

Independent Schools Officer

Role Description

Role Purpose

The Independent Schools Officer leads Dorset NEU's work with members employed in independent, fee-paying, and private education settings. The role ensures that independent-sector members are represented within Dorset NEU, that their specific employment issues are identified and raised, and that union organising, support and communication reach colleagues in these diverse settings.

Key Responsibilities

1. Representation of Independent-Sector Issues

- Act as Dorset NEU's lead representative for members working in independent schools.
- Ensure that independent-sector concerns and perspectives inform Dorset NEU discussions, decisions and campaigns.
- Highlight issues such as contractual variation, pay frameworks, workload, term-time conditions, governance practices, inspection requirements, and restructuring.

2. Communication & Engagement

- Maintain regular contact with members and reps in independent schools across Dorset.
- Share NEU guidance relating specifically to the independent sector, including policy updates, rights information, and advisory notes.
- Encourage independent-sector members to participate in Dorset NEU events, meetings, ballots, CPD and campaigns.

3. Supporting Reps & Building Workplace Organisation

- Support workplace reps in independent schools by providing resources, briefings and updates.
- Work with Dorset NEU officers and the Regional Organising team to develop rep structures in independent schools without representation.
- Promote NEU training for reps and members to strengthen organising in independent settings.

4. Recruitment & Visibility

- Support recruitment of new members in independent schools, including NQTs/Early Career Teachers and new support staff.
- Help raise the visibility of NEU values, membership benefits and collective organising within independent settings.
- Encourage independent-sector colleagues to take on activist or officer roles.

5. Monitoring & Reporting

- Track developments in independent schools across Dorset such as staffing changes, contract updates, wellbeing concerns, financial pressures or governance shifts.
- Provide regular updates at Dorset NEU meetings on trends, concerns and opportunities for action.
- Flag emerging issues that may require national NEU guidance or regional escalation.

6. Collaboration

- Work closely with the District Secretary, Membership Secretary, Organising Officer, Equality Officer and other relevant Dorset NEU officers.
- Liaise with the NEU Regional Office and national NEU independent-sector networks.
- Build constructive links with reps, members and, where appropriate, local school leadership teams or governing bodies.

Skills & Attributes

- Understanding of independent-school structures and employment contexts (or willingness to develop this).
- Strong communication and relationship-building skills.
- Ability to represent member concerns clearly, professionally and empathetically.
- Organisational skills to manage communication, networking and reporting.
- Commitment to NEU values of fairness, equality and collective organisation.

Time Commitment

- Attendance at Dorset NEU district meetings.
- Regular engagement with independent-sector members and reps.
- Participation in NEU training, briefings and independent-sector network events where possible.