

# Directed time

## How to tackle workload in the independent sector



Guide for National Education  
Union workplace representatives  
and members



**As we return to established working practices, now is the time to fully assess the workload impact of new initiatives, or ways of working, introduced during Covid-19. We need to ensure that they are reasonable, proportionate, and fair.**





# Contents

Foreword	4
Our bargaining calendar	5
What is directed time campaign and how is it relevant in the independent sector?	6
Why are working time calendars important?	7
Working Time Regulations and independent schools	9
How to win on workload in your workplace	10
Working time calendar examples for prep and senior schools	11
What reps say	13
Your next steps	14
Your support as an NEU representative	15

# Foreword

Welcome to our first edition of our Winning at Work publication, focusing on working hours in the independent sector. This publication complements the National Education Union (NEU) directed time campaign.

As reps, you are the most important part of our union, supporting members, making gains for union groups and representing our profession. The pandemic has meant schools have had a challenging year trying to deliver the best education in the safest way.

This has meant more being asked of our members, who have been working longer hours to ensure the safest possible workplaces. The NEU believes that managing workload is an essential component of a safe and healthy workplace.

Now is the time to make your strong union staff voice heard. Act before additional work, undertaken as a contingency during the pandemic, becomes a permanent addition. Let's embrace new ways of doing things that work. But, in so doing, let's also be clear that workload must be managed and prioritised.

One positive from the pandemic has been the greater collaboration between management and staff and the union. Independent sector employers have become a little more accustomed to conversations around NEU-endorsed

policy. You have an opportunity to build on this.

Challenging excessive work demands is a critical conversation that needs to be had. It goes to the core of your professionalism, the quality, and enjoyment, of your work.

The aim of our bargaining calendar is to support you to work together with members at your school to improve working conditions.

Your school might not have a directed time calendar, but using our calculator to look at your working hours is a good benchmark. A directed time calendar is standard practice in the state sector.

We hope this booklet is useful to you and your members and that together you can use it to help you win at work.

You can share your stories with us via [campaigns@neu.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@neu.org.uk)

Thank you again for your work and dedication on behalf of our union.

Together, we will shape the future of education.

Yours sincerely,



**Kevin Courtney and Mary Boustad**  
Joint general secretaries,  
National Education Union

# Our bargaining calendar

Our bargaining calendar is a framework for NEU reps and members to help develop workplace presence and win for members. Echoing the rhythm of the school year, the framework will help co-ordinate activity as part of a national campaign to improve working conditions. Covid-19 has disrupted everyone's calendar, making excessive working time as much of an issue for many members as safety.

Our bargaining calendar in the independent sector is slightly different from the state version.

A key difference relates to pay negotiation, which in the independent sector is conducted in spring for the award in September.

It is recommended that NEU members submit a collective pay claim in January/February, while draft budgets are being discussed. It does not have to be sophisticated or complex. The mere act of submitting a pay claim changes the dynamic. For more information see the NEU briefing on collective bargaining in the independent sector and the starter for ten.

A second difference relates to appraisal. In the state sector, appraisal is a well-regimented system. This is not the case in the independent sector.

Instead, we recommend that there are two conversations around workload; the first, in the summer term when timetables are being prepared; the second, in autumn term when they have been finalised.



## Autumn term: Workload



## Spring term: Pay



## Summer term: Workload

# What is directed time and how is it relevant to the independent sector?

Directed time is when teachers are directed by their head teacher to be at work and available for work. In the state sector the agreed maximum is 1,265 hours per academic year, spread over 190 days of teaching and five non-teaching days.

The 1,265 hours is a maximum — schools should allow a contingency to cover unexpected events. Teachers do have to work reasonable additional hours, as necessary, for preparation and assessment — but these hours cannot be directed by the head teacher.

While these maximums do not apply to the independent sector, they provide a solid benchmark.

Anyone can use the directed time calculator to work out their total working time.

The following must be part of directed time: teaching time, PPA time, supervision before and after lessons and at breaks cover, parents' evenings, after school meetings, Inset/CPD and anything else which teachers are "directed" to do, and which requires their professional skills.

Directed time and the 1,265 maximum should be adjusted pro-rata for those working part-time.

State schools have a calendar of the activities which make up teachers' directed time — consulted on with staff via trade unions.

The NEU believes that, not only is it good practice for staff and the union to be involved in the general discussion of the allocation of work, but that it makes for a better run school.

We have all heard the justifications that *the inspectorate demands it, the parents expect it, and our competitors are doing it.*

This is all well and good but there needs to be a professional discussion with those delivering the work to ensure that it is desirable, productive, and necessary. If so, then workload must be prioritised. If new things are added, others need to be taken away.

We encourage all our reps and members in the independent sector to request involvement in the discussion about the allocation of work and duties, to ensure that it is reasonable, proportionate, and fair to all. Seek to establish this as common practice.

# Why are working time calendars important?

All schools should have a calendar of the activities which make up teachers' working time. The NEU believes that it should be consulted on with staff via trade unions in all workplaces. Individual teachers should also have a personal record or working time calendar that reflects the school's calendar and shows their individual commitments.

These ensure that enough time is allocated to them to fulfil each of the requirements of their role, leaving a contingency cushion for the year and avoiding an excessive and unmanageable workload. NEU reps/members should ask their head or leadership team for meaningful collective staff consultation on workload, the working time calendar, or other record of hours. It is important to have collective staff oversight of timetabling. Individual teachers can raise concerns about their workload at any point during the academic year.

The allocation of duties, tasks, and roles between full and part-time staff should be on a pro-rata basis. It is important to ensure that the position of part-time teachers – who are predominantly women and contain large numbers of teachers with protected characteristics – is fairly managed.

One of the characteristics of independent schools is that they are all different. However, what most have in common, in comparison to the state sector, is a shorter academic year but longer working days.

There is an expectation that extracurricular provision is extensive. Herein lies the distinction, and part of the problem, in that: the expectation to “volunteer” for clubs, clinics, and trips is not systematic.





Longer lunch times might be in place to accommodate lots of clubs. This makes for a long day. A teacher might run three clubs a week, adding an extra three hours. Some staff might do less, but others more. Sports staff might spend five hours a week on clubs, in addition to travelling to fixtures at 7am or returning after 6pm.

Educational trips, with early starts/late finishes, can also be plentiful. Duke of Edinburgh is enjoyable but a significant time commitment.

Pastoral duties can also be time-consuming.

All these duties need to be taken in the round and, when benchmarking against the state sector, considered in the context of the shorter academic year.

What is important is that we know how much work you are undertaking, and that the workload is reasonable, proportionate, and fair.

A directed/working time calendar helps us quantify the work we do and to make comparisons.



# Working Time Regulations and independent schools

Nothing replaces dialogue, good practice, and agreement. Schools should listen to, and trust, the professional judgement of their staff. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Inevitably, there is a power imbalance between employer and employee. This is why employees come together in a union to make their voice heard.

Beyond collegiate discussion, there is statutory minimum protection under the Working Time Regulations.

This includes the 48 hour maximum working week, rest breaks and daily and weekly rest periods.

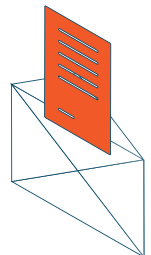
The regulations do bite in the independent sector. However, the impact is lessened by the fact that, 'working time' is averaged over 17 weeks [26 weeks in boarding and residential schools], thereby including periods of some school holiday.

It is not uncommon in the independent sector for the statutory minimums to be breached, especially in boarding schools. The NEU has successfully won cases in the independent sector, for instance, gaining boarding house staff additional time-off and rest periods.

More details on how the regulations apply in the independent sector can be here [neu.org.uk/working-time-regulations-and-independent-schools](https://neu.org.uk/working-time-regulations-and-independent-schools)

## Three key questions to ask members

- 1** Do you receive an uninterrupted lunch break away from your specific area of work, every day, for a) the statutory minimum 20 minutes b) the NEU recommended minimum 40 minutes?
- 2** When carrying out evening duties, boarding, school trips etc, do you receive a minimum of 11 hours off from work in any 24-hour period?
- 3** When required to undertake early, or late, duties, do you receive an equivalent period of compensatory rest?



# How to win on directed time in your workplace:

- 1** Organise a meeting of members to discuss workload and/or a working time calendar – there should be an annual discussion about workload that sets out the details of teaching staff working time in the forthcoming academic year. Bear in mind that there might be two parts to the conversation: first, when the timetabling is done in the summer; and second, when the implications are fully known in the autumn.
- 2** If this is something that doesn't usually happen at your school, use the members' meeting to agree that the rep/s will speak to the head/SLT about workload/or working time calendar overview and collective staff input into the general discussion.
- 3** Meet with the head/SLT to discuss workload/a working time calendar and any areas of concern for staff and the union. Seek to establish that workload will be reasonable, proportionate, and fair.
- 4** Meet again with members to discuss your head/SLT's response and decide your next steps.
- 5** If you have concerns about your hours of work, use the Excel pro forma to calculate the hours of you and your colleagues to compare with the state sector. Better still, contact your NEU counterparts in comparable schools to make comparisons.
- 6** If you need any further support, contact your district secretary or regional office.

# Working time calendar example for a prep school teacher

Prep

Here is an example of a working time calendar for a full-time classroom teacher in a prep school without additional responsibilities. This is simply an example – the way in which the time is allocated for different aspects of a teacher’s working day will vary between schools. What’s important is that the issue is given careful consideration.

Use of hours		Number of hours per year
Registration	35 mins x 169 days	98.5
Mid-session break	30 mins x 169 days	84.5
Teaching and PPA Time	22.5 hrs x 34 weeks	765
Inset days	6 hrs x 5 days	30
Supervisory duties (Includes start of the morning session, either end of the lunch break, and the end of the school day.)	30 mins x 169 days	84.5
Parents’ meetings and open evenings	3 hrs x 4 days	12
Staff meetings	75 mins x 34 days	42.5
Events (Open Day x 2, other whole school events)	2 x 8 hours	16
Clubs	2 hrs x 34 weeks	68
Clinics & catch-up Educational trips, residentials, Duke of Edinburgh etc.		Variable
Other duties of the teacher (e.g. email correspondence)	30 mins x 169 days	84.5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,285.5 hours</b>
Contingency (a cushion of time available for unforeseen circumstances.)		8.5 hours

# Working time calendar example for a senior school teacher

**Senior**

Here is an example of a working time calendar for a full-time classroom teacher in a senior school without additional responsibilities.

Responsibilities and duties vary considerably between independent schools. This is simply an example – the way in which the time is allocated for different aspects of a working day will vary between schools. What’s important is that the issue is given careful consideration.

Use of hours		Number of hours per year
Registration	30 mins x 169 days	84.5
Mid-session break	20 mins x 169 days	56.3
Teaching and PPA Time	27.5 hrs x 34 weeks	935
Inset days	6 hrs x 5 days	30
Supervisory duties (Includes before the start of the morning session, either end of the lunch break and end of the school day.)	30 mins x 169 days	84.5
Parents’ meetings and open evenings	3 hrs x 8 days	24
Staff meetings	1 hr x 34 days	34
Events (Open Day x 2, other whole school events)	2 x 8 hours	16
Clubs & clinics	2 hrs x 34 weeks	68
Clinics & catch-up Educational trips, residentials, Duke of Edinburgh etc.		Variable
Other duties of the teacher (e.g. email correspondence)	15 mins x 169 days	42.5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,374.8 hours</b>
Contingency (a cushion of time available for unforeseen circumstances.)		0 hours

# What reps say

**“ When the SLT proposes new initiatives, we have found that it is very effective if NEU members say, in unison, yes, we’d love to undertake this new work but, what of our current workload are you proposing to take away? ”**

**Cathy, prep school rep**

**“ Our school is taking a firm line managing parent expectations, so that they are reasonable and proportionate. Staff in our school have strongly and successfully resisted hybrid lessons as the new normal. Aside from the additional workload for staff, school management need to be very wary of a creep to virtual schools. ”**

**Lesley, senior school rep**

**“ It’s only by coming together collectively that we can begin to make sustained and impactful inroads into challenging workload. ”**

**Gary, secondary rep**

# Your next steps

**1**

**2**

**3**

# **Your support:** contact your districts and region

We have a whole network of support to help you in your role as an NEU representative, ensuring you win for members at work.

This includes:

## **Your district secretary**

An elected NEU member who will be responsible for supporting you in bargaining and winning for members. Their details are available at [neu.org.uk/contact-us](https://neu.org.uk/contact-us)

## **Your regional team**

Our group of professional staff are there to assist you in your area.

The details for each regional office are here:

### **Northern**

3 McMillan Close  
Saltwell Business Park  
Gateshead  
NE9 5BF  
[northern@neu.org.uk](mailto:northern@neu.org.uk)

### **Yorkshire and Humber**

Lazarus House (1st Floor)  
14 Prince's Street  
Doncaster  
South Yorkshire  
DN1 3NJ  
[yorkshire&humber@neu.org.uk](mailto:yorkshire&humber@neu.org.uk)

### **North West**

Paragon Business Park  
Chorley New Road  
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Bolton  
BL6 6HG  
[north.west@neu.org.uk](mailto:north.west@neu.org.uk)

### **West Midlands**

8 Edward Street  
Birmingham  
B1 2RX  
[west.midlands@neu.org.uk](mailto:west.midlands@neu.org.uk)

### **East Midlands**

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Elm House  
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### **South East**

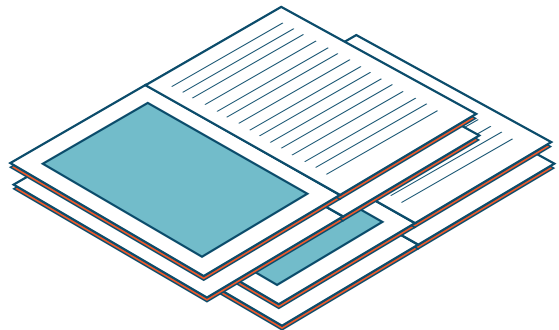
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### **South West**

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9 Harrier Way  
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**south.west@neu.org.uk**





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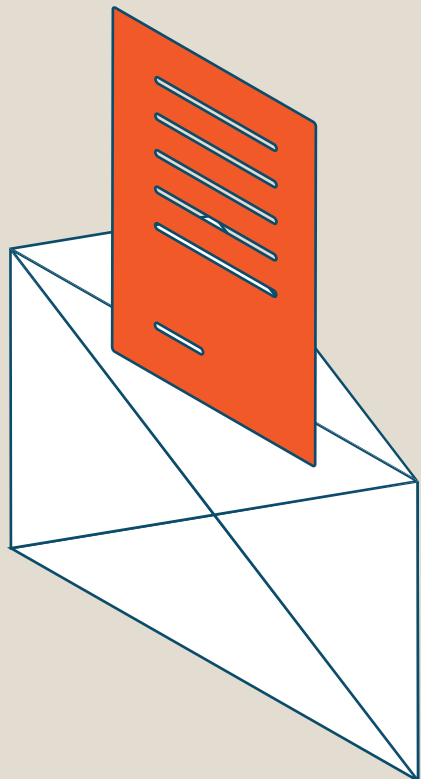
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