

Important information for UNISON members in schools

This week has seen a number of ministerial announcements and news reports about plans to lift some of the vital current safety measures in schools from 19 July or September.

This bulletin includes:

- ***UNISON's response to these plans***
- ***news on a mass meeting for members***
- ***updated guidance for medically vulnerable and higher risk members***
- ***Save our Maintained Nursery Schools online rally***
- ***New report on asbestos in schools***
- ***School uniform grants are available***
- ***Barnsley term time workers grievance***

UNISON response to ending bubbles and isolation

This week the Secretary of State for Education has announced plans to consider ending bubbles and self-isolation of close contacts in schools before the end of term.

In response, UNISON's schools committee met on Tuesday 29 June and agreed a statement and action plan to stand up for our members concerns about these proposals.

UNISON believes that the government's plan to end bubbles and self-isolation of close contacts in schools is dangerous and will lead to more disruption. In light of the surge in infection rates in schools, UNISON is calling for the government to keep current rules in place and strengthen safety measures in schools, by making bubbles smaller, improving ventilation and bringing back previous rules on face coverings.

Please read UNISON's statement by following the link below.

[UNISON's statement](#)

Members meeting - Tuesday 20th July

We will be holding an online meeting for all members on the government's plans for schools in September and UNISON's advice on improving safety for pupils and staff.

This meeting will be held on **Tuesday 20th July at 5pm**. We will send further details on how to join the meeting in the next member's email.

Updated vulnerable employees guide

Throughout the pandemic UNISON, working alongside NEU, Unite and GMB, have published a series of guides for workers who are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV), clinically vulnerable or in higher-risk groups and those who live with or care for people in these groups.

We have published an update to this guidance to cover the final half term of the year. Please read this guidance by following the link below.

[Updated guidance for vulnerable members](#)

Save our Maintained Nursery Schools online rally!

Join our live event at 6.30pm on Thursday 8 July when UNISON, NAHT, Early Education and NEU will be launching the next phase of the Save our Maintained Nursery Schools campaign.

We have continued to see maintained nursery schools under the threat of closure.

We're bringing together school leaders, parents, teachers and advocates for the early years sector who are determined to make their voices heard.

Please join the rally next Thursday via the link below and take the pledge to march with us on the Treasury in the Autumn term.

[Register for the rally](#)

Asbestos in Schools – UNISON joins calls for the Government to act without delay

Action Mesothelioma Day was on 2nd July, a day focussed on raising awareness about the asbestos related cancer, mesothelioma. To mark the day the Joint Unions Asbestos Committee (JUAC), of which UNISON is a member, have launched a new report on asbestos in schools.

The report estimates that a shocking 5-7,000 former pupils, school support staff and teachers have already died from mesothelioma due to asbestos exposure at school in the 1960-1980s. JUAC is calling on the Government to strengthen the asbestos regulations, identify all schools with unsafe asbestos and fund asbestos removal.

For more information on asbestos regulations and schools' legal requirements visit [Managing asbestos in schools - Frequently asked questions](#)

UNISON is always looking for members who are interested in becoming a health and safety rep to help protect themselves and their colleagues [find out more here](#)

UNISON School uniform grants available online!

There for You has once again set up a fund to help members on low incomes struggling with the cost of school uniforms. Grants of £50 per child are available, up to a maximum of £150 per family.

Applications are by downloadable form and will be available from **Thursday 1 July** at www.unison.org.uk/schooluniform2021. As always, this is a *limited fund* and once it's gone, it's gone.

Term time only workers could have been underpaid for years – join our legal claim

You may recall that we told you last year that UNISON believes that term-time only workers in Barnsley have been underpaid due to their hours and annual leave having been mis-calculated.

We registered collective grievances on behalf of almost 700 members across Barnsley. However, we have been unable to achieve negotiated settlements and therefore we intend to lodge Employment Tribunal claims on behalf of affected members in order to secure back pay where it is owed.

What you need to do

If you want to be included in the tribunal claim you must be a current term-time worker (or have been within the last 2 years). You need to complete a Case Form

- Please read the Guidance Notes and complete the Case Form and return to us by email to branchoffice@unisonbarnsleylg.org.

[Read the guidance notes](#)

[Download the case form](#)

Spread the word!

Ordinarily UNISON operates a 4 week rule, which means you must have been a UNISON member for at least 4 weeks before you need our assistance. However, because of the importance of this issue to many thousands of predominantly low-paid women, UNISON's National Executive Council has agreed to waive the 4 week rule so that anyone who joins UNISON can be included in the legal claims.