

CIRCULAR

Circular No. 02/046/CCU

Date: 21 March 2002

To: Secretaries of Divisions and Local Associations – **FOR INFORMATION**

Dear Colleague

NURSERY CLASS SIZE ACTION FIGURES

The purpose of this circular is to inform divisions and associations of the establishment by the Union of class size action figures for nursery schools and classes.

Annual Conference 2001 asked that the Union '*introduce action limits on class or group sizes in nursery schools or classes and support and provide protection, under Union Rule, to members who are faced with teaching oversized classes*'.

The Conference motion reflected issues that had been raised a number of times in the Foundation Stage Working Party. The Executive has consulted with the Working Party and has identified basic principles to be applied in relation to class sizes, together with an action figure for nursery classes and the context in which the figures should be applied.

Class size action figures are already established as part of Union procedures for classes in both primary and secondary schools.

1. Basic Principles

- (i) Class size action figures need to be understood as triggers that could result in action ballots in appropriate circumstances. Such ballots would follow requests from members for action that are supported by divisions. Ballots would be held in accordance with Union Rules and Procedures. Class size action figures are distinct from policy objectives or aspirations with regard to class sizes.

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- (ii) The NUT recognises that there can be difficulties involved in taking class size action, especially in nursery schools and classes. Where circumstances warrant class size action but where such action might isolate individual members rather than support them as a school group, forms of action other than class size action to deal with oversize classes may be considered more appropriate.

2. Class Size Action Figures for Nursery Classes

- (i) The NUT regards the trigger for considering class size action in nursery schools to be where a class with one teacher, supported by an appropriately qualified nursery assistant, has in excess of 26 pupils. This is in line with the DfES recommendation that for nursery classes in maintained primary schools there should be an adult to child ratio of 2:26, where half the staff and all those employed as teachers have QTS.
3. In agreeing to requests for action, the Action Sub-Committee, or the Action Officers as appropriate, will take into account other factors that might suggest the figure could be varied. These factors could include the number and qualifications of teachers; the number and qualifications of nursery assistants; the size of the rooms available; the number of part-time places; the quality of the accommodation and facilities; the background of the children and the level of special educational needs.

Divisions considering requesting class size action in relation to nursery schools and classes should, in the first instance, contact their Regional Office or in Wales the NUT Wales Office, NUT Cymru.

Yours sincerely

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General Secretary

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Deputy General Secretary

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