



ULSTER TEACHERS' UNION

MEMBERS' GUIDEBOOK

*Your practical guide to conditions of service — for
every teacher, at every stage of your career in
Northern Ireland.*

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IN THIS GUIDE

CONTENTS

This guidebook answers the everyday questions that arise across the school year. Use it as a quick reference — and remember that UTU officials are always on hand for advice tailored to your situation.

Welcome & your HQ team

A note from the General Secretary and the people behind UTU.

Newly-qualified teachers

Finding your feet, registration, and getting the school year into perspective.

Maintaining classroom discipline

Ten practical principles for a calm, productive classroom.

Induction & EPD

Your induction year, the Career Entry Profile and professional development.

Conditions of service

Working time, professional duties and your contract.

Time allocation

How the 1,265 directed hours are made up in primary and secondary schools.

Salary, NI & superannuation

How you are paid, what is deducted and why.

Pay progression & pensions

Moving up the scale, allowances and the NI Teachers' Pension Scheme.

Absence from work

Sick leave, certification, maternity and adoption leave.

Leave of absence

Recommended actions for a wide range of circumstances.

Childcare & flexible working

Vouchers, job share, flexible working and career breaks.

Administering medicines

What to consider before agreeing to administer medication.

Educational visits

Risk assessment, supervision and insurance for trips and events.

Using cars & your union

Transporting pupils safely — and making the most of your membership.

YOUR UNION, IN YOUR CORNER

Need advice now? Call the office on (028) 9066 2216 or email office@utu.edu. Find your UTU school representative — they are your first point of contact in school.

WELCOME

FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Welcome to the new school year. Whether you are stepping into your very first post or returning to the classroom for another year, everyone at the Ulster Teachers' Union is glad to have you with us.

Teaching in Northern Ireland has rarely asked more of its profession. Rising workload, pressures on wellbeing, pay that has not kept pace and constant change all make a demanding job harder than it should be. UTU exists to stand with you through all of it — as the only union based here, working exclusively for the teachers of Northern Ireland.

We have put this guide together as a clear, practical companion to your conditions of service: something to turn to when the everyday questions arise, from contracts and salary to absence, maternity and pensions. It also includes a dedicated section for newly-qualified teachers, and for the experienced colleagues who mentor them.

No guide can anticipate every situation. When you need advice you can rely on, our experienced officials are only a phone call away. Please don't hesitate to contact me, our Deputy General Secretary **Stephen McCord**, our Field Officer **Rebekka Gilpin**, or our Organising Officer **Joseph Wyglendacz**, on **028 9066 2216**. We are always happy to help.

Wishing you a rewarding — and well-supported — year ahead.



Jacquie White
GENERAL SECRETARY

Meet the team at HQ

Experienced, dedicated staff working exclusively for Northern Ireland's teachers, based at 94 Malone Road, Belfast.

Jacquie White General Secretary	Stephen McCord Deputy General Secretary	Rebekka Gilpin Field Officer
Leigh Cooper Field Officer	Joseph Wyglendacz Organising Officer	Heather Arrell Financial Executive Officer
Karen Taylor Executive Officer	Tony McCabe Communications Officer & PA to Deputy General Secretary	Lindsay Osbourne Operational Officer & PA to General Secretary
Denise Allely Database Administrator	Meriel Segal Database Administrative Support Officer	

STARTING OUT

NEWLY-QUALIFIED TEACHERS

For several years you have been learning how to teach. Now is the time to put it all into practice. One point matters above all from the very start: teaching is about communicating with your pupils. Until you have mastered that, all the educational theory in the world will not help you.

Successful teaching depends on building the right relationship with your classes. There is no single formula — there are as many answers as there are children. Each school is different and each teacher is different. It is up to you to develop a style that suits you, your school and the children in your care, and that does not happen overnight.

Be prepared to put in maximum effort and enthusiasm, to take advice from those more experienced than yourself, and above all to stay flexible and adapt to whatever arises. As your skills develop, so does your job satisfaction — and you will realise that the years of training were worthwhile.

Registration

Once qualified you must register with the **General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI)** at www.gtcni.org.uk, and for temporary employment with the **Northern Ireland Substitute Teacher Register (NISTR)**. Registration can take some time, as police security checks are carried out, so it is recommended that you contact both as soon as you graduate. Your university or college should provide guidance.

A Teacher Register Number is required for both but will not be issued until your first salary has been received. Graduates who trained outside Northern Ireland must still register with GTCNI even if already registered in England, Scotland or Wales.

Your first pay

Teachers on permanent contracts are paid monthly, on the last banking day of the month, with special arrangements over the Christmas period. Teachers in temporary employment are paid in the middle of the month following employment. You will receive a pay advice slip confirming that salary has been lodged.

With your first salary a National Insurance number will be allocated (unless you already have one), and National Insurance will be deducted from your gross pay. A tax code — possibly an interim one — will also be allocated, and income tax deducted under PAYE. Contributions to the Northern Ireland Teachers' Pension Scheme (superannuation) will also be deducted.

ON OPTING OUT

Retirement may feel a long way off, but the pension scheme provides a lump sum and regular income — and vital protection if you ever have to retire early through ill health. **UTU does not recommend opting out.** If you are considering it, you must arrange an alternative pension. Speak to us first.

Getting things into perspective

Everything about a new job feels strange at first. To make life easier, build an overall view of the school as quickly as you can.

1. The school year

The phrase most new teachers dread is “schemes of work” — the outline of what you plan to teach across the year. The detail required varies from school to school; your Head of Department or Principal will keep you right, and will want to see and comment on your schemes. Your assigned mentor can help you get an overall view, including:

- ☐ The dates of holidays. Every school has broadly the same compulsory holidays, but there are up to 10 extra non-contact days that vary between schools.
- ☐ The dates of external examinations affecting your pupils (e.g. GCSE).
- ☐ The dates of internal examinations, report issue and parents' evenings.
- ☐ Any other event affecting pupils — field trips, school productions, school trips and so on.

2. The school's resources

Before planning what you teach, find out what is available. Textbooks remain the main resource, alongside PCs, laptops and audio-visual equipment. Many schools use interactive whiteboards, and a growing number use tablets in the classroom.

3. The staffing structure

You will discover that many teachers carry responsibilities beyond teaching — curriculum co-ordination, exams, pastoral roles, senior leadership. Some receive teaching allowances for these duties; your UTU representative can tell you how many allowances the school holds and how they are distributed (a decision for the Principal and Board of Governors). Find out early who is responsible for what, so you know whom to approach — whether a problem arises or you wish to get involved yourself.

4. Groundwork

If you are appointed before the end of June, ask whether you can spend time in school as a visitor; most Principals are glad to help, and the time is invaluable. If that is not possible, try to:

- ☐ Meet your Head of Department or Principal to discuss textbooks, schemes and resources.
- ☐ Find out the number, age range, ability and special needs of the children in your class(es).
- ☐ Gather basic information about the school day — start, break, lunch and assembly times.
- ☐ Learn the layout of the school, especially emergency exits and evacuation procedures.
- ☐ Find out when the first staff meeting is — many schools hold non-contact (“Baker”) days before term begins.
- ☐ Most importantly, find out what preparation you need to do before term commences.

IN THE CLASSROOM

MAINTAINING DISCIPLINE

Good discipline is the key to happy pupils and a happy teacher. When you are constantly managing behaviour, time for teaching and learning shrinks, stress grows and job satisfaction falls. Problems will always arise, but they can be minimised by your attitude and by setting and maintaining clear standards. Children must know the rules and the consequences of breaking them.

Make yourself aware of your school's discipline policy and follow it. The following principles will help.

#	PRINCIPLE	WHAT IT MEANS IN PRACTICE
1	Be prepared	Plan lessons and resources well in advance. If you are not fully prepared, your attention is not on the pupils — and children should never be left idle while you decide what to do next.
2	Be in full control	You are the responsible adult. Pupils must understand they are not deciding how the lesson is organised or how it proceeds.
3	Be consistent	Set the boundaries and avoid letting them be extended.
4	Be fair	Treat all pupils in the same way.
5	Keep rules to a minimum	Few rules, applied to everyone — including the adults. If coats are not draped over chairs, that applies to staff too.
6	Know what you expect	If you do not know what you expect, the pupils will decide for you.
7	Be punctual	Arrive before the pupils, who should enter in an orderly fashion.
8	Settle pupils first	Don't talk over chatter, and avoid raising your voice unduly. A teacher who shouts competes with the class — noise begets noise.
9	Have a routine	Set clear rules for how a lesson begins, proceeds and ends, and organise an orderly exit.
10	Involve pupils thoughtfully	Where pupils share in decisions, keep outcomes in line with your expectations.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Pupils are your responsibility, and a lack of forethought can lead to incidents with far-reaching consequences. You should control the class — the class should not control you. Your first meeting with pupils is the most important: your aim is not to be liked, but to be respected.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

INDUCTION & EPD

Your contract

You will be asked to sign a Contract of Service and to undergo a medical examination. Read the terms carefully, and if in any doubt consult UTU Head Office. Failure to sign or to produce medical reports can lead to your salary being stopped without notice, which often causes serious inconvenience. Our advice is to attend to such matters immediately.

Induction & Early Professional Development

All newly-qualified teachers take part in an induction programme to help consolidate classroom skills, provided in partnership with the Education Authority's School Development Service and CCMS. Induction is integral to your professional development within the school context, addressing aspects of teaching that initial teacher education cannot fully develop, through both classroom and school-focused provision.

The Career Entry Profile (CEP)

The CEP is an important bridge between the initial and induction stages. It records the assessment of your competences and highlights your strengths and development needs, shaping your continuing professional development through induction and EPD. Used well, it lets you build a strong, coherent framework for your development.

The CEP is your responsibility, but will be seen by the Principal and Board of Governors and used to identify targets for your induction action plan. That plan is drawn up jointly by you and your teacher-tutor, and should be reviewed and updated at regular intervals through the year.

Your first teaching appointment

- The **Board of Governors** is your employer.
- The **Principal** is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school and for ensuring appropriate policies and procedures are in place.
- **Vice-Principals, Heads of Department and Key Stage Leaders** assist the Principal and may be your first port of call when a problem occurs.

You are responsible for the well-being, discipline and education of the pupils assigned to you, and must know the relevant policies and procedures before you meet the pupils — in particular Child Protection procedures, the Disciplinary Procedure, and any system for seeking permission from or informing parents.

BE ONE STEP AHEAD

Taking responsibility for your first classes can be daunting, and preparing well in advance makes it easier. Know the meaning of bells (end of class, fire warning), what happens at break and lunch, where to find resources, the procedure for collecting money, who deals with pupils who are ill or injured, and what should happen if an adult asks for a child to leave school early.

What should you know about your first classes?

- ☐ Make yourself aware of the curriculum content for each subject, class or form.
- ☐ Seek guidance from an experienced teacher — your mentor or year, subject or key stage leader.
- ☐ Use available schemes and plans of work to draw up your own plans.
- ☐ Follow your school's planning requirements (weekly, monthly, six-weekly or termly). Plans are likely to be checked and commented on by the Principal, Key Stage Leader or mentor.
- ☐ You may also be required to write follow-up assessments on some or all lessons.

Your pupils

- ☐ Learn pupils' names as quickly as possible.
- ☐ Pupil profiles and records can reveal behavioural, learning, medical or social needs, and may inform how you organise your classroom (for example, seating a pupil with a hearing difficulty near your workstation).
- ☐ Understanding a child's home situation can help you understand their difficulties in school. Changing home circumstances may also explain a change in behaviour or performance.

For temporary teachers

- ☐ Register with the Education Authority's School Development Service.
- ☐ Attend courses wherever possible.
- ☐ If in long-term temporary work, ask to be allocated a teacher-tutor and try to complete aspects of induction.

YOUR RIGHTS

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

The following applies to all teachers at every stage of their career.

Working time

- A full-time teacher (other than in a residential establishment) shall be available for work on **195 days a year**, of which no more than 190 should involve teaching children in a classroom.
- A teacher shall be available to perform such duties, at such times and places as may reasonably be specified by the Principal, for **1,265 hours per year** — excluding time spent off school premises preparing and marking, and time travelling to and from work.
- A teacher may not be required to **teach** (as distinct from supervise) for more than **25 hours per week** in a primary or special school, or **23½ hours per week** in a secondary school.
- Unless employed under a separate contract as a mid-day supervisor, a teacher shall not be required to undertake mid-day supervision.
- All teachers shall have a break of at least **30 minutes** between 12 noon and 2.00pm (in nursery schools and units, between 12 noon and 2.30pm).
- A “year” means 12 months commencing 31 July; a “week” means 7 days commencing on a Sunday.

Professional duties

The following are deemed to be included in a teacher's professional duties:

- Planning and preparing courses and lessons.
- Teaching pupils according to their educational needs, including setting and marking work to be done in school and elsewhere.
- Assessing, recording and reporting on pupils' development, progress and attainment.

Contracts

When appointed to a post

You will be asked to sign a Contract of Service under which you are bound by the Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Service. Read it carefully and, if in any doubt, consult UTU. You will also be asked to undergo a medical examination.

On appointment to your first position

The contract confirms the type of employment — permanent full-time, permanent part-time, temporary, and so on — and, if part-time, the number of hours or days you are expected to work. Teachers in primary and secondary schools in permanent, full-time employment are contracted to work 39 weeks (38 weeks pupil contact and 1 week exceptional closing), totalling 1,265 hours.

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR CONTRACT?

Specific enquiries can be answered by UTU officials — telephone 028 9066 2216.

HOW YOUR HOURS ADD UP

TIME ALLOCATION

The 1,265 directed hours are made up differently in secondary and primary schools. Teachers working part-time have their hours calculated accordingly — for example, a 50% (2.5-day) contract divides the hours below by two; an 80% (4-day) contract multiplies them by four-fifths.

Secondary schools

Maximum class-contact time: 23½ hours per week.

ALLOCATION	HOURS
Class contact (38 × 23½ hrs)	893
Directed time	372
— Exceptional closures (5 × 6 hrs)	30
— All other duties	342
Total	1,265

Primary schools

Maximum class-contact time: 25 hours per week.

ALLOCATION	HOURS
Class contact (38 × 25 hrs)	950
Directed time	315
— Exceptional closures (5 × 6 hrs)	30
— All other duties	285
Total	1,265

"All other duties" includes teaching allowances, which are not over and above the 1,265 hours. This does not apply to the Principal or Vice-Principal.

Other duties (all school types)

- **Supervisory** — pre-school, break, and seeing pupils off the premises after school. Not everyone supervises every day, but all must be available if needed; the morning break counts as directed time, and a teacher may be called on to cover a colleague.
- Staff meetings, curricular meetings and key stage discussions.
- Planning and preparation; assessment and reporting.
- Parent interviews; extra-curricular activities; concerts.
- A contingency reserve for unforeseen events; time for management responsibilities; and any other activity the Principal requires during the school year.

Where a teacher supervises pupils' lunch, they must have a minimum 30-minute break (before or after) between 12 noon and 2pm — in special schools, between 12 noon and 2.30pm.

KNOW YOUR HOURS

Teachers generally work over and above 1,265 hours, but no one can be **directed** to work beyond them. A copy of the time budget showing the allocation of hours can be obtained from the Principal, and any changes during the year should be by negotiation. If in doubt, contact a UTU Field Officer on 028 9066 2216.

GETTING PAID

SALARY, NI & SUPERANNUATION

Your salary

Salaries are paid monthly — on the last day of the month for permanently employed teachers, and half-way through the month following employment for temporary staff. Arrange to have your salary paid directly to your bank account. You will be notified of the amount paid and of deductions for superannuation, National Insurance, PAYE and union subscription.

National Insurance

To qualify for full benefits and pension you must pay a specified number of contributions. National Insurance is deducted monthly from your salary.

Income tax

Your salary is taxed entirely through PAYE, operated by the tax office serving your school's area — the office to approach with questions about your tax code or allowances. You may be sent a claim form on which to set out items qualifying for tax allowance, which normally includes your UTU subscription and the replacement of clothing essential for your job. Full details are available from UTU Headquarters.

Superannuation

Teachers are “contracted out” of the state pension scheme because employers provide an acceptable alternative. Each month you pay a percentage of your gross salary, the employer contributes on your behalf, and together these provide a substantial lump sum and pension on retirement. The scheme is no longer compulsory, but if you opt out you must provide an alternative pension.

PROTECT YOUR PENSION

Unless you pay your superannuation contributions, you risk a reduced pension when you retire. If you have any queries about salary, National Insurance, income tax or superannuation, contact UTU in the first instance.

Where new teachers start

All newly-qualified teachers are placed on **point 1 of the Main Scale**, regardless of qualification or age. Permanent, full-time teachers are paid over 12 months; part-time teachers are paid pro rata. A temporary teacher is paid on the same point as permanent staff, but salary may be calculated by the day or the hour (annual salary divided by 195 days, or by 1,265 hours, respectively).

FIGURES CHANGE

The salary points, tax bands and allowances illustrated in this guide change regularly. Always confirm the current figures with UTU Headquarters or on the UTU website before relying on them.

MOVING FORWARD

PAY PROGRESSION & PENSIONS

Progression on the pay scale

Permanent teachers

Salaries currently increase on **1 September** each year, when movement to the next pay point also takes effect where appropriate. In exceptional circumstances, progression may be withheld. Until Upper Pay Scale 1 is reached, progression is yearly; thereafter it takes two years from UPS1 to UPS2, and again from UPS2 to UPS3. Teachers must complete a **Threshold application** to progress from M6 to UPS1 — details are available from your Principal.

Temporary teachers

Provided a teacher has worked at least 26 weeks of a school year and successfully completed EPD or PRSD, there should be yearly movement to the next Main Scale point on 1 September. Progression beyond UPS1 is a two-yearly process, as for permanent teachers. All progression is linked to successful completion of EPD (Early Professional Development) or PRSD (Professional Review and Staff Development).

Teaching & special needs allowances

You can improve your salary by taking on extra responsibilities, known as **teaching allowances**. These become available when a teacher relinquishes an allowance through retirement, phased retirement or promotion. There are currently five points on the scale; when available, posts are advertised in school with the responsibilities and the criteria used by the Board of Governors. Two **special needs allowances** are also available, in special schools and to teachers taking responsibility for special-needs pupils in mainstream schools.

Northern Ireland Teachers' Pension Scheme (NITPS)

The NITPS is a statutory scheme. It is contributory — both teachers and employers contribute — with a minimum service requirement of two years for the award of a pension. It is possible to purchase Additional Pension, and the scheme provides a lump sum on retirement and an index-linked regular income.

For members who began contributing **before 1 April 2007**, Normal Pension Age is 60; for entrants after that date, it is 65. From 1 April 2007 it is possible to retire from age 55, though pension and lump sum would be actuarially reduced. **Phased retirement** is also possible from 55, where a member reduces employment by between 25% and 75% for at least 12 months before Normal Pension Age.

Career Average (CARE) arrangements

From **1 April 2015** the NITPS moved from a final-salary scheme to a Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) scheme. Some members remain in final-salary arrangements; others have benefits calculated using a combination of career-average and final-salary arrangements. Anyone joining on or after 1 April 2015 has benefits calculated on career-average arrangements only. Contribution rates are tiered according to a member's actual annual pensionable earnings:

ACTUAL ANNUAL PENSIONABLE EARNINGS	CONTRIBUTION RATE
Up to £25,999.99	7.4%
£26,000 – £34,999.99	8.6%
£35,000 – £41,499.99	9.6%
£41,500 – £54,999.99	10.2%
£55,000 – £74,999.99	11.3%
£75,000 and above	11.7%

Rates and bands shown are indicative and are reviewed periodically. Further guidance on determining your band is available from the Department of Education's Employer Payroll Guide and from Teachers' Pensions.

THINKING ABOUT YOUR PENSION?

If you have any pension queries, or are considering retiring, please contact Ulster Teachers' Union. Articles on superannuation appear regularly in UTU News, and full details of pension entitlement are published on the UTU website.

WHEN YOU CAN'T BE THERE

ABSENCE FROM WORK

Sick leave (permanent employment)

There will be times when you cannot attend work. In all cases, inform the school as soon as possible. The sick-leave year runs from 1 April to 31 March, and each working day's absence is totalled within it. Entitlement to full and half pay depends on your length of service.

YEAR OF SERVICE	FULL PAY	HALF PAY
First year	25 days	50 days*
Second year	50 days	50 days
Third year	75 days	75 days
Fourth year and after	100 days	100 days

**In the first year, half pay applies after completion of four months' full-time service. Teachers employed temporarily on daily or hourly rates have no right to paid sick leave.*

Certification

- For absences of up to **7 days inclusive** (counting Saturday and Sunday), submit a self-certification form to the Principal as soon as possible, and no later than the 7th day, to ensure sick pay.
- Short illnesses may be followed by an informal return-to-work discussion with your Principal.
- For illnesses lasting longer than 7 calendar days, a doctor's statement must be submitted before the end of the second week of absence.
- Following longer absences, your GP should issue a Fitness to Return to Work certificate.

If you are absent for a prolonged period, or where the frequency of absence causes concern, you may be asked to attend a formal attendance meeting, or be referred by the Board of Governors or Employing Authority to the Occupational Health Physician.

Phased return & alternative work

Following a referral, if you are deemed unable to maintain regular and reliable attendance, you may be offered a phased return of up to four weeks, a different work pattern such as job share, alternative work if available, or additional help. If deemed unfit to work, your contract may be ended and you may be offered Retirement on Grounds of Ill Health (after two years' pensionable service) on one of two levels:

- **Total Incapacity Benefit (TIB)** — with service enhanced by half of the service that could have been completed before Normal Pension Age; or
- **Partial Incapacity Benefit (PIB)** — with no enhancement.

Maternity leave

All teachers are entitled to one year's maternity leave — 26 weeks' ordinary and 26 weeks' additional leave. Entitlement to occupational pay and/or Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) depends on your work pattern before leave begins. For those entitled, Occupational Maternity Pay is currently:

MATERNITY PAY	ADOPTION PAY (UP TO 39 WEEKS)
4 weeks' full pay	4 weeks' full pay
2 weeks' pay at 90%	2 weeks' pay at 90%
12 weeks' half pay plus SMP	6 weeks' half pay plus SAP
21 weeks' SMP only	27 weeks' Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP)

You need not take the entire entitlement, but you may not work for the two weeks following the birth, and you must supply a Fitness to Return to Work certificate if you wish to return before the end of 26 weeks. Leave may not begin more than 11 weeks before the expected date of birth. By the end of the 15th week before the expected date, inform your employer and submit Form TR160 (from Teachers' Salaries Branch) and Form MAT B1 (from your GP).

WE CAN HELP YOU PLAN

Full details and advice on maternity, adoption and ill-health matters are available from Ulster Teachers' Union — please contact us early.

TIME OFF

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Apart from illness and maternity or adoption leave, all leave is granted at the discretion of the Board of Governors. Any request should be made **in writing** to the Board through the Principal. The Department of Education has issued guidance to Boards on which requests might be granted, and on what basis — some with pay, some without. A teacher may not take leave, paid or unpaid, without the Board's written permission.

HOW RELATIVES ARE DEFINED

"Near relative" means father, mother, husband, wife, brother, sister, son, daughter, grandparent, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law or daughter-in-law. **"Other relative"** means sister-in-law, brother-in-law, nephew, niece, aunt, uncle or guardian.

Leave not exceeding 3 working days

CAUSE OF ABSENCE		RECOMMENDED ACTION
1	Death of a near relative, or another relative who is a member of the teacher's household.	WITH PAY Up to 3 days' leave.
2	Death of another relative.	WITH PAY 1 day's leave; where extensive travel is involved, 2 days may be granted.
3	Attendance at a funeral other than a relative's.	WITH PAY Granted only where attendance is a necessary social duty; absence should be the minimum part of the day required.
4	Marriage of the teacher.	WITH PAY 3 days' special leave (timed relative to school closing periods).
5	Attendance at a wedding.	WITH PAY 1 day if the bride or groom is a relative, or the teacher is bridesmaid or best man; up to 2 days where extensive travel.
6	Serious illness of a member of the teacher's household.	WITH PAY Up to 3 days' leave.
7	Attendance at examinations.	WITH PAY Leave for each exam day, provided the exam leads to an additional qualification.
8	Interviews for other teaching or NI education-service appointments.	WITH PAY Up to 1 day's leave.
9	Attending as a representative of a Teachers' Organisation.	WITH PAY Granted provided the frequency of absence is not excessive.

CAUSE OF ABSENCE	RECOMMENDED ACTION
10 Attendance at a Conference of Teachers' Organisations.	WITH PAY Leave granted.
11 Conferences and meetings of statutory or departmental bodies, beneficial conferences, or youth-welfare activities.	WITH PAY Granted for meetings of EA, CCMS and their committees, statutory bodies, beneficial conferences, and activities such as Guides or community-relations projects.
12 Disruption of daily travel (flood, snow, transport strike).	WITH PAY Granted, with regard to individual circumstances.
13 Attendance at an Ordination or Profession.	WITH PAY 1 day's leave; 2 days where extensive travel.
14 Attendance at court or tribunal as witness, plaintiff or defendant.	WITH PAY Leave granted.
15 Graduation ceremony of the teacher or a near relative.	WITH PAY 1 day's leave; 2 days where extensive travel.
16 Participating or officiating in amateur sport of international, national or provincial standing.	WITH PAY Leave granted.
17 A partner's confinement.	WITH PAY 3 days' leave.
18 Serious burglary or serious damage to the home.	WITH PAY 1 day's leave.
19 Service as a lay person on the bench of a juvenile court.	WITH PAY Time off, less any loss-of-earnings allowance received, for up to 4 days a year.
20 Accompanying a spouse, or a child, on a special visit to a medical consultant.	WITH PAY Up to 1 day's leave.
21 Accompanying own child to receive a Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award.	WITH PAY Up to 2 days, depending on travel.
22 Attending own child's graduation ceremony outside NI.	WITH PAY Up to 2 days, depending on travel.
23 House removal.	WITH PAY 1 day's leave.
24 Birthday, New Year or Special Honours award to a near relative.	WITH PAY 1 day's leave; 2 days where extensive travel.
25 Preparation for examination.	WITHOUT PAY Leave granted.

CAUSE OF ABSENCE		RECOMMENDED ACTION
26	Competing at a musical festival or feis.	WITHOUT PAY Without pay, unless the festival is of national or international standing.
27	Acting as presiding officer or polling clerk at an election.	WITHOUT PAY Without pay if the school is in operation.
28	Religious observances required by the teacher's denomination.	WITHOUT PAY Without pay, provided notice is given at the start of the school year.

Leave exceeding 3 working days

NATURE OF ABSENCE		RECOMMENDED ACTION
1	Officiating (manager, coach, referee) at amateur sport of international, national or provincial standing.	WITH PAY Leave granted.
2	Participating in sporting events as a member of a club.	WITHOUT PAY Leave granted.
3	RIR or TA annual camps, or Royal Naval Reserve exercises.	WITH PAY Up to 10 working days.
4	Training as a dog handler with NI Mountain Rescue.	WITH PAY Not exceeding 5 working days.
5	Staying with a child receiving specialist treatment in a distant hospital, or caring for an ill or dependent relative for a considerable period.	WITHOUT PAY Leave granted.
6	Attending conferences or functions as a District Councillor.	WITH PAY With pay if holding Chief Elective Office (Mayor or Chair) or where connected with educational or recreational activities.
7	Attending unapproved courses, or study not grant-aided by the Department.	WITHOUT PAY Leave granted.
8	Competing in an international music festival abroad.	WITHOUT PAY Leave granted.
9	Conferences or events for charitable organisations (e.g. Rotary, Soroptimists).	WITHOUT PAY Leave granted.
10	Voluntary service overseas, visiting disaster areas, or working in under-privileged countries.	WITHOUT PAY Leave granted.
11	Standing as a parliamentary candidate, acting as an election agent, or electioneering.	WITHOUT PAY Leave granted.

NATURE OF ABSENCE		RECOMMENDED ACTION
12	Duties as National President of a Teachers' Organisation.	WITH PAY With pay, as agreed during the presidential year.
13	Scholarship to visit areas outside the UK regarding educational standards.	WITHOUT PAY Without pay; Principal and senior staff only.
14	Award of a Teacher Fellowship.	WITH PAY With pay for up to one term, if teaching in a secondary school and the fellowship is connected with the subject taught.

The recommended actions above are guidance to Boards of Governors and may vary with individual circumstances. If a request is refused, contact UTU to discuss your options.

FAMILY & FLEXIBILITY

CHILDCARE & FLEXIBLE WORKING

Childcare vouchers

Information is available from Employers for Childcare (0800 028 3008), with application forms from the Education Authority. Key points:

- Open to all working parents and available to each parent; it is not means-tested, and is a different scheme from tax credits.
- A maximum of £243 per month is exempt from income tax and National Insurance.
- Vouchers must be paid to a registered provider — childminders, day nurseries, crèches, playgroups, after-school and breakfast clubs, holiday schemes and workplace nurseries.
- Opting out is possible. It may affect maternity pay (opt-out is recommended 23 weeks before the due date) and sick-leave pay, but does **not** affect Teachers' Pensions, the State Pension or AVCs.

Government childcare-voucher schemes have changed in recent years and may be closed to new entrants. Check current arrangements with Employers for Childcare before relying on this.

Part-time working arrangements

A variety of part-time arrangements are available. Applications are made to the Board of Governors, and there is a possibility of appeal if a request is refused.

ARRANGEMENT	WHAT IT OFFERS
Temporary Variation of Contract	A short-term change to your working pattern — normally short-term, but for up to one year, with possible extension in extenuating circumstances.
Flexible Working	Open to a teacher with a child under 18, or with caring responsibilities. Arrangements can be permanent, or temporary for up to three years.
Job Share	Two or more teachers sharing one post. Arrangements can be permanent, or temporary for up to two years.
Career Break	Special leave of absence without salary, for not less than one year and not more than five.
Phased Retirement	For those aged 55 or over — reduce hours and/or responsibilities in exchange for a reduced pension or lump sum while still earning a salary.

CONSIDERING A CHANGE?

Applications are considered by the Board of Governors, and an appeal is possible if a request is not granted. Speak to UTU before applying — we can advise on the option that best fits your circumstances.

USE CAUTION

ADMINISTERING MEDICINES

There is **no obligation** on teachers to administer medicines or drugs to pupils, and teachers should be wary of becoming involved. Where you do agree, only do so once you are satisfied on every one of the following points.

- ☐ You have received adequate training for each task you are asked to undertake.
- ☐ You have clear, written guidance from your employer.
- ☐ You have clear, written indemnification from your employer.
- ☐ You have proper facilities to administer and store the medication.
- ☐ You are accompanied by a responsible member of staff on every occasion you administer medication to a pupil.
- ☐ You have immediate access to a fully qualified practitioner should you need to consult one.
- ☐ You have a copy of a letter confirming the parents have been told you have no contractual obligation to administer medication.
- ☐ You have typed, written information from the parents covering the medication, timing, dosage and possible effects.
- ☐ You have written assurance that you will not be asked to judge when, how often or what dosage to give.
- ☐ You have, in writing, the name of the teacher responsible for the school's record of administration and the safekeeping of substances, who can provide the medication and the means to administer it (or access to where it is kept).
- ☐ You are satisfied that the volume of such work does not warrant employing a qualified nurse.
- ☐ You are satisfied you are not being asked to perform a task that needs a qualified nurse or practitioner, or that could result in injury to a pupil.
- ☐ You have a copy of a statement giving parental permission to administer the medication concerned.

THEN, AND ONLY THEN

Having satisfied yourself on all of the above, follow your Employing Authority's guidelines on the administration of medicines and drugs. If in any doubt, contact UTU.

OUT OF SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL VISITS

For any activity off the school premises — day trips, overnight stays or sports events — your responsibility is that of a responsible adult acting *in loco parentis*. If a child is injured under your supervision, you must be able to show you took all the care a reasonable parent would. No teacher should feel under pressure to undertake such visits, but the guidance below will help if you choose to lead or assist one.

1. Carry out a risk assessment

Where possible, visit the site in advance and identify problems for pupils of the proposed age group, of normal ability, and those with physical, health or other difficulties — including travel, indoor and outdoor activities, and eating and sleeping arrangements. Then put procedures in place to minimise the risks, and inform parents of any issues affecting all or individual pupils. Consider whether an activity is too strenuous, whether alternatives can be offered, and whether staffing is adequate.

2. Travel

- ☐ Do pupils need travel documents (passport, photographic ID)? Are inoculations required?
- ☐ Does any pupil suffer from travel sickness, or have dietary requirements to arrange before travel? (Intermediate stops at service stations can be a particular problem.)
- ☐ Is medication required for any pupil during travel?
- ☐ Is the coach or mini-bus company reliable, with properly maintained vehicles?

3. Sleeping arrangements

- ☐ Is staff accommodation adjacent to pupils' dorms? Are male and female staff allocated to the respective dorms?
- ☐ Does any pupil have a problem that could disturb others at night? Is there a separate sick bay, and how is an ill pupil supervised without leaving other groups understaffed?
- ☐ Can pupils who cause problems be separated and supervised?

4. Dietary considerations

- ☐ Parents should indicate specific diets required for health or religious reasons; the hotel or travel company should be told before travel.
- ☐ Have a clear course of action if a pupil becomes ill through eating the wrong food — nut allergy can be a major problem.

5. Activities

- ☐ Is trained staff always available to lead activities? In the event of an accident, what procedures are in place, and is a local doctor on call?
- ☐ Do you know each child's relevant health history, such as allergic reactions? If abroad, will there be language difficulties, and what transport is available to hospital?

- Who travels with a pupil to hospital, and is staffing sufficient to allow one or two staff to leave? How are parents informed, and is there 24-hour contact with the school?
- Is the activity within the pupils' capabilities — the walk not too long, the climb not too difficult? Will pupils be suitably clothed? Are you confident to lead or accompany every activity, and is a trained first-aider with the party?

6. Discipline & insurance

Pupils must know the behaviour expected of them and the sanctions if rules are broken. When a rule is broken, take appropriate steps to prevent further breaches — a second chance without consequence simply pushes the boundaries further. Allowing pupils out unaccompanied requires serious consideration of their age, the location and their response to freedom. You are the responsible adult whether pupils are within sight or not.

INSURANCE COMES FIRST

Being properly insured for travel, sport and all other activities — regardless of location or difficulty — is your number-one concern. Never leave school without being satisfied that you and your pupils are covered for whatever may happen.

TRANSPORT & MEMBERSHIP

USING CARS & YOUR UNION

Using your own car

Ulster Teachers' Union does **not** recommend using private vehicles to transport pupils, for short or long journeys. If you nonetheless agree, follow this guidance:

- ☐ Never be the only adult in the vehicle (child protection).
- ☐ Provide seat belts and booster seats for pupils up to 135cm tall and up to 12 years of age (a legal requirement).
- ☐ Check with your insurer that you are properly covered to transport pupils.
- ☐ Obtain written consent from both the Board of Governors and parents.
- ☐ Keep your vehicle correctly maintained, so you cannot be deemed to have contributed to any accident through negligence.

Using others' cars

Using the cars of parents, classroom assistants or other non-teaching staff should only ever be done with the written consent of the Principal, who should ensure the individual has security clearance, is properly insured, provides correct booster seats, and will not be the only adult in the vehicle. All of this advice applies whether pupils are out for an hour's sporting fixture or a ten-day visit abroad.

Your union

You can become a full member of UTU by returning the deduction-authorisation form. Get to know your **UTU school representative** — your first point of contact in school — and try to attend branch meetings in your area. Don't hesitate to contact Headquarters with any query, and encourage colleagues who have not yet decided on a union to join UTU.

TALK TO US

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Telephone (028) 9066 2216 · office@utu.edu · www.utu.edu

Northern Ireland's only PAYE teachers' union — local expertise, real support.