



School workforce news

...nursery nurses, secretaries, bursars, learning support practitioners, sitekeepers, school meals staff, teaching assistants, learning mentors, administrators, midday supervisors, librarians, cleaners, personal care assistants, technicians ...

GMB your union in school

Issue 28, Summer Special, August 2009:

This is the twenty-eighth in a series of bulletins for GMB reps and members working in schools. Our bulletins will keep you up-to-date on national policy developments and other news affecting the school workforce.

School Support Staff Negotiating Body gears up for a busy summer

The holidays may have arrived, but the new School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB) has a full programme of work this summer.

The new body held its first meeting on 7 July. Now its two working groups are setting about their tasks.

The working group which is designing a new core contract for support staff met for the first time on 28 July. The group has begun outlining basic elements of an employment contract, and has also opened discussions about how to define the working year.

Meanwhile the other working group, which is devising a national pay and conditions framework for support staff, meets on 7 August.

If agreed by the SSSNB and the Secretary of State, a new pay and conditions framework will apply with

statutory force to all maintained schools in England.

The SSSNB's Executive Group has also got under way, to coordinate the ongoing work. It's a busy time for everyone concerned, and GMB will keep our members fully involved.

GMB is represented in all parts of the SSSNB by lay members of our National Schools Committee: Karen Leonard from Worcestershire, Alyson Bryan from Sunderland and Barbara Plant from Lewisham, with the negotiations led by National Secretary Brian Strutton.

All SSSNB meeting papers are being circulated to organisers in every GMB region. If you would like to know more, get in touch. GMB members can contact their local office or brian.strutton@gmb.org.uk. Non-members: join now! There's a form on the back.

Local government pay offer

Local Government Employers have put in writing their final offer on pay for 2009. The terms of the offer are:

1. For spinal column points 4-10 inclusive, a pay rise of 1.25% backdated to 1 April 2009.
2. For spinal column points 11-49 inclusive, a pay rise of 1.00% backdated to 1 April 2009.
3. For employees with less than 5 years service an increase to the minimum leave entitlement of an extra day (going from 20 to 21). This does not change other leave entitlements.

4. There is a commitment to producing a joint statement or joint guidance, the employers seem unclear which, about best practice in handling redundancies.

GMB expects to begin consultation on the offer later in August.

It is vitally important that everyone is aware of the offer and has their chance to vote through GMB membership. There is a membership application form on the back page.

See GMB's Local Government Bulletin for full details of the pay offer: <http://www.gmb.org.uk/Templates/Internal.asp?NodeID=89986&int1stParentNodeID=89654>.

Swine flu: advice for schools

As *School Workforce News* went to press at the end of July, schools were expected to reopen as usual in September.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) will be sending a message to schools and local authorities in late August, to let them know what they should be doing at the start of term. Secretary of State Ed Balls has said that: "We will be monitoring the situation closely over the school holidays and will review the evidence in late August."

Existing DCSF advice is that school staff (and children and parents) should not come to the school if they have any flu-like symptoms.

Any member of staff displaying symptoms during the school day should be instructed to go home. Any child with symptoms should be isolated until their parent/carer can collect them.

If you are concerned about swine flu because you are pregnant or have a medical condition (e.g. a history of respiratory illness), you should contact your GP for advice.

The latest official advice on swine flu and schools is available at: www.teachernet.gov.uk/educationoverview/flupandemic/.

Support Staff in the “21st Century school”

The Government has recognized the indispensable role of school support staff in its new white paper.

The white paper sets out a vision for the “21st Century schools system”.

It acknowledges that “the wider school workforce has expanded significantly in the last ten years, and the improvements to children’s lives over this period could not have been achieved without them.”

There is a pledge to improve training for support staff. “Our ambition is that all staff within a school are both trained and supported in their current role and are given the opportunity to develop their skills and progress in their careers.”

A new strategy for the professional development of the school workforce is being worked up.

The Government promises to work with the School Support Staff Negotiating Body to consider how the “increased professionalism” of

support staff should be reflected in their pay and conditions.

The white paper repeats the Government’s ambition for all staff who support pupils’ learning to have, or be working towards, a Level 3 qualification.

It also calls for schools to make good use of the Higher Level Teaching Assistant status, and to deploy their HLTAs effectively.

The “21st Century schools system” will form the basis for future Government policy and new pieces of legislation.

It can be downloaded from the DCSF website:

<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=Cm+7588>.

Let us know what you think by emailing the Public Services Section at National Office:

tom.hazeldine@gmb.org.uk.

“RARELY COVER” REMINDER

“Rarely cover” for teachers starts in September. For more details, see *School Workforce News 25*, available at <http://www.gmb.org.uk/Templates/Internal.asp?NodeID=91087&int1stParentNodeID=89654&int2ndParentNodeID=89986>.

How is “rarely cover” being implemented in your school? Is it being done fairly? Are you being consulted? Tell your GMB rep or Officer, or email the Public Services Section at National Office: tom.hazeldine@gmb.org.uk.

