

Consultation responses:

The Girls' Day School Trust (GDST) Teachers' Pension withdrawal consultation ended on Friday 28 January.

NASUWT members submitted individual responses and the Union submitted a collective response. This can be found on our website at: [NASUWT | Girls' Day School Trust: GDST](#).

Our collective response highlighted:

- GDST teachers worked tirelessly during the pandemic, acknowledged in comments from the published accounts, in which a GDST headteacher stated: *'When the world offered uncertainty, instability and fear, they [staff] provided certainty, stability, excitement, creativity and hope. They showed grit, determination and a can-do attitude'*;
- teachers' shock and dismay at the GDST responding to their commitment and service by proposing to worsen their terms and conditions, and the uncertainty this has created for GDST teachers at all stages of their careers;
- the detriment caused to teachers' terms and conditions and overall reward package should the Trust leave the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS);
- the fact that the majority of independent schools are still in the TPS;
- that the discount rate which led to an increase in employer contributions will be re-evaluated in 2024, which may reduce the level of employer contribution, reminding us that pensions are a **long-term** investment;
- the 'flexibility' of the proposed pension being in the employer's rather than the employees' favour, which could lead to a teacher not having sufficient funds in their 'retirement savings account' to retire securely; and
- the published GDST accounts, which show that the Trust is in good financial health, with £461.9 million in total funds, £43.1 million in reserves and £112 million in investments. The Trust is exempt from VAT as a charity, and claimed £5.6 million from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Megaphone petition

Please sign and encourage others to sign the megaphone petition, on the link below, as part of the campaign to maintain the TPS at GDST: https://www.megaphone.org.uk/petitions/protect-teachers-and-their-pensions-at-girls-day-schools-trust?share=913e5c9a-b926-4882-81bb-503e054aeb8d&source=email-share-button&utm_source=email.

Correspondence with MPs

Our General Secretary, Dr Patrick Roach, has written to MPs in constituencies with GDST schools, alerting them to this dispute, and a number have been in touch with the Trust, particularly to raise their concerns about 'Fire and Rehire'.

(continued overleaf)

Fire and Rehire

The GDST has issued a S188 notice, allowing the Trust to commence a procedure known as 'Dismissal and re-engagement' or 'Fire and Rehire'. This means that if a collective agreement is not reached over TPS pension withdrawal, the Trust will ask you to sign a new contract with a change to your terms and conditions, stating that you agree to sign up to the proposed defined contribution (DC) pension scheme.

If you refuse to sign, the Trust may dismiss you and offer to re-engage you on new terms and conditions.

In English law the contract is sacrosanct, and while this is technically legal, recent debates in parliament and advice from Acas show this is far from good and ethical practice. Clearly a consultation is not meaningful if the threat of dismissal hangs over your head.

It is reasonable for you to take away any documentation provided by your employer to consider and to obtain advice in the first instance.

If you are asked to sign a new contract or a variation to your terms and conditions, please contact the NASUWT immediately for advice.

Please contact us on: advice@mail.nasuwt.org.uk.

Industrial action

NASUWT members at Oxford High School and Norwich High School for Girls will be taking industrial action in February and March.

It is unlawful for a member of the NASUWT to take industrial action where the NASUWT has not given a specific notice to the employer advising that action will be taken.

If the NEU is taking action in your school and the NASUWT has not given notice of industrial action, you should take the following action on strike days:

- If asked, make clear to the headteacher that you will be reporting for work as normal.
- Report for work as normal.
- Not accept any variation to your contracted duties and/or undertake the timetabled or other responsibilities of those engaged in industrial action, including taking into your timetabled lessons pupils from classes of teachers who are involved in a strike.

NASUWT Workplace Representatives should inform the headteacher of this on behalf of NASUWT members.

Please click on the following link for further advice for NASUWT members if the school is closed, applicable to senior leaders, supply and cover teachers and regarding picket lines.

[NASUWT | When Other Unions Take Industrial Action.](#)



E-mail: advice@mail.nasuwt.org.uk
Website: www.nasuwt.org.uk