



Hackney News

September 2019

Support the climate change school strikers

That there is a Climate Emergency is now beyond doubt and accepted by all but the most sceptical or by those who profit most from the fossil fuel and other CO₂-emitting industries. Hackney Council, as well as the government, have recently declared a climate emergency and the NEU passed a motion on Climate Change at National Conference. Thus, we all have a responsibility, especially in schools with the very people it will affect the most, to ensure all plans are actioned.

What is climate change?

Climate change is the current rapid warming of the Earth's climate caused by human activity. If left unchecked (and current responses are doing little to halt it) it poses an unprecedented threat to human civilisation and the ecosystems on this planet.

The world has been experiencing changes in climates, affecting millions of lives. Already, there has been the bleaching of coral reefs, the sea ice volume in the Arctic has been reaching new lows, an increase in the number of natural disasters worldwide (such as wildfires, droughts, floods) and the mass migration of species.

What can we do as educators?

Climate change will affect our children much more than older generations. But what is an age-appropriate way to engage them in the subject? First, you need to make sure children understand what Climate Change is. Children will have likely seen glimpses of news pieces about the situation but need further explanation as the truth is terrifying and we want to engage them in a way that isn't like watching a box set of Chucky. We need to prepare them



to become climate change activists to defend their futures.

Start by asking questions. Have they heard about climate change? What have they heard? What have they seen? How does it make them feel? Ask about the ecosystem and explain how it works. Explain the science behind climate change.

Helpful online resources for teaching about climate change:

- [Nasa Climate Kids](#) ● [Doc Academy](#)
- [World Wide Fund](#) ● [Climate](#)

Generation

In school you can:

- Become informed and invite speakers

from the multitude of groups in Hackney.

- Create a school eco-group to tackle issues in your school.
- Calculate your school's climate footprint.
- Tackle consumerism – help our community get what they need without spending. Trading, borrowing...
- Reduce waste!
- Make walking and cycling a priority where possible.
- Start a gardening club. Plant trees, fruits and vegetables.
- Make sure **20th September** is a day of learning about and tackling climate change!

We owe it to our young people to join them

The Education for Sustainability (EfS) Network works alongside Hackney Schools and raises awareness of climate change among pupils, staff and local communities.

They have been working with Hackney schools, promoting Eco-

schools as a programme for teaching and learning these urgent issues in local schools and their communities. They have so far delivered INSETs, assemblies, meetings with staff and senior management, workshops for

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pupils and staff and advice sessions for an increasing number of sustainability lead teachers.

Their next meeting, on the important subject of **teaching Climate Change will be on 26th September at 4.30 pm at the new Nightingale School.** (See details on the SH website, emails, newsletter or in the Schools' Weekly Bulletin).

With warnings from the IPCC, David Attenborough, the advent of Extinction Rebellion and the School Strikes, locally, nationally and globally we owe it to our young people to join them in demanding their right to choices over their future and to learn the facts about Climate Change, its causes and mitigation at their places of education – what could honestly be more important for them to learn?

So please work with us to meet our aim of making Hackney a 'Beacon Borough for Education for Sustainability'.

■ **Contact us:** sustainablehackneyefsnetwork@gmail.com or see <https://sustainablehackney.org.uk>



We are not experiencing Climate Change – we are experiencing a Climate Emergency which threatens life on this earth. Across the world school students and young people have taken the initiative and are calling for urgent action, including a global strike on 20th September. The UK Student Climate Network is calling on workers, trade unions and community groups and people of whatever religion or culture to add their voices. Can you join them?

Look out for the events in central London or why not organise in your workplace or community

School funding

It's a start, it's not eno

Funding relates to everything else.

If there is not enough money then there is a lack of resources generally within the education system, a lack of school places for pupils with SEND, threats to sixth forms and increased workload leading to increased stress for both pupils and staff. Pay awards and pensions are not accounted for and have to be paid for by schools with already stretched budgets. Promises of increased funding have not yet addressed the problem.

Kevin Courtney, joint leader of the National Education Union, said the funding promises “go some way towards closing the gap, but are still significantly short of what is required”.

Labour's shadow education secretary, Angela Rayner, had rejected

the three-year funding plan as a “con trick” that would still leave schools waiting years for funding they needed straightaway.

Even with the Prime Minister's recent announcement of £700m for high needs funding, schools won't see this money until next year.

8,500 children with SEND don't have an appropriate school place this September as a result of the devastating cuts to specialist provision.

Even Sir Michael Wiltshire, ex-head of Mossbourne Community Academy and chief inspector of schools between 2012 and 2016 has said, “the huge progress that we've made is in danger of falling back unless the funding goes into schools... there are many more children in our schools now than there were a few years ago, national

#School cuts

Ofsted

An inadequate appraisal

The new Ofsted framework was introduced in May of this year and has made a number of changes that school leaders will have been considering over the last few months.

Overall, it is a missed opportunity for overhauling the subjective and often unfair judgement system at its heart and replacing it with a useful, honest and supportive process to help schools improve.

It will still be heavily based on results, which will be compared to the national average and not contextualised, and, although it will not obsess about the progress shown in internal data, inspectors will require the

school to be able to show the purpose and usefulness of this data.

There is a focus on a pupil's resilience, character attributes and 'virtues'. This encourages a deficit model of mental health and wellbeing rather than looking at measures which assess a whole school approach to social and emotional wellbeing.

The judgement categories have been completed revised and will now cover Quality of Education (this is a big one!), Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development, Leadership and Management.

Some key themes emerge around reducing workload for teachers, an

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insurance contributions, pension contributions at schools have also gone up and the big challenge for our system at the moment is that we have not got enough teachers and good leaders in our schools.”

Last year, the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) revealed that funding per student in sixth forms has fallen by more than a fifth (21%) per student since 2010-11.

Counsellors at the Education Support Partnership, a charity that helps education staff with their mental health, dealt with 9,615 cases between April 2018 and March 2019 – a 28% rise from two years ago.

17,723 schools have suffered Government cuts to per pupil funding since 2015. The NEU has led the way in fighting school cuts. We are campaigning to get the money

emphasis on good character and resilience among pupils, tackling off-rolling, and a broad, well-balanced knowledge-rich curriculum.

This gives us an opportunity to use the new framework to tackle the question of workload. Regarding assessment and data collection, input and analysis, Ofsted now suggest that leaders ‘do not use it in a way that creates unnecessary burdens for staff or learners’.

They also point out that school leaders should be aware of the main pressures that are on staff and take account of them, realistic and constructive in the way they manage their staff (including their workload), and that any workload issues are consistently dealt with appropriately and quickly.

education urgently needs.

A report from MPs of all political parties has described the “bleak funding picture” in schools and colleges and called for an immediate injection of cash and a 10-year plan. We’ve done the maths and schools and colleges need a £12.6bn increase over the next three years, with £3bn straight away to end the funding crisis. **We need real money for real children in real schools now.**

The recent promise of increased funding is described by Kevin Courtney as “a tribute to the campaign waged by the NEU, NAHT and ASCL, alongside parents, councillors and many others. Our campaign in the General Election of 2017 moved 800,000 votes on the question of school funding and that message has clearly sunk in.

“The money now promised will in many cases be enough to mean schools don’t need to make further cuts next year.

“It is also welcome that a three-year funding plan has been laid out – long-term funding has been a theme of our campaigning.

“However, even the sums announced are not enough to reverse all of the cuts already made that have so damaged children’s education – and we will continue to campaign alongside heads, parents and governors for the funding our children need.”

The framework also states that leaders should ‘protect their staff from bullying and harassment.’ The criteria for outstanding leadership also include the statement: ‘Staff consistently report high levels of support for well-being issues.’

Although they are vague, these additions allow us to argue in our schools that there needs to be a concerted whole-school attempt to address the issues of teacher stress and workload.

If even Ofsted has belatedly realised that these problems are driving teachers out of the profession and impacting on the education of our students then we need to insist that our school leaders also take them seriously.

Asbestos

Action needed on killer dust

Asbestos is not just a problem of the past. Education unions are worried about the risk of its continuing presence, and the poor management of the material, in schools today.

In 2010, education and public services unions formed the Joint Union Asbestos Committee (JUAC) its catalyst being the Asbestos in Schools (AiS) campaign, started by Michael Lees after his wife Gina, a former teacher, died from the asbestos-related cancer, mesothelioma, in 2000. Asbestos doesn’t just affect industrial workers, but also teachers, cooks, caretakers and others working in schools.

At least 40 teachers and members of staff died from mesothelioma in 2017, up 30% on the previous year. Between 200 and 300 former pupils die annually as adults because they were exposed to asbestos at school, according to Health and Safety Executive (HSE) figures.

The NEU’s April 2019 survey into asbestos revealed over 52% of respondents had been told their school contains asbestos, but 39% of these were not told where it was located. Nearly 74% said asbestos was in accessible locations such as floors, ceilings and window frames. 73% said staff had not been provided with asbestos awareness training and less than 1% said parents had been given any information about its presence.

NEU joint general secretary Kevin Courtney said the survey showed “much more needs to be done to keep children and staff safe”. The JUAC wants the government to bring in a phased, planned and costed programme of removal of all asbestos from schools with a mandatory survey of all schools to find exactly where asbestos is present and its condition, with results made available to all staff and parents.

All school staff should be trained on how asbestos in schools should be managed, there should be more resources for the HSE and proactive inspections in schools must be restored.

Hackney Council will later this term offer comprehensive asbestos inspections to establish an asbestos management plan, which all unions in Hackney fully support. Make sure your school takes up this opportunity.

NEU reps

Could you be a school rep?

There are many reasons why you should consider being an NEU school rep:

- It is rewarding: supporting and advising others.
- It is a role which allows you to develop your communication and organisational skills.
- It means that you are kept up-to-date on key developments in education.
- You have opportunities to discuss and organise around issues in education, equalities and a whole range of political issues.
- You will make a difference: negotiating with your head teacher, speaking on behalf of members, putting forward ideas from your union group.

In order to carry out your role as a rep, facility time is available. Schools have funding to allow you to have regular time-off in school to carry out this important role. There is also a lot of support. You will be offered training – both locally and nationally. In Hackney NEU there is a group of local officers who are there to support and advise you. Many of us are or have been school reps, so we can give you very practical advice. You also have our regional and local officials who are there to support reps in schools.

School reps are a vital part of the union. As a school rep you are often the first person members in school turn to for help and advice. Each day as a school rep can be different: you might discuss a new appraisal policy with the head, advise a member on pay and another on excessive workload, speak to NQTs about joining the union or arrange a union meeting to discuss climate change. Each day can be different, but you make a difference!

Contact the Hackney NEU office if you would like to find out more.

Dates for your diary

Welcome to Hackney

FREE FOOD + DRINK

A SOCIAL FOR NEW EDUCATION WORKERS TO HACKNEY

Thursday 19 September, 5-7pm
The Empire Bar, 291 Mare St E8 1EJ
 Hosted by Hackney National Education Union

Booking: www.climate_emergency.eventbrite.co.uk

One-day conference **Climate Emergency**

Education for the Future
Curriculum Activism Education

Sponsored by

Saturday 12th October
 10am-4.30pm
 Regent High School, Chalton St, London NW1 1RX
 Tickets £10 (£5 for students)

WE'RE MISSING OUR LESSONS SO WE CAN TEACH YOU ONE SCHOOL STRIKE FOR CLIMATE ACTION

General meeting

Hackney branch of the NEU

Fighting climate change in school

Speaker: student protester reports on the climate strike

Monday 23rd September @5pm
 The Urswick School Paragon Rd E9 6NR

Would you like to take part?

The following conferences are taking place later in the autumn term. NEU Hackney has agreed to pay conference expenses (travel and accommodation if necessary) for up to 10 delegates per conference. You need to register on line via the NEU website:

- Disabled Members' Conference: 27th to 29th September, Manchester
- Support Staff Conference: 5th October at NEU headquarters
- Black Educators' Conference: 15th to 17th November, Manchester
- National LGBT+ Educators' Conference: 29th November to 1st December, Blackpool

How to contact Hackney NEU

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All social media is currently being updated