



SOUTHERN EDUCATION BRANCH AGM NEWSLETTER 2024

Southern Education Branch AGM 2024

It's about You, Your Branch, Your Say and Your Vote

Our Branch AGM is the single most important meeting of the year.

Every year UNISON requires its branch officers and stewards to stand for re-election. The AGM is your opportunity to have a say in how the branch is run and who will represent you in 2024. Please come along and bring a work colleague.

It will still be a great opportunity to meet with other members and UNISON stewards and to find out how UNISON has been active on your behalf during the year.

If you would like to become more active in UNISON: Representing your colleagues or becoming involved in solidarity or welfare work, please contact your branch.



AGM Meeting Dates

Monday 8th January 2024
St Catherine's College
10am-3.30pm

Tuesday 9th January 2024
Craigavon Senior High School
10am-3.30pm

Monday 15th January 2024
Portadown Integrated PS
10am-3.30pm

Tuesday 16th January 2024
St Ciaran's College
10am-3.30pm

EDUCATION WORKERS BALLOT FOR PAY JUSTICE



LOOK OUT FOR YOUR VOTE AND REMEMBER TO POST IT BACK ON TIME!

UNISON EDUCATION MEMBERS VOTE FOR STRIKE

Thousands of UNISON members working in Education have voted to strike and for action short of strike in a dispute that has seen them have to wait for up to 3 years to have their pay levels adjusted to reflect their work and worth.

Over 90% have voted for both strike and action short of strike.

UNISON members taking part in the industrial action will include classroom assistants, school cooks and catering, school cleaners and caretakers, transport drivers, bus escorts, estates staff and clerical and administrative grades across all Education Authority functions. They will combine together to deliver a strong message that they are no longer prepared to wait to have their issues resolved.

As unions and workers in Education await the outcome of the 2023 UK wide NJC pay negotiations the collapse of pay differentials in Northern Ireland comes sharply into focus. They no longer reflect levels of responsibility and length of service and have been challenged by unions here for some years now.

The employer, the Education Authority, has made a case for additional funding from the Department but has also paused negotiations with unions. The Department has gone silent and point to their budget allocation from the Secretary of State. That budget has squeezed education services to an intolerable level. Pupils, their families and workers are bearing the brunt of cuts.

UNISON is the largest union for Support Workers

Throughout 2023 our bargaining team and your branch continued working to protect and secure employment rights and health and safety standards for our members who work as classroom assistants, and in school transport, cleaning, catering, estates and youth services. Our lay team participates directly in all the EA bargaining directorates - operational services (estates, catering, cleaning, transport); children & young peoples services; education (curriculum and services); finance; HR.

Contentious issues are:

- development of the new EA payroll EA1;
- blended contracts for classroom assistants;
- increased responsibility of supervisory staff in catering and cleaning without proper reward;
- the need for a framework recognition agreement with Voluntary Grammar schools and the ever growing integrated sector (all individual employers);
- growing concern around resources for EA youth services;
- implication of the Brazil judgement on the calculation of annual leave for term time workers.

NOT YET A UNISON MEMBER? JOIN TODAY!

Call Membership on 028 9027 0190 or join online <https://join.unison.org.uk>



MEMBERS IN VOLUNTARY GRAMMAR, INTEGRATED & IRISH MEDIUM SCHOOLS

UNISON members within Education Authority (EA) schools have just recently been balloted to take strike action against their employer (EA) on the grading structure.

In schools who have recently changed status to integrated, UNISON support staff members who remain on EA contracts are entitled to be involved in this dispute. Members in Integrated and Voluntary Grammar Schools who don't have EA contracts are not covered in this dispute, and you ask

WHY NOT?

The strike is with the Education Authority, although your school is funded by them your school is not part of the negotiating structure.

If the NJC grading structure is improved as a result of the upcoming industrial action, we will seek that these changes apply to you also.

Once NJC new rates have been agreed, UNISON will seek to have these applied to support staff in your schools, if your employer refuses you can decide to dispute, UNISON will support.

UNISON will be pursuing for non EA schools to be included in the

The UNISON Free School meals campaign objectives are:

- to seek universal, nutritious, free schools meals for all pupils to both reduce poverty and improve public health;
- to safeguard and promote the vital work of our members within schools catering. School meals services should be publicly provided;
- as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic, to build support for the implementation of a public health model across Government that is aimed at dealing with health and educational inequalities that have been exacerbated during the pandemic.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE SURVEY

UNISON recently conducted a survey on workplace violence experienced by support staff working in a classroom setting. Out of responses received 66% report being worried about violent behaviour from pupils, with 57% experiencing or observing violent incidents towards staff on a daily or weekly basis. Respondents reported a lack of support from management and a feeling of normalisation of violence.

UNISON Northern Ireland plans to use these survey findings and feedback to the campaign to make the workplace safer and more sustainable for support staff. If you're currently working in a similar role and would like to get involved in a campaign please either contact your local branch reps or UNISON Regional Office on 028 90270190.

RETAINER PAYMENTS

The EA has made proposals to trade union side which they state will improve payments as the school year ends. These will be discussed with your branch reps to ensure we get feedback from members. An update will be circulated once this consultation is complete

GREEN UNISON

Green UNISON is a new campaign calling on employers across the public sector to decarbonise public services. Members and activists have a crucial role to play in greening our public services and ensuring a just transition to a low carbon and sustainable economy. Members in Education are especially encouraged to get involved. Sign up to our Green UNISON Network .

Membership Services

UNISON Welfare – 'There For You'

Use this service which is FREE to all UNISON members and is there for you at times of difficulty and crisis. For full details please see UNISON's website. www.unison.org.uk/get-help/

Legal Advice

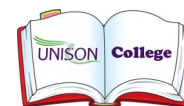
Thompsons NI our specialist employment solicitors. For free legal advice and support on non employment matters, contact 0800 0857 857.

Update Your Details

Check your membership status by checking your payslip for deductions or your bank for direct debit. If this is not up to date, then you may **NOT** be a UNISON member. Please contact membership services on 028 90270190 to update your details.

Changed your name, moved house or have a new number? You can update your details using our online form. Go to <https://www.unison-ni.org.uk/update-your-details>

UNISON College



UNISON College has Free E-learning courses available for UNISON members.

All of our courses are now hosted at <https://unisoncollegeni.org.uk>

BRANCH CONTACTS

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