
HTLA Scenarios - Cohorts 80 – 89

Choose two or three as appropriate:

Scenario 1

Donald and the cat part 1

Donald is a retired sea captain with developing dementia, now living in a care home.

The care home has three core values: **Dignity, Care and Respect**. Donald has been prone to angry outbursts, particularly in the dining area if he doesn't like the food and in social areas during activities, which has had an upsetting effect on other residents.

Just recently, the care home was gifted a remarkably lifelike robotic cat which purrs if stroked and responds to commands to 'sit' and 'walk'.

Donald has adopted Felix and sits contentedly for hours stroking him and having him walk beside him in the corridor. His improved mood has led to him joining in more activities and is much more co-operative with staff.

On a scale of 0 – 5 where 0 equals absolutely no harm to 5 serious risk of harm, what's your score?

Donald and the cat part 2

Donald's son, also called Donald, is an infrequent visitor but arrived unexpectedly this morning. He is outraged to see his father so 'humiliated'.

He points out that his father loathed cats – or pets of any kind – and would be appalled at the thought that he would one day spend hours every day patting a toy cat. Donald Junior believes his father is being conned to give **them** a more peaceful life. He believes the staff are being deceitful and demands that they respect his dignity and stay true to the 'real father' that Donald Junior so clearly misses.

Does any of this affect your score?

Donald and the cat part 3

Donald Junior demands that the cat's batteries are removed so that his father loses interest before his next visit which, unusually, will be next week.

What are the issues here? What would you do if you were the care home manager?

Wellbeing v Rights

Scenario 2

Gifts for teachers

It is just after the Easter holidays and you have taken up post as head teacher (HT) of a 490 pupil primary school and nursery. The chair of the parent council asks for an early meeting to discuss a number of 'unresolved issues'. Top of her list is end of session gifts for teachers.

This what she says:

"Your predecessor Mr Begone had a very casual attitude to end of term gifts for teachers – and many other things too! But it's all getting out of hand. Two years ago, the parent council had suggested a maximum £2 per pupil. However, last year a group of more affluent parents, outside the parent council, organised collections for the teachers of their children at up to £10 per head plus gifts in kind such as vouchers from local businesses.

"The wide variation led to ill-feeling between parents, between some teachers and amongst other valued school staff for whom there were no collections. Mr Begone shrugged it off as 'not on my remit' and 'the least of my worries'.

"At Christmas the same parent group organised gifts of champagne and chocolates for 'their teachers' despite a parent council view that any Christmas collections should be for an agreed charity. Again, Mr Begone was uninterested.

"I fear this issue will erupt into considerable unpleasantness if not tackled head on in the next few weeks..."

So, what are you thinking?

The discussion can be widened to how best to tackle issues that are not aligned to your values when taking up a new HT post? Tackle head on at the outset or wait and build support for change? Be prepared to play Devil's advocate.

Scenario 3

(An old favourite)

A fellow deputy head teacher is in the stages of a long running Master of Education (M.Ed.) course. You find him photocopying reams of paper which he sheepishly admits is original research carried out by a colleague for another purpose that he plans to pass off as his own. The final submission will have to be counter-signed by the HT who will have no knowledge of the actual source of the evidence. You have been colleagues for several years and are aware that he has considerable challenges in his personal issues and believes the M.Ed. is vital to his desire to secure a headship. He asks you to turn a blind eye to what you have seen.

Will you? Tease out implications of whichever responses are offered.

Scenario 4

You have moved to a different authority to take up a head teacher post. It is a relatively small authority with seven secondary schools, 42 primary schools, one special school and 11 standalone nurseries. After six months in post, you realise that your core values do not chime with those of the head of service and the chief executive.

There is a strong emphasis on:

- compliance and conformity to comprehensive policies and procedures developed at the centre and sent to schools as directives
- resource allocation that is driven more by equality than by equity to the detriment of your school
- monthly collation of data on multiple indicators that is then organised into league tables and circulated to HTs as ‘incentives to improve areas of underperformance’
- a centralised appointments system that appoints all unprompted staff and all support staff – such staff can be moved at the authority’s discretion...etc.

The command-and-control approach has been re-asserted more forcefully in recent weeks after a ‘period of grace’ during the worst of the pandemic You find yourself being asked to do certain things that do not sit comfortably with your values.

Scenario 5

You are six months into a new headship. The staff have been largely supportive with the exception of one teacher who was transferred to the school just over a year ago for a 'fresh start' following a prolonged dispute with the HT over policy and practice.

Ahead of an inset day in which you have allocated a two-hour slot for Moving Towards a More Collaborative Approach, you have received the following memo from the teacher:

"Head Teacher, in my experience so called 'collaborative approaches' are nothing other than an artificial way to get teachers to work on priorities that they do not necessarily believe in. I am an experienced and effective teacher and do not believe that I will gain anything from attending your planned session. I will, instead, use this valuable time to prepare work that I know will benefit my pupils in my classroom. Respectfully, yours."

How will you approach this challenge? Be prepared to be the teacher – 'respectfully' of course!

Scenario 6

A couple of years ago a member of staff asked your permission to organise a school trip to the Amazon jungle. The trip is a month long and in the summer holidays. There is no mobile coverage. The company organising the trip is ABTA recognised and organises a number of school excursions to remote locations. You approve the trip. During this time there have been a number of fund-raising community events, PTA have donated money and the small group of eight pupils (five girls and three boys) have contributed towards the total cost.

A week before the trip is due to depart the police come into the school to inform the school about one of the boys on the trip. Over the weekend he absconded from home and threatened to take his life. When talked down from the bridge from which he'd threatened to jump, he became aggressively challenging to police and paramedics.

After receiving this information, you invite mum and boy into school to discuss the situation.

Both mother and son give assurances that the boy still wants to go on the trip and add that if he isn't allowed on the trip one of the other boys, who is his best friend, will also withdraw.

The member of staff is willing to take the pupil.

What as Head Teacher do you do?