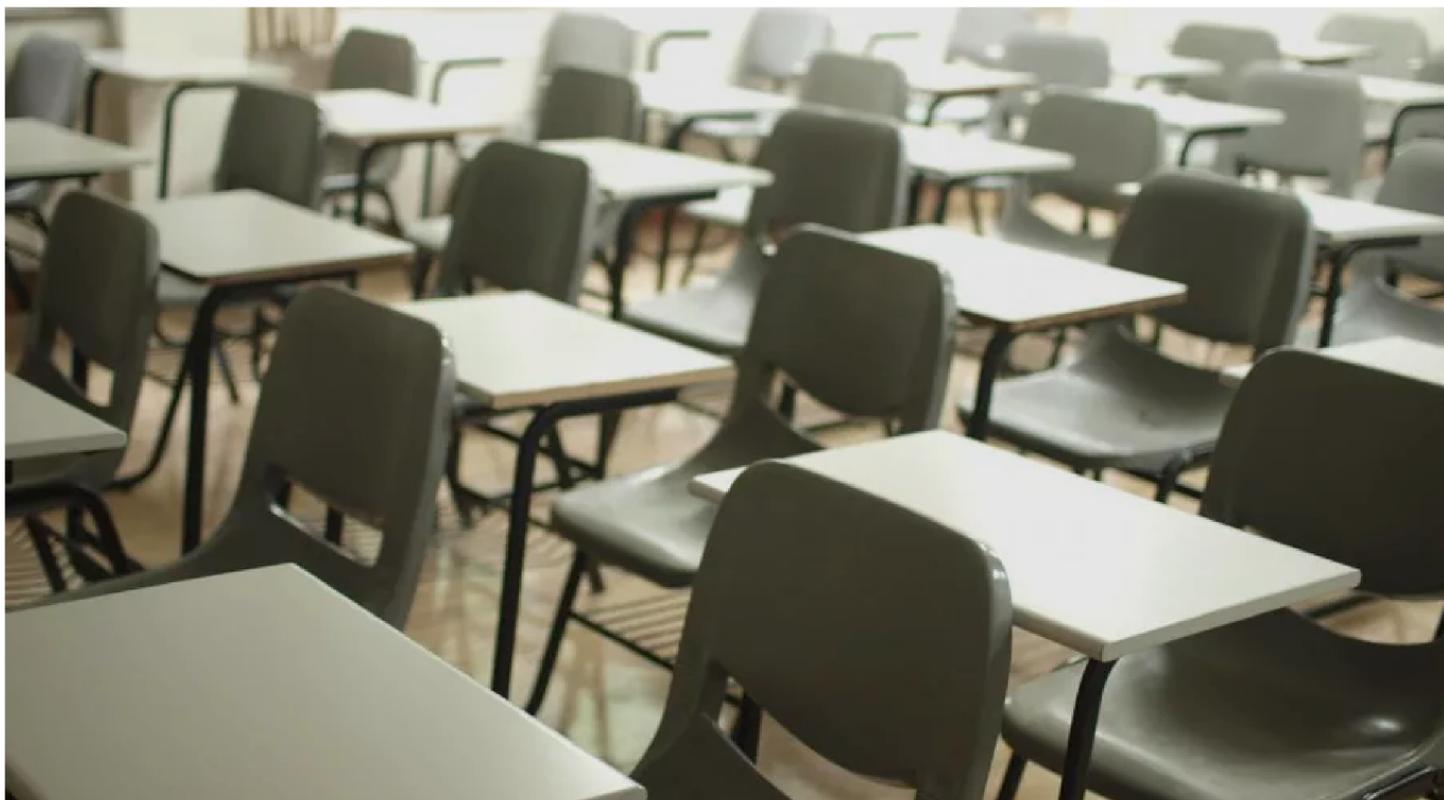


# 40 per cent of school support and early years staff worried about Christmas cash



Almost 40 per cent of school support and early years staff are worried about having enough money to feed their families this Christmas.

The mass survey of more than 4,600 school support workers and those working in early years settings shows more than half are also worried about having enough money to buy Christmas presents for their families.



The average teaching assistant salary is just over £17,500 a year, with early years paid slightly more at £19,000.

Yet almost three quarters feel obliged to bring things on for the children in their care, from treats, to presents and even Christmas clothing, including raincoats from charity shops for children who come in without adequate outdoor gear.

Meanwhile the lack of time off during term causes big issues for many – more than half of those with primary age children have been unable to take time off to watch their own child’s nativity for at least three years and just 6 per cent able to do any festive shopping in the week.

One worker said they had been docked an hour’s pay for attending a funeral.

**Stacey Booth, GMB National Officer, said:**

“I think it’s fair to say most people will be horrified by the fact the people we rely on to look after and educate our children are so badly paid their worried about feeding their own families at Christmas.

“It’s tragic indictment of what we value as a society – and how for generations we’ve systematically undervalued the work done by women.

“From chronically low wages, to term time only pay, daily violence and abuse and to not being able to take any time off outside school holidays – school support staff face a litany of workplace problems.

“That’s why the School Staff Negotiating Body – set to be reintroduced by the Labour government in 2026 – is absolutely vital and must be delivered in full.”

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