School Calendar, Directed Time Budget and Gained Time

Before the end of this term, NASUWT Representatives should be engaged in discussions with their headteacher about the allocation of the school calendar and directed time budget for the next academic year.

Instruction 10 of the NASUWT National Action Instructions states:

Instruction 10
Members are instructed not to attend any meetings outside school session times which are not within directed time and where there is no published directed time calendar which has been agreed with the NASUWT.

To view all the Action Instructions, go to: www.nasuwt.org.uk/IndustrialActionEngland.

Representatives should make clear to headteachers that if agreement cannot be reached on a directed time calendar for the next academic year, then members will be following the NASUWT’s lawful action instruction.

Please use the guidance below to support your discussions with the headteacher on seeking to agree a directed time budget and calendar of meetings.

Directed Time Budget
The School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) requires a teacher employed full time to be available for work on 195 days in any school year, of which on 190 of those days the teacher may be required to teach pupils and perform other duties as described in full in the STPCD, and on five days of which the teacher may only be required to perform other duties (these are known as teacher days/inset days).

A teacher may be required to teach and perform other duties for 1,265 hours (directed time) each year, allocated reasonably throughout those days in the school year on which s/he is required to work.

Therefore, every individual teacher not paid on the leadership spine should have a time budget that details how the 1,265 hours of directed time, for reasonable direction by the headteacher, will be allocated over the 195 days on which teachers are required to be available for work.

School sessions will account for a significant proportion of the directed hours. Within the timetabled teaching time during those sessions, teachers should also have planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time and leadership and management time.

PPA time
All teachers should have a guaranteed minimum of 10% timetabled PPA time marked on the timetable. This counts towards the directed time total. PPA time cannot be used for any other activity, including cover, and should be marked clearly on the teacher’s timetable.

Leadership and management time
In addition to PPA time, teachers who have additional responsibilities to the generality of classroom teachers, whether they are paid or unpaid, are entitled to leadership and management time within school sessions.

The STPCD states that: ‘a teacher with leadership or management responsibilities is entitled, so far as is reasonably practicable, to a reasonable amount of time during school sessions for the purpose of discharging those responsibilities’.

Whilst the amount of time is not defined in the STPCD, it would not be reasonable for it to be in blocks of less than 30 minutes.

‘Buffer time’
So-called ‘buffer time’ at the beginning and end of school sessions should be included in the directed time if teachers are required to be available for that time.

The time budget should be discussed and agreed with the teacher.
Calendars
A calendar of meetings for the academic year should be published in advance of the start of the academic year. The days of the week on which meetings will be held at the end of school sessions should be identified so that teachers can plan their personal activities. This is critical for teachers with carer responsibilities.
Once published, the days and dates identified should not be changed unless there are exceptional circumstances, and then only in consultation with teachers, the NASUWT and other union representatives.

Meetings
The NASUWT recommends that teachers not on the leadership spine should attend no more than one staff meeting per week outside pupil session times and only when this meeting cannot be replaced by an alternative form of communication.
Those on the leadership spine should seek to agree a limit on the number of meetings they should attend per week outside school session times.
Teachers should not be expected to teach any booster, revision or intervention classes outside school session times.
The contractual entitlement in the STPCD to achieve a satisfactory work/life balance applies to all teachers.
Meetings should normally be no more than one hour in length and should have published agendas, be effectively chaired and have clear outcomes.
Teachers should not provide ‘secretarial support’ at meetings by taking formal minutes or verbatim notes.
Teachers cannot be directed to attend meetings during the lunch break. They should not therefore be encouraged to attend or volunteer to do so. Meetings should not be arranged during the lunch break.

Parental consultation
The NASUWT recommends that teachers should only attend one parental consultation per year for each year group. These meetings should be counted as directed time and identified in the calendar of meetings.
In a week where there is a parental consultation meeting scheduled, no other meeting outside school sessions should be calendared to take place.

Open evenings
There is no requirement for teachers to attend open evenings. However, where they agree to attend, these should count against directed time and against the weekly total of meetings.

Gained Time
During the year, teachers may be released from some of their timetabled teaching commitments as a result of pupils being on study or examination leave. Such time is known as gained time.
NASUWT National Action Instruction 21 specifies that, during gained time, teachers should only undertake activities from the list below, which were previously listed in Section 4 of the STPCD:
• developing/revising departmental/subject curriculum materials, schemes of work, lesson plans and policies in preparation for the new academic year. This may include identifying appropriate members’ materials for use by supply staff and/or cover supervisors;
• assisting colleagues in appropriate planned team-teaching activities;
• taking groups of pupils to provide additional learning support;
• supporting selected pupils with coursework;
• undertaking planned activities with pupils transferring between year groups or from primary schools;
• where the school has a policy for all staff to release them for continuing professional development (CPD) during school sessions, gained time may be used.
In order for a school to be able to direct any activities during gained time, all gained time has to be included in the school’s 1,265-hour directed time budget.
If a school attempts to direct teachers to undertake activities which are not on the list above, including cover or involving reallocating classes, contact the NASUWT for advice and support.