

## Climate action week

The NASUWT is aware that there is likely to be a climate crisis action week in the week leading from Friday 20 September. This may include calls for pupils and staff to walkout of schools in protest to encourage action on climate change. The response below sets out the Union's position on this issue for NASUWT members.

The NASUWT believes that there is an urgent need for government, businesses and the international community to address the issues that have led to the current climate crisis and that there will be a catastrophic impact on the future of the planet and humanity if we do not act quickly and decisively with a global response to deal with the crisis.

The NASUWT recognises that many children and young people are acutely concerned about their futures and in ensuring that there is long-term environmental sustainability. As a consequence, the Union has long argued about the importance of education on environmental issues and climate change within the curriculum.

The Union supports the right to protest for all individuals. This right has been hard-won by organisations, including the trade union movement.

However, the NASUWT believes that there are a number of issues that must be considered in relation to the proposed walkouts or any such 'climate school strikes'.

Teachers have a duty of care to their pupils. Where children and young people walk out of school, they are potentially putting themselves and others at risk. Teachers cannot condone and encourage such behaviour and may be held responsible should they allow children and young people to do so.

Some employers have indicated that they will allow individual headteachers/principals to decide whether or not to record any pupil as absent who does not attend school in order to participate in the student protest. However, failure to accurately record pupils' attendance or absence from school would be in breach of the legal duties on schools and could result in disciplinary action being taken. Schools may also be vulnerable to future legal claims by parents or pupils if they fail to act in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions.

NASUWT members should be aware that if teachers are encouraged to walkout of their workplaces, such walkouts are not covered by a lawful industrial action ballot and as such, disciplinary or other forms of action may be taken against them by their employers and jobs may be at risk.

Teachers, children and young people are of course able to attend any legally organised protests or activities outside of the school day.

The NASUWT believes that there are opportunities as a result of this action week to highlight the climate crisis and to encourage conversations within schools. This could include highlighting issues during assemblies or other presentations, and engaging pupils in letter writing or other activities.

The NASUWT will continue to advocate for a curriculum that addresses these issues and that equips young people with the skills and knowledge to make their voices heard, and will continue to work with national and international bodies to highlight climate crisis concerns.

The NASUWT wants to hear your views about green and climate change activities your school is involved in. Please go to our 'How Green Is My School' survey at: [www.nasuw.org.uk/howgreenismyschool](http://www.nasuw.org.uk/howgreenismyschool).

If you have any feedback on the climate activities you have been involved in during the week, please contact [campaigns@mail.nasuw.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@mail.nasuw.org.uk).

Should you have any questions or queries about the information above, please contact [advice@mail.nasuw.org.uk](mailto:advice@mail.nasuw.org.uk).