

Getting Started

The NASUWT is committed to protecting the interests of all beginning teachers.

In whatever type of school you teach, you will have the full backing of the NASUWT.

Support is provided to beginning teachers through the NASUWT's network of lay representatives and the professional staff in the NASUWT Belfast National Centre.

Below is an overview of the types of schools in Northern Ireland in which you may teach in as a beginning teacher.

In Northern Ireland, public education is administered centrally by the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI), locally in controlled schools by the Education Authority (EA) and in maintained schools by the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS).

For teachers employed in schools, their terms and conditions of employment and pay scales are contained within the Teachers' (Terms and Conditions of Employment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1987.

There are several categories of school in Northern Ireland.

Controlled schools

Controlled schools are managed and funded by the EA through school Boards of Governors.

Catholic maintained schools

These schools are managed by Boards of Governors but the employing authority of teachers is the CCMS.

Voluntary grammar schools

The Board of Governors is the employing authority and is responsible for the employment of all staff in its school.

Grant-maintained integrated schools

The Board of Governors is the employing authority and is responsible for the employment of all staff in its school.

Controlled integrated schools

Controlled schools are managed and funded by the EA through school Boards of Governors.

Irish-medium schools

The Board of Governors is the employing authority and is responsible for the employment of all staff in most Irish-medium schools. There are a very small number of controlled Irish-medium schools. These schools educate pupils through the medium of the Irish language.

There is a Committee for Education to advise and assist the Minister for Education. The Committee undertakes a scrutiny, policy development and consultation role with respect to the DENI and plays a key role in the consideration and development of legislation.

For an overview of the variety of ways in which the NASUWT supports beginning teachers, including a guide to the induction process, the free professional development seminars and the interactive networking between beginning teachers that the Union facilitates, use the web link below.

www.nasuwt.org.uk/NewTeachers



“As a Union the NASUWT is in constant contact with its members – I feel very much aware of my rights as a teacher and feel reassured about a number of issues which have concerned me.

Post-Primary School Beginning Teacher”

Finding Your First Teaching Post

Dos and Don'ts

Finding a first teaching post can be difficult for beginning teachers. As well as free seminars to prepare new teachers, the NASUWT offers advice on what new teachers initially should do in their search for a job. In this section is key guidance to help new teachers.

Finding a Vacancy

Do:

- start looking for a job as soon as possible and definitely by the Spring term of your final year;
- check the Belfast Telegraph Job Finder either online or in the Tuesday or Friday paper and the Irish News on a Thursday. Note that the EA and CCMS no longer advertise in the press;
- check the EA website for vacancies in controlled schools www.eani.org.uk/i-want-to/apply-for-a-job;
- check the CCMS website for vacancies in Catholic Maintained Schools www.onlineccms.com;
- ensure that your social media profiles are set to private. Many employers check them;
- consult the NASUWT online resource for advice on compiling your letter of application and CV at www.nasuwt.org.uk/FindingYourFirstTeachingPost;
- consider substitute teaching as an option if a permanent placement is unavailable.

Don't:

- always wait for a post to be advertised before applying. Speculative applications can be successful if they are received at the appropriate time or if they make such an impression that the school keeps your application on file;
- rely only on job searches to identify posts. You can identify vacancies through contacts. Friends and course tutors may have contacts who inform them of vacancies that arise. Be alert to job vacancies from contacts you may make during your teaching practice placements;
- be disheartened if you are still seeking a post into the Summer term of your final year.

Making an Application

Do:

- take careful note of guidance on the appointments procedure and follow the employers' instructions;
- prepare a rough draft of the application first;
- ensure that your knowledge, experience and skills are matched to each criterion on the person specification when you write your supporting statement;
- make sure that your application is clear and easy to read;
- unless you are applying online, use a good-quality black pen, as your form may need to be photocopied;
- word-process your supporting statement and attach it as a separate document;
- check carefully your spelling and grammar;
- ask someone to check the application before you submit it;
- keep a copy of your application. You will need to remember what you said when preparing for an interview and it can be referred to when completing other applications;
- write a supporting letter unless stated otherwise. This will provide you with an opportunity to set yourself apart from other candidates. The letter is an opportunity to get your personality across, but should be concise;
- if you are asked to send in a CV, check the NASUWT's guide to CV writing in the Union's 'Finding your First Teaching Post' website resource www.nasuwt.org.uk/FindingYourFirstTeachingPost.

Don't:

- send a curriculum vitae (CV) unless you are asked to;
- just copy a previous application form for every job, as it may not be specifically targeted at your new audience;
- make any spelling or grammatical errors;
- include anything in your application that you cannot back up with evidence in an interview;
- miss the closing date;
- omit any questions on the application form or criteria on the person specification;
- make negative statements about yourself or your experience;
- waffle or provide irrelevant information;
- treat online applications any differently to hard-copy applications, in terms of the spelling, grammar and structure of your application.

The Interview

Do:

- gain as much intelligence about the school as you can before the interview. If it is feasible, visit the school prior to the interview. Request the opportunity to do so. Most schools have a website. Check it out. Make reference to the information from your visit or the website in your responses;
- think about questions that you may be asked and prepare key points you want to make when answering;
- think about your body language and use of eye contact with the person asking you the question;
- ask for further clarification if you do not understand the question asked;
- decide whether you are prepared to accept the post if offered during the course of the interview. This may be the final question asked. If you do not wish to take up the post, tell them so;
- be prepared to ask the panel questions you have prepared beforehand at the end of the interview. Make sure that they are well-considered and don't ask questions for the sake of it, particularly if your question has been covered during the interview. If it has, say so;
- prepare by rereading your application form and developing examples of situations where you have demonstrated your skills and competencies;
- be prepared for the fact that some schools may use pupils in interview panels. The NASUWT has produced detailed guidance on this, which is available on the website www.nasuwt.org.uk.

Don't:

- sit down in the interview room until invited to do so, unless it is immediately obvious where the candidate is required to sit;
- be afraid to use a pen and paper to jot down key points before answering questions;
- speak too quickly, even if it is normal for you to do so;
- be panicked into making an ill-considered reply if you are asked an unexpected question. It is reasonable to take a few moments to consider your reply before answering;
- just give 'yes' or 'no' answers. Give appropriate examples to illustrate and support your answers;
- be afraid to use gestures to emphasise a point or 'talk with your hands' if it is normal for you;
- be panicked into repeating yourself or rambling on to fill a silence when you have finished giving an answer.

The NASUWT provides a comprehensive online guide to Finding Your First Teaching Post.

Visit the website to help you plan your job-seeking strategy.

The web resources include links to local authority websites that hold teacher vacancies.

www.nasuwt.org.uk/FindingYourFirstTeachingPost

A photograph of a classroom scene. In the foreground, a woman with dark, curly hair, wearing a light blue sweater, is smiling and looking towards a young girl. The girl, with long brown hair and wearing a pink shirt, is also smiling and resting her chin on her hand. They are sitting at a wooden desk. In the background, another person is blurred, and shelves with various items are visible.

I feel very well supported by the NASUWT. Lots of professional development courses available. Lots of care for new teachers.

Primary School Beginning Teacher

Appointment

After the Interview

Following a successful interview, you should receive a formal written offer of the post that sets out the conditions of appointment. This should include:

- the nature of the contract, i.e. standard or temporary;
- the date of commencement;
- the starting salary;
- the definition of the post. (This may be in the form of an accompanying job description. If this is not included, it should be issued shortly after you take up the post.)

Either before or shortly after you commence, you should receive a copy of your conditions of employment, which should only be signed if it complies with the definition of the post that you were offered. If you are unsure, you should take advice from the NASUWT.

If you have been unsuccessful, always ask for a debriefing to enable you to use this information to support your next application. If you are unhappy about any aspect of the appointment process, contact the NASUWT for advice.

Fitness to Teach

It is important that you are able to meet the medical fitness requirements of teaching. The responsibility for determining medical fitness rests with your employer, who may require you to undergo a medical examination before, or shortly after, taking up your appointment.

If beginning teachers from Northern Ireland decide to teach in England, Wales or Scotland after qualification, it is important to understand that employers in those countries have more obligations under the Equality Act 2010 than those currently in effect in Northern Ireland.

In particular, the Equality Act 2010 places a duty on employers when making a decision regarding whether a teacher is fit to teach, to take into account any reasonable adjustments to assist the teacher in carrying out their duties. The Equality Act 2010 also prohibits employers from asking potential employees questions relating to their health before a job offer is made.

If the report of the medical officer is unfavourable, contact the NASUWT to receive advice on formulating an appeal.

Teachers with a Disability

The Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 makes it unlawful for a person to place an advertisement that invites applications for a position to indicate within the advertisement that the applicant should not have any disability or a particular disability, or that the applicant should not previously have had a disability.

It is also unlawful for the person determining the application to show any reluctance to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments for prospective employees.

If you believe that you may have been refused employment or have faced discrimination on the grounds of disability, contact the NASUWT.

If a beginning teacher is thinking of working in England, Wales or Scotland, it is important to remember that a disability should not automatically prevent a teacher from teaching. Under the Equality Act 2010, it is the responsibility of the

employer to make reasonable adjustments to the working environment to accommodate employees who have declared that they have a disability.

If you believe that you may have been refused employment or have faced discrimination on the grounds of disability, contact the NASUWT.

Visiting Your New Workplace

If your new employer does not automatically invite you to visit your new workplace before taking up your post, take the initiative. Contact the school and ask when would be convenient. This visit will give you a feel for the school and make your first day of term a lot easier. This is a valuable opportunity to meet pupils and prospective colleagues and, if possible, parents and governors.

You may wish to make contact with the NASUWT Workplace Representative/contact in the school, who will be pleased to provide you with advice and information.

Appointment Checklist

The type of school a new teacher teaches in may influence the type of information available. However, new teachers should make sure that they have access to the essential items in the checklist below and should endeavour to get hold of the desirable items if possible. If you are experiencing any difficulties acquiring this information, contact your NASUWT Workplace Representative/contact or the NASUWT Belfast Centre.

Essential	Desirable
• A letter of appointment. • A copy of your conditions of employment, including salary. • A job description. • A contract of employment.	• Details of the school’s induction programme. • A staff handbook. • A copy of the school’s pupil behaviour policy. • The school’s collective agreements and personnel policies, including: • equal opportunities; • health and safety; • staff grievance, disciplinary and capability procedures; • sickness absence; • performance management; • leave of absence.

This list is not exhaustive and the NASUWT Workplace Representative/contact at your school or the NASUWT Belfast Centre will be happy to advise you about the school’s policies.

Visit the Being Appointed page within the NASUWT’s Finding your First Teaching Post web resource giving information new teachers need once appointed into a teaching position.

www.nasuwt.org.uk/BeingAppointed

Registration

General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, if you want to teach, the law requires you to be registered with the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI).

The requirement to fully register applies to full-time, part-time and substitute teachers.

Teachers pay a direct fee to the GTCNI.

The GTCNI does not currently have a remit with respect to competency or discipline for teachers with a contract in a school. However, if you are dismissed by your employer or resign in circumstances where you would have been dismissed, e.g. for misconduct or incompetence, you will be referred to the GTCNI and may be summoned to attend a hearing conducted by council members, who will determine whether you should remain on the register. If you are a supply teacher, the GTCNI can investigate serious disciplinary matters in the absence of an employer.

The GTCNI has the power to investigate criminal sanctions, which are now automatically referred to it. You are therefore advised to inform your employer if you have been convicted of or cautioned for a criminal offence just prior to taking up a new appointment.

If you are removed from the register, you will be unable to work in a grant-aided school.

Criminal Record Checks

Responsibility for undertaking criminal history background checks falls to AccessNI.

AccessNI provides three types of disclosures: Basic, Standard and Enhanced.

All grant-aided schools request an Enhanced Disclosure (ED) Certificate to obtain pre-employment criminal history on all prospective employees, volunteers and school governors. The ED contains details of any convictions, as well as cautions, warnings and reprimands, held by the police. It also contains non-conviction information held on police records or by other law enforcement agencies deemed to be relevant to the post being applied for.

In addition, the ED includes a check against the DENI's List of Unsuitable People (UP List).

The application fee for an ED is £33. The payment of the fee is the legal responsibility of the applicant. However, in practice, many employers pay the fee on behalf of the applicant.

The DENI also maintains a section of List 99 within the wider List 99. It lists all those persons whose eligibility to teach has been withdrawn and are prohibited from working as teachers. A teacher who is no longer eligible to teach will be removed from the GTCNI's register.

For those wishing to undertake substitute teaching, it is important to note that schools and employing authorities must only employ substitute teachers who are listed on the Northern Ireland Substitute Teacher Register (NISTR) to ensure that they have passed the necessary checks.

Members applying for a job are advised to disclose all convictions, cautions, warnings, reprimands and bindovers. This should be done regardless of how old the conviction is or whether it is totally unrelated to the role of teaching. Failure to disclose any information that is subsequently discovered could lead to a dismissal.

If a member believes the information revealed on the ED is inaccurate or incorrect and wishes to make representations to AccessNI, the member should contact the registered body who made the application and ask them to raise a dispute in writing. Applicants have a three-month time limit (90 days) from the date of issue of a certificate in which to raise a dispute. Members with concerns in this regard should seek advice from the NASUWT.

If you have a criminal conviction and are concerned about its nature and potential impact on any job application, you should contact the NASUWT for advice.

A criminal conviction does not always automatically mean you cannot teach. It will depend on its relevance to your employment.

www.nasuwt.org.uk/Registration

Induction

The NASUWT's aim that all beginning teachers have the best and the most effective start to their career is central to the Union's strategy to support beginning teachers. The NASUWT is committed to ensuring that all beginning teachers should have a statutory right to high-quality support and induction, including access to early professional development. Access to guaranteed employment for beginning teachers is a prerequisite for ensuring that they get off to the best possible start in their careers and the NASUWT is campaigning for this to be an entitlement. The NASUWT also understands that for most beginning teachers, the actual process of developing skills and abilities through the induction process is of key importance. Beginning teachers will face many challenges during the induction year. To meet the standards required to pass induction, beginning teachers will have to show that they have the ability and commitment to build on the professional skills, talents and expertise that were developed during teacher training. However, it is important that beginning teachers remember that they have significant rights in this process. Ensuring that you access these rights is essential in getting the most out of your induction period.

Below are the key rights that beginning teachers should expect to receive when going through the induction period:

- a reduction in timetabled teaching time;
- to normally serve their induction period in a post that involves similar planning, teaching and assessment processes to those in which teachers working in substantive posts in the school are engaged;
- to have an assigned teacher-tutor who is fully trained and who should be fully aware of their professional responsibilities towards beginning teachers;
- to only teach children with severe behavioural problems if additional support is provided;
- an allocation of seven days of substitute cover during their induction year to allow them to participate in EA in-service training (INSET) and internal INSET within the school;
- to serve their induction period in a post that involves regular teaching of the same class;
- to receive regular feedback and support on their progress;
- to receive a comprehensive programme of support during their induction period;
- to be given early warning of any perceived problems or difficulties with their progress;
- to be treated as a professional.

If you feel that you are not getting access to the key rights and appropriate support that would allow you to be successful in induction, you should contact the NASUWT Belfast Centre. Failure to complete the induction period satisfactorily means that the beginning teacher is no longer eligible to be employed as a teacher.

If you believe you are in danger of failing your induction period, or you have been told that you are likely to fail your induction period, you should contact the NASUWT Belfast Centre for advice straightaway.

Continuing Support from the NASUWT

The ongoing need to ensure high-quality induction support for beginning teachers remains critically important. This will require attention by national policy makers and by schools to ensure that all beginning teachers have a secure induction entitlement, including professional time, an entitlement to professional development and collaboration with experienced teachers in other schools.

If members experience any difficulties during their induction programme, they should contact the NASUWT immediately. Delay in doing so can hinder the resolution of problems.

Induction is meant to support a beginning teacher, not to be a punitive process.

The NASUWT offers a wide range of professional advice and support for beginning teachers undertaking induction.

The NASUWT also provides free professional development seminars to all beginning teacher members before they enter the classroom.

The NASUWT's 'Preparing for Your First Teaching Post' seminars offer important information about the induction process, as well as other areas of professional practice. Follow-up seminars for beginning teachers throughout the induction year add to the package of support.

Further information on the induction process is available in the NASUWT's Induction Planner.
All beginning teacher members of the NASUWT will receive this before the start of the academic year.

www.nasuwt.org.uk/InductionPeriod

Your Salary

Salary

The rates of pay for teachers in Northern Ireland are contained in Schedules 1, 2 and 3 of the Teachers' (Terms and Conditions of Employment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1987.

More information on pay scales in Northern Ireland can be found on the NASUWT website at www.nasuwt.org.uk/NorthernIrelandPay.

As soon as new pay scales are released they are posted on the NASUWT website at www.nasuwt.org.uk/NorthernIrelandPay.

Teachers' Pensions

The NASUWT strongly recommends that all teachers, full or part time, make their pension provision through the Northern Ireland Teachers' Pension Scheme (NITPS).

Full-time teachers will be in the NITPS automatically. Part-time employees are automatically members of the NITPS unless they opt out of the Scheme and complete the appropriate form.

The NASUWT strongly recommends that all teachers maintain their membership of the NITPS. Teachers on existing non-pensionable part-time contracts will remain outside of the NITPS unless they make an election to opt in, or until they enter into a new contract.

You are entitled, if you wish, to make your own pension arrangements but the strong advice of the NASUWT is that teachers are generally far better off with the guaranteed, index-linked and defined benefits of the Teachers' Scheme.

At present, there are no arrangements for the transfer of pension credits from the NITPS applicable to teachers in the Republic of Ireland. Teachers transferring from the Republic of Ireland to teach in Northern Ireland cannot therefore transfer pension credits from the Republic of Ireland into the NITPS.

Further details of the NITPS can be obtained from the DENI website.

Useful Contacts

NASUWT Northern Ireland	028 9078 4480, rc-nireland@mail.nasuwt.org.uk
Department for Education Northern Ireland (DENI)	44(0)28 7131 9000, E-mail: teachers.pensions@denigov.uk
Wesleyan	0800 358 0325, http://wesleyan.co.uk/professions/teachers
The Pensions Advisory Service (TPAS)	0300 123 1047, www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk
Pensions Ombudsman Service	020 7630 2200, www.pensions-ombudsman.org.uk

www.nasuwt.org.uk/TeachersPay
www.nasuwt.org.uk/Pensions

“ I feel safer communicating honestly at work and standing up for myself knowing that the NASUWT backs me!

Post-Primary School Beginning Teacher”



Observation of Teaching Practice

Why Observations are Important

Observations of beginning teachers' teaching practice during the induction period, if utilised correctly by the school, can be an effective aid to beginning teachers' development and progress.

Before the Observation

The objectives of each observation should be agreed between the beginning teacher and the induction tutor/mentor prior to the observation taking place.

Each observation should highlight your strengths and areas for further development.

If your first observation is not following this path, you should arrange a discussion with your induction tutor/mentor.

Most problems can be ironed out informally. However, if a problem persists, you may want to discuss the matter with your principal and you should also keep notes of any discussions.

The NASUWT considers the induction tutor and/or teaching staff with appropriate seniority to be the appropriate people to be undertaking beginning teacher observations.

If the person undertaking the observation is to differ from the norm, this should be discussed between the beginning teacher and induction mentor/tutor prior to the observation, and the principles of why a different person is undertaking the observation should be agreed upon.

If beginning teachers have concerns about the range of people observing their practice and these concerns cannot be resolved in the school, they should speak to the NASUWT as soon as possible.

After the Observation

The NASUWT adheres to the principle that a beginning teacher's teaching practice should be observed at intervals throughout the induction period.

Although there is no specification regarding how often observations should take place, the Union suggests that in general three observations a term would be adequate within the induction period.

If, however, beginning teachers believe they are being over-observed, they should talk to their induction tutor/mentor in the first instance. If the issue persists, consider having a conversation with the principal. In these circumstances, beginning teachers should always keep the NASUWT informed and updated so we can assist.

The NASUWT is clear that over-observations of beginning teachers is counter-productive and will not aid the developmental process that induction is intended to be.

Additionally, if observations of teaching practice are to be beneficial to the development of beginning teachers, the objectives of observations should be agreed in advance and every observation should be followed by a discussion and feedback to analyse the lessons observed.

The ensuing discussion and feedback should be positive and constructive and should point out what beginning teachers are doing well, but also where the school can help beginning teachers in areas where improvement may be needed.

A brief written record should be made after every observation.

This should cover the agreed development objectives, indicate where further development is needed and where objectives should be revised in light of the observation.

There are standardised forms that are available to all beginning teachers and these should be used to help record discussions post-observation and completion of the portfolio: www.education-support.org.uk/teachers/induction-epd/induction/induction-programme-requirements.

The NASUWT's Induction Planner can also prove an essential resource with such record keeping.

www.nasuwt.org.uk/NewTeachers

Staying Safe

Assaults

Teachers do an excellent job in maintaining discipline in schools, but in a small minority of cases problems arise. The NASUWT recommends that the following steps are taken by members if they are assaulted at work by a pupil, parent or member of the public on the school premises:

- summon assistance;
- ask for the NASUWT Workplace Representative/contact to be informed and for an opportunity to speak to him/her;
- ask for the principal to be informed and that the incident is reported to the police. If necessary, and after taking the Union's advice, make a statement to the police and obtain a crime number;
- request that an ambulance be called, if appropriate, particularly if you have suffered a blow to the head. At the very least, you should be allowed to leave the premises to seek medical advice;
- do not attempt to carry on teaching your lesson or carry out other duties. Request either to be allowed to go home or to sit quietly away from pupils;
- contact the NASUWT Belfast Centre as soon as practicable;
- as soon as you feel able, write down what you can remember of the incident and the circumstances that led up to it. Do not submit a written report to anyone until you have consulted the NASUWT;
- as soon as possible after the event, note the names of witnesses and, if possible, obtain for your own reference written statements from any members of staff who witnessed the incident;
- ensure that, at the earliest opportunity, the incident is recorded in the accident book, preferably by yourself or your Workplace Representative. Obtain a copy of what is recorded for your own records. Check its accuracy, if it has been entered by anyone other than yourself.

If you have suffered an injury arising from an assault at work and you feel that your employer exposed you to an unnecessary and foreseeable risk of personal injury which could have been avoided, telephone the **NASUWT free legal advice line on 0808 100 2221**. You may also be eligible to make an application to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority which pays compensation to victims of violent crimes.

Child Protection

You should be provided, on appointment, with the school's child protection policy. Any action you take should comply with the policy. If a pupil confides in you that they are being abused or if you suspect abuse, you must not keep the information to yourself or promise the child confidentiality. You should report your concerns to the designated child protection officer within the school. Do not attempt to question a child as this could jeopardise any future investigation. Leave questioning and investigation to other professionals.

If an allegation of child abuse, which arises from your employment, is made against you by a pupil, parent or others, contact the NASUWT immediately. The NASUWT will provide professional and legal support as appropriate.

Contact with Pupils

Physical Contact

A pupil, parent or observer may misconstrue physical contact. You should avoid making gratuitous physical contact with pupils. Any form of physical punishment of pupils is unlawful, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of restraint.

There may be occasions where physical contact is acceptable:

- when a distressed pupil needs comfort such as a caring parent might give. However, you should use your discretion in such cases to ensure that what is normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same pupil over a period of time;
- because of the nature of the subject being taught. Examples may be demonstrating a piece of equipment or apparatus or demonstrating a move or exercise in PE. You should be careful that such contact could not be misinterpreted;
- in an emergency, where you need to administer first aid. Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present;
- teachers have a legal right to use 'reasonable' force where it is necessary to physically restrain a pupil to prevent him/her from inflicting injury to others, or self-injury, damaging property or causing disorder. In such situations, only the minimum of force necessary should be used. It is essential that you consult the school's policy on physical contact with pupils and the use of restraint before you begin teaching. Teachers should be trained in acceptable forms of restraint.

Teachers should be aware that there is no legal definition of 'reasonable force'. UK Government guidance says force will be reasonable 'if it is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent'. It is therefore a question of judgement on the part of the person using the force.

UK Government guidance does state that employers should fully support a staff member if they have exercised their statutory right to use reasonable force. The NASUWT welcomes this principle but is concerned that the guidance implies that management will always accept that the member of school staff exercised their judgement correctly and used an appropriate level of force, which in practice is often not the case. The NASUWT advises teachers that they should not presume that they will always receive such support from the school and should ensure that they contact the NASUWT as soon as an incident occurs.

Searches

The NASUWT strongly advises teachers not to undertake searches as they are liable to put themselves at an increased risk of assault and accusation. Such searches should only be carried out by staff specifically employed to do so, or by the principal. There should be a school policy regarding screening and weapon searching.

Meetings with Pupils

Private one-to-one meetings with individual pupils may leave you vulnerable to allegations of inappropriate conduct. It is important that you are aware of and follow your school's policy on such meetings. There will be occasions when a confidential interview or a one-to-one meeting is necessary, but, where possible, such interviews should be

Staying Safe

conducted in a room with visual access by someone outside or with the door open. Another adult should be present nearby. Where such conditions cannot apply, ensure that another member of staff knows that the interview is taking place. Meetings with individual pupils away from school premises should be exceptional and only be arranged with the specific approval of the principal.

Relationships with Pupils

You should ensure that your relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age and gender of the pupils and take care that your language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

You should also refrain from engaging with pupils outside of school, including using electronic means of communication such as text messaging, instant messaging or social networking sites such as Facebook, as this may also leave you vulnerable to allegations of inappropriate conduct.

If you are concerned that a pupil is becoming attracted to you or is developing an inappropriate attachment, you should report the situation to a senior member of staff and seek advice from the NASUWT.

The Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000 introduced what is known as the 'abuse of trust' legislation, making it unlawful for a person to engage in sexual activity with a person under 18, where they are in a position of trust in relation to that younger person, even where the young person has consented to the relationship. This clearly covers teachers with regard to pupils at their school, including those over 16 years of age.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 extended this legislation even further. It introduced an offence of 'grooming' and raised the penalties for offences. This means that convicted persons can now expect much longer custodial sentences. Acceptance of a caution under the Sexual Offences Act also means automatic placement on the Sex Offenders' Register. It is also likely to result in the imposition of a bar by the Disclosure and Barring Service from working with children and/or vulnerable adults in any capacity, not only teaching.

Supporting members

Stress

NASUWT research indicates that two thirds of teachers suffer with some form of work-related stress. Although most teachers experience pressure on a daily basis and some of this pressure can be good for people, even enjoyable, the pressure must be proportionate to the needs of the situation, the time limits and the individual's capacity to cope and control. This capacity varies according to the individual. Long-term pressure can lead to stress, which can be the cause of mental or physical illness.

Possible symptoms of stress include exhaustion, headaches, increased pulse rate, sweating, and pains in the back, shoulders or neck. It can bring about illnesses such as heart disease or stroke, high blood pressure, digestive disorders, skin problems, infections, asthma and even cancer. Teachers suffering from stress may also be more susceptible to infections such as colds and flu.

Stress may lead to behavioural changes such as:

- anxiety;
- panic attacks;
- fatigue;
- sleeplessness;
- becoming withdrawn;
- depression;
- mood swings;
- irritability;
- neglect of personal appearance;
- frequent absences;
- aggression;
- unwillingness to accept advice or co-operate with others;
- increased use of cigarettes, coffee, alcohol and other drugs;
- overworking;
- difficulty in maintaining concentration.

Personal relationships can also suffer.

The employer has a legal duty to protect the health and safety of employees at work. This includes protection against the effects of stress.

Employers should identify the causes of work-related stress, assess the risks and take preventive action before illness occurs.

Contact the NASUWT for support and advice or visit the website for information on the NASUWT 'Wellbeing at Work' online survey.

Voice care

An essential and sensitive instrument in your teaching toolbox is your voice. Extreme stress such as shouting or aggressive clearing of the throat can cause instant and sometimes prolonged effects including hoarseness and a sore throat. Teaching is widely recognised as one of the professions most likely to result in voice problems, which is why the NASUWT provides voice care training to members and this is why the NASUWT include voice care training as part of the seminars for beginning teachers. If you have not yet attended one of our NQT seminars, here are a few simple steps you can take to help protect your voice:

- Avoid shouting to get attention. Don't raise your voice over noise: it increases tension in the vocal folds. Develop techniques, other than shouting, to get attention, e.g. a nod to the board where you have written a consequence if the talking doesn't stop, etc.
- Pace your speaking at a manageable rate. Pause and take a breath. Too fast a pace may result in increased tension on the vocal folds.
- Practise good posture. Slouching prevents effective use of the diaphragm. Standing up straight and looking forward greatly reduces vocal strain.
- Keep hydrated by drinking plenty of water and avoid drinks that may be an irritant or too acidic.
- Consider seeking medical advice if symptoms persist.

NASUWT members wishing to apply for legal assistance in relation to accidents at work, accidents during travel between home and work, work-related disease or disability, or assault by pupils, parents or intruders should phone 0808 100 2221.

Use and Abuse of Technology

Developments in technology have made significant improvements in support for learning and in the working practices of teachers and other members of the school workforce. There is growing evidence of the abuse of technology, particularly mobile phones, e-mails and internet sites. They are not only contributing to increasing workload but also providing a vehicle for the prejudice-related bullying and harassment of staff and for false allegations to be made against them. Cyberbullying has a devastating effect on teachers' health, wellbeing, confidence, self-esteem and, in some cases, their career progression, as a result of employers trawling websites for information. The NASUWT continues to campaign for schools to adopt a zero tolerance policy whilst still promoting the positive benefits of technology.

You may use a variety of social networking sites, e.g. Pinterest, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The NASUWT advises all new teachers to review carefully all internet sites where they have recorded any personal information that could be accessed either by students or employers to ensure that it is appropriate. Performing an internet search with your own name and a few keywords can sometimes yield surprising results. Does it reveal anything you would not want a student or prospective employer to see? If you experience difficulty removing your link to internet content, the NASUWT may be able to provide advice and support, so contact the NASUWT Belfast Centre.

What you can do to Protect Yourself

- Check your school behaviour policy or procedures on acceptable use of technology to ensure that it covers school staff.
- Keep personal phone numbers private and do not use your own mobile phones to contact pupils or parents.
- If you use social networking sites, avoid 'friending' pupils or parents or adding them to your contact lists. You may be giving them access to your personal activity and information and allowing them to contact you inappropriately. They may also be giving you access to inappropriate information.
- Do not post information about yourself publicly that you would not want employers, colleagues, pupils or parents to see.
- Keep passwords secret and protect access to your computer accounts.
- Always restrict access to your personal internet accounts and set privacy levels.
- Avoid retaliating to or personally engaging with cyberbullying incidents.
- Inform the appropriate person in authority in the school of any incidents at the earliest opportunity.
- Keep a record of all incidents (with dates, times, witnesses, feelings experienced). Many of the incidents may appear trivial in isolation, so it is important to establish if there is a pattern over time.
- Be aware that your employer has the right to access any information and content (such as browsing history and saved documents or photos) stored on electronic devices owned by the school. This includes computers, tablets and mobile phones which may be provided for teachers to use during the course of their work.

Use Social Networking Sites Safely

The NASUWT has worked with Childnet International to support the production of guidance for beginning teachers and trainee teachers on using social networking sites safely. The guidance will help new teachers understand the e-safety issues within the school environment specifically.

Please turn over...

The Use and Abuse of E-mails

E-mails are used regularly as a method of communication in schools and used appropriately can make a positive difference to working practices.

However, in too many schools, teachers are reporting that e-mails are adding to their workload, intruding into their personal time and causing them stress.

The NASUWT has carried out extensive research into the abuse of e-mails which has highlighted poor practice. Full details of the NASUWT research can be found on www.nasuwt.org.uk/Emails.

Teachers need to be aware of the following information:

- schools should have a clear protocol for the use of e-mails and the school's e-mail account. Check if the school has a protocol;
- the contents of e-mails on a school's e-mail account are not totally private. These are often monitored by school management and any e-mails can be accessed by them;
- the school e-mail account should never be used for personal e-mails between staff or for communication– for example, with other union members on union business;
- teachers should have a personal e-mail account and that e-mail address should not be used for school-related matters or shared with pupils or parents;
- when using the school e-mail account, care should be taken to ensure that what is included in an e-mail is written in a professional manner.

There should be no expectation by the school that teachers will read or reply to e-mails during teaching time, during the evenings, at weekends, during holiday periods or while on sick leave.

Some schools have an expectation that teachers will use e-mails to communicate with parents or support pupils with homework. There should be no expectation that teachers will do this in their own time.

If you work in a school where e-mails are:

- sent, for example, with read receipts which are designed to create an expectation of a response in a particular timescale;
- regularly sent during the evening, weekends or holiday periods;
- sent when you are on sick leave;
- intruding on your personal life;
- causing you pressure and stress;
- adding to your workload;

contact should be made with the NASUWT Belfast Centre for advice and support.

www.nasuwt.org.uk/WhatsNew/Campaigns/StopCyberbullying

Substitute Teaching

The NASUWT understands that many beginning teachers undertake substitute teaching, in some cases whilst looking for a post suitable in which to complete induction.

It is important to remember that for the vast majority of substitute teachers in Northern Ireland, only teachers registered with the Northern Ireland Substitute Teacher Register (NISTR) can be employed as a substitute teacher. If a teacher is employed in a grant-maintained school or as a peripatetic teacher, they need to register with the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI).

As a substitute teacher, you may face specific challenges in your role, such as a frequent change of workplace and the differing procedures schools have in place.

There are some tips that can help to ensure that you obtain both your rights as a substitute teacher and a positive experience of substitute teaching.

Before taking up supply work:

- establish the rate of pay you will receive for a full day or half day;
- check when you get paid and how you will be paid.

When you start your supply work, request:

- a tour or a map of the school to help you find classrooms, the staff room and toilets;
- relevant policies such as the school's disciplinary, grievance and health and safety policies;
- a timetable with timing of sessions, breaks and lunch periods;
- the emergency contacts and telephone numbers/procedures;
- details of registration procedures, fire drills and security arrangements;
- a named person to whom you can go for advice and support;
- information on who has management responsibility for you;
- details of training days and, if you are expected to attend, check you will be paid;
- information about the pupils you are going to teach, e.g. do any have medical conditions or special educational needs?

Remember:

However short the placement, ask the school for a reference or testimonial to put in your portfolio and to support you in obtaining another job.

As a substitute teacher you have rights: in particular, you should not be expected to teach or supervise lessons for which you do not have relevant qualifications or experience.

The NASUWT understands that substitute teachers face certain unique issues within their employment. Therefore, the Union continues to offer specific support to substitute teachers.

This includes seminars and conferences for substitute teacher members, whereby members get an opportunity to discuss the issues facing them in the workplace and contribute towards the NASUWT's strategy of support for substitute teachers.



“ I appreciate being valued as a professional and being treated like a professional. The NASUWT puts on lots of events that empower teachers individually and collectively.

Primary School Beginning Teacher”

About the NASUWT

The NASUWT is the largest teachers' union in Northern Ireland and across the UK. This is one of the many factors that makes the NASUWT the trade union for all beginning teachers.

Cross-sector Representation

The NASUWT has members in all sectors from early years to further education and represents teachers in all roles, including school leaders.

Democratic

The NASUWT's membership determines policy, which is implemented by those elected to represent them and professional staff.

Politically Independent

The NASUWT is political but not party political. It does not affiliate to any political party. The Union's aim is to serve the best interests of teachers no matter what party is in government. The NASUWT is deeply committed to working to influence the education policy to secure the best working conditions for all teachers and school leaders to enable them to work effectively to raise standards.

First-class Representation

The NASUWT provides first-class legal and professional services through a high-quality network of local officers, professional staff and specialist legal advisers.

Focused on Equality

The NASUWT is committed to pursuing fair and equitable conditions of service for all members. The Union leads the fight in championing equality. The Union also recognises that not only are teachers and school leaders entitled to work in a fair and just environment, free from discrimination, but they also play an essential role in challenging discrimination, inequality and intolerance. The NASUWT has therefore produced advice and information to members in respect of a wide range of equality issues. Many of these publications are designed to provide practical advice to ensure that equality is embedded in all areas of school life. To access all NASUWT equalities publications and to find out more about the NASUWT's equalities policies, visit the Union's website at www.nasuwt.org.uk.

Campaigning to Deliver Change

The NASUWT is a campaigning union and has secured real improvements in teachers' conditions of service, dealing with violent and disruptive pupils and reducing excessive workload and bureaucracy, amongst many other campaigns that have positively affected teachers' working lives. The NASUWT is the only teachers' union that is 'Standing up for Standards' and protecting teachers through judicious use of the Union's continuing action short of strike action. Find out more www.nasuwt.org.uk/IndustrialAction.

Communication

The NASUWT believes that good communication between the Union and its members is vital. The NASUWT sends:

- information on key issues direct to every member's home throughout the year;
- a copy of *Teaching Today*, the NASUWT journal, to every member's home five times a year; and
- regular reports, advice and guidance to members and representatives in schools to keep them fully up to date on current issues and negotiations.

Please turn over...

The NASUWT website is also a vital source of information. Visit www.nasuwt.org.uk.

Practical Advice and Guidance

The NASUWT produces excellent practical advice and guidance. All NASUWT publications can be accessed via the Union's website. Printed copies can be ordered from 028 9078 4480 or e-mail: rc-nireland@mail.nasuwt.org.uk.

Training and Information

The NASUWT offers an extensive programme of trade union and professional courses. They can be found on the website. The NASUWT also holds numerous single-issue conferences and seminars throughout the year. These are featured on the NASUWT website.

Benevolence Assistance

Sometimes teachers experience financial hardship. Members are eligible to apply to the NASUWT Benevolence Fund if they are or have been subscribing members of the NASUWT. Dependants of a member or former member of the NASUWT may also be eligible for support. Any NASUWT member who is experiencing hardship and wishes to make an application to the Benevolent Fund should contact the NASUWT Belfast Centre. Contact details can be found on the NASUWT website at www.nasuwt.org.uk.

Confidential Advice

The NASUWT provides all members with confidential advice on issues of concern relating to their employment. If you have a problem at work, you can discuss this with your NASUWT Local Secretary, National Executive Members or the NASUWT Belfast Centre professional staff. The NASUWT will offer advice and support, but will only act in accordance with your wishes.

The NASUWT on Twitter



You can follow the NASUWT for further general Union news, events and policy on twitter.com/@nasuwtunion. You can also follow the NASUWT General Secretary on twitter.com/@Chris_K_NASUWT or NASUWT Northern Ireland on twitter.com/@NASUWT_NI.

The NASUWT on Facebook



The NASUWT Facebook page is another source of useful information. The NASUWT also has designated Facebook sites for new teachers and for other groups of members. To find out more, visit www.facebook.com/nasuwt or www.facebook.com/nasuwtnorthernireland.

www.nasuwt.org.uk

How to Contact the NASUWT

Workplace Representatives and Contacts

The NASUWT is a member-led organisation whereby the initial support for members will come from fellow teachers who undertake elected roles for the Union on a voluntary basis. The NASUWT has a network of teachers undertaking the role of Workplace Representative/contact in the majority of schools where the Union has members. Workplace Representatives/contacts should ideally be the first people members approach when they have a workplace issue.

Local Associations

All members are automatically part of an NASUWT Local Association and the Local Association they are part of is dependent on where they teach.

Local Associations are run by serving teachers who have been elected by the membership in a specific area. Local Associations are again a vital source of support for members.

National Executive Members are elected from the membership to provide advice, guidance and support to the Local Associations within their area.

Members can find the contact details for their Local Association Secretary or their National Executive Member on the NASUWT website at www.nasuwt.org.uk or by contacting the NASUWT Belfast Centre.

The NASUWT Belfast Centre

The NASUWT's Northern Ireland National Centre is in Belfast. The highly trained professional staff at the Union's Centre provide support and guidance for members, Workplace Representatives and Local Associations.

NASUWT Belfast Centre

Ben Madigan House

Edgewater Office Park

Edgewater Road, Belfast BT3 9JQ

Tel: 028 9078 4480

E-mail: rc-nireland@mail.nasuwt.org.uk

There is also an advice line for members in Northern Ireland, open 8am to 8pm.

The contact number is: 0808 100 2221.



“The best thing about being a member of the NASUWT is being part of an organisation which fights for the rights of teachers and supports teachers. This will then result in a better education experience for our pupils.

Special School Beginning Teacher”

Benefits and Services

Additional Support and Advice

The NASUWT understands that members may occasionally need additional confidential support and advice in specialist areas. In order to provide this advice, the NASUWT supports several organisations to provide the following services to members:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| • 24-hour counselling service: | Education Support Partnership | 08000 562 561 |
| • FREE debt advice: | Payplan | 0800 280 2816 |

Other Services

Members of the NASUWT can take advantage of the wide range of offers, discounts, benefits and services available from nearly 200 different companies. In addition to the financial and insurance services from long-term partner companies such as Wesleyan for Teachers, UIA and Endsleigh, the Benefits and Services website at www.nasuwtbenefits.co.uk (password p2016) gives you access to savings from a complete range of lifestyle benefits that should enable you to recover each year the cost of your NASUWT subscription.

In addition to the website, look out for the twice monthly Benefits and Services eZine that is sent to all members who have supplied the Union with their e-mail address. If you are not receiving the eZine, simply call the Membership Team on 03330 145550 and supply your e-mail address or e-mail your membership number to membership@mail.nasuwt.org.uk.

Non-employment-related Issues

NASUWT members have access to a number of legal services:

- 30 minutes' free non-employment legal advice;
- non-employment personal injury claims for members and their dependants;
- hassle-free conveyancing;
- free will writing.

NASUWT members can access the above services by telephoning 0808 100 2221.

Free Personal Accident Cover

The NASUWT provides free personal accident cover in the event that a member suffers a fatal injury or loss of limbs due to an accident at work. Cover includes accidents incurred whilst travelling to and from work.

Free Insurance Cover for Cash and Personal Belongings

The NASUWT provides free insurance cover for cash and personal belongings stolen from school or lost through fire. Cover includes losses incurred whilst on official school visits. Members completing the payment of their subscription by 31 January each year or, alternatively, who pay their subscription by direct debit, benefit from increased levels of insurance cover.

Please turn over...

Free Malicious Damage to Car Cover

The NASUWT provides free insurance cover in the event that members' cars are subject to malicious damage whilst on school premises.

This cover is only available to members who complete the payment of their subscription by 31 January each year or, alternatively, who pay their subscription by direct debit.

Further details of the free insurance cover provided can be obtained from 03330 145550, e-mail: advice@mail.nasuwt.org.uk or on the NASUWT's website.

Just some of the benefits available to NASUWT members



For your benefits go to www.nasuwtbenefits.co.uk (password D2016)

ARE YOU A STUDENT TEACHER QUALIFYING IN 2016?

Do you want an unrivalled package of **FREE
professional support and advice?**

The largest teachers' union in Northern Ireland offers the following:

- **Finding your First Teaching Post** – a comprehensive online resource to assist you in obtaining your first teaching position: www.nasuwt.org.uk/FindingYourFirstTeachingPost.
- **Starting Out** – a quick guide to essential information you need on appointment, including salary, conditions of service and registration.
- **A personal Induction Planner** – to guide and support you through the key milestones of induction – unique and only available through the NASUWT.
- **A programme of free professional seminars** – before you take up your first post and throughout your first year.
- **Local networks of serving teachers** – only a phone call away, providing advice and support.
- **A National Centre in Belfast** – with professional staff to provide legal and professional advice and representation.
- **First-class advice and information** – to your home, online and in your workplace.

**The best new teacher offer in Northern Ireland
...*FREE until 2018****

GUARANTEED!

Join the NASUWT today.

Quick and easy, no hassle. Online: www.nasuwt.org.uk

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*All beginning teacher members qualifying in 2016 who agree to pay their future subscriptions by direct debit will receive FREE NASUWT membership until 31 December 2017, followed by a 50% reduction in 2018.

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www.nasuwt.org.uk