

INDUSTRIAL & STRIKE ACTION 2026: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This document was last updated at 2pm on Tuesday 29th September.

What is going on with talks with the Government?

The Public Service Agreement 2024-2026 expired in June. Preliminary engagement with Government in June didn't convince union negotiators that living standards would be protected by the approach officials in the Department of Public Expenditure are taking to a new agreement.

As a result, public service unions have been balloting members on industrial action. The ICTU Public Services Committee met on Friday 11th September and agreed to coordinate industrial action.

With no public service agreement in place, we are now in dispute with Government, as the employer of public service workers.

Why aren't we going into talks when Government Ministers are saying they are open to talks?

Our position is that talks must have a clear purpose from the outset, including a credible approach to protecting living standards, which can only be achieved by addressing pay.

For months, unions have highlighted the Government's unwillingness to address cost-of-living measures at the start of any negotiations. This failure to immediately address pay for 2026 onwards, is the primary reason that talks cannot progress.

In previous public service pay negotiations, pay has generally been the final item on the agenda, usually following a period of intense negotiations on public service reform and other issues. Unions have made it clear to Government that a different approach is needed in 2026, and that workers need certainty in uncertain times.

In recent years, public service pay has fallen significantly behind prices, by as much as 5%. In September 2026, the CSO advised that annual inflation is running at 3.7%, while pay improvements delivered in 2026 amount to an average increase of around 1.5% across the year. This means, at a minimum, pay improvement measures need to be implemented for the latter part of 2026.

The Government side has not accepted this point and was unwilling to commit to this approach in preliminary discussions.

INDUSTRIAL & STRIKE ACTION 2026: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How many unions are involved?

There are 19 unions with members working in the public service who are part of a group called the Public Services Committee (PSC) of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU).

What about the Budget?

We will have to wait until Budget 2027 is announced on Tuesday 6th October to understand what impact measures in it will have on the cost-of-living crisis.

Ministers have made comments in the media about potential tax cuts to benefit workers. Anything they do will apply across the economy, and the first thing they will have to address is their own failure to index tax bands and credits last year.

It is important to know that pay bargaining is the only way for teachers to be sure that their pay can keep up with the cost of living.

In this dispute Government are both the employer and the state's policy maker. We can't let them confuse these two roles. The Government is the State's largest employer, and if it refuses to address pay falling behind inflation, it emboldens other employers to take the same approach, putting workers' pay across Ireland at risk.

What industrial action have the ASTI decided to take?

Standing Committee has directed the following industrial action for ASTI members.

1. NON CO-OPERATION WITH THE CROKE PARK HOURS

This means no meetings/ activities currently listed as part of the Croke Park Hours Schedule. This will include parent-teacher meetings, staff meetings, etc.

- **(a) Will I be required to make up the Croke Park Hours?** It is the clear position of the ASTI that members are not required to make up the Croke Park Hours.

Continued →

INDUSTRIAL & STRIKE ACTION 2026: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

2. NON CO-OPERATION WITH MEETINGS HELD OUTSIDE NORMAL SCHOOL HOURS

This includes meetings under [M58/04](#) which covers in/out parent-teacher meetings and staff meetings.

- **(a) What should schools do about parent-teacher meetings already planned in October.** Schools can reschedule the parent-teacher meetings to take place during school hours. Otherwise, the meetings should be cancelled.
- **(b) Does this instruction extend to Board of Management meetings?** No – this instruction does not currently extend to BOM meetings.

3. NON CO-OPERATION WITH EMAILS AND OTHER FORMS OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

This means members will not be responding to emails from management/parents/outside agencies. ASTI members will be advised to place the following standard automatic reply on their email account. 'Due to industrial action, this email account is not being monitored.'

- **(a) Does this instruction impact the use of school management software e.g. Tyro, VSware Compass?** No – this instruction does not extend to these programmes.
- **(b) Does this instruction extend to teaching and learning resources e.g. Moodle?** No – this instruction does not preclude the use of technology in the classroom for teaching and learning.
- **(c) What should I do if there is a child protection issue that requires email contact?** All concerns related to child protection, and provided for under the Children's First legislation are derogated from the instruction.

4. NON-COOPERATION WITH PHONE COMMUNICATION

Members will not be taking phone calls or making calls to parents or other outside agencies.

- **(a) What should I do if there is a child protection issue that requires phone contact?** All concerns related to child protection, and provided for under the Children's First legislation are derogated from the instruction.

INDUSTRIAL & STRIKE ACTION 2026: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What if I am unwell and cannot attend for work?

In such circumstances you must communicate with management as normal by text, phone or email in order to ensure compliance with [Circular 0013/2024](#).

What if there is an inspection during the industrial action?

The inspection will go ahead. Inspectors will be aware of the directive on email communication.

I work in a boarding school. Are there different arrangements?

Specific guidance for ASTI members working in boarding schools will be available shortly.

Will the industrial action impact extracurricular activities?

Members may continue with such activities, with the exception of the strike day.

Will there be any exceptions to the industrial action directive?

Sometimes exceptions, known as 'derogations' are granted during industrial action. A derogation means that a certain type of work, or worker, is exempt from the union instruction. Where a school is seeking a specific derogation from the ASTI, this must be submitted in writing to gensec@asti.ie. Approved derogations will be published on www.asti.ie.

What about other union members in my school?

All public sectors workers are engaged in a campaign of industrial action. Members of other unions should contact their own union for advice. School Stewards in schools where multiple unions operate should coordinate at local level.

Will I be penalised for taking industrial action?

Trade union members in Ireland are legally protected when they take part in industrial action, if that action has been approved by a ballot of members. Simply put, you cannot be penalised for taking industrial action if you are an ASTI member.

What happens on the strike day?

Pickets will be placed on all schools where ASTI members work. All members are expected to picket. Further details will be provided closer to the strike day.

What if I am on a school tour the day of the strike?

A tour should not go ahead on the strike day. If the tour is over a number of days including the strike day then a derogation should be sought.