

Education Headaches Seminar – June 2026

1. Mr Brent, Headteacher, is not happy with the quality of the cleaning at Wernham Hogg Academy by the cleaning contractor, Slough Cleaning Ltd. The contract is coming to an end and Mr Brent wants to bring the cleaning in-house and employ new cleaners.

Is Mr Brent able to do this?

2. Ms Reeves has been a Politics teacher at Labour Grove School for 18 months and has been absent from work for the last 6 months with "work-related stress and anxiety". Mr Starmer, Headteacher, has had enough and wants to sack Ms Reeves for long-term sickness absence.

Can Mr Starmer just dismiss Ms Reeves?

3. Mr Jones, Headteacher at Scooby-Doo Academy, has implemented a restructure of the SLT. Daphne, Velma and Shaggy (who are Deputy Heads) are all at risk of redundancy. Daphne is currently on maternity leave.

3a. As part of the restructure, only 2, rather than 3, Deputy Head roles are required.

3b. As part of the restructure, no Deputy Heads are required. However, there is one promotion opportunity available as Director of Teaching and Learning. Daphne, Velma and Scrappy all apply for the role.

How should Mr Jones proceed in both scenarios?

4. Hagrid and Filch manage the grounds of Hogwarts. They are involved in a fight in the staff room. As a result, Filch is dismissed on the grounds of gross misconduct but Hagrid is only given a final written warning. Filch claims unfair dismissal.

Will Hogwarts be able to defend Filch's claim?

5. Mrs Simpson, Headteacher at Springfield High, has just chaired a disciplinary hearing with Mr Burns, a Pastoral Support Worker who has worked at the school for 6 months, who admitted having racially offensive comments and pictures on his Facebook page. However, Mr Burns insists that the posts had been put on there by others who had access to his Facebook account. He also says that he thought his Facebook page was private and that it would be a breach of his human rights if he could not have his own beliefs.

Mrs Simpson wants to dismiss but is she safe to do so?

6. Mr McKenzie, Headteacher at Rudge Park School, has just been informed that Phil Gilbert, English Teacher, has been arrested for having indecent images on his laptop. He denies the allegation and has been bailed. The police investigation is ongoing.

What action, if any, can Mr McKenzie take?

7. Mrs Winkleman is employed full-time at the Fringe Academy as Head of English. She is due to return from maternity leave in three months' time and has submitted a formal flexible working request to return on a part-time basis (3 days per week), suggesting a job-share arrangement. Mr Carr, Headteacher, is not a fan of part time working and has asked if he can reject and retain her full-time maternity cover instead. Mr Carr is considering rejecting the request on that basis.

How would you advise Mr Carr to proceed?

8. An anonymous complaint alleges that the Deputy Headteacher, Mrs Peggy, has a bullying management style and is causing low morale. The Headteacher, Mr Mitchell, is concerned as similar informal issues have been raised previously regarding Mrs Peggy's performance, but no formal complaints have been made, and earlier support has not improved matters.

What should Mr Mitchell do?

9. Mr Sugar is a Business Manager at Amstrad High Academy. Mr Sugar's absence record is poor. Some of his absences related to the fact that he has previously had a heart bypass and needs to attend medical appointments, but the rest appears to be for varying reasons, such as coughs and colds, and a lot of his absences are on a Monday and Friday.

What would you do?

10. Mr Keating is employed on a 12-month fixed-term contract as a Teaching Assistant to support a specific pupil with an EHCP. After 7 months, the pupil leaves the school and the funding ceases. Mrs Twain decides to terminate Mr Keating's contract early. He has over 6 months' service but less than 12 months. He alleges unfair dismissal and argues that he was treated less favourably than other permanent Teaching Assistants.

Was Mrs Twain right to terminate Mr Keating's contract early?

11. You receive an anonymous email alleging that Miss Green, a learning support assistant, has been engaging in inappropriate out-of-work activities that may call into question her suitability to work with children. No evidence is provided, and the

sender refuses to identify themselves when asked for further information. Miss Green has an otherwise clean record.

How should you handle the anonymous tip-off?

12. Mr Wicks, Head of the PE Department, has ongoing conflict with several members of the senior leadership team. Multiple colleagues have raised concerns informally and through an anonymous staff engagement survey, citing breakdown in trust, communication issues, and difficult behaviour. However, no one is willing to provide a formal signed statement or act as a witness. Attempts at mediation have failed, and working relationships continue to deteriorate.

Can you fairly dismiss Mr Wicks on these grounds? In the absence of any named witnesses, can you rely on these concerns to take formal action?