

# DATA

Newsletter of the Derbyshire  
Association of Teachers

February 2007

## Do not read this article . . .

... If you feel that teaching is a relaxed, easy and stress free job.

The guidelines are in school. The summary has gone to every member. A checklist has gone to NUT Reps. What now? Well, the results of surveys tell us that NUT members' biggest concern is workload, and now it's up to NUT members to get together and decide the priorities for your school.

Reps are being asked to get members together and discuss the issues which relate to your school, then discuss them with the Head and SLT. What is causing you anxiety and overwork? It might be –

- Long hours
- Too many meetings
- No time to enjoy life
- No break at lunchtime
- Not enough PPA or Management time
- Too much unnecessary detailed planning
- Lengthy or too many reports
- Performance Management
- Observations
- Class size
- Any or all of these
- Other things



The overwhelmingly positive result of the Workload Ballot has given the NUT a mandate to lead the way. Other unions are not pursuing a similar campaign. Nor are they protected by our ballot. **You are!** This is your opportunity to make a difference. **Seize it.**

- ✓ Discuss the issues in your school.
- ✓ If you haven't a named rep, elect someone.
- ✓ Talk to the management about members concerns
- ✓ Insist on being involved in discussions on Performance Management.
- ✓ Be involved in discussions on Classroom Observations
- ✓ Let us know what's happening in your school.
- ✓ Ask for help and advice if you need it.
- ✓ Don't suffer in silence.

## Your life in your hands!

The Derbyshire Division of the NUT is committed to supporting you as much as we can. If you need us, ring 01629 585086 or email us at [derbysnut@softhome.net](mailto:derbysnut@softhome.net)

We are pleased to inform you that we are developing a new set of courses for you, our members. See below for details of the first course in our new local NUT Teachers' Programme.

### **Course at Matlock**

- **Harassment & Bullying** - in Committee Room 2 at County Hall.

*Free NUT course (NUT members only)*

Teachers need to challenge workplace harassment wherever it occurs. NUT representatives have an important role in challenging workplace harassment and bullying. This course is suitable for *all* teachers.

It aims to: -

- Consider the forms that harassment and bullying can take.
- Provide an overview of NUT policy
- Give information about the legal / policy framework for harassment and grievance procedures.
- Give guidance and strategies on how colleagues can challenge and overcome workplace harassment and bullying.

The course will be run over two twilight sessions (17.00 – 18.30).

The first session will be on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> March, the second on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> March.

Refreshments will be available from 16.30.

**Contact us at the Matlock office (01629 585086) with your details if you would**

**Please note that the following ICT training opportunities will be available (from our rolling ICT programme) during the summer term at Derby/Chesterfield.**

### **Course at Chesterfield**

- **Multi-Media** - at the Tapton Site of Chesterfield College.

*Free.*

Eleven weekly sessions (17.30 – 19.30) beginning on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> April.

Develops participants' knowledge of interactive whiteboards and digital cameras together with knowledge of Publisher.

### **Courses at Derby** – at Derby Trade Union Education Centre, Heritage Gate, Friary Street, DE1 1JF

- **Digital Photography Course**

*Free* OCN accredited.

Twelve weekly sessions (17.30 - 20.00) beginning on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April.

Uses Adobe PhotoShop CS.

- **Website Design Course**

*Free* OCN accredited.

Twelve weekly sessions (17.30 - 20.00) beginning on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April.

**Contact us at the Matlock office (01629 585086) with your details if you would like to attend any of these courses.**

If you would like to be placed on a waiting list for a future course in Basic ICT (Word, data-handling, Internet & Email), Intermediate ICT, Multimedia ICT, digital photography or website design; would like any information on local and national NUT training; or would like to discuss your own personal training needs please contact us at the Matlock Office.

Debbie & Terry.

# Asbestos - all you need to know; well nearly!

There are many schools in Derbyshire where asbestos has been found, and others where it exists but has not yet been found. If asbestos affects you, it is deadly. There are teachers who have died from asbestosis, and the number will increase in the future. Despite the publicity it receives, the size of the scandal has not yet emerged. It can be compared with the car: very dangerous, and learning to live with it is not straight forward.

The DCC asbestos team has done a medium depth survey of all schools in Derbyshire, ie of surfaces which are readily visible. They decide whether to remove asbestos which is found. If not, they inform the head of where the asbestos is and train them in a management process.

This is where you come in: all staff need to be involved. If not, the management process will not work! Because - the asbestos is only safe if it not disturbed.

## Are you the Eyes and Ears of Health & Safety?

1. Ask to see you School's Asbestos survey - it should be no more than five years old.
2. Ask if your responsible person (usually the Head Teacher in the case of a school) has been on "The Asbestos Course".
3. There must be a "Permit to Work" for all contractors. (Unless the school was built in 2000 or afterwards). This must cover work however small carried out by electricians, plumbers, etc, etc. Even your own caretaker is subject to the "Permit to Work".
4. There should be notices in prominent places to inform all contractors to report and sign the "Permit to Work"
5. There are areas of the site not yet surveyed. The list of areas should be photocopied onto the back of the "Permit to Work" form which the contractor signs.

One particular area where you can be the "Eyes & Ears" to help the school in its efforts to control contractors is in your school. Sometimes a contractor (BT engineer; computer technician; electrician;) will want to lift a ceiling tile to go into the space above a ceiling or suspended ceiling. It could disturb asbestos dust. You should inform your responsible person immediately to advise them that this is happening. Areas above suspended ceilings, ceiling cavities & roof voids were not included in the type 2 survey. Work should cease immediately. It should then be established that the area has a positive statement that clearly states it does not contain asbestos. If this is the case the work can recommence. If not the "Asbestos Unit" at Matlock should be alerted to advise the next course of action. This may well be a "Type 3" survey.

There is an on-going argument between removing the asbestos (expensive!) and managing it in place. If it cannot be managed safely in place, then it should be removed. You may need our help to get it removed. If there is a problem then contact the Matlock office on 01629 585086 or email [derbysnut@softhome.net](mailto:derbysnut@softhome.net)

# Your school or ours?

On 23<sup>rd</sup> January a group of Derbyshire members went to the TUC rally and lobby of Parliament "Speak up for Public Services". We met with a number of MPs and focussed on the effect of PFI/Academies on the Education Service, especially in Derbyshire. Some of the ideas and material that we used is printed in the accompanying articles. The NUT, both locally and nationally, is monitoring the recently passed Education and Inspections Act, and will fight any proposals that we believe to be detrimental.

## Practical issues encountered when working in PFI build

- Are you looking forward to a new PFI build in your school?
- Is BSF **B**ringing **S**weet **F**urnishings?
- Will its windows be pure crystal and its corridors lined with gold?
- Will you have lovely big classrooms with walls covered with your students work?

PFI builds are often designed by people whose experience in building is based on businesses and not schools. Too often the plans are inadequate for a school and if the design is good, there's no certainty that this is the school you'll be delivered. Derbyshire does not have to deliver its new builds under PFI, find out who's building yours. Here are some of the issues raised in PFI schools.



- Poor heating and ventilation: cold in winter, sweltering in the summer.
- No air conditioning in hall. The hall has no windows and tiered seating. When filled to capacity it becomes hot and stuffy. It is used for exams
- No natural lighting on corridors.
- Poor quality doors.
- Classroom doors not wide enough for wheelchair users to negotiate without hitting door jambs. This in a supposed purpose built ERS.
- Doors leak when it rains.
- Poor quality flooring in labs and tech rooms (lifting and bubbling).
- No non-slip flooring around sink areas
- Poor quality furniture in labs
- Work tables in textile room unable to accommodate electric sewing machines adequately.
- One ICT room has an appalling layout because of the way the electric wiring and sockets were installed when built.
- Windows rarely cleaned outside.
- Continual wrangles over responsibility for repairs and safety issues.
- Lack of social area space for pupils.
- Lethal car park when icy, refusal to grit any of the car park to enable staff to walk from their cars in safety.
- Minimal amount of display boards in classrooms, charged school for any extra. Not allowed to use 'blu-tack' on walls. Very clinical not like a school.
- Slow responses for solving Health & Safety issues
- The different companies 'bid' for the contract. When the school was built the specifications by which they got the contract were not adhered to.
  - le. A) There was a swimming pool in the original approved plan. Later the school was given the option of having a swimming pool or a good running track – not both. The swimming pool was therefore never built.
  - B) There was air conditioning in the original plan. This disappeared.
- The heating has to be on in order to provide hot water for the PE showers and the kitchens.
- The corridors are very narrow which leads to problems at changeover times
- The staff steps to the car park were lit by waist high marker lights. One winter's evening a member of staff tripped up on the steps and fell. After this the steps were marked and taller marker lights were installed.
- There is not enough car parking space for staff.
- There have been issues about the charging for utilities during evening sessions run by the community – the PFI company has, in the past, tried to charge the authority.
- We still have not got cupboard doors on some of the cupboards despite repeated requests for this to be done.
- The staff room is not big enough for the whole staff to meet. There is no space for T.A's to keep their belongings.
- There are only 2 water dispensers for the staff. There are none for the pupils.
- There is often no paper towels/toilet paper in the staff toilets.
- Dining room too small
- No child changing facilities
- Drinking water comes from storage tanks
- Feels like factory, sterile, crowded busy and cramped.



ou of ten hear people say that PFI is the only way to fund a new school. Off the top of my head there are three ways

**Divert Spending From Elsewhere.** Delay Trident, hire a few less consultants, give MPs a pay cut, these should all save a few bob.

**Raise Taxes.** If education, education, education was such a vote winner, how damaging is an education tax?

**Increase Public Borrowing.** In a lot of ways, a PFI build is really just borrowing the money to build a school off the providers and pay it back over 35 years.

I'm sure there are other ways of paying for new schools, but of course, all these options are politically unpalatable. No government is going to raise taxes, divert spending from defense or consultancies or increase borrowing. They're certainly never going to vote themselves a pay cut.

But it cannot be beyond our ken to come up with a solution to this problem and fund the new build of schools properly so that we can put the design of schools back in the hands of people who are good at it and have the education of young people and not personal profit as their ultimate motivation. If I can come up with three alternatives in two minutes, someone, somewhere must be able to do better.

Derbyshire itself has the LEP as an alternative. This means that the authority will be able to use its own architects and its own technical services and subcontract out the build. This should at least be offered to other authorities as an alternative.

Because if don't, we're going to spend the next 35 years in poorly designed, poorly built, sub-standard schools.

## Toxic Teacher Syndrome

I was recently searching the web for ways of murdering a teacher (long story) and came upon this:

*A 25 year old woman begins her new career as a teacher in a newly renovated school.*

*Three months later our teacher notices that her concentration is poor and she feels "edgy." Her husband is concerned that maybe she is working too hard and tries to get her to do less. As the weeks go by, she begins experiencing headaches.*

This sounds like me and lots of people I know.

*Six months into the school year, her symptoms are getting worse. In addition to her headaches, lack of concentration and irritability, she is now having insomnia, cries over nothing and has noticed an unusual tingling in her face, hands and feet.*

This still sounds like me, including the tingly bits.

*She decides to see a doctor who says she is overdoing it and recommends she lighten her load. In the mean time, she is prescribed a mild tranquilizer.*

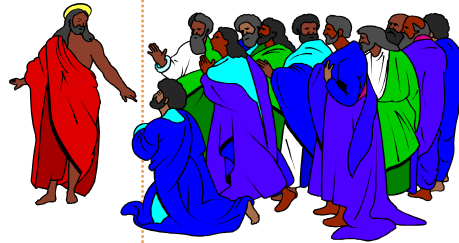
I didn't get that far, but I know people who have.

*Another three months pass and this time our once highly motivated teacher is only a "shadow" of herself. Her doctor diagnoses her with depression and prescribes an anti-depressant and also recommends counseling. The teacher begins an extended period of absence.*

This is known as *Toxic Teacher Syndrome* and is thought to be linked to the poor working environment in newly renovated schools.

So remember, you're not hypochondriac, you're not malingering, you're not working too hard, depressed, chronically fatigued or stressed out. You've got Toxic Teacher Syndrome.

**The following, which is anonymous, comes from Classroom Behaviour, an illuminating guide to good teaching by Bill Rogers, published by Paul Chapman:**



"Then Jesus took his disciples up the mountain and, gathering them around him, he taught them saying: blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; blessed are the meek; blessed are they that mourn; are the merciful; blessed are they that thirst for justice; blessed are you persecuted; blessed are you when you suffer; be glad and rejoice for your reward is great in heaven. Then Simon Peter said "Are we supposed to know this?" And Andrew said, "Do we have to write this down?" And James said, "Will we have a test on this?" And Phillip said, "I don't have any paper". And John said, "The other disciples didn't have to learn this." And Matthew said, "May I go to the lavatory?"

around  
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when

"Then one of the Pharisees who was present asked to see Jesus' lesson plan and inquired of Jesus, "Where is your statement of objectives?"

"And Jesus wept."

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# TSN Update

I thought it timely to write to let you know what has been happening since I was elected onto the TSN National Council last April. My workload as a volunteer for Derbyshire has been rather light, I'm pleased to say, because this could mean that teachers here are coping well or that they have their own means of getting any support they may need. However, it could also mean that teachers whether working, resting or retired do not know about us or have not realised just how wide-ranging the TSN service is. TSN has improved and extended its services without leaving its original aims behind. What are those aims?

TSN aims to:

- Listen to the changing needs of teachers
- Offer high quality care to teachers and their families in need
- Provide teachers with an individual support network
- Empower teachers to deal with personal problems
- Enable teachers to cope with professional pressure.

Well how is this done?

TSN can be reached by telephoning 08000 562 561 (England) or 08000 855 088 (Wales); this is the Teacher Support Line and importantly it is free and furthermore entirely confidential. It is a good means of access to help because not people today have a telephone and the number enables the caller to access all of the services available, whether it is counselling, information or money advice. You may be interested to know that almost 6% of calls come from retired teachers.

The TSN website found on [www.teachersupport.info](http://www.teachersupport.info) is extremely important, for it is through Teacher Support Online that many of our serving teachers get the help and support that they need. Comments I have seen have remarked on the speed of the service and the value of having a "coach". (Coaching is the current term in use for what I would call counselling.) One user said "Work/life balance had begun to seem like a thing of the past. Thanks to this service and my coach I have made a number of changes to the way I do things and the way I relate to others.

Patrick Nash, the Chief Executive of TSN, frequently responds to educational agencies on matters concerning teachers; important work keeping these bodies up-to-date on teachers' difficulties and needs. He heads a professional, dedicated and enthusiastic team who provide a high standard of service. Volunteers such as myself have also been encouraged to undertake training which has helped us to be clearer about what TSN can do for its users. As with other sections of British society, teachers can find themselves in financial difficulties at times, and they can still turn to TSN for practical help. Bad debt is an increasing problem; advice and often grants are given to those in need. I am amazed that although grants and loans appear to be a small part of the work of the charity, the amount of money given out is quite large. I have been asked to serve on the Grants and Loans Advisory Board which helps to make final decisions about very difficult cases, but I have not been called on yet.

All this work cannot go on, of course, without people like you who donate to the charity. The fund-raising department is a very busy one and new strategies have been devised for increasing the amount of money donated. I hope that you will continue to give whatever you can to TSN. So, in conclusion, if you have access to the internet, call up the TSN website and have a look for yourself. I think you will be pleasantly surprised. Bye for now and take care!

Judith McGarry

# *Sorry for Being . . .*

When I worked in an office we would get badly photocopied pieces of paper with humorous lists. These bits of paper now exist in cyberspace. This is a list of genuine notes sent in by parents. It was compiled by Nisheeth Parekh, University Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, who was doing a survey into condoned absence.

My son is under a doctor's care and should not take P.E. today. Please execute him.  
Please excuse Lisa for being absent. She was sick and I had her shot.

Dear School: Please excuse John being absent on Jan. 29, 29, 30, and also 33.

Please excuse Gloria from Jim today. She is administrating.

Please excuse Roland from P.E. for a few days. Yesterday he fell out of a tree and misplaced his hip.

John has been absent because he had two teeth taken out of his face.

Carlos was absent yesterday because he was playing football. He was hurt in the growing part.

Megan could not come to school today because she has been bothered by very close veins.

Chris will not be in school cus he has an acre in his side.

Please excuse Ray Friday from school. He has very loose vowels.

Please excuse Tommy for being absent yesterday. He had diarrhea and his boots leak.

Irving was absent yesterday because he missed his bust.

Please excuse Jimmy for being. It was his father's fault.

I kept Billie home because she had to go Christmas shopping because I don't know what size she wear.

Please excuse Jennifer for missing school yesterday. We forgot to get the Sunday paper off the porch, and when we found it Monday, we thought it was Sunday.

Sally won't be in school a week from Friday. We have to attend her funeral.  
My daughter was absent yesterday because she was tired. She spent a weekend with the Marines.

Please excuse Jason for being absent yesterday. He had a cold and could not breed well.

Please excuse Mary for being absent yesterday. She was in bed with gramps.

Gloria was absent yesterday as she was having a gangover.

Please excuse Burma, she was sick and under the doctor.

*Got any better ones? Let us know and we'll publish – no libels please!!!*

# www.derbysnut.org.uk

We have a website. You can find us by typing [www.derbysnut.org.uk](http://www.derbysnut.org.uk) into your browser or typing Derbysnut into Google.

And we need you to contribute.

All the following would come in handy.

Photos

Cartoons

Anecdotes

Useful links

Resources

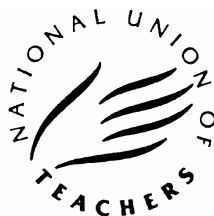
Examples of Good and Bad practice.

You can e-mail me at [hairynut@hairydemon.co.uk](mailto:hairynut@hairydemon.co.uk)

You can also help our rankings in the search engines by adding us a link to your own website.

# www.derbysnut.org.uk

Please note that the views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the National Union of Teachers.



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