



## SEPTEMBER 2017 UPDATE

Dear Colleague

### **INDUSTRIAL ACTION**

As you will be aware, we are still in a state of limbo as no agreement has been reached between the parties to form a government in Northern Ireland. There is therefore no Education Minister appointed as yet and as a result little progress has been made in settling the 17/18 salary claim. Working Groups on Workload are meeting in the next few days to consider what might be presented to the Minister when he/she takes up post. As a result of the lack of progress the UTU is continuing the same Industrial Action as previously regarding Inspections – the full detail of action can be found on the UTU website. The action will be reviewed at the first meeting of the Central Executive Committee to be held on 8<sup>th</sup> September.

**INDUSTRIAL ACTION WILL CONTINUE UNALTERED UNTIL SUFFICIENT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE ON ALL ELEMENTS OF THE SALARY CLAIM.**

### **INCREMENTAL PROGRESSION**

The Department of Education has informed us that teachers who are entitled to incremental progression will receive it in their September salary. This will apply to teachers who are on the Main Scale and are still proceeding up the scale. Once a teacher reaches point 6 on the Main Scale they must apply to cross the Threshold onto the Upper Pay Scale – this entails completing a form highlighting their contribution to teaching, full details of which can be obtained from the DE website. Once a teacher has crossed on to the Upper Pay Scale they are then entitled to progress every two years but the Principal must complete a simple form to advise the Department of Education that they approve the teacher moving up to the next point. The onus rests with the teacher to advise the school if they do not want to avail of such a progression. The Principal must have the paperwork for the Upper Pay Scale

completed by 27<sup>th</sup> October 2017 so we would advise that you check that your Principal has completed the forms by that date.

**REMEMBER, IT IS YOUR CONTRACTUAL RIGHT TO RECEIVE INCREMENTAL ENTITLEMENT BUT YOU SHOULD ENSURE THAT PAPERWORK IS SUPPLIED WHERE NECESSARY.**

#### **CALLING ALL MINIBUS DRIVERS!**

Earlier this year school minibus drivers were warned that they must comply with the current requirements regarding driving school minibuses. This direction was then withdrawn and schools were advised that drivers must be compliant by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017. All teachers who find themselves taking on the duties of driving the minibus should ensure that they have the appropriate documentation, insurance and time allocated within their timetable to allow them to carry out the essential maintenance duties that such a post requires. Please note that a failure to fulfil all the requirements of the post will render your insurance null and void and may even lead to a criminal conviction! We would advise that you discuss the matter as soon as possible with your Principal.

#### **CHILD PROTECTION GUIDANCE**

It has been brought to our attention that the employing authorities may have issued guidance to schools which did not go through the proper consultative process. We would ask that teachers do not sign up to such guidance until we have had the opportunity to examine it. The unions intend to raise this matter at the first meeting with Management Side at the Joint Working Party scheduled for 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT ONCE YOU HAVE SIGNED FOR SOMETHING IT BECOMES CONTRACTUAL AND YOU MAY BE BOUND BY IT, NO MATTER HOW UNREASONABLE IT TURNS OUT TO BE!**

#### **EDUCATION AUTHORITY**

We have become more and more aware that the Education Authority is not giving full support to schools in the way that the Education and Library Boards did in the past. If you have been involved in any situation which resulted in a less than satisfactory response from EA please let us know of it so that we may raise it with them.

#### **PRACTICAL CLASS SIZES**

The Department of Education issued advice to schools earlier this year suggesting that practical class sizes may be increased as long as a Risk Assessment has been carried out. It has been drawn to our attention that the Education Authority, who insures schools, may not be satisfied with this defence in a situation where an accident occurs in such a class. Our advice is that Principals should ensure that if they intend class sizes to exceed the normal size they should get written confirmation that this is acceptable for insurance purposes

before putting additional pupils into classes. We would also advise teachers that they obtain written indemnification before accepting larger classes.

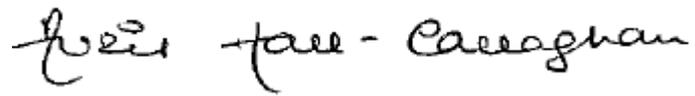
**PLEASE NOTE: If you are advised that the school is being inspected this term you should advise the Principal that the UTU members will not be participating in the Inspection – there is a standard letter on the UTU website which should be printed off to hand to any Inspector who attempts to enter your classroom. You should contact UTU Headquarters to advise us of the date of your Inspection and we will ensure that a UTU Official will be present on the day the Inspectors arrive to advice of the situation. UTU Officials can arrange to speak with members of the Board of Governors about our continuing action.**

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We have just heard today about the proposed reduction of £56 per pupil to primary and nursery school budgets. These budgets are already at breaking point. Obviously this is not acceptable and will put further pressure on Principals and teachers. Schools should impress on parents that it is **their child(ren)** who will be disadvantaged and **they should make their feelings known to their local political representative!**

Please invite other teachers on your staff to become a member of the effective local teacher's union – the UTU!

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Farrell-Cavanagh". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P' and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**General Secretary**