson has been a teacher at Conservatory School for 18 months and has been absent from work for the last 6 months with Long Covid. Mr Sunak, Headteacher, has had enough and wants to sack Doris for long-term sickness absence.
Can Mr Sunak just dismiss Doris Johnson?
4. Mr Jones, Headteacher at Scooby-Doo Academy, has implemented a restructure of the SLT. As part of the restructure, only 2, rather than 3, Deputy Head roles are required. Daphne, Velma and Scrappy all apply for the new roles. Daphne is currently on maternity leave.
How should Mr Jones proceed?
5. Sherlock and Moriarty are ground staff at Baker Street School. They are involved in a fight in the staff room. As a result, Moriarty is dismissed on the grounds of gross misconduct, but Sherlock is only given a final written warning. Moriarty claims unfair dismissal.
Will Baker Street be able to defend his claim?
6. Mrs McCluskey, Headteacher at Strange Hill High, has just chaired a disciplinary hearing with Mr Griffin, a Pastoral Support Worker who has worked at the school for 6 months, who admitted having racially offensive comments and pictures on his Facebook page. However, Mr Griffin insists that the posts had been put on there by others who had access to his Facebook account. He also says that he thought his Facebook page was private and that it would be a breach of his human rights if he could not have his own beliefs.
Mrs McCluskey wants to dismiss, but is she safe to do so?
7. Mrs Rooney is employed full-time at the Scouse Academy as Head of English. She is due to return from maternity leave in a few months' time and she has asked to return on a part time basis. Mr Van Gaal, Headteacher, is not a fan of part time working and has asked if he can reject and retain her maternity cover instead.
How would you advise Mr Van Gaal to proceed?

8. An anonymous complaint has been received via an unknown email address from someone who has said that they are a concerned employee of East End High. They have complained that the deputy Headteacher, Mrs Peggy bullied staff and staff morale is low, causing staff to want to leave.

What would you do?

9. Mr Sugar is a Business Manager at Amstrad High Academy. Mr Sugar's absence record is poor. Some of his absence relates to the fact that he has previously had a heart bypass and needs to attend medical appointments, but the rest appears to be for varying reasons, such as coughs and colds, and a lot of his absence is on a Monday and Friday.

What can you do in this scenario?

10. Mr Hill is an Art teacher. He is currently being performance managed and is on a final written warning. During his performance management he raised a grievance which was dealt with, with the help of an external HR adviser. He has now made a data subject access request within which he has asked for all communications passing to and from the HR adviser involved with his grievances. You are concerned about providing this as it includes some advice about how to deal with the situation, including a recommendation that the performance management process is used to exit the "difficult" employee.

How should you deal with this request?