

TEACHERS ELECTRONICALLY TETHERED TO THEIR CLASSROOMS

Nearly half of teachers say that work-related emails are significantly driving up their workload and invading their home life. A survey of over 1,500 teachers by the **NASUWT-The Teachers' Union** found that only 5% of teachers did not receive work-related emails outside of school hours, with more than four in ten (41%) often and 15% constantly receiving work-related emails during periods of sickness absence. Over a quarter (26%) said they often and 9% said they constantly receive emails during other periods of absence such as maternity, paternity or bereavement leave.

Nearly two thirds (63%) said they often receive work-related emails on workday evenings, 55% in mornings before school, 58% during weekends and 45% during holidays. In addition, 85% of part-time teachers say they are expected to check and respond to emails on days when they are not contracted to work. 14% reported receiving emails at midnight and 8% at 1am. 12% said they receive emails at 5am and 40% at 6am. Nearly six in ten (57%) said they are expected to respond to these emails in their own time, with over half (55%) saying they are made to feel guilty if they do not respond. Over a quarter (26%) said their email or online activity was monitored by their school.

Communication with parents is adding to the issue, with 14% saying they are expected to communicate electronically with parents in their own time every day, with a further 19% saying they are expected to do so several times a week. 71% of teachers said their email address is made available to parents by their school, but 90% said this was done without their permission.



The growing use of apps such as Class Dojo and social media by schools was also highlighted by many respondents to be adding to work-load burden on teachers to communicate with parents. Education Secretary Damien Hinds, picture left, recently called for a "shift away from an email culture in, and into school to free teachers up to spend more time in the classroom."

Rather than helping teachers to work more efficiently, email abuse is instead electronically tethering them to their classrooms adding to their stress, anxiety and workload. For many teachers there is no escape from work. No respect or concern being shown for them even at some of the most difficult and distressing times in their lives such as bereavement or sickness. There is something fundamentally wrong about a management culture which has no boundaries of consideration or concern. Teachers are not just facing the intrusion of those who manage them into their private lives but there is now an unreasonable expectation that they are available at the convenience of parents.

Many schools are now providing app links for parents which raise the expectations that teachers are available anytime anywhere. Damien Hinds has recently taken to wringing his hands in public about his concern for teacher workload, including the email culture pervading schools but what is he actually doing about it? He exhorts schools to free teachers from emails to work more in the classroom. He clearly has no concept of either the scale or the nature of the problem. It's home invasion by email which is the problem. It's the tyranny teachers are facing in their inbox, which is all part of an anything goes management culture this government has allowed to flourish across schools, where teachers' health and well-being is not even given a second thought.



MEETING NOTICE CHANGE OF VENUE

The Local Executive Committee
and School Reps meeting on
Wednesday 8th May
will be held at
Bebington High Sports College,
now the Cooperative Academy,
Higher Bebington Road, CH63 2PS
4.15-5.30 p.m.

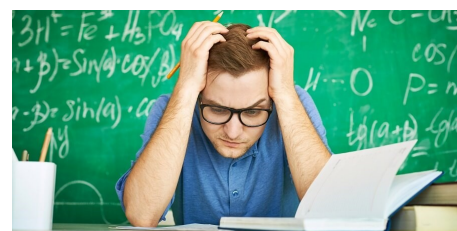
All members are welcome

TEACHERS AND PUPILS PAY A HIGH PRICE FOR HIGH STAKES ACCOUNTABILITY

Teachers and pupils are being burnt out by the demands of the assessment, tracking and data systems employed in many schools, which drive up teacher workload, undermine the ability of teachers to focus on teaching and supporting their pupils and generate anxiety and stress in many pupils. In too many schools data is being abused and misused to set teachers up to fail and to deny them pay progression.

Reforms to assessment have resulted in schools creating and implementing their own, often bureaucratic and workload intensive, assessment and testing structures for pupils. The high-stakes accountability system is driving up teacher workload, stress and anxiety with the consequent adverse impact on the provision of high-quality education for every child.

An alternative approach to assessment, data and accountability which genuinely supports schools to assist every pupil to achieve their full potential is long overdue. In Wirral we are seeing a huge increase in long-term absences of members due to work-related stress, anxiety and depression after being put on "support" programmes in their schools. Many of these programmes are not about supporting teachers to improve but are just about more observations and scrutiny of the teacher. If members are experiencing difficulties in school you are urged to contact the **NASUWT Member Support Advice Team on 03330 145550.**

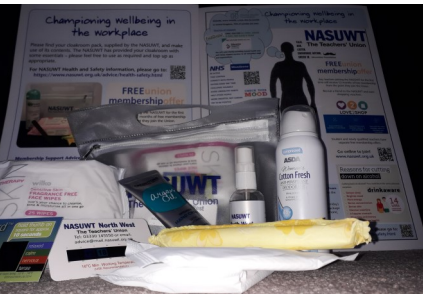


TIME TO TRAIN IS A 'FUNDAMENTAL WORKPLACE RIGHT'

The statutory right to time out of work for training for all trade union representatives is a fundamental workplace right that must be protected. Representatives at the NASUWT Annual Conference in Belfast raised concerns over the increasing attacks by governments, administrations and employers on this provision. There are equal concerns expressed by teachers more generally about the lack of guaranteed access to continuing professional development.

It is ironic that in a service which is about education and the importance of learning so little value is placed by employers on training and development of their workforce. Trained trade union representatives are an asset in the workplace to employers as well as to the staff they represent. There are statutory provisions governing time to train, but regrettably too many employers believe they are above the law and seek to refuse every opportunity to allow representatives to access the training.

The failure to facilitate trade union training mirrors, however, the failure of too many employers to provide access to other training and development for their workforce. Unlike many other professions where training and development are a contractual entitlement, teachers are denied these opportunities but are still expected to implement effectively major change and develop their practice. Successive education ministers have talked about the importance of CPD for teachers but once again have failed to do anything to make it happen. Until teachers have a contractual entitlement to access development and training nothing will change.



NASUWT WELLBEING PACKS

In the next few weeks our Local Executive Members will be delivering wellbeing packs to schools. The packs contain posters to promote wellbeing and a cloakroom bag for ladies' cloakrooms. During these stressful times it is essential that all school staff are supported to maintain a healthy work-life balance and, particularly, good mental health. This can only be achieved by protecting our working conditions.

At this time of year schools should be negotiating next year's calendars and ensuring that the demands on teachers do not exceed the **1265 hours**. It is worth remembering that this is not an aspirational figure but the maximum over the **195 days**

that you will be in school. Whilst we appreciate our cloakroom packs will not solve the issues teachers face, we do hope that their appearance in schools will stimulate debate and raise awareness of wellbeing at work. If your school does not have a pack please email the Local Secretary to arrange collection.

END THE 'SECRET GARDEN' OF SCHOOL FINANCES

Action is needed to end the 'secret garden' of school funding. The NASUWT Conference in Belfast called for substantial year-on-year increases to per pupil funding, but also stressed the need for greater transparency around school and college accounts and spending decisions. Concerns have been raised that despite the austerity measures which have been inflicted on education, reports of six figure salaries for senior leaders have proliferated, along with reports of vast sums being spent on consultants and the replication of services such as legal and HR provision once provided at a reasonable and realistic cost by local authorities. Wirral LA Human Resources still provides better and much more affordable services to schools than the expensive private alternatives.

Austerity has taken a heavy toll on investment in education. Examples of the impact of the cuts are littered across the education landscape with the casualties usually the children, young people and the workforce. As schools and colleges have been given increased autonomy over spending, spending decisions and priorities have become increasingly cloaked in mystery and secrecy. The lack of regulation, transparency and democratic accountability has provided opportunities for flawed, and in some cases, corrupt practices. In Wirral we now have a MAT that is being investigated for alleged financial irregularities.

There appears to be no interest from ministers in whether the funding allocated for the education of our children is being well or wisely spent or is instead lining the pockets of consultants and funding vanity projects at a time when year-on-year investment in education has been cut. It is nothing short of scandalous. It is time to stop the privatisation of our state education system.



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

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. Members are asked to share the **NEWSLETTER** with colleagues on your NASUWT Noticeboard.

Visit the Wirral NASUWT website
www.wirralassociationnasuwt.org

WIRRAL NASUWT NEEDS SCHOOL WORKPLACE AND HEALTH & SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES

We are a lay-led organisation and the only trade union dedicated to serving teachers.

As more academies are taking over Wirral LA schools, often with worsening conditions of service for teachers, we need more representatives in place in these workplaces.

Members are entitled to time off work for training for both School and Health & Safety Reps as well as for Staff Governors.

If you are interested in doing any of these roles contact the

Wirral NASUWT Local Secretary:
annerycroft@gmail.com