

One in 10 school support staff experience sexually inappropriate behaviour



Pupils masturbating, taking pictures of support staff's private parts and smacking their bottoms among shocking testimonies

Disturbing new figures from GMB show more than one in ten school support staff who responded to a survey have experienced sexually inappropriate behaviour from pupils.



The shocking statistics come from a nationwide survey of members, commissioned for GMB's 101st Congress, which starts in Brighton today.

More than 4,600 school support staff responded to the question 'Have you experienced sexually inappropriate behaviour from pupils (including verbal comments, innuendo, inappropriate touching and the taking of inappropriate pictures - sometimes known as 'up-skirting')?'

“ No one should have to put up with being sexually abused while at work – and that includes our members in schools.

Karen Leonard, GMB National Officer

More than 10.5% said they had, rising to more than 11% among classroom based staff.

Many of the responses are too explicit to report verbatim, but testimony from members includes:

Male pupils photographing female staff bottoms when bending to pick things up off the floor

Pupils masturbating in the classroom

Use of inappropriate and sexually suggestive terms by pupils to staff including being called 'babe', 'beautiful', 'my MILF', 'a prostitute,' and 'a pervert'

Pupils telling staff to perform sexual acts, and saying 'this is what your husband likes'.

Boys exposing themselves and making inappropriate comments and gestures

Students smacking female staff on the bottom or touching their breasts

Karen Leonard, GMB National Officer, said:

“Our members love their jobs and enjoy positive, professional relationships with the vast majority of pupils, and are dedicated to supporting children and young people.

“However, some tell us that an unacceptable proportion of students use inappropriate language to each other and to staff regularly.



“ These testimonies from our dedicated school staff make very tough reading and bring home the difficult situations many of our teaching assistants, school administrators, lunchtime supervisors and others experience every day.

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“These testimonies from our dedicated school staff make very tough reading and bring home the difficult situations many of our teaching assistants, school administrators, lunchtime supervisors and others experience every day.

“It’s not surprising many are left stressed, intimidated and even with mental scars.

“But schools must make sure they have proper policies, guidelines and principles to support staff when these incidents do take place.

“GMB demands a zero-tolerance approach – with proper, reliable support systems in place for those who do experience it.”

Press office

079859 1525698

press.office@gmb.org.uk

Member requiring help?

Click to contact your local GMB Region

info@gmb.org.uk

