



Term Time Only Contracts- Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is a Term Time Only (TTO) Contract?

A. The majority of school support staff are employed on a term-time only (TTO) contract. This contract is usually for 39 weeks however some TTO contracts can be more, or less, than this.

Q. How do I get paid on a TTO Contract?

A. For a 39-week contract, the pay is calculated by adding 38 weeks' pay (190 school days) as worked plus 5 INSET days (totalling 1 week) plus statutory holiday entitlement, usually 5.6 weeks.

38 weeks (190 school days) + 1 week (5 INSET days) + holiday pay = your annual pay.

This annual total is divided by 12, and paid to you monthly, to ensure you are in receipt of a wage each month of the year.

(Your holiday entitlement is added to your pay, as you do not have the opportunity to take annual leave like other workers, however, your employer is legally obliged to pay you holiday pay.)

Q. What does this mean?

A. On average, those on TTO Contracts **receive pay for only 44 weeks per year leaving 8 weeks per year with no pay at all**. Although you receive pay throughout the year, you are not being paid for the whole year. This means that pension contributions are less than they would be if you were paid all year round and this obviously impacts the pension you receive when you retire. Also, the Low Pay Commission in September 2023 added Teaching Assistants and other school support staff roles to the Low Paid Occupation list because of the effect of TTO pay.

Q. Are all staff in schools employed on TTO contracts?

A. No. Teachers are employed to work 190 days per year plus 5 INSET days, which is also 39 weeks, but they are paid all year. Teachers work 'Directed Time' which is 195 days, 1265 hours (32.5 hours per week for 39 weeks) and this means they cannot be asked to work outside of these e.g. in the school holidays. The weeks, days and fulltime hours of teachers and support staff are the same and yet only support staff are paid on a term time only basis.

Q. What is GMB campaigning for?

A. GMB is campaigning for school support staff to receive pay all year. Members are experiencing financial hardship both in their working lives and retirement because of the low pay of TTO contracts. Teachers are paid all year round, when they work the same number of days and weeks as support staff and GMB is calling for support staff to be treated the same as teachers.

Q. Why is this campaign happening now?

A. There are several reasons this is happening now. Firstly, the Labour Government has committed to reinstating the School Support Staff Negotiating Body. This Body, known as the SSSNB, will give support staff including teaching assistants, caretakers and cleaners a stronger voice in government and will be tasked with establishing a national terms and conditions handbook, training, career progression routes, and fair pay rates. We therefore have an opportunity to highlight the current two-tier contracts in schools and campaign for improvements. Secondly, the role of school support staff has changed significantly since the original job descriptions and terms and conditions were written. This professionalisation and the additional responsibilities that are part of the role have never been officially recognised. One way of doing this would be by ensuring there is equality between the contracts of teachers and support staff.

Q. If Term Time Only Contracts ended, would I have to work in the school holidays?

A. GMB is campaigning for school support staff to be on the same contract as teachers and **teachers are not contracted to work in the school holidays**. Both support staff and teachers are contracted to work 195 days per year, but support staff lose 8 weeks pay per year by being on a TTO contract, rather than an all-year contract.

Q. Does being on a TTO contract affect my sick pay?

A. Yes. In other jobs, if you are sick when you are on annual leave you can claim back your leave. If you are sick during a school holiday, you cannot claim back any annual leave because you are paid your annual leave entitlement each month and don't actually take any leave. Also, for those on Term Time Only Contracts there are 13 weeks a year when they are neither at work or on annual leave but may be sick and at present there is no definitive guidance on what happens in this instance. Ending Term Time Only Contracts would address this and make the calculations of Maternity Pay and Redundancy Pay more straightforward.