



POLICY

2017-2019

**FREE
MEMBERSHIP**

FOR STUDENTS AND
NEWLY-QUALIFIED
TEACHERS

OUR LEGAL SERVICE IS YOUR PROTECTION

POLICY 2017-19 (2)

PAY

(1) UTU notes that the starting salary for recently qualified teachers is 16% below the OECD average. UTU is calling on the employers of teachers and the DE to agree a restoration of the value of teachers' pay which has continued to decrease in real terms since 2010.

(2) UTU is highly alarmed at the recent threats to incremental pay made by the employing authorities. UTU reaffirms its position that incremental pay is a contractual right and will not countenance putting teachers in the early stages of their career into a position of disadvantage.

UTU is further alarmed at the fact that a growing number of teachers are carrying out key coordinator roles for no additional remuneration.

UTU demands that the journey towards valuing our teaching workforce again begins with the employing authorities respecting teachers' contractual rights and ensuring they are appropriately paid for the work that they do.

(3) UTU notes with alarm that teachers have suffered a 9% pay cut since 2010.

UTU demands that Management Side recognise the value of teachers by agreeing to the reasonable demand by teachers of a 5% pay increase.

(4) Conference notes that, even in these times of financial constraint, schools continue to utilise short-listing strategies that place emphasis on the holding of teaching allowances as an indication of proven and existing leadership responsibility and competency. Conference calls on EA to urgently address this practice with schools and to ensure that the experience of leading a curriculum area or other aspect of school life is cited as a criterion for a post regardless of whether or not the teacher received payment.

PENSIONS

UTU calls upon the Central Executive Committee to put mechanisms in place to provide all our members with clear information about pension provision and to encourage members to investigate the various options open to them to prepare for their financial future.

BUDGET

(1) UTU is alarmed at EA's suggestion that there exists an increasing number of schools unable to operate within their annual budget allocation. UTU is aware that School leaders have worked hard and creatively to ensure the current lack of funding and investment has a minimal impact upon teaching and learning and overall standards attained within our schools. UTU calls upon the Department of Education to provide schools with sufficient funding now and to avoid the inevitable deterioration of standards and learning experiences.

(2) UTU notes, with alarm, the continuing budget pressures faced by our schools. UTU instructs the Central Executive Committee to ascertain, by whatever means necessary, the real savings, if any, achieved by the establishment of the Education Authority.

ETI

UTU condemns the recent actions of the Chief Inspector in instructing inspectors to visit schools and carry out inspections during a time of industrial action. UTU continues to call on the ETI to examine the workload issues created by the inspection process and calls on DE to examine the effects of inspection in distorting the normal pattern of teaching and learning in schools.

UTU notes that the ETI has not taken any further steps to develop a collaborative and supportive approach to school inspections (as recommended by the Education Committee in 2014), opting, instead, to create further varying bureaucratic, evaluative inspection platforms. UTU calls for CEC to put further pressure on the Department and ETI to ensure that current modes of inspection are fit for purpose, that inspectors have a minimum standard of professional, school-based experience and that procedures are put in place, as a matter of urgency, to provide professional and supportive guidance in necessary school improvement points.

LEVELS OF PROGRESSION

UTU registers the lack of confidence in the teaching profession and amongst parents in the levels of progression and calls on the DE, as a matter of urgency, to introduce legislation which makes these no longer a requirement for teachers and schools.

WORKLOAD

UTU continues to be gravely concerned about the accountability agenda which is leading to unmanageable levels of workload for teachers and Principals.

UTU is calling on DE, ETI and the employing authorities to re-engage with the work of addressing teacher workload with a view to ensuring that precious teacher time is spent on activities which show a direct impact on the core function of teaching and learning.

UTU demands that workload is amalgamated between all agencies and EA, therefore reducing unnecessary paper overload when supporting children on our SEN registers.

TEACHING PRINCIPALS

UTU notes the lack of progress made, at departmental level, to tackle and stabilise the mounting workload faced by all teaching professionals in the workplace, but in particular, that of teaching principals. UTU calls on the Department to issue strong guidance to Governors to ensure that teaching principals in their first few years of holding the position are given proper access to their principal release time.

SEN PROVISION IN NURSERY SCHOOLS AND UNITS

UTU is alarmed at the lack of support provided for Nursery School pupils who have a statement for Educational Needs. The current provision is totally inadequate and has an impact on pupil/teacher ratios at some point each day. UTU is calling on the EA and DE to provide proper investment to ensure all SEN pupils within our Nursery Schools receive the adequate support and other pupils are not disadvantaged as a result of the current lack of investment.

SEN/PUPIL BEHAVIOUR AND SUPPORT FOR EMOTIONAL NEEDS

UTU is highly concerned about the complete inability of schools and teachers to impress on those responsible for providing support the crisis that is facing schools in terms of providing appropriate teaching and learning for growing numbers of children with SEN and their peers.

UTU demands that DE and EA recognise that the point and purpose of the education system is to provide appropriate educational experiences for all children and that failing to provide all necessary resources in that regard is not an option.

UTU insists that the employing authorities face up to the responsibilities of the system and use whatever means necessary to ensure that a significant number of our children do not continue to face a system which refuses to cater for their needs.

UTU further insists that the teachers of these children suffer no longer from the absence of essential resources and support.

UNNECESSARY PAPERWORK INVOLVED REFERRING CHILDREN SAR1

UTU is concerned about the increased workload expected to be completed by SENCOs within our schools. UTU has identified the unnecessary duplicity of information when referring children for statutory assessments. UTU demands a major review of the current referral system and suggests a single entry system be introduced where all necessary information is readily available, thus reducing the unnecessary work and stress for our SENCOs.

SEN

With the vast increasing number of pupils presenting with special educational needs, the responsibilities put on schools from health departments and demand from parents is overwhelming. UTU calls on the EA for support to meet the needs specified in Stage 3, 4 and 5 paperwork.

CLASS SIZE

UTU reiterates the current policy on class size which states:

UTU condemns the fact that DE has already breached the existing guidelines on maximum class size. UTU is calling on DE to reconsider and revise downwards on class size in primary schools and to extend similar legislation to KS2. UTU is also calling on DE to impose a statutory limit of 24 pupils in composite classes. UTU is further urging DE to return to the statutory class sizes for practical subjects at post-primary level.

UTU urges the Department of Education to listen to those who are working in schools and classrooms and bring legislation into line with their professional opinion.

UTU further urges DE to move on this as a priority issue in the context of the ever increasing number of children in mainstream classrooms presenting with complex needs demanding of time and specialist approaches.

UTU also urges the DE to recognise and respond to the difficulties being raised by teachers in terms of the attempts to extend practical class sizes at post-primary level beyond 20.

INDUCTION AND EPD

UTU despairs about the continuing decrease in the resources made available to our Beginning and Newly-Qualified Teachers. At this vital point in their career, UTU has grave concerns that, even when suitable courses and opportunities for Professional Development are identified, budgetary constraints beyond their control are preventing BTs and RQTs from accessing such.

UTU calls on the Department of Education to recognise the value of the new entrants to the teaching workforce and to show recognition of that value by ensuring that substitute cover for Induction and EPD courses is centrally funded, and that all BTs and RQTs can access these opportunities without detriment, regardless of contract.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

UTU is concerned about the lack of consistency in the information provided to substitute teachers in schools.

UTU calls on the Education Authority to raise awareness in schools about the importance of key information to substitute teachers and to provide a short, user-friendly format for schools to use in this regard.

NORTHERN IRELAND SUBSTITUTE TEACHER REGISTER

UTU is calling on the Department of Education and the Employing Authorities to revisit the practical outworkings of the NISTR and ensure that it is fit for the purpose for which it was intended ; that is, for schools to readily and easily engage substitute teachers and for substitute teachers to readily and easily source employment.

MENTAL HEALTH

UTU is alarmed at the growing impact of the present crisis in schools on the mental health of teachers and Principals. UTU is gravely concerned that the issues caused by excessive accountability, diminishing budgets and lack of specialist support are having a huge detrimental effect on the well-being of members.

UTU calls on the Department of Education and the Employing Authorities to firstly recognise and name the problem and secondly engage with the teaching unions in finding and actioning a meaningful response.

SOCIAL MEDIA

UTU remains gravely concerned about the misuse of social media by parents and students to bully and harass both individual teachers and schools generally. UTU also notes with alarm the heightening of such incidents both in terms of frequency and nature.

UTU calls on the employing authorities to ensure that guidance to schools around the use of social media includes very clear instructions, developed in conjunction with the teaching unions, about how schools should address such issues and protect the rights of the teacher.

TEACHER HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

UTU has grave concerns about the sharp decline in teacher health and well-being as a direct result of the present crisis in the education system.

UTU demands that the DE recognises the dangers of the present system to its teachers and Principals and revisits the THAW strategy with a view to effecting immediate action.

NO TOLERANCE POLICY OF PHYSICAL AND VERBAL ABUSE TOWARDS SCHOOL STAFF

UTU calls on the EA to issue a No Tolerance policy to safeguard school staff from physical and verbal abuse.

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Conference has concerns about the continuing high incidence of domestic abuse in our society. As a mark of recognition and a means of raising awareness that this issue impacts on teachers to the same degree as any other section of the workforce, Conference calls on TNC to add a clause to the Teachers' Attendance Procedure which allows for absence due to domestic abuse to be treated appropriately.

MATERNITY AND PATERNITY BENEFITS

UTU continues to be highly concerned at the inequity in maternity and paternity benefits for teachers in comparison to other public sector workers.

UTU urges the Department of Education to recognise the disproportionate impact of the present policy on what is a workforce which is predominantly female and address this highly unacceptable issue as a matter of urgency.

RECRUITMENT

UTU is increasingly concerned at the continued use of recruitment criteria which no longer fully inform the appointing school of the skills and experience of the candidates.

UTU demands that EA revisits its guidance for Governors regarding the setting of recruitment criteria and ensures that teachers and Principals are not disadvantaged in their career progression due to the impact of budgetary and other outside factors over which they have no control.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

UTU calls on the Education Authority to examine the setting up and resourcing of 'hubs of expertise and resources'. These hubs will enable teachers and schools to have and share the best and highest quality of resources for pupils. It will also mean that teachers and schools will not need to spend time on 'reinventing the wheel' or paying to access on-line resources.

UTU is disappointed that access to departmentally funded professional development continues to be on the demise while privatised professional development continues to flourish. UTU calls on the Department to fulfil its responsibility to the teaching profession to ensure that quality, departmentally-funded professional development opportunities are made available.

UTU recognises the value of Continuous Professional Development and calls on the EA to adequately fund for sufficient professional development, including face-to-face sessions. UTU also demands that appropriate sub-cover be funded and provided.

CURRICULUM

UTU notes with dismay the narrowing of what was once a broad-based curriculum addressing the needs of all of our children. UTU notes that the cutting of languages has now been joined by the pushing out of science-based activities at primary level and is concerned that the move towards focusing on what are viewed as core subjects by ETI is having a detrimental effect on our core purpose: developing the potential of all children.

UTU demands that the fundamental principle of a broad-based curriculum which meets the needs of all children is reasserted by all key parties and that the performance of schools is measured accordingly.

ICT RESOURCES

UTU calls on DE to provide funding to update ICT resources in schools. UTU also calls on EA to ensure that all education personnel receive updated training in the area of ICT. UTU furthermore insists that all schools should have equality of provision in order to access ICT as required.

TECHNOLOGY IN SCHOOLS

UTU notes that technology has contributed much to teaching and learning in our schools. UTU, however, notes that concerns are being expressed about the amount of time children spend on screens. UTU calls on the Central Executive Committee to investigate these concerns and report to the 2019 Conference.

SHARED EDUCATION

UTU calls upon DE to ensure that sufficient funding is provided to continue the excellent programmes for Shared Education which have been developed in recent years with the assistance of EU funding.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

UTU is increasingly concerned about the falling levels of pupil attendance in our schools. UTU is further concerned that parents do not fully appreciate the impact that poor attendance can and does have on pupil attainment and achievement. UTU demands that the Department of Education fund a campaign to highlight to parents the positive impacts of good attendance. UTU further calls on the EA to collate examples of good practice in tackling poor attendance and disseminate such positive strategies to all schools.

MINIBUSES

The recent change where teachers need a full D1 licence and the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) has had devastating impacts financially across the province. The interpretation of 'due diligence' continues to place schools in uncertainty. UTU calls on the Education Authority and Department of Infrastructure to examine this issue and for funding to be made available to enable teachers and schools to continue to provide the transport for enriched activities for pupils.

EA (QUALITY OF PRACTICE)

UTU is highly perturbed at the present lack of support provided to schools by the EA.

UTU condemns the negative impact that this lack of support is having at all levels in the life of a school.

UTU demands that EA determine the core functions that schools can expect from them as a service and deliver these in an appropriate and timely fashion.

AREA BASED PLANNING

UTU is concerned about the increasingly insecure positions, fuelled by speculation and ambiguity, in which schools are finding themselves with regard to the future.

UTU calls on EA to bring a clear proposal on the way forward with regard to Area Planning to the table and engage constructively with the teaching unions to establish a future education system which best serves the needs of all.

GTCNI

Following the consultation on the GTCNI Regulations UTU would urge GTCNI to engage with unions on the future extended role of GTCNI and its independence.

BREXIT

UTU is concerned about the potential areas of impact of Brexit on the education system in Northern Ireland.

UTU calls on the relevant authorities to ensure that the out-workings of Brexit cause no detriment to schools in either funding or practice.



ULSTER TEACHERS' UNION

94 Malone Road, Belfast, BT9 5HP

Tel: 028 9066 2216

E-mail: office@utu.edu Web: www.utu.edu