

## Guidance on arrangements for union meetings in schools

### Introduction

The Burgundy Book recommends that local agreements on the provision of facilities for the local officers of the recognised teachers' organisations should include arrangements for use of accommodation in schools or other premises of the authority for association meetings. The Green Book (support staff) simply provides for local authorities to provide recognised trade unions with facilities necessary to carry out their functions, without a specific reference to meetings in the workplace.

This guidance supplements the existing trade union facilities agreements by setting out the arrangements for union meetings in schools. It covers all recognised unions, including the teachers' associations.

The ACAS Code of Practice on Time off for trade union duties and activities states that *"Whilst there is no statutory right for facilities for union representatives, except for representatives engaged in duties related to collective redundancies and the Transfer of Undertakings, employers should, where practical, make available to union representatives the facilities necessary for them to perform their duties efficiently and communicate effectively with their members, colleague union representatives and full-time officers. Where resources permit, the facilities should include accommodation for meetings...confidential space where an employee involved in a grievance or disciplinary matter can meet their representative or to discuss other confidential matters..."*.

The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations provide (in regulation 13(8)) that "The employer shall allow the appropriate representatives access to any affected employees and shall afford to those representatives such accommodation and facilities as may be appropriate."

### Meetings relating to proposals made by the school affecting employees

During consultations over proposals made by the school for matters such as redundancies and staffing re-structures, the same arrangements should apply as are required by the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (see above). Schools should work with the recognised trade unions in providing opportunities for union representatives to meet with their members in the school.

### Meetings requested by a trade union

Trade union representatives or officials wishing to meet with members of that union in a particular school acknowledge that they should, out of courtesy and having regard to the needs of the school, contact the head teacher to ensure that a room is available on the premises for such a meeting and that the time of the meeting is compatible with the working time of employees. If the meeting is being organised by a school representative who invites an external union representative or official to attend, then either the external union representative/official or the school representative should contact the head teacher. Head teachers acknowledge the provisions of the ACAS Code of Practice, the Transfer of

Undertakings Regulations, and the facilities agreement on making available accommodation for meetings.

On arrival at the school the union representative or official should report as a visitor in accordance with the school's normal arrangements for visitors.