

SCHOOL REPORT

Tackling violence
against support staff

Best practice for PE
changing

School evacuation and
lockdown

To post or not to post -
social media guidance

Two pull-out posters!

GMB

UNION



Preventing Violence in Schools: Key Demands

GMB believes that the risk of violence in schools is like any other health and safety risk – it can be identified, controlled and managed.



GMB DEMANDS THAT...

! All staff are treated fairly & equally, regardless of perceived status/grade

! Negotiated & agreed policies & procedures are used to reduce the risk of violence as much as possible

! Absence for a work- related incident should not be counted towards sickness reviews

! All staff are consulted on violence issues, not just teachers

! Serious incidents suffered by any staff member are reported, so trends can be analysed & hotspots identified

! All school leaders acknowledge that violence presents a risk to the school workforce & a source of stress

! Feedback is given after every report made, even if only to confirm the incident has been logged

! All schools assess the risk of violence both within school premises & for all external activities

! Sanctions are issued whenever aggressive incidents occur

! Performance is regularly monitored & reviewed & the lessons learned & shared from all significant incidents

! Sufficient time is given for recovery when incidents occur & counselling & support provided where needed

! Personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided where required

... supports GMB's campaign to prevent violence in schools.

GMB

U N I O N

Tackling violence against school support staff



“We at Merton council abhor any violence in schools and will clamp down on it. We need to work with schools, schools staff and their unions, alongside parents to ensure those working and studying in schools enjoy their school day. That is why i am pleased to sign up to GMB’s preventing violence in schools campaign.”

Stephen Alambritis, Leader of Merton Borough Council (pictured signing our key demands document below, and with Kathy Abubakir, Education Convenor for Merton Borough Council, top left. You can print the poster using the opposite page.)

Violence against school support staff is on the increase. GMB members have been punched, spat at, kicked and suffer intimidating verbal and sexual abuse. We know that the vast majority of members working in schools have experienced violent incidents.

However, most GMB members say that it is the manner in which their employer responds and supports them that is most important to them. That’s why GMB launched a campaign to tackle the rising tide of violence against our members.

We are asking employers to be honest about violent incidents, because they are not resolved when employers downplay incidents, or worst still, suggest the fault somehow lies with the staff.

If they haven’t already, encourage your employer to sign up to our campaign and share the good news with us when you have. By working together we can reduce violence against school staff.



For further information, or to arrange a meeting in your school to discuss any issue covered in the magazine, contact your local branch or email: schools@gmb.org.uk



Social media is part of everyday life. However, there are risks involved for people working in schools. GMB are seeing an increasing number of members disciplined or even dismissed as a direct result of social media activity, for example, allegations of 'bringing the school in to disrepute'

This guidance is for your safety. If not used with care an ill-judged post could damage your reputation or even lose you your job.



Policy

Know your workplace policy on usage of social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

Employer

Avoid identifying the name of your school as your employer on personal accounts. Have the highest privacy settings possible and be aware that 'friends' may not have the same levels of privacy as you.

Review Settings

It's good practice to regularly review your privacy settings.. Social media companies regularly change their privacy settings, if you just click 'agree', your privacy may be compromised. Avoid identifying where you live. Consider using a different name that does not enable students to easily search for and identify you.

Old Posts

Have a 'clear out' of old posts via your privacy settings.

Pupil

Don't be 'friends' with pupils on personal Facebook or Instagram accounts, and don't post photos of pupils on your personal social media accounts.



DO	DON'T
Regularly change password	Post things you wouldn't want your parents to see
Check your privacy settings	Add/accept strangers
Require approval for tagged posts/photos	Drink and post
Respect others' cultures, religions and values	Share your password
Think before you post	Include home address/ phone number in profile
	'Check-in' at home - it could invalidate your home insurance

Do's and don'ts of #socialmedia

Staff

Avoid criticising your employer, parents, pupils or colleagues on social media, even if you haven't stated where you work.

Separate?

Consider having separate personal and work social media pages – especially if you use social media for work purposes.

Retweeting and sharing

Handle with care, retweeting and sharing suggests you are endorsing what is being said.

Be careful what you share even in private groups. It's best to assume comments on social media are always public.

The school's duty to you

The school social media policy should provide protection for staff. Your employer has a duty of care towards you, so if parents or pupils are criticising, bullying or ridiculing staff on line your employer should step in to protect your health and reputation.



A teacher was forced to resign after her head teacher said photos of her on Facebook drinking 'promoted alcohol use', and a member of staff was sacked for comparing her hourly rate with that of the CEO and commenting 'that's fair'. One in five bosses say they have rejected an applicant because of their social media profiles.

Source: Eurocom Worldwide



Don't respond directly to such posts or try and defend yourself. The offender should be asked by the school to remove such posts.

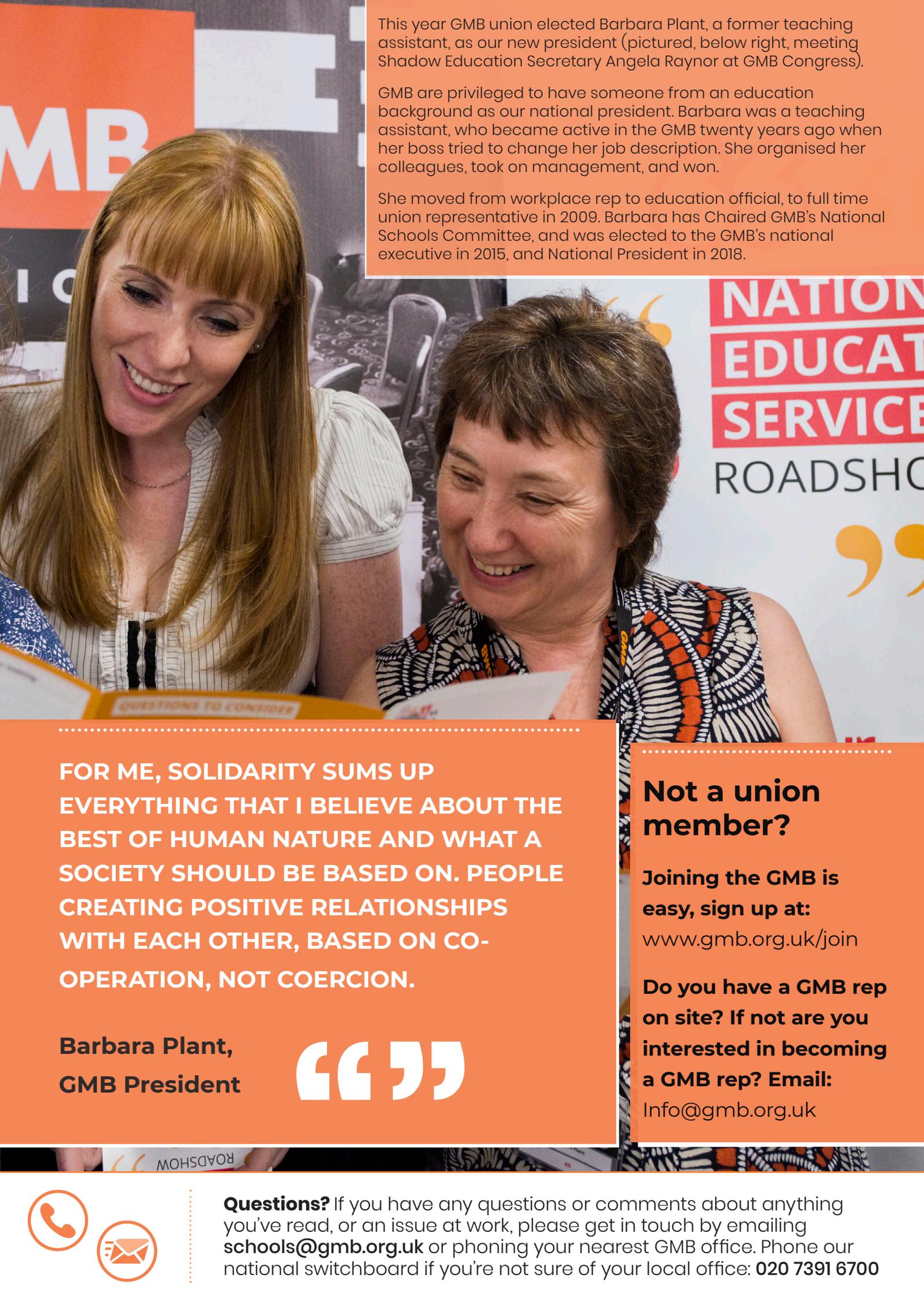
If you have a responsibility for the school's social media platforms, ensure you are clear on the school's social media policy and have the necessary written permissions.

Always THINK before you post.

If in doubt – don't post.

DON'T FORGET TO FOLLOW GMB UNION'S ACCOUNTS TOO >>>





This year GMB union elected Barbara Plant, a former teaching assistant, as our new president (pictured, below right, meeting Shadow Education Secretary Angela Raynor at GMB Congress).

GMB are privileged to have someone from an education background as our national president. Barbara was a teaching assistant, who became active in the GMB twenty years ago when her boss tried to change her job description. She organised her colleagues, took on management, and won.

She moved from workplace rep to education official, to full time union representative in 2009. Barbara has Chaired GMB's National Schools Committee, and was elected to the GMB's national executive in 2015, and National President in 2018.

FOR ME, SOLIDARITY SUMS UP EVERYTHING THAT I BELIEVE ABOUT THE BEST OF HUMAN NATURE AND WHAT A SOCIETY SHOULD BE BASED ON. PEOPLE CREATING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OTHER, BASED ON CO-OPERATION, NOT COERCION.

**Barbara Plant,
GMB President**



Not a union member?

Joining the GMB is easy, sign up at:

www.gmb.org.uk/join

Do you have a GMB rep on site? If not are you interested in becoming a GMB rep? Email:

Info@gmb.org.uk



Questions? If you have any questions or comments about anything you've read, or an issue at work, please get in touch by emailing schools@gmb.org.uk or phoning your nearest GMB office. Phone our national switchboard if you're not sure of your local office: **020 7391 6700**



Best practice for supporting pupils changing for PE

There is no legislation providing guidance for schools on how to support pupils changing for PE, which means that schools write their own policies.

Squeezed school budgets have led to members sharing concerns with GMB about supporting children when they are getting changed at school, for example for PE or swimming lessons.

Reduced staff numbers is no excuse to cut down on procedures designed to protect the dignity of the pupils, but just as importantly employers have a duty to protect staff. Staff should have clear instructions on how to conduct any contact of a personal nature with a pupil, and should never do so when they are alone with a child.

Malicious accusations of abuse can arise and are devastating for school staff, so it is vital that staff avoid putting themselves at risk. Schools should have clear policies on supporting pupils when changing for PE, and it is good practice for parents to understand these procedures too.

Where staff could be at risk, a risk assessment should be conducted in order to minimise or

School evacuation and lockdown



Every school should have a clear procedure on what to do in an emergency situation. These plans should be shared with all staff.

Lockdown procedures should be practiced in exactly the same way that emergency evacuations including fire drills are, so that staff and pupils can all react to emergency situations calmly, and so that everyone knows what to do.

Consideration should be given to all adults including lone workers, and visitors, as well as the pupils.

Procedures should be practiced at different times of the day, including before and after school, when there may be schools clubs, or adults working alone.

If you don't know what your school evacuation or lockdown procedure is, raise it at your next staff meeting. If you

are uncomfortable or unsure of your procedures, talk to your GMB representative for confidential advice.



