

FACILITIES FOR REPRESENTATIVES OF RECOGNISED TEACHERS' UNIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

An agreement between employing authorities and teachers' unions represented on NITC in respect of the facilities to be made available by employing authorities to those teachers, not being paid officials of the recognised teachers' organisations who are representative of those unions.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The agreement is based on the belief that both the teachers' unions and the employing authorities accept their joint responsibility for ensuring a well ordered system of trade union organisation and industrial relations, and on a recognition of the contribution that can be made by the teachers' unions and their local representatives to the smooth running of the education service at local, regional and central levels. A recognised teachers' union is a union on Teachers' Council.

It is agreed that in jointly determining the nature, extent and use of the facilities to be provided, the parties will endeavour to avoid necessary cost in maintaining the effective operation of the schools where the teachers' representatives are employed. The parties will also endeavour to ensure that the provisions of the agreement are introduced within the resources available to the employing authority.

3. ACCREDITED REPRESENTATIVES

An accredited representative of a recognised teachers' union is a teacher who is:

- (a) a member of the Central Executive or other central committee of his union, or a representative of his union appointed by the Central Executive to serve on a central body;
- (b) a member of a NI Regional Executive or other NI committee of his union, or a representative of his union appointed by the NI Regional Executive to serve on a NI body;
- (c) an official of such a union whose necessary official union duties are at area board level;
- (d) a school representative whose duties are limited to necessary activities for his union and its members within the school or schools for which he is responsible.

In certain circumstances a representative may have responsibility for more than one of these functional levels. For their part the recognised teachers' unions undertake to ensure that their accredited representatives locally understand the extent of their authority and responsibility as teachers' representatives.

4. The recognised teachers' unions shall notify the employing authority, who shall notify the individual principal teachers, of the name of its accredited representatives and it will be to the accredited representatives only that the facilities are extended. In very large schools, unions may appoint more than one representative while in those areas where there are very small schools unions may have one representative to service more than one school.
5. The principal matters with which the appropriate accredited representatives, as defined in paragraph 3, will deal are as follows:-
 - (a) Matters arising out of the use of grievance, disputes and disciplinary procedures;
 - (b) responsibilities of the teacher representative to their unions including attendance as delegates at union conferences;
 - (c) responsibilities of the teacher representatives in connection with the interests of their members in the schools;
 - (d) functions connected with the training of teacher representatives , including attendance at training courses;
 - (e) matters arising from the Department of Education (Northern Ireland), the Area Boards or the recognised negotiating machinery.

6. FACILITIES FOR ACCREDITED REPRESENTATIVES

The facilities for accredited representatives of recognised unions shall include:

- (a) Arrangements for carrying out union responsibilities within the schools;
 - (b) permission to leave school to perform duties as an accredited representative;
 - (c) use of accommodation in schools or other premises of the employing authority for union meetings.
7. Absences from school duties for the performance of the responsibilities of a representative of a recognised teachers' union shall be allowed without a reduction in pay in accordance with the Appendix.

- 8.** The accredited school representatives of the recognised teachers' unions shall be permitted reasonable opportunities and be given the necessary facilities to discharge their functions, namely:
- (a) Union matters such as recruitment, maintaining membership, collecting contributions and communicating with members;
 - (b) within the responsibilities conferred on them by their respective unions, industrial relations matters such as the handling of members' grievances.
- 9.** The facilities shall include:
- (a) Reasonable notice board facilities to be provided without charge. All notices must bear the full name of the union concerned. Notices should also bear the signature of the accredited representative.
 - (b) Use of telephone (if available) with reasonable privacy. Payment for outgoing calls to be met by the accredited representative concerned.
 - (c) Provision of a room for a meeting with the union's members as required, providing reasonable notice is given.
 - (d) Use of school reprographic equipment, where available, for essential union work within the school providing this does not interfere with the work of the school. The union concerned shall supply or pay for the material used and shall pay for damage caused to equipment by reason of such use.
 - (e) Expenditure necessarily incurred by the school authorities in the provision of facilities – in addition to the expenses referred to in 9(b) and 9(d) above – shall be recouped from the union concerned.
- 10.** The accredited school representatives should be provided access to information on the structure and allocation of the staffing establishment of their own schools and to the Articles of Government/Rules of Management.
- 11.** It is agreed that the above arrangements will be subject to review at the request of either party.

Appendix I

1. The agreement provides for leave of absence with pay to be granted to accredited representatives as defined in paragraph 3 of the documents. Paragraph 3(a) relates to representatives at national level, paragraph 3(b) to representatives at regional level and paragraph 3(c) to representatives whose duties are at Education and Library Board level. Employing authorities have in the past recognised, and undertake to continue to recognise that accredited representatives shall be given adequate leave of absence with pay to enable them effectively to deal with their responsibilities arising under paragraph 3(a), (b) and (c) of the document. It is also accepted that accredited representatives in some instances will not need to be absent for the whole day. They may however on occasions have to travel some distance to meetings and it is accepted that reasonable leave of absence will be construed in such a way as to ensure that the representative has adequate time to travel to the meeting and if necessary to have a meal before or after his journey.
2. In order to enable employing authorities to take account of the leave of absence with pay required when determining the school duties to be performed by teachers who are accredited representatives it is accepted that individual representatives will furnish to the employing authority before the beginning of the school year particulars of regular meetings, conferences etc which require their attendance. However it is accepted that provided reasonable notice is given adequate leave of absence will be granted for exceptional meetings, conferences etc which require their attendance and which are not arranged on a regular basis. Individual representatives will inform the authority of the reasons for a leave of absence, if so requested. It is also accepted that on request, the recognised teachers' organisations will make available to individual education and library boards or other employers as the case may be a detailed description of their constitution and organisation as it affects accredited representatives at school, board, regional and national levels. The recognised teachers' organisations will also be prepared, on request, to verify the numerical strength of their membership at the various levels described.
3. A representative whose duties are at school level, as defined in paragraph 3(d) of the document, shall be entitled to leave with pay for union business on the following scale:

5 – 30 members	1 period per week
31 – 60 members	2 periods per week
Over 60 members	3 periods per week
4. Accredited representatives shall be allowed time off for one day in each 2 school years to attend union sponsored training courses.