

Frequently Asked Questions.

New Action Short of Strike Action Instructions.

ASOS Commencing from 00:01am on 28th September 2026.

GENERAL

These instructions require members to work in a manner which is consistent with the recommendations made by the Minister's Independent Review Panel on Teacher Workload. Additionally, members are instructed to no longer provide labour on an unpaid, goodwill, basis, where the Independent Review Panel on Teacher Workload has determined that such work should be properly planned, resourced, allocated time, or otherwise reformed.

1a. Members are instructed not to agree any policy until the impact it will have on members' workload has been assessed, the recognised trade union representative has agreed it, and the time taken to complete this work has been included in members' Directed Time budgets

FAQ- This includes non-compliance with any existing or new policies which has not been agreed with your Trade Union and is included in your Directed Time Budget. Steps: Must be workload assessed, presented and agreed with reps in your school and included in individual DTBs.

1b. Members are instructed not to implement any existing or new policies, initiatives or working practices including any initiatives relating to TransformED, which have not been the subject of consultation and agreement with the recognised trade unions. Members are instructed to refuse to implement any new initiative that:

- Has not been subject to a workload impact assessment;
- Has not been supported by sufficient Directed Time, clearly allocated in a teachers' Directed Time budget.

FAQ- Members will refuse to respond to, or facilitate, consultations and new practices, including Transform Ed, initiated by employing authorities and any other arm's length bodies unless requested to do so by their trade union.

1c. Members are further instructed not to create or update non-statutory policies as part of any such initiative or working practice unless the workload has been assessed, agreed with the recognised trade unions and sufficient time has been provided. Statutory, safeguarding and child-protection requirements remain unaffected.

FAQ- This refers to policies, procedures or initiatives that the school is not legally required to have or implement. Examples might include new school policies, frameworks, action plans or other initiatives introduced by the school or management where there is no statutory requirement for staff to undertake the work. Members should continue to comply with legal requirements, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection.

2a. Members are instructed not to undertake any task that has not been specifically included within their individual Directed Time budget.

FAQ- Where a member has no Directed Time Budget they should adhere strictly to TNC 2024/2 and fulfil their contracted duties.

2b. Members are instructed to refuse any direction to undertake meetings, supervision, cover, training or other administrative duties during protected Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time. PPA time shall be used solely for professional planning, preparation and assessment activities.

3. Members are instructed to refuse routine clerical or administrative duties, including duplication of tasks, that are not properly attributable to the professional role of a qualified teacher. This includes technical IT or infrastructure tasks that would ordinarily be undertaken by C2k, an IT technician, telecommunications provider, contractor,

infrastructure specialist or other appropriately trained person, rather than by a qualified teacher.

FAQ-see below for a list of clerical/ administrative duties not to be undertaken by a teacher.

Routine clerical or administrative duties, including duplication, that are not properly attributable to the professional role of a qualified teacher.

- Collecting money
- Chasing/investigating pupil absences
- Bulk photocopying
- Copy typing
- Producing standard letters
- Producing class lists
- Record keeping and filing
- Putting up and taking down displays
- Producing attendance analyses
- Processing examination results
- Collating pupil reports
- Administration of work experience
- Administration of examinations
- Administration of cover
- ICT troubleshooting and commissioning
- Ordering supplies and equipment
- Stocktaking
- Cataloguing, issuing and maintaining supplies and equipment
- Taking or producing formal minutes
- Coordinating and submitting bids
- Seeking or giving personnel advice
- Managing pupil data
- Inputting pupil data after the initial entry

This list is illustrative rather than exhaustive: the underlying test is whether the task requires the professional skills and judgement of a teacher

4. Members are instructed not to exceed their maximum teaching hours inclusive of cover *(25 hours per week in primary & special and 23.5 hours in post-primary; pro-rata if part-time)*.

FAQ – If you are teaching more than 25 hours (primary or SEN) or 23.5 hours (post-primary); (pro-rata if part time) immediately contact your Trade Union.

5. Members are instructed to complete all other Directed Time activities outside pupil session times at a time and place of their choosing, with the exception of one event per term and the non-teaching days.

FAQ- where an activity falls within Directed Time but is not one of these exceptions, members should not be required to attend at a particular time or place during that Directed Time. Members should continue to meet their professional and statutory responsibilities.

6. Members are instructed to refuse to be directed to undertake any existing or new unremunerated duties or responsibilities which are not required of all classroom teachers.

7. Members are instructed to complete statutory Special Educational Needs (SEN) documentation only where sufficient Directed Time has been specifically allocated, and training has been provided. Members are instructed not to duplicate SEN documentation, or maintain duplicate evidence files.

FAQ-do not to duplicate SEN documentation or evidence files where the same information is already recorded within the school's agreed SEN systems. If a teacher has not received PLP training/guidance they are unable to adopt a new, unfamiliar PLP format without appropriate training and allocated time. Schools may continue to use existing measures for recording SEN information, including an current IEP or PLP template.

MEETINGS

8. Members are instructed only to attend one formal school meeting or parental engagement event of no more than one-hour duration per term outside the school's normal pupil teaching day (see point 5), providing an agenda is published 48 hours in advance.

9. Members are instructed to attend meetings during the normal pupil teaching day only where:

- The meeting has been specifically identified within the Directed Time budget;
- A written agenda has been issued at least 48 hours beforehand,
- Appropriate cover has been provided where necessary, and time to produce the work for this cover session has been provided.
- The meeting does not exceed one hour.

COMMUNICATION

10. Members are instructed not to participate in employer consultation exercises, surveys, working groups or consultation forums unless participation has been agreed by their recognised trade union.

FAQs-if there is no rep in your workplace the school may contact union offices.

11. Members are instructed to refuse to respond to emails/telephone calls/online learning platform messages or any other form of messaging platform outside of Directed Time, or outside of time specifically identified within the Directed Time budget for this purpose. This includes acknowledging receipt of communications.

FAQs-All schools should have communicated professional hours to parents. The instruction is not to monitor, read, respond to or acknowledge work communications outside Directed Time and prevent work communications from extending into teachers' personal lives.

Members may wish to use an automatic response to reduce pressure to respond outside their allocated working time. Members may wish to turn off work email, messaging and platform notifications outside their allocated working time.

COVER AND SUPERVISION

12. Members are instructed to refuse to undertake cover, including temporary compositing of classes, outside of the contractual requirements, or cover during times not specifically identified for the purposes of cover on the timetable.

FAQ – Should a colleague be absent more than 2 days you should not be providing cover for the class. Members should contact their TU for further advice.

Classes should not be “split” during any part of the day to accommodate absent colleagues. In post-primary “cover” periods should be identified in your timetable and matched against your time budget.

13. Members are instructed to refuse to undertake:

- public examination invigilation;
- scribing,
- reader duties,
- examination administration,

except where such duties have been specifically agreed and appropriately resourced.

FAQ – Teachers should not be partaking in invigilation or scribing for examinations (unless part of a secondary contract).

14. Members are reminded that participation in extra-curricular activities remains entirely voluntary. Members are instructed to refuse direction to organise, supervise or participate in extra-curricular activities outside their contractual duties of 1265 hours over 195 days.

FAQ – Teachers may volunteer to take extra-curricular activities, and the time should be allocated in their time budget, or they should be fully remunerated for their time. Where members are no longer volunteering, they should inform their Principal.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

15. Members are instructed to refuse to complete any part of the School Development Plan (SDP) unless sufficient time is allocated for this task in their Directed Time budget. Members are not required to undertake supplementary or duplicative SDP work, additional templates, reports, presentations or duplicate uploads, nor to complete or replace SDP work withheld by colleagues participating in lawful industrial action.

FAQ Members should first establish whether time has been allocated within their Directed Time budget for any SDP work that they have been asked to complete. If no time has been allocated, members should explain that they are complying with the industrial action instruction and are therefore unable to complete the task.

16. Members are instructed to refuse to accept or co-operate with any classroom observation outside of Induction and Early Professional Development and the Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD) scheme, which stipulates classroom observation of one hour per year with a maximum of two visits. This includes learning walks, drop-ins, peer observations, learning reviews, AI-based observation technology, and quality assurance visits, except where required by statutory induction arrangements.

FAQ - Even if previously agreed through established local agreement any classroom observation or peer observations should cease. The only statutory arrangements where this may be facilitated are TNC 2025-2 & TNC 2025-3 - Procedure for supporting effective teaching in schools. (ETI observations are not impacted).

17. All members currently at UPS3 or at the top of their Individual School Range (ISR) are instructed to refuse to cooperate with or undertake any work related to their own Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD) process. Principal and Vice-Principal Members are additionally instructed not to operate, administer, facilitate or implement PRSD for any member of staff who is at UPS3 or at the top of their respective ISR.

FAQ – Only those on UPS3 (or at the top of their ISR) should refuse to undertake PRSD. If you are on any other scale and do not participate in PRSD you may not be able to progress up the pay scale.

18. Members who have not reached UPS3 on the Teachers' Pay Scale or principals/VPs who have not reached the top of their ISR scale are instructed to participate only in agreed Professional Review and Staff Development (PRSD) arrangements. Members are instructed to refuse locally developed PRSD procedures, additional documentation, additional observations, additional evidence requirements, or locally imposed portfolio systems that exceed arrangements agreed with the TNC.

FAQ – Only those on UPS3 (or at the top of their ISR) should refuse to undertake PRSD. If you are on any other scale and do not participate in PRSD you may not be able to progress up the pay scale.

19. Members are instructed to refuse to participate in:

- book scrutiny,
- work scrutiny,
- book scoops, etc.

FAQ – There should be no scrutiny of pupils' books or work. This applies to teachers, co-ordinators and school leaders.

20. Members are instructed to refuse to submit their short term planning, teacher planners and / or lesson plans to members of the Senior Management Team or anyone acting on their behalf. Teachers should continue to plan their lessons within their PPA time.

FAQ – Teachers should continue to plan their lessons in their PPA time. There is no need to submit or electronically upload these lesson plans.

21a. Members are instructed to continue to engage professionally with Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) inspections and to discharge their normal professional duties.

21b. Members are instructed not to carry out any additional workload beyond that normally associated with their professional duties as a result of the announcement, notification or conduct of an ETI inspection.

21c. Members are instructed not to suspend compliance with these Action Short of Strike Action instructions as a result of an ETI inspection.

FAQ – Should the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) visit or inspect a school you should carry out your normal professional duties and engage with the Inspector during your contractual working pattern.

22. Members are instructed to participate in no more than **two whole-school assessment and data collection exercises** during any academic year, provided that sufficient time is allocated in their Directed Time budget to complete all associated tasks for these assessment exercises. These should be clearly identified on the school calendar.

22b. Members are instructed to record assessment information **once only** for each assessment exercise.

22c. Members are instructed to undertake controlled assessment, coursework assessment, and associated administrative activities only where:

- Sufficient Directed Time (not from 10% PPA allocation) has been specifically allocated within the individual's Directed Time budget to complete all associated duties, including preparation, assessment, marking, authentication, recording, moderation and submission of marks, as per the requirements set out by the examination board;

Or

- The relevant Awarding Body has made direct payment arrangements for such work.

Or

- Through a formally agreed Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) arrangement, with the TOIL taking place within the current academic year.

Where neither sufficient Directed Time nor Awarding Body payment nor TOIL has been provided, members are instructed to notify their recognised trade union representative, and will not undertake these activities until the matter has been resolved.

FAQ – Members are instructed to only complete two assessment points per pupil, which have been identified in the calendar, over the academic year. Time must be allocated in your time budget for the preparation and marking of the assessment. Only one mark requires to be uploaded electronically to SIMS or BROMCOM.

For Controlled Coursework members should have allocated time in their time budget to facilitate the marking and any administrative tasks that are required.

PROMOTED POSTS AND SCHOOL LEADERS

24. Members holding Teaching Allowances, SEN Allowances or promoted responsibility posts are instructed to undertake those responsibilities only where those duties have been identified and sufficient Directed Time has been specifically allocated

25. Members are instructed not to assume duties arising from vacant posts from day one of absence unless appropriate remuneration has been agreed and sufficient Directed Time has been specifically allocated.

26. Principal and Vice-Principal members are instructed to refuse to implement initiatives; policies, administrative procedures, assessment arrangements, monitoring systems, recording requirements, etc, which have not been workload impact assessed; been agreed by the Teachers' Negotiating Committee.

27. Principal and Vice-Principal members are instructed to limit School Development Planning (SDP), operational planning and associated documentation to one year.

28. Principal and Vice-Principal members are instructed to refuse to provide information, reports, data, returns or financial-planning information to employing authorities, the

Department of Education or other relevant bodies where the information is non-statutory, is available from another source, has already been provided, or would duplicate information already held or submitted.

29. Principal and Vice-Principal members are instructed not to undertake activities which undermine, circumvent or negate these Action Short of Strike Action instructions. They are instructed not to request, collate or provide to employers information identifying individual staff members participating in lawful industrial action, except where there is a clear statutory or legal requirement to do so, and not to undertake work left uncompleted as a consequence of colleagues participating in lawful industrial action.

30. Principal and Vice-Principal members are instructed not to write, produce or contribute to Annual Board of Governors' Reports beyond statutory requirements.

31. Principal and Vice-Principal members are instructed not to facilitate or attend more than one Board of Governors' meeting in any school term. Board of Governors' meetings should take place during the normal school working day. Principal and Vice-Principal members are also instructed not to facilitate or assist with the dissemination of non-statutory training materials to governors. Any Board of Governors subcommittee attendance must be consistent with these instructions and must not be used to circumvent the restriction on meetings.

32. Principal and Vice-Principal members are instructed not to act as a clerk or minute-taker at meetings of the Board of Governors. The preparation of minutes is an administrative function and should normally be undertaken by administrative staff in accordance with the Education Authority's Scheme of Management section 35 paragraph 4.

33. Principal and Vice-Principal members are instructed to refuse unsolicited contact, correspondence, meetings or visits from employing authorities, the Department of Education, School Improvement Professionals (SIPs), School Development Services and other school-improvement personnel, except where required by legislation, where the school is in formal intervention, where a legitimate safeguarding or child-protection issue

arises, or where the Principal has initiated or expressly requested the contact because it is directly useful to the school.

33a. Principal and Vice-Principal members are instructed not to act merely as a conduit for the employing authorities or the Department of Education by distributing or passing on non-statutory materials or communications to staff or Governors. This does not apply where communication is required by legislation or is necessary for safeguarding or child protection.

33b. Principal and Vice-Principal members are instructed not to personally undertake technical IT or infrastructure work that would ordinarily be undertaken by C2k, an IT technician, telecommunications provider, contractor, infrastructure specialist or other appropriately trained person. Members may report faults, identify the operational impact, provide reasonable access to authorised technical personnel and take immediate proportionate action necessary to address an imminent safeguarding or health and safety risk, but should not diagnose, repair, install, configure or assume technical responsibility for infrastructure on behalf of another body.

33c. During weekends, public or bank holidays, Christmas, Easter, summer and other scheduled school-closure periods, Principal and Vice-Principal members are instructed not to respond to, process or act upon routine requests from the Department of Education, employing authorities or other relevant bodies. This does not apply to a legitimate and urgent safeguarding or child-protection matter, a court direction, statutory notice, legally enforceable deadline or other formal legal requirement. Accessing school premises during a closure period does not of itself make a member available for general employer or Departmental business.

33d. Principal and Vice-Principal members in special schools are instructed not to undertake administrative, operational, managerial or leadership responsibilities for Education Authority summer schemes by virtue of their substantive school role. This includes planning or managing the scheme; staffing, rotas or pupil allocation; scheme-specific risk assessments; healthcare, transport, catering, premises or procurement arrangements; data returns or evaluations; or accepting accountability for the operation, staffing, safety or

governance of the scheme. The Education Authority must appoint and resource its own scheme management and administrative support. Genuine safeguarding responsibilities remain unaffected, and members offered a separate paid summer-scheme contract or written assignment should seek advice from their recognised trade union before accepting it.

33e. Principal and Vice-Principal members are instructed to refuse to facilitate budget-based redundancy processes where the proposed redundancy arises from the financial circumstances of the school, and to seek advice from their recognised trade union before undertaking any related process or action.

ALL MEMBERS

34. Members are instructed not to undertake any activity intended directly or indirectly to replace, circumvent, undermine or negate these Action Short of Strike Action instructions, including by redistributing withdrawn work, requiring another member of staff to undertake it, or engaging another member to perform work which would otherwise remain uncompleted because of lawful industrial action.

FAQ - Members must not undertake activity intended directly or indirectly to circumvent, undermine or negate the instructions. Report attempts under Action 37. Work should not be redistributed to other members undertaking action.

35. Members are instructed not to undertake duties which members of another recognised teaching trade union have withdrawn from, or have been instructed not to undertake. Members must not be directed or volunteer to replace such withdrawn labour or otherwise act in a manner that undermines lawful industrial action by another recognised teaching trade union.

FAQ - Members must not be directed or volunteer to replace another trade union member who has withdrawn their labour.

36. Members are instructed not to undertake any tasks not completed as a consequence of compliance with these Action Short of Strike Action instructions once the action has ceased. Work not undertaken shall not accumulate for later completion.

FAQ – Tasks not completed during the period of ASOS will not accumulate and be asked for at a later time.

37. Members are instructed to report any attempt to circumvent these Action Short of Strike Action instructions through their School Representative or, where no representative is available, through their Local Association Secretary, National Executive Member or National Official.

FAQ - Report any attempts to circumvent these ASOSA instructions through to the School Representative or, if none is available to you Trade Union HQ.

38. School Representatives are instructed not to negotiate local variations to these Action Short of Strike Action instructions.

FAQ - Do not negotiate a local variation. Refer the dispute through the union routes in Actions 37–39.

39. Where uncertainty exists regarding the application of these instructions to a specific activity, members are instructed to seek advice from their recognised trade union before undertaking that activity.

FAQ - seek advice from your Trade Union HQ before undertaking the activity where uncertainty exists.

In the event of a genuine safeguarding or child protection emergency, the welfare of the child remains the priority.

FAQ - The final statement is explicit: the welfare of the child remains the priority.