



NQT pocket guide

Welcome

Teaching is one of the most rewarding careers you could have chosen, but at the start you may well have a lot of questions. As a member of the National Education Union, we've got lots of help and advice to support you in your new role, including specific information on the most common questions and issues faced by those new to teaching. As your union we will be there for you throughout your career to empower you to be a strong voice for teachers and the children you teach.



See our trainee and NQ hub at
neu.org.uk/new-teachers

Induction

Every teacher awarded qualified teacher status (QTS), is required to complete an induction period of usually, one year. Good induction helps you to feel at home, to fit in, to make sure you know all the routines and procedures of the organisation you have joined. Induction should be a supportive process that helps new teachers develop their professional confidence and competence. For more information, see your guide to induction and our induction checklist at [neu.org.uk](https://www.neu.org.uk)

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Before you start



Your first day in a new school is an exciting time, but you may also feel apprehensive. Find out as much about the school as you can before you start, through the website, prospectus or recent inspection report.

Arrange a visit if you can, to familiarise yourself with the layout of the school and gather any other information which will help get you off to a good start.

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Relationships

There are lots of relationships to get used to when you first go into the classroom: with pupils, other teachers, support staff, leaders, and, of course, parents. Take your time, you don't have to get to know everyone straight away. Acknowledge the skills and expertise of your more experienced colleagues, but don't forget that your view matters. Working out, over time, how the staff relate to each other is invaluable.

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You and your mentor

For trainee or newly qualified teachers, the most important professional relationship is likely to be with your mentor and time should be set aside for you to meet on a regular basis. There is no specific and consistent job description that applies to the role of a mentor and the word is often used to describe many different roles. The NEU has practical guidance on managing this relationship, including what you should expect from the mentor and what the mentor should expect from you.

See neu.org.uk/advice/role-mentor

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Planning, preparation and assessment time

All teachers are entitled to have at least ten per cent of their teaching timetable for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA). This time should be allocated during the school's timetabled teaching week, not bolted on to the school day, and must be in minimum blocks of 30 minutes.

NQTs are also entitled to spend ten per cent less time teaching than other classroom teachers, so they have time to undertake activities in their induction.



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Professional development

It's never too early in your career to think about continuing professional development (CPD). The union's CPD programme is delivered by highly qualified trainers and offers a wide range of courses, many aimed at new teachers. Courses are designed to meet your individual needs and to have a lasting impact on teaching and learning. See neu.org.uk/learning-and-events for our CPD programme.

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Pay

Most newly qualified teachers will be placed at the bottom end of the main pay range. The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) permits governing bodies to place teachers with relevant experience outside teaching at a higher point. If you've been told your school will do this, ensure your pay reflects the position. If you're working in an academy, you should check the pay arrangements because these can vary significantly between academies and academy trusts. See [neu.org.uk/pay-advice](https://www.neu.org.uk/pay-advice)

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Teachers' Pension Scheme

All new teachers will automatically join the 'career average' pension scheme. This means pensions are based on your average salary over your whole career. As an NQT you will pay a minimum of 7.4% of your salary towards your pension. We understand that this is a big ask, with other pressures such as student loans and rent. However, your employer pays a substantial 23.6% contribution too (from September 2019) so, if you opt out, you will be losing a substantial financial benefit. If this is a consideration for you, the NEU recommends you take independent financial advice before doing so, and that you review your decision on a regular basis or whenever your financial situation improves.

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In the classroom

Your time in the classroom should be exciting and stimulating. You will have many responsibilities, but you should also be aware of the responsibilities the school has towards you. You can find NEU advice about these on our website and through our publications or by contacting us directly.



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Legal responsibilities



All teachers, including those on the way to gaining QTS, have a 'duty of care' towards their pupils. According to this duty of care, you are required to apply your professional training and skills to promote the well-being of the pupils. Your school also has a responsibility to train and support you to do this. The NEU has advice on your rights and responsibilities in meeting your duty of care.

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Child protection

Teachers are not responsible for investigating suspected physical or emotional abuse but should know where to report concerns. Acquaint yourself with procedures in your school, academy or college for dealing with suspected abuse. Your school or college should ensure you know this information from day one of your employment, as well as who the designated safeguarding lead, responsible for child protection, is. Insist on receiving appropriate training on child protection issues.

See our trainee and NQ hub at
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Stress

The NEU believes all employers should have a policy on how to reduce and prevent teacher stress. The most common causes of teacher stress include workload and inspections by Ofsted (in England) and Estyn (in Wales). If you are feeling stressed, it is likely your colleagues will be too. Speak to your NEU rep so that they can provide support and offer suggestions on how to tackle stress and its causes.

See neu.org.uk/stress



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Work-life balance

The NEU believes all employers should have a policy covering work-life balance. The DfE also says schools should consider incorporating work-life balance into their development plan, so check to see if your workplace has one. Additionally, the DfE and Estyn offer specific advice on reducing workload around marking, lesson planning, and data collection. As part of our ongoing campaign to tackle excessive workload, the NEU has developed many helpful resources, as well as continuing to lobby the Government to make changes to alleviate workload. See [**neu.org.uk/campaigns/workload**](https://neu.org.uk/campaigns/workload)

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Marking

Teachers should be allowed to exercise professional autonomy when it comes to the frequency and style of marking. Ofsted's School Inspection Handbook is clear that no specific type or volume of marking and feedback is expected; these are for the school to decide through its assessment policy. The DfE has said that marking should be 'motivating, meaningful and manageable'. Estyn has made it clear that all feedback (including marking) should be 'timely, meaningful, manageable and motivating for pupils'.



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Lesson plans

As a trainee or NQT, you are likely to be required to produce a plan for your lessons. The format is entirely a matter of professional judgement, as the DfE, Ofsted and Estyn do not require a particular format. They should be kept to a minimum length and can be set out in bullet points or notes, including how learning objectives can be achieved. You should not be expected to hand in lesson plans for scrutiny by senior management, so speak to your union rep if you are asked to do this.

See our trainee and NQ hub at
neu.org.uk/new-teachers

Data

The collection of data can be a major cause of workload problems in schools. The NEU has advice to make it more manageable. Advice from the DfE and Estyn is that data collection should have a clear purpose, and should be as efficient a process as possible. They advise that only data needed to support outcomes for children should be collected, and the amount of data should be proportionate to its usefulness. Duplication should be avoided – data should be collected once and used in many ways.

See our trainee and NQ hub at
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Behaviour

All teachers, whether they are new to the classroom or have many years of experience, can sometimes find pupil behaviour challenging and undermining. Establish your classroom expectations and class rules, based on school policies, and outline these with pupils at the beginning of the academic year. They are more likely to respond positively to rules that they have agreed. Make sure that you read the school's behaviour policy and discuss practice with your mentor when joining a new school. The NEU offers practical advice on behaviour management, including the positive behaviour management guide at neu.org.uk/advice/managing-behaviour

See our trainee and NQ hub at
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Inspections

Your first Ofsted or Estyn inspection can seem daunting, but inspections should not be an experience you have to face alone. Seek out your fellow NEU members and find a collective approach to inspections, which minimises additional work and ensures teachers are in control. Be aware of Ofsted and Estyn's 'mythbuster' guidance, which makes clear what inspectors should and should not look for. The NEU also has material to support you through the process.

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Observations

The NEU believes that classroom observation should be developmental and supportive. As an NQT you will be observed at regular intervals. There is no stipulation around the timing of observations. NEU policy is that teachers should be subject to no more than three classroom observations per year, exceeding no more than three hours in total.



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Social media and electronic communication

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have changed how we communicate, but it's important to remember that careers have been wrecked over an ill-judged post. Your professional position can be compromised if inappropriate information is accessed or shared online, even if done outside work. Limit public access to accounts and don't post information you wouldn't want your employers to see. Also, never use personal email addresses, mobile phones or other personal social media accounts to contact pupils or parents.

See our trainee and NQ hub at
neu.org.uk/new-teachers

Extra activities

Taking on activities such as breakfast or after-school clubs must be voluntary and should not be undertaken to the detriment of your substantive role or work-life balance. If you do take on additional activities, in some, rare, circumstances you can be paid for the time if employed under the STPCD. The level of payment should be set out in your school's pay policy.



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Get involved

The NEU is led by education professionals just like you. There are so many ways you can get involved and make a real difference in your workplace and across the education service. These include supporting our campaigns, responding to surveys, taking part in the learning and development opportunities we offer and becoming a workplace rep. Being a rep is a great way of getting more involved in the union. Did you know the NEU is also looking for green reps and union learning reps? Find out more about the training and opportunities on offer to reps. See **neu.org.uk/get-involved**

See our trainee and NQ hub at
neu.org.uk/new-teachers

Here to help

The rep at your school or college will be able to offer you practical and personal support. Your local branch/district can also provide help and advice. If you do not know the name/telephone number of your rep or local branch/district secretary, or do not have a rep in your workplace see **neu.org.uk/contact-us**

You can also call the AdviceLine on **0345 811 8111** or email **advice@neu.org.uk** for advice and support.

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Upgrade your membership now

Upgrade to full membership of the NEU for just £1 for the academic year 2020/21 to ensure that you receive all the support and advice you need.

Upgrade online at neu.org.uk/join-now or call **0845 811 8111**. The National Education Union is a powerful voice for all teachers and education professionals who are passionate about what they do. Upgrade today and make sure your voice is heard.

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Join the NEU today and be part of the biggest education union in Europe

- ◆ Be part of a campaigning union shaping the future of education
- ◆ Access the support of our network of workplace reps
- ◆ Get advice from our dedicated national advice line
- ◆ You are the union. Get involved in NEU campaigns, organising events or meetings in your workplace
- ◆ Benefit from a wide range of subsidised CPD courses in your local area
- ◆ Take advantage of money-saving member benefits and services, including insurance protection at work



neu.org.uk/neu-member-benefits

See our trainee and NQ hub at neu.org.uk/new-teachers



Hamilton House
Mabledon Place
London
WC1H 9BD
0345 811 8111

neu.org.uk

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