



SUPPORTING SUPPORT STAFF

GMB LONDON SURVEY RESULTS



Thank you to all those who responded to our survey. Please see below some headlines from the survey results

- 70% of GMB members had seen their risk assessment- **if you still have not seen the risk assessment you can ask to see it**
- Only 40% of GMB members contributed to their risk assessment and it is disappointing that Head Teachers have not consulted with their staff effectively on this important issue. If you have any concerns about your role and what is being asked of you it is your right to speak up and speak out. GMB is here to support you.
- 81% of GMB members felt supported by their Head Teacher and 73% said they felt confident to raise any concerns
- 92% of GMB members are currently working either the same or less contracted hours
- 1 in 3 GMB members are carrying out additional duties to their usual role and the majority of these additional duties involve cleaning
- Overall, 2 in 3 GMB members said they felt safe at work
- Whilst 85% of respondents felt their first week back was as, or better than expected the concerns expressed by the 15% who had a worse week than expected were quite serious and these are followed up later in this bulletin

GMB London welcomes that for most of our members, the wider reopening of schools has been a largely positive experience but this does not mean there is room for complacency. Many members highlighted serious concerns in their survey response and these have been looked at and taken forward. The feedback from surveys such as this one, is key to ensuring your voice and concerns are being heard.



CLEANING/MAINTENANCE DUTIES

It would be unrealistic to expect for there to be no additional cleaning duties for school support staff at a time of a global pandemic but any additional cleaning duties must be **SAFE** and must be **REASONABLE**. Our survey results showed huge numbers of classroom based staff being required to clean toilets, sinks and perform deep cleans. Here is a guide to what could be considered safe and reasonable additional cleaning duties for classroom based staff.

- Wiping down equipment after use.
- Wiping a surface after use.

It is not safe or reasonable for classroom based staff to be used for the following

- Deep Cleaning- this is a specialist provision which requires specialist equipment and cleaning products. COSHH Risk Assessments need to be completed and Classroom based staff do not have the required training to perform this role
- Cleaning Toilets – Classroom based staff should not be cleaning toilets and then going back into classrooms, working with children. Uniform and PPE should be provided for cleaning and there are infection control issues with classroom based staff carrying out such cleaning duties. Again COSHH Risk Assessments and training, such as BICS, are required for such duties.
- If classroom based staff are not required in this capacity, the question should be asked whether they should be in school at all. Classroom based staff should not be required to be in school to perform gardening, decorating or any other maintenance work. This is all specialist work which requires training, PPE and risk assessments.



BUBBLES

One of the most alarming results of our survey was that so many members expressed concern that the integrity of their bubble was not being respected or protected. The 'Bubble' was introduced as a measure to further reduce the risk of any transmission of Coronavirus. The Guidance is clear that workers who are classroom teaching assistants should be allocated a specific class pod or bubble - a group of no more than 15 pupils who will be the sole class worked with until the end of term. These bubbles should be protected and you should not be working in different bubbles. Other members of staff should respect the integrity of bubbles and not enter a bubble to which they are not allocated. Office and administration staff in schools have also expressed concern and frustration that many people are entering their workspaces and these are issues which need to be raised. The 'bubble' is there to protect you and it is your right to speak up if it is being compromised. This is a serious health and safety issue. You should raise any concerns with your Head Teacher, workplace Rep, Branch or Regional Organiser. Your safety matters.



TEACHING ASSISTANTS

All teaching assistants should still be working to their contracted role and under the supervision of a qualified teacher. If you are not an HLTA, you should not be planning and preparing classes and be responsible for a whole class of children in a bubble. Many members have told us they have been given responsibility for whole bubbles. If you are being asked to carry out work you either not trained or not comfortable with, this is something which you need to raise. GMB is here to support and advise you with any issues you are experiencing.



MEMBERS FIRST