

CUTS AND ACADEMIES

With no consultation whatsoever Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education decided to abolish your negotiating body and said: "The schools support staff negotiating body does not fit well with the government's priorities for greater deregulation of the pay and conditions arrangements for the school workforce."

After more than a decade of relentless campaigning by GMB Union to establish a national negotiating body for school support staff, it took just four months for the government to abolish it. They have decided school support staff do not need their career structures, pay and terms and conditions negotiated nationally.

The Tory led government wants every school to be able to set the pay and conditions of its school support staff. Instead of fairness, consistency and transparency they want secrecy and different rates of pay and terms and conditions.



The government's own inspectors (OFSTED) have identified and highlighted the professionalism of support staff in our schools and the positive difference you make to our children's education. Mr. Gove has decided that your employer should be encouraged to cut your pay and conditions.

GMB says that this is proof that we are yet again dealing with a regime that really does not know what goes on in our schools day to day and does not want to know.

GMB fears that this decision will take us back to the days when :

- **You didn't know if you were to have a job from one term to the next.**
- **The stationery budget was seen as more important than the role of a teaching assistant.**
- **Support staff were coerced into taking cuts in their hours and pay to make sure they all kept their jobs, but they still continued to work the same hours for the sake of the children.**
- **School support staff were treated as "Mum's Army."**

MOVE OVER TO DIRECT DEBIT Act now to avoid losing GMB protection—at no extra cost.

The government wants to convert schools into 'Academies'. If your school chooses to make the change your job, your pay and your conditions will be put at risk and so could your GMB membership. You therefore need to switch your method of paying GMB subscriptions so that your GMB protection stays with you whatever happens to your school.

Visit www.gmb.org.uk and switch to Direct Debit or contact your GMB Regional Office.

Contact details are at the bottom of page 3.

If you want to organise a meeting at your schools with GMB or to make sure your school receives GMB's regular newsletter, call Bill Chard on 0845 337 7777. If you or any of your colleagues working in schools are not members, you can join using the form on the back of the newsletter or online.

Join online at www.gmb.org.uk

ACADEMIES UPDATE

TELL GMB AS SOON AS YOUR SCHOOL DECIDES TO BECOME AN ACADEMY. CONTACT YOUR GMB LEAD SCHOOLS OFFICER. SEE CONTACT DETAILS AT THE BOTTOM OF PAGE 3.

The government has made it clear that it is their intention to make every single school in England become an Academy by hook or by crook.

- First of all they invited every outstanding school in the country to become an Academy with a virtual guarantee that they would be successful.
- Then they invited every school in the country to "register their interest" enticing them by additional funding.
- Now they are saying if schools are shown to be failing they will compel them to become an Academy.

GMB says it is only a matter of time before we have 21,000 schools in England that are all run as businesses. Governing bodies will be the employer of all staff in schools. They will set the hours of work, pay rates and terms and conditions of support staff without having to have any regard to national agreements.

If your school has or is deciding to become an Academy, legally you should transfer on your current terms and conditions, and any change to your pay, hours or terms and conditions has to be by agreement. This process is known as TUPE and all GMB Officers know the TUPE legislation and will be on hand to advise and support members throughout the transfer and beyond.

It is very important that your national terms and conditions are maintained and GMB is concerned that Lord Hill, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Education is advising head teachers to the contrary.

In a letter to head teachers the minister said: "There is absolutely no requirement for schools to enter into any agreement with unions to retain staff pay and conditions."

Lord Hill's letter also threatens schools that: "...the existence of any such agreement would be a significant factor in the assessment of the Secretary of State deciding whether or not to enter into a Funding Agreement with the school."

The threat of this penalty is not only confusing and misleading for head teachers and governing bodies, GMB believe it is also unlawful. (The legality of this advice has been challenged by GMB and other education unions).

PROTECT YOURSELF

Whether your school is community maintained, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided or an Academy, it is still a workplace and unfortunately whatever the status of your school all staff will still be liable to having accusation and/or allegations made against them by the pupils or pupils parents/carers. If your school is outside local authority control your governing bodies and appeals panels will become judge and jury. Even more reason for school staff to require independent advice, professional representation and legal back up from GMB.

GMB has also compiled a series of resources for members, parents, governors, and communities to provide them with information such as frequently asked questions about the process of converting to Academy status, model letters to send to governing bodies and head teachers; these can all be accessed at www.gmb.org.uk/academyschools

If any of your colleagues are not GMB members encourage them to join now. Give them the form in this newsletter or get them to go online and join instantly at www.gmb.org.uk/join