

Learning to Behave

A CHARTER FOR SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND



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THE NATIONAL UNION OF TEACHERS

1. The quality of relationships between teachers, support staff, young people and parents is vital to each school's success. Those relationships are the collective responsibility of all members of the school community.
2. Unacceptable pupil behaviour, whether low level or extreme, is profoundly challenging for the staff and pupils who come in contact with it. It disrupts the continuity and consistency of teaching; it damages teachers' confidence and young people's learning.
3. **Any pupil behaviour which disrupts or impacts on the learning of other pupils, including low level disruptive behaviour, bullying and incidents of verbal abuse, physical violence or assault is unacceptable.**
4. For young people involved in unacceptable behaviour their life chances are jeopardised. The causes of unacceptable behaviour, which may lie outside the school, if not tackled, may continue to damage their own lives and those of others into adult life.
5. Either directly or indirectly all teachers and support staff in schools are affected by unacceptable pupil behaviour. They should not be expected to sink or swim and made to feel that poor behaviour in their lessons is their fault or something about which they feel ashamed to discuss with or seek support from their colleagues. Teachers, support staff and pupils have been failed if they do not feel confident that they are protected from physical threat in their working environments.
6. Schools in which incidents of unacceptable pupil behaviour are resolved speedily and the climate of relationships of staff and pupils is positive, are characterised by teachers collectively seeking solutions to the learning and social needs of pupils and adopting common and consistent strategies. The NUT believes that this approach should be underpinned by legislation that clarifies the legal basis of a teacher's authority. Teachers need to be confident that the reasonable actions they undertake in schools, including disciplinary action, are beyond legal challenge.
7. The NUT's charter on pupil behaviour is rooted in the NUT's belief about the nature and purpose of education. In its education statement, 'Bringing Down the Barriers', the National Union of Teachers set out its views on how education should be carried forward in England for the next decade.

8. The introduction to 'Bringing Down the Barriers' emphasises that education is a fundamental human right.

All children and young people have a right to high quality education. Education is central to the personal development and health of young people. It encourages them to think and acquire knowledge. Education enables young people to make sense of and contribute to society. At the heart of education are teachers. Teachers inspire young people and unlock their potential. Teachers enrich their countries and societies.

As a human right education is special. It promotes other rights and responsibilities. Globally and at home education can play a central role in the elimination of poverty. It has the power to help liberate not only individuals but also whole groups of people. These ideas have underpinned the policies and practices of the National Union of Teachers for over 130 years.

9. Fundamental to this belief are the rights of teachers to teach and children and young people to learn. Fundamental also is that whatever their needs, no child or young person should ever be written off.
10. School communities consist of teachers, support staff, pupils, parents and governors. Individually and collectively, each has rights and entitlements. Each has responsibilities to themselves and others. This charter sets out those rights, entitlements and responsibilities.
11. Accompanying the charter are proposals that focus both on the needs of school communities collectively and on those of staff and pupils. These proposals have been sent to the Leadership Group and to the Ministerial Stakeholder Group on pupil behaviour.

THE CHARTER

ENTITLEMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Children and Young People

12. All children and young people should be entitled to:
- educational provision that meets their needs and enables them to enjoy their learning, be safe and healthy and make a positive contribution to their schools;
 - sustained, high quality educational provision regardless of gender, race, class, sexual orientation or disability;
 - a creative and flexible curriculum that stimulates learning and encourages engagement;
 - be taught in environments that are conducive to learning and free from disruption;
 - school meals that are free from junk foods; and to
 - be free from circumstances in which they are bullied, ignored, ridiculed, or subjected to any forms of discrimination.
13. All pupils have a responsibility to:
- work to the best of their ability;
 - show, through their behaviour and their language, respect and consideration for teachers, support staff and other pupils;
 - take proper care of books, equipment and the school environment generally; and
 - accept and support their school's discipline policies and norms of behaviour.

Teachers

14. Teachers should be able to enjoy teaching, without being subject to the stresses caused by unacceptable pupil behaviour. Teachers should be entitled to:
- regular professional development on behaviour strategies;
 - a clearly defined range of available disciplinary measures and sanctions, including detention, exclusion and the curtailment of voluntary activities;

- clear guidelines and professional development on: what to do in a disciplinary crisis, including guidelines covering intervention in fights or disputes between pupils; the use of physical restraint; sexist, racist and homophobic harassment; unacceptable language; and recording and logging incidents of violent or poor behaviour;
 - the necessary time within the school day to share information and experiences on the behavioural needs of individual pupils.
15. Teachers should be consulted fully on the behaviour policies of their schools. Government guidance emphasises the importance of such consultation. Behaviour policies should be linked to other school policies. Those that do not reflect the views of teaching staff are doomed to failure.
16. Teachers should be entitled to know:
- where to turn when they need support;
 - the arrangements in place where pupils are removed from the classroom;
 - the arrangements for supporting and protecting staff who may be working on their own before and at the end of the school day; and
 - where to turn when they need support.
17. Teachers should be entitled to:
- a strong lead from head teachers and those with management responsibilities who provide close support to staff;
 - the support of teams of trained and committed support staff;
 - work in an environment where the ethos is supportive of teaching and learning; and
 - effective security arrangements, particularly when working in remote classrooms and when on their own.
18. Teachers have an entitlement to work in conditions that enable teaching to be at its most effective. Those conditions should include:
- appropriate class and group sizes, with counselling and personalised tuition available to young people at key points in their school lives;
 - an up-to-date teaching and learning environment;
 - effective health and safety policies which protect the health, safety and welfare of all those in the school community;

- sufficient up-to-date books, materials and equipment to meet the learning needs of all those in the school community;
- sufficient up-to-date information and communication technology (ICT), such that all young people have ready and immediate access to that technology.

19. Teachers have a responsibility to:

- respect the children and young people they teach;
- be committed to and have high expectations of pupils' learning;
- encourage good behaviour and respect for others;
- prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils;
- keep their pupils safe;
- seek support and advice about how to promote positive behaviour;
- keep parents informed of their children's educational and social progress; and
- work as part of a team with other teachers and support staff.

Parents

20. Parents have a right to expect from their children's schools:

- high quality education, whatever their children's learning needs, including full information on their progress;
- full consultation on school policies, including their behaviour policies; and
- detailed information on how they promote positive behaviour and what they can do to help.

21. Parents have a responsibility to support their children's schools by:

- encouraging their children to recognise the importance of education and learning;
- backing the application of their behaviour policies and their systems of incentives, rewards and sanctions;
- insisting that their children pay proper respect to teachers and support staff;
- preparing their children for school;
- taking all reasonable steps to ensure that their children carry out work set for them;
- respecting staff, pupils and the school environment; and by
- not behaving aggressively or violently towards staff.

School Governing Bodies

22. School governing bodies have a right to be involved and contribute to the formulation of the behaviour policies of their schools. Their insights and contributions should be valued and fully taken into account.
23. Each school governing body has a responsibility to play its part in ensuring that the health and safety of the entire school community is not undermined or jeopardised.
24. School governing bodies have a responsibility for contributing to the positive ethos of the school and to schools' work in enhancing pupils' learning.

The School Community

25. Each school's behaviour policy should be updated regularly. It should be the product of, and made known fully to, the whole school community. It should be applicable to and followed by all pupils, staff, parents and, as appropriate, visitors to the school.

EVIDENCE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S LEADERSHIP GROUP ON SCHOOL DISCIPLINE AND TO THE MINISTERIAL STAKEHOLDER GROUP

26. Proposals on pupil behaviour should take into account the factors which influence the lives of those working in and supporting school communities. This is exemplified by a passage in the study commissioned by the National Union of Teachers from Cambridge University; 'A Life in Secondary Teaching'.

Pupil behaviour, ranked as a number one issue (by teachers) does not exist in a vacuum... not all of the obstacles to teaching and professional development have an independent existence. They are all closely interrelated and interdependent. While teachers' talk of poor pupil behaviour may be seen by some, including some policy makers and media critics, as simply blaming pupils, what is plainly evident is the intrinsic relationship of behaviour to class size, inappropriate curriculum, pressure to meet targets and (the need to) keep up with new initiatives ...".

27. The identification of a wide number of factors which impact on pupil behaviour and their relationships to each other was fundamental to the report of the Elton Committee of Inquiry on Discipline in Schools in 1989. Its recommendations were wide ranging and exhaustive. The Elton Report's recommendation to Government that it should commission research on the relationships between school staffing levels, class size and pupil behaviour is remarkably similar in approach to the passage from the 2004 Cambridge University Research.
28. The evidence that the NUT has received from its members and the emphasis they place on the issue shows that teachers believe unacceptable pupil behaviour to be one of the highest priority issues that need to be addressed in schools. It demonstrates that unacceptable pupil behaviour is the trigger for many teachers to leave the profession.
29. For this reason, the NUT's 2005 Annual Conference called for a charter on pupil behaviour. The demand for such a charter received wide publicity and was one of the principal reasons for the establishment by the Government of the Leadership Group on Discipline and the Ministerial Stakeholder Group. This was a very welcome initiative by the Government and was widely supported by teachers.
30. The NUT has sought the establishment of a new independent inquiry into pupil behaviour. The groups set up by the Government could go a long way to meeting that request. They should certainly consider the Elton Inquiry as one of the benchmarks for their work. The NUT's Charter is a contribution to the debate, both within and outside those groups. The survey of teachers' views conducted by the Elton Committee, demonstrates that their views mirror largely those of teachers today. Addressing the causes of unacceptable pupil behaviour in today's schools is therefore long overdue.

The Need for System-Wide Reform

31. Teachers need professional freedom in order to respond adequately to the needs of children and young people. Currently, the National Curriculum acts as a barrier against such freedom. Research on pupils' views, both from the NFER and commissioned by the NUT from Cambridge University, shows that the current Key Stage 3 curriculum is a powerful background factor against encouraging young peoples' enjoyment of, and engagement with learning. It is a factor which does not encourage good pupil behaviour, therefore.

32. The NUT believes that the capacity of secondary schools to organise the curriculum imaginatively, particularly for Year 7 pupils, would be enhanced by a thorough review of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3.
33. Research, commissioned by the NUT from Cambridge University on the curriculum in primary schools, shows the same concern about the overloaded curriculum. It found a decline in the curriculum time available for creative subjects. A 2005 survey of NUT members in primary schools found that many teachers believed that they did not have time to offer as many curriculum enrichment activities as they would like and that the National Curriculum did not encourage them to teach creatively.
34. There should, therefore, be a review of the Primary National Curriculum aimed at the enhancement of the capacity of teachers to respond creatively to children's needs.

An Independent Review of the National Curriculum and its Assessment

35. There should be an independent review of the National Curriculum leading to a framework curriculum with equality at its heart. Much of the current National Curriculum content should be redesignated as being of only advisory status.
36. The framework should describe a range of statutory entitlements, or signposts, including: literacy; numeracy; science and technology; the creative arts; the humanities, including knowledge of global developments; information communications technology and modern foreign languages.
37. The signposts should include new approaches to cross-curricular learning such as: thinking skills; environmental learning; the impact of religious and secular beliefs on society; learning about industry and manufacturing; and citizenship and personal, social and health education, including healthy living and the importance of exercise. Decisions on how and when to introduce cross-curricular learning should rest with schools.
38. Through their self-evaluation arrangements, schools should be required to demonstrate that their curriculum arrangements are capable of encouraging young peoples' learning and motivation.
39. Coupled with the strong arguments for a review of the National Curriculum is the urgent need for a review of the National Curriculum's assessment arrangements.

40. Research conducted by the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI), demonstrated the detrimental impact of high stakes National Curriculum tests on pupils' motivation and learning, particularly on those who are less able and less confident than their peers. The NUT believes that the Government should learn the lessons of the major developments in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland on the reform of assessment. It should focus instead on encouraging and supporting assessment for learning.
41. The fundamental approach behind the NUT's proposals for curriculum and assessment reform is to enable teachers to shape the curriculum and its assessment to meet the needs of their pupils. It is an aspiration which dovetails with the concept of personalised learning. The conditions for personalised learning can be in place only when the curriculum provides a scaffolding for the development of teachers' own creativity in the interests of children's learning.

Practical Personalised Learning

42. Personalised learning should have practical outcomes. Personalised tuition arrangements should be in place for groups of pupils at key points in their development. Support is most crucial during the years that cover the transition between primary and secondary education, Key Stage 3 and the times adjacent to public examinations.
43. A further outcome of personalised learning should be a guaranteed entitlement for all pupils to a range of experiences and activities outside school. Linked to work in school, these should include a minimum number of visits to museums, galleries, theatres, concerts and study in outdoor centres and visits abroad.
44. The idea of a guaranteed entitlement and personalised tuition should be at the heart of personalised learning, and teachers should be at the centre of such a development. For this reason, the NUT has urged the Government to set up a funded pilot to trial such approaches.

Personal and Social Education

45. The third element vital to encouraging young people's motivation in their learning is having an effective pastoral structure in each school, which is fully responsive to young people's personal and social needs.

46. The Elton Committee of Enquiry had no doubt that schools 'should base pastoral systems on the strengths of the traditional integrated academic, welfare and disciplinary role of the teacher'. It considered that 'personal and social education should be a cross curricular theme in the National Curriculum'.
47. The NUT is firmly committed to that view. Effective pastoral structures and practical personalised learning are integral to each other. Qualified teachers are essential to such an approach as is the support of trained support staff.
48. It is vital, therefore, that the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions document contains criteria for Teaching and Learning Responsibility payments (TLRs) which explicitly include responsibility for the personal and social development of young people.

Every Child Matters

49. The fourth element in securing the best conditions for the motivation of young people to learn arises from the Every Child Matters agenda. The NUT supports the principles of this approach and has urged the Government to recognise that schools need to be central to developing additional services and to receive the funding necessary to develop those services. Whilst schools need to be able to respond to the needs of vulnerable children, research shows that vulnerable families are having an increasing impact on schools.
50. Properly introduced with the support of schools, an integrated children's services approach will increase protection for vulnerable children and start to tackle the needs of vulnerable families. The NUT has urged each local authority to set up a Children's Services Forum, with membership drawn from the local authority and from representatives of organisations of parents, teachers, governors and support staff alongside representatives from schools.
51. At school level, a strong pastoral structure should be complemented by lead professionals with the authority necessary to initiate fast responses to the needs of children who are deemed to be vulnerable or who are suspected of being subject to abuse. It is essential that such professionals are readily accessible.
52. Lead professionals should be based in individual schools or clusters of schools. They should have specific high status career routes, supplemented by high quality training. They should be drawn from a range of backgrounds, including social services and teaching. It should be a requirement that they understand the nature of schools as communities.

School Accountability

53. The fifth issue concerns school accountability. It continues to create tension and stress as a result of high stakes and punitive systems. Current accountability mechanisms create unnecessary stress and constrain the capacity of schools to respond properly to the needs and interests of pupils. In its document 'Bringing Down the Barriers' the NUT observed, "While, accountability for the effective functioning of the education service is a legitimate requirement ... the accountability system in England is permeated by a lack of trust. Teacher initiative and creativity is undermined by uncertainties created by a multiple and often conflicting lines of accountability."
54. Within 'Bringing Down the Barriers', the NUT has set out a range of proposals which tackle these overlapping accountability systems and which the NUT believes will remove the stress inflicted on school communities.

Bureaucratic Burdens

55. The NUT believes that teachers still face unnecessary internal pressures in respect of accountability, arising from excessive demands for planning, preparation, recording, reporting and assessment. Despite Government advice, teachers are still constrained to undertake too much planning, reporting and recording and to attend too many meetings. These bureaucratic burdens go far beyond the list of administrative tasks which teachers are now not normally expected to carry out. A national initiative, in the form of new guidance agreed between the Government and all unions is necessary to strip out continuing excessive bureaucratic burdens within schools.

Healthy Schools

56. There are other external factors impacting on schools, including diet. Such factors need tackling with coherent strategies covering the needs of local communities. The NUT supports the Government's Healthy Schools Initiative on school meals and has called for a minimum guarantee of 'a pound on a plate' for each child.

Background Conditions

57. **Establishing the proper background conditions for encouraging good pupil behaviour is vital. The factors which define an effective school are well known. They include a positive**

classroom and school climate support for teaching and learning, equity, time and resources. They are predicated on effective leadership. These factors provide an essential background influence in the drive to tackle unacceptable pupil behaviour.

58. The NUT believes, however, that to support good leadership and effective management within schools, system-wide reforms are needed. It believes further that: curriculum and assessment reform; securing a practical, personalised entitlement for all young people; strong pastoral structures in schools, with teachers central to those structures; school ownership of the Every Child Matters agenda and continuing reforms of accountability systems, are fundamental to promoting pupil enthusiasm for learning and eradicating unacceptable pupil behaviour.

THE CONDITIONS FOR POSITIVE PUPIL BEHAVIOUR

59. Sound leadership and teaching, with effective discipline policies, are at the centre of the capacity of schools to tackle unacceptable pupil behaviour. Many schools and their teachers are unsure, however, about the steps they can take where strategies for tackling unacceptable pupil behaviour are unsuccessful. Local authorities are unclear about Government policies on exclusions, as are many schools. This, in turn, can affect the discipline policies of schools and the day-to-day lives of teachers and pupils.
60. The Government has taken a number of steps to provide additional support for schools on pupil behaviour, including the Behaviour Improvement Programme. The NUT's proposals are additional to those measures and aim to fill the gaps in existing support.

Research and Information on Pupil Behaviour

61. Identifying underlying patterns linking the incidents of violence by area, type of school, pupil age, socio-economic factors and other factors, including gender and ethnicity is vital. The Elton Committee of Enquiry commissioned a specific survey of schools to gather this information. Research needs to be conducted regularly on the frequency of violent incidents without adding to the administrative burden on schools.

The Government, Local Authorities and Schools

62. The Government, with local authorities, should take the additional measures proposed below.

- Each local authority should be required to provide behaviour support to schools. It should be a requirement on local authorities to maintain or have access to a range of provision, including behaviour support services and schools or dedicated units for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. All local authorities should maintain or have access to Pupil Referral Units and hospital and home education services. Schools should be encouraged and resourced to provide outreach behaviour support to local maintained schools alongside their provision for their own pupils.
- The National Union of Teachers supports the Government's programme of collaborations between secondary schools on behaviour management, persistent truancy and alternative provision. Such collaboration, however, should not be a substitute for local authorities providing support services. The recent OFSTED report on SEN support services highlights the damaging effects for pupil support and delegation of services, including the undermining of local authorities' ability to support pupils with complex needs. Collaboratives of secondary schools should not be expected to substitute for local authorities' support services. They should be required to co-ordinate with local authority support services.
- Local authorities should be required to maintain a range of support services including special educational needs support services and educational psychology services. Funding for Behaviour and SEN support services should remain as part of the local authority's funding share.
- Academies and Foundation Schools should be required to contribute their fair share to the cost of local authority support services.
- When pupils are excluded by Academies, the pupil unit cost of the excluded pupil should return to the local authority.

63. Local authorities should be required to consult on and publish a Behaviour Support Plan, separate from the Children and Young People's Plan, outlining the range of provision available for behaviour support.

The Legal Basis for the Authority of Teachers

64. It is vital to affirm the status of teachers in the mind of the public. It is apparent that an environment exists in which some pupils consider it acceptable to demonstrate disruptive, abusive and, very occasionally, violent behaviour towards teachers. Some parents demonstrate a similar lack of respect. This undermines education and teacher morale.
65. The Elton Committee of Enquiry explored the issue of a teacher's authority and asked whether such authority was covered by law. The Enquiry said that it expected to "find this authority simply and clearly stated in an Act of Parliament". To quote the findings of the Enquiry, "we were concerned to find that it was not".
66. There remains uncertainty about the legal basis of the authority of teachers. It is not clear whether reasonable actions which teachers undertake in schools, including disciplinary actions, are beyond legal challenge. The Secretary of State should introduce legislation clarifying the legal basis of teachers' authority. Such legislation would contribute to affirming the status of teachers. In addition, the Government should take the following actions.
- Given the role of the General Teaching Council (England) as a professionally self-governing regulatory body on teachers' professional standards, all teachers, including those working in academies and in the independent sector, should be required to register.
 - The value of granting a 'protected title' to qualified teachers' status; for example, to make it an offence for anyone who is not a qualified teacher to claim to be a qualified teacher; should be examined.
 - The Section 133 Regulations under the 2002 Education Act should be revisited to define the core characteristics of practising qualified teachers, such that the principle that teaching is a highly skilled responsibility, extending across a broad range of professional skills, is set out in law.

Guidance on Exclusions

67. The DfES 'Guidance on Exclusions from Schools and Pupil Referral Units' (October 2004) is clear and comprehensive. The guidance sets out strategies such as restorative justice, mediation, internal seclusion and managed moves. It does not, however, identify resources sufficient to implement these practical approaches.

68. There are, nevertheless, specific messages which should be sent to school communities. The actions at school, local authority and Government level which the Union believes need to take place, are set out below.
69. The Government should include the following statement or a similar equivalent in its guidance.
70. *“ When the strategies within the agreed school discipline policy have been applied without success, then exclusion should be the next option. No teacher, member of support staff or pupil should have to tolerate persistent and defiant misbehaviour including low level disruption, bullying, including racist, sexist, or homophobic bullying, assault, carrying an offensive weapon, abuse, including sexist or racist abuse, unacceptable language or the supplying of illegal drugs. Neither should pupils remain in mainstream schools if they require restraining in anything other than exceptional circumstances.”*
71. Within the Government’s guidance on pupil exclusion, persistent low-level disruption should be added to the criteria for permanent exclusion. The provision would then read:
- “ Persistent and defiant misbehaviour, including persistent low-level disruption, bullying (which would include racist or homophobic bullying) or repeated possession and/or use of an illegal drug on school premises...”*
72. The Government’s guidance on permanent exclusion of pupils should be amended in three areas.
- Within the current membership of Independent Appeals Panels there are no places allocated for classroom teachers this should be rectified and alongside the places allocated for head teachers of maintained schools, there should be places for nominated classroom teachers.
 - The Independent Appeals Panel procedure allows teachers who are expected to attend as witnesses to be accompanied by friends or representatives. This facility should apply to the discipline committees of school governing bodies when it hears evidence from teachers.
 - The Government should revise its guidance in circumstances where Independent Appeals Panels consider that permanent exclusions should have taken place. Where head teachers and

their staffs consider that there have been irretrievable breakdowns in relations between pupils and teachers or between pupils and other pupils, the reinstatement of excluded pupils should not be an option.

The Students' Voice and Pastoral Care

73. Schools which provide mechanisms for consultation with their students and structures for listening to the collective voice of students, are those which often have lower incidences of unacceptable pupil behaviour. Government advice and information on citizenship education opportunities and the forms of student involvement that contribute to the lives of schools should be revised and include also details of ESSA, the recently founded English Secondary Students' Association.
74. Additional resources should be made available to all schools for the provision of student counsellors and behaviour support assistants. Such staff can play a vital role in detecting bullying and providing individual support to pupils.
75. The Government's guidance on Improving Behaviour and Attendance should be amended to include advice that schools are expected to have effective pastoral structures including involving teachers with specific pastoral responsibilities.

Continuing Professional Development on Pupil Behaviour

76. The NUT's Continuing Professional Development programme is acknowledged nationally as one of the best providers of high quality CPD on pupil behaviour. The Union Learning Fund should be expanded to include funding to unions representing teachers and support staff, such that they can provide continuing professional development on pupil behaviour.
77. The Government's programmes on Behaviour Improvement and Violence Reduction in Schools have the capacity to make a real difference to pupils, teachers and support staff. The content of these programmes need to be replicated at the level of teacher training. The Teacher Development Agency should review its requirements for teacher training providers to provide training on pupil behaviour management, such that all student teachers feel that they have received effective practical advice on this issue. The TDA should seek partnership with teacher organisations in the provision of such training to student teachers.

The Needs of Families

78. There is growing evidence, particularly from the NUT's research commissioned from Cambridge University, that the fragility and vulnerability of families, particularly of very young parents, contributes to poor pupil behaviour. The Government should review its current position, including Sure Start, to ensure that classes in parenting are available for all teenage parents.

Pupil Restraint

79. The powers of teachers and other staff on the use of reasonable force to restrain pupils are contained within Section 550A of the Education Act 1996. They protect staff from prosecution if they use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. There has been no national guidance on training for teachers, however, on pupil restraint and physical contact with pupils. This has been left to individual local authorities, as has the production of model policies on physical restraint policies. National guidance should be published after consultation with teachers' organisations.

Pupil Allegations

80. The number of teachers who are suspended as a result of pupil allegations is very small and the number of proven cases even smaller. Nevertheless, it is vital that suspension is kept as short as possible. There is evidence of differences in local authority guidance on the circumstances leading to suspensions. This is unacceptable. Suspended teachers should have a right to fast and thorough investigations and the resolution of the allegations. In addition the NUT believes that the General Teaching Council (England) must act to ensure the fast resolution of any allegations or complaints against a teacher. Teachers should have a right to confidentiality until the result of any legal proceedings is known.

Knives and Other Weapons in Schools

81. Since the Dunblane and Hungerford incidents in the 1990s, the work of the Government's School Security Working Party has led to major improvements in school security. The security of schools needs constant review, however, particularly for staff working on their own in isolated rooms and spaces. Consideration needs to be given to the right of all staff to secure help immediately if under physical threat, including the right to have panic alarms.

82. The Government's attention to the issue of knives and other offensive weapons in schools is welcome. The presence and use of weapons in schools presents serious risks to the health and safety of staff members and pupils, which threatens to escalate if not tackled firmly and effectively. The NUT has proposed specific amendments to Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 on physical restraint, that would clarify the position on the possession of offensive weapons. The NUT calls for the publication of statutory guidance on this issue after full consultation. The adoption of the NUT's proposed amendments would ensure that no liability would attach to teachers who declined to use the powers contained within the amendment. The NUT believes that any legislation should not have the effect of staff placing themselves at risk.

Resources for Behaviour Support

83. The Government should audit the resources needed to provide for support to schools in respect of behaviour management. Such an audit should take into account the capacity of schools to organise personalised tuition, small groups and small class sizes. The NUT believes that additional resources for schools and local authorities will be needed, if a real and effective move is to be taken to tackle unacceptable pupil behaviour in schools.

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OUR AIM: PROFESSIONAL UNITY

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