

NEWS AND PRESS

Tues 4th February 2014

Intimidation campaign of young teacher deplorable

A teacher at Boys' Model, Catherine Seeley, has been the target of a sectarian campaign forcing her to leave her post.

The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI), the professional and regulatory body for teachers, has condemned the on-line sectarian intimidation of a young teacher, which has resulted in her quitting her post at a north Belfast school.

Dr Carmel Gallagher, Registrar of the General Teaching Council said: *"I am sure I speak on behalf of the whole teaching profession in voicing grave disquiet at the on-line sectarian intimidation of a young teacher leading her to quit her job in a north Belfast school".*

"Teaching is a challenging vocation which deserves the respect of parents and society".

"We are constantly warning young people about the dangers of on-line bullying and here we have an example of adults doing exactly this to a professional carrying out a dedicated job for which she has been fully trained. Ms Seeley was teaching a key area of the curriculum - 'Learning for Life and Work' – which aims to help young people make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives. It is very positive to see her students starting a campaign on Twitter in support of their teacher.

"As a society we must do all we can to allow our teachers to get on with the important job of teaching within an environment that allows both our young people and our teachers to develop".

"All cases of on-line bullying deserve to be investigated and action taken against the perpetrators to send a signal that virtual intimidation is just as serious as actual intimidation"

ENDS

Notes to Editor

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GTCNI is the statutory independent and regulatory professional body for teachers in NI. The Council was established under the auspices of the Education (NI) Order 1998 and has a membership of 33, the majority of whom are teachers. GTCNI is committed to developing a research and evidence based approach to discharging its statutory duties and informing key education policies in NI.

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The main features of GTCNI are as follows:

1. Professional Registration

GTCNI, on behalf of the profession, ensures that only appropriately qualified teachers are registered to teach in Northern Ireland.

- Professional Registration: We check that all who wish to teach here have completed a suitable course of initial teacher education before being listed on the professional teachers' register.
- Accreditation of ITE Programmes: We accredit all Initial Teacher Education Programmes in Northern Ireland to ensure that all providers meet agreed criteria.
- Providing up-to-date Statistics: We maintain up-to-date statistics about the profession, (*for example, how many teachers are employed in each phase of education and their gender, age and subject profile*) so that there is an appropriate supply of qualified teachers for each phase.

2. Professional Regulation

GTCNI, on behalf of the profession promotes the highest standards of Professional conduct, competence and practice.

- **Professional Code and Competences:** These are set out in Teaching: the Reflective Profession' (GTCNI 2007) and can be accessed on the website at www.gtcni.org.uk
- **Extension to GTCNI's Regulatory Powers:** Proposals have been consulted upon and new legislation is expected to come into effect in 2014-15.

3. Professional Research

GTCNI on behalf of the profession undertakes, and provides access to, up-to-date educational research on practice.

- **Best Practice Research:** We support and disseminate best practice research to ensure that any proposed changes are informed by local, as well as global, experience and reflection.
- **On-line Surveys:** We conduct on-line research on key issues (*for example, we surveyed your views on statutory assessment in June 2013*) in order to develop advice on matters that affect teaching and learning.
- **Research Database:** We have developed the 'Access to Research Resources for Teachers Space' (ARRTS) to provide easy access to important educational research [www. arrts.gtcni.org.uk](http://www.arrts.gtcni.org.uk)

4. Professional Development

GTCNI, on behalf of the profession, advises government, employers and other stakeholders on all matters relating to teacher education, planning, performance review and professional development.

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- **Policy Advice:** We have proposed that all teachers are given access to a progressive range of professional development opportunities throughout their careers, aligned to revised competence standards.
- **Policy Alignment:** We have proposed that revised competence standards are aligned to school development planning, school self-evaluation, PRSD and a 'professional update' e-portfolio.

5. Professional Voice

GTCNI is your professional voice on all matters relating to teaching. Our position is that the educational voice of the profession should lead educational policy thinking and development.

- **Policy Advocacy:** We promote informed educational policymaking and best practice at all levels and speak up for the good of young people and the profession with integrity and conviction, based on research and consultation.
- **Professional Engagement:** We consult you on matters of major concern / policy debate so that we can represent your views with authority (*for example during 2012-13 we engaged face-to-face with many Primary Principals' Associations and Area Learning Communities and undertook a major survey on statutory assessment*).
- **Consultation Responses:** We respond to all relevant educational consultations on your behalf, drawing on research and consultation evidence

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