

# EDUCATION: OUR FUTURE

The UNISON North West Schools Newsletter

Issue 1 May 2012

## Message From Kevan Nelson, UNISON North West Regional Secretary



Working in schools has never been easy for support staff, many of your roles have been underpaid and under-appreciated for far too long. The current trend towards Academy status and the severing of links with Local Authorities poses a new threat to the employment security of UNISON members.

That's why UNISON North West region is giving priority to strengthening our organisation in schools and providing improved support to school based members.

You can be part of that process, engaging with school management and your school's Governing Body to safeguard the terms and conditions of school support staff in your workplace.

If you want to become active in UNISON please contact us for a discussion as soon as possible — quality advice and training will be provided.



# Academy Update

The DfE have released the latest stats —as from 1st April 2012 there are now 1776 Academies open in England.

This figure is increasing at an alarming rate. The DfE have announced those that have applied are over 50% of secondary Schools and will soon be Academies, only around 10,600 Schools are now Local Authority Community Schools out of a total of 20,011 in England. In the North West the number of schools who have converted to Academy status is 153.

UNISON has identified that Communicating with our members and gaining Trade Union Recognition as the main priority to ensure that our members interests are protected and Local UNISON Branches and North West Regional Staff are currently engaged in securing recognition with all Schools that are converting to Academies.

You can also play your part in supporting the union, we are only as strong as the members we

represent, it is vital that all School Support Staff are members of their recognised trade union - UNISON.

Attached to the back of this news sheet is a UNISON application form, if you could share this with your colleagues and encourage them to join UNISON it will make our negotiating arm stronger with your employer.

**Myth**

**“Schools seeking academy status don't need to consult”**

**Fact:**

**All Schools must consult with Parents, Communities, staff and their recognised Trade Union (UNISON), students and Church diocese where applicable. The consultation should be transparent and meaningful and include arguments for and against academy status in order to allow an informed decision.**

# YOUR SCHOOL NEEDS YOU!!!



In order to ensure that UNISON members are protected and represented in the workplace we need to have a strong team of Activists and Representatives of UNISON in Every workplace.

We are currently recruiting for Shop Stewards, Health And Safety Reps, Equality Reps, Workplace Contacts, Union Learner Reps.

UNISON Stewards and Activists are the fundamental building blocks of Workplace Organisation. We offer loads of training and support and you receive paid time off from work for trade union duties and for training. If you are interested about learning more about the roles please contact your Local UNISON Branch or alternatively please contact:

**Gary Cleaver (Area Organiser) or Keith Bradley (Lead Officer for Schools) on 0161 661 1624 or email: [g.cleaver@unison.co.uk](mailto:g.cleaver@unison.co.uk) / [k.brads@unison.co.uk](mailto:k.brads@unison.co.uk).**

Find out more about UNISON work in schools:

[www.unison.org.uk/education](http://www.unison.org.uk/education)

**Calling all school support staff!**

## Administration of medicines campaign

UNISON is aware that an increasing number of school support staff are expected to administer medicines and/or provide medical assistance to children as part of their roles.

From consultations with our members in UNISON we have found that staff are often pressured into providing medical care without a suitable policy in place that ensures adequate training and recognition in terms of pay and grading.

UNISON is currently working on your behalf to ensure that both staff and pupils are protected by clear policies and procedures and staff feel rewarded for the care they give.

Whilst discussions with the council take place, we would ask staff to support our campaign by administering medicines and medical care only if:

- It is clearly defined in your contract - vague references such as "personal needs" or "healthcare" are not acceptable
- You have been trained, receive regular updates and are clear about the limits of your responsibilities
- There is a medical policy, system of support and transparent chain of responsibility in the school
- Your pay and grading take full account of medical support duties

**YOU SHOULD NOT FEEL EMOTIONALLY BLACKMAILED INTO TAKING ON MEDICAL SUPPORT DUTIES. IT IS UNFAIR ON YOU AND POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS FOR THE CHILDREN IN YOUR CARE.**

**For further information, please go to:**

**[www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/19084.pdf](http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/19084.pdf)**

**or call your local UNISON branch.**



# Help to keep our schools a community service



A message from Pam Howard - Chair of UNISON National Schools Forum

The current coalition government is encouraging as many schools as it can to become an academy, in doing so it will ensure that schools sever their links with the local community and local council. Every community should care about the future of our schools, and as a member of support staff in a school you are key to the fight against the demise of a good school for every child.

The governing body of the school where you work, or where your own children attend may now be considering academy status. UNISON is working to defend our schools, but as always our members are our

strength. If your school shows an interest in academy status you need to contact your Branch without delay. Your Branch can support you and your colleagues in campaigning against academy conversion, ensuring that full and meaningful consultation takes place, highlighting the concerns to staff terms and conditions and the detrimental effect on education standards.

If your school is considering a conversion there are many things you can do to help the campaign against it, firstly contact your local Branch and give them as much information as you can, get involved with joint union meetings (teaching

unions and their members don't want academies either so you have support right from the start).

**UNISON provides a raft of resources to support campaigns, visit our website: [unison.org.uk/education/defendyourschool](http://unison.org.uk/education/defendyourschool) where you will find advice on lobbying local councillors and speaking to community groups etc.**

There is no way back from privatisation of our school system, every child deserves a good school, every member of staff deserves decent terms and conditions – get involved now!



Education is under attack from the Tory-led

government. And it's pushing more and more schools to become independent academies without proper consideration or consultation.

Academies are a form of privatisation. We need to stop it now - because once a school has become an academy there is no way back. Governing bodies should be accountable to parents and the local community. But governors are not being given time or the facts to make decisions that will have long-

## Do you know the truth about academies?

term and far-reaching consequences.

The new wave of academy schools will lead to a two-tier system and adversely affect the quality of education for children within the local community.

UNISON believes that no school should pursue academy status without knowing the facts and understanding what academy status really means.

**Myth:** Local authorities 'control' schools

**Facts:** Head teachers and governors currently make most decisions. Local authorities provide support and a range of services including:

- co-ordinating admissions
- specialist help for children with acute special needs
- monitoring of SEN provision
- support for governors
- training and professional development for staff
- legal advice
- guidance to make sure schools comply with the law to keep children safe.

# Spotlight on Chorlton High School Manchester



In February this year parents of children at Chorlton High School received a letter stating that the school was starting a consultation on voluntarily converting to an Academy. Like many other parents, I was concerned about what conversion to an academy would mean for this successful, well-run comprehensive school where both my children have attended and where they have both thrived.

The head and governors have repeatedly asserted their commitment to keeping the ethos of the school, but converting to an academy would be a risk to our children's education. Academies are not subject to the democratic control of the local authority, are not covered by national agreements on pay and conditions for staff and are run like businesses. Academies can also select a proportion of the children they take, unlike Community Schools.

We knew that the present head teacher at Chorlton was unlikely to make moves in that direction even if the school converted, but what about those who will lead the school in the future? They might have interests other than the education of local children. Many commentators consider conversion to academy as the privatisation of education, which is why Tories love them so much. They

can see the profits that might be made from education.

We had to move quickly to oppose the change to academy, as the official consultation process was very short. Some parents contacted UNISON & Anti-Academies Alliance (AAA) and with their support we approached the head teacher to speak against academies at the consultation meeting and to hold anti-academy meetings at the school during the consultation process. It was important for us to be seen for what we were, part of the school's community, and quite rightly the head teacher agreed without hesitation.

A few of us distributed leaflets opposing conversion to an academy written with the guidance of UNISON & AAA at the initial consultation meeting and the following week around 30 parents came to hear speakers from the main trade unions at our anti-academy meeting. These close connections between the parents group and the unions were important and have sustained throughout.

We petitioned at the local precinct over several Saturday mornings and collected around three hundred signatures; we distributed window posters to display support for keeping the school as a Community School; and we sent out press releases and got the story in the Manchester Evening News and on the front page of the South Manchester Reporter. We contacted local councillors, three of whom publicly spoke against conversion

and we also gained the support of the local MP. Finally, we also lobbied the governors and addressed their meeting.

Perhaps the greatest obstacle for our campaign is that the local authority has done nothing to keep the school under its democratic control. Shamefully, the local authority has remained completely silent.

Through the activities of the Union & parents' campaign we managed to contact and engage with many more people than responded to the official consultation process, which in any case was far from impartial. Despite only 97 of the 2200 parents consulted positively noting their agreement with the school becoming an academy, the governors last week decided to formally start the process of conversion. Though disappointing, this was not wholly unexpected and our campaign continues.

So, what suggestions can we make for other similar campaigns to stop academies from what we have learned during ours?

- \* Keep an eye on what the school is planning by speaking to governors. \*
- Act quickly to involve as many as parents and others as possible.
- \* Be part of the consultation process and meet on school premises.
- \* Contact the AAA for advice and campaigning materials.

- \* Keep in contact with UNISON, and invite union speakers. \*
- \* Stay in touch with the local press.

**Remember Contact UNISON as soon as possible**



With more than 1.3 million members working across the public services, being part of UNISON means you have the full weight of the UK's biggest trade union behind you.

We have more workplace representatives than any other union in the country - backed up by experienced full-time regional and national experts. Together we can help ensure that your rights are protected at work and that you are in a safe environment.

UNISON members include staff working for the NHS, the Police Service, Colleges and Schools, the Electricity, Gas and Water Industries, Transport and the Voluntary Sector.

UNISON campaigns to keep services public and strengthen the voice of public sector workers. Join us and make sure your voice is heard.

your friend at work



Please fill in this application form form in BLOCK CAPITALS and send it to the address shown below.

### 1. YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS

Mr/Ms/Miss/Mrs/Other	First Name	Other Initial
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Surname	Date of Birth / /
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Home address
Postcode

National Insurance No. (from your payslip)
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How would you describe your ethnic origin?

- |                                      |  |                                      |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Other     | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese     | <input type="checkbox"/> Black African   | <input type="checkbox"/> White UK    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indian      | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> Irish       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani   | <input type="checkbox"/> Black UK        | <input type="checkbox"/> White Other |

Please tick this box if you require materials in a different format (e.g. large print or Braille) - be sure to supply contact details below

Please give a telephone number/voice/text/email address for UNISON to contact you - indicate if work or home
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### 2. YOUR EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

Employers Name
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Job Title/Occupation
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Department/Section
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Workplace Address
Postcode

Payroll No.
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When completed please send to your local branch or:  
**UNISON North West Regional Centre**  
**Freeport (MR9713)**  
**Arena Point, 1 Hunts Bank**  
**Manchester, M3 9PD**

### 3. WHAT YOU WILL PAY FROM 1 OCTOBER 2003

Please tick your earnings before stoppages

Weekly Pay	Annual Pay	✓	Band	Per Week	Per Month
Up to £38.47	Up to £2,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	A	£0.30	£1.30
£38.48-£96.16	£2,001-£5,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	£0.81	£3.50
£96.17-£153.84	£5,001-£8,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	C	£1.22	£5.30
£153.85-£211.53	£8,001-£11,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	D	£1.52	£6.60
£211.54-£269.23	£11,001-£14,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	E	£1.81	£7.85
£269.24-£326.92	£14,001-£17,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	F	£2.24	£9.70
£326.93-£384.61	£17,001-£20,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	G	£2.65	£11.50
£384.62-£480.76	£20,001-£25,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	H	£3.23	£14.00
£480.77-£576.92	£25,000-£30,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	I	£3.98	£17.25
£576.93-£673.08	£30,001-£35,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	J	£4.68	£20.30
£673.08 +	Over £35,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	K	£5.19	£22.50

Please tick the appropriate box to indicate how often you are paid

- Weekly  
 Fortnightly  
 Four Weekly  
 Monthly

Please tick this box if you are a student member in full-time education (including student nurses or modern Apprentices). Your subscription is £10 per year.

### 4. POLITICAL FUND

UNISON'S **Affiliated Political Fund (APF)** is used to campaign for and promote UNISON policy and the need for quality public services within the Labour Party, locally and nationally, in Parliament and Europe. UNISON APF affiliates to the Labour Party.

UNISON'S **General Political Fund (GPF)** is used to pay for campaigning at branch, regional and national levels of the union and for research and lobbying in Parliament and Europe. It is independent of support for any political party.

It is important that you indicate a choice of fund by ticking one of the boxes below. Your subscription shown above includes a political fund payment so you do not pay any more by being in one of the funds.

### 5. YOUR AUTHORISATION

- I wish to join UNISON and accept its rules and constitution.
- I authorise deduction of UNISON subscriptions from my salary/wages at the rate determined by UNISON in accordance with its rules to be paid over to them on my behalf and I authorise my employer to provide to UNISON information to keep my records up to date.
- I authorise deduction of the following political fund payment as part of my subscriptions: *Tick one box only*

- Affiliated Political Fund*   
*General Political Fund*

Now please sign and date below.

Signature
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Date
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If you have been a member of a trade union before, please state which one below:

**DATA PROTECTION**  
UNISON will process your membership information together with other information for administration, statistical analysis, conducting ballots and other statutory requirement purposes. We may also send you newsletters, journals and surveys and let you know about educational and campaigning matters. We will disclose your information to our service providers and agents for these purposes.

If you do not want to receive any mailings from UNISON besides those required by statute as shown in bold above, please tick this box.

We may share your information with organisations with whom we have a business relationship for your benefit. We, or they may contact you by mail, telephone, SMS, fax or e-mail to let you know about goods, services or promotions which we think may be of interest to you.

If you do not wish to receive such information please tick this box.

If you tick either of these boxes then you will be removed from the appropriate mailing lists as quickly as possible but for administrative reasons this may take a couple of months.