

REQUESTS FOR FLEXIBLE WORKING

Flexible working improves employees' work-life balance and well-being, helps to attract and retain staff, particularly those with caring responsibilities, increases productivity and reduces costs. Alongside job sharing it forms a key element in many employers' overall talent strategy. Flexible working is a way of working that suits the needs of the employee. It is a way of sharing, staggering or breaking up the normal working day or week in order to improve work/life balance. It could also be helpful in schools with budget problems.

All employees (not just parents or carers) have the legal right to request flexible working if they have worked for the same employer for at least 26 weeks. The law does not give an automatic right to flexible working, but employers must respond to requests. A teacher can only make a request under the legislation once in any 12-month period. If you are thinking about applying for flexible working for next Academic Year now is the time to talk to your Headteacher about while they are planning for it.

A request for flexible working should:

- be in writing;
- make clear that this is a statutory request;
- state the date of the application;
- make clear the change being requested to working arrangements;
- state how this change might impact upon the school/college and how any such effect might be dealt with;
- include a statement saying if, and when, any previous application was made.

Check your school's flexible working policy before making a request. The employer has to consider seriously a request for flexible working and must consider a request in a 'reasonable manner', which involves weighing up the benefits for the employee and the school against any potential adverse business impact. Call the Members Support Advice Team if you need help.



REDUNDANCY NOTICES

Towards the end of last school year we reported that members were being asked to do work over and above their contractual obligations. This included being asked to do cover for absent colleagues, doing lunchtime supervision, attending several meetings a week and invigilating examinations in addition to facing large class sizes and losing Teaching Assistants.

School Managers often cited budget problems as the reason for getting teachers to do the work that other people should be employed to do while they are making them redundant. This is unacceptable and we must not allow it to happen.

Towards the end of the Autumn Term schools, including those in MATs, were informing us that they were facing budget problems and would have to issue First Notices about redundancies to their staff this term.

Members must get in touch with the union if this is happening in your school.

OFSTED'S ANNUAL REPORT

The 2018 OFSTED Annual Report was published in December. It is clear from the report that the teaching profession is continuing to achieve high standards for children and young people. This is despite the continuing pressures teachers are facing in terms of depressed pay, excessive workload and the knock-on impact of the major recruitment and retention crisis. This success has been achieved despite the government's education policies, not because of them and we see in Ofsted's report some of the consequences of the government's failure to exercise strategic leadership over the education system.

The NASUWT supports the call by Ofsted for it to be given the powers to inspect Multi Academy Trusts and to take action when concerns are raised about unregistered schools. MATs, as we have witnessed in Wirral, are increasingly powerful and influential and they should be held accountable for their performance in the same way that schools are. Equally, it is vitally important that where there are concerns about unregistered schools that the inspectorate has sufficient powers to intervene to ensure pupils are safe and are receiving education which is appropriate and of sufficient quality.

The NASUWT agrees with Ofsted's view that it is not right that schools which are graded as outstanding should be exempt from inspection. Proportionate, focused inspections which genuinely support schools to reflect on their progress and continue to improve should be part of the system of accountability for all schools.

Ofsted is correct to raise the impact which declining levels of local authority funding for wider children's services are having on schools. Access to specialist CAMHS support is just one example where delays and in some cases, the impossibility, of obtaining expert external support for pupils with mental health issues is placing schools under acceptable pressure. Similarly, local authority provision for children and young people with special needs is highlighted by the inspectorate as a concern. In Wirral there is the need for greater investment in support for children with high needs, but also greater consistency in how schools and local authorities generally cooperate to meet the needs of these children. At present there is unacceptable variability in practice between different authorities which means that some children are not getting the support they need.

It is shocking that thousands of young people are disappearing from school rolls each year and the NASUWT agrees with Ofsted that this is a situation which cannot be allowed to continue. The NASUWT - The Teachers' Union has called on the Department for Education to give local authorities the capacity and resources to allow them to challenge off-rolling and ensure all children receive their entitlement to education.



Amanda Spielman
OFSTED Chief Inspector

The Local Secretary's Report - January 2019

Happy New Year! Like many of you I returned to work today (Monday 7th Jan). It was an interesting day with many staff reporting in the morning that they had enjoyed the break but by lunchtime they were saying they felt as though they had never been away! I think that this clearly illustrates how busy we all are and how the pressures of work are never far away.



With this in mind we must take care of ourselves and encourage our school leadership to take our wellbeing seriously. A number of schools are doing great work on this with regular sessions being offered to staff in activities such as mindfulness, yoga and running clubs. In some schools wellbeing is being addressed through one off events. Although these are good to focus teachers on what is available, to be part of our routine, wellbeing must be reflected in school policies and procedures. Those who found time over Christmas to read the latest "Teaching Today" will notice that **NASUWT - The Teachers' Union**, is highlighting it's guidance on managing menopause in the workplace, supply teacher exploitation, sexual harassment, online safety and pupil indiscipline. All of these issues, though very different, are a huge part of our wellbeing. Our expectations with regards to pupil behaviour are very clear.

Teachers have a right to expect:

- a safe environment in which to work;
- access to appropriate training;
- appropriate resources to enable them to respond to pupils' behavioural needs at an early stage;
- access to external advice, support and specialist provision;
- parents to take responsibility for the behaviour of their child;
- effective school leadership, working in partnership with staff to maintain high standards of behaviour;
- respect for their professional opinion and any concerns to be taken seriously;
- the support of a non-discriminatory pupil behaviour policy, drawn up in consultation with the **NASUWT—The Teachers' Union**, which promotes acceptable standards of behaviour;
- regular monitoring and review of data on pupil behaviour to ensure that the behaviour policy is working effectively.



Is your school meeting these expectations?

Please consult the guidance available on the website and be clear about your rights and responsibilities on these issues.

There are some serious issues in Wirral schools at the moment. As mentioned already, some schools are facing financial difficulties. **NASUWT - The Teachers' Union**, should always be involved in re-structure discussions even when redundancies are threatened within the support staff as these redundancies can have a big impact on teachers' working conditions and we will work with our TU colleagues to secure working conditions for our members.



Anne Rycroft
Wirral Local Secretary

We also have a small minority of schools who are not operating Performance Management and Pay Progression in a fair manner. Such behaviour will be challenged by **NASUWT - The Teachers' Union**, but we can only do this when we are made aware of the issue. Please use these contact details and seek support if you work in such a school.

Finally, I hope to see some new faces at our AGM next month. There are no expectations placed on those who attend, you will all be welcomed and will benefit from making contact with local activists.

Wirral Association NASUWT A.G.M.

Tuesday 5th February 2019

The Chimneys Pub & Restaurant
Hooton Green, CH66 5ND
(Just off M53 J5 on the A41)



Order your free Bar Meal & Drink
from 4.00 p.m.

Meeting 4.30 - 5.30 p.m.

ALL MEMBERS WELCOME



BEWARE!
sexual harassment
SAY NO!

Report all incidents to
NASUWT immediately.

NASUWT

The Teachers' Union

**MEMBER SUPPORT
ADVICE TEAM**

The dedicated number for
all members to access
help and advice.

Calls are free from all
landlines and mobile
phone networks:

03330 145550

Members can also e-mail to:
advice@mail.nasuwt.org.uk

Wirral Association NASUWT LOCAL OFFICERS

If members need to call for
local help and advice you can
contact the Local Secretary or
the Assistant Secretary on the
following days:

**Monday, Tuesday &
Wednesday call
Mick Robinson**

07739 422 181

mickrobinson@nasuwt.net

**Thursday & Friday call
Anne Rycroft**

07910 026695

annerycroft@gmail.co.uk

NASUWT
The Teachers' Union

If any member would like to contribute to the **Wirral Association NASUWT NEWSLETTER**, please contact Mick Robinson. Mob: 07739422181 or E-mail: mickrobinson@nasuwt.net
Previous recent issues of the **NEWSLETTER** can be viewed on our website.

Visit the Wirral NASUWT website
www.wirralassociationnasuwt.org