



TEACH  
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ALLIANCE

# Teachers: How to Deal with Unfair Treatment

You have just been treated unfairly at school. It may be that you have been refused a reasonable request or given a dressing down or told to do something in a manner you consider to be unprofessional. You have a choice: To let it go and move on or to do something about it. If you want to do something about it, this booklet explains how.





# The Write it-State it-Let Go (WSLG) method of dealing with unfair treatment

We've all been there.

A colleague or more senior member of staff has spoken to you in an unacceptable manner. Or given you a dressing down. Or told you that they are making a decision which affects your role or working conditions without the right to reply. At the very least, you consider you have been treated unfairly. Perhaps you regard it as bullying.

You are angry, dismayed, feel aggrieved and badly treated.

You have a choice. To act or not to act. Not to act may be the best option, at least in the short term. If so, you will need to talk through how you feel with someone close, to prevent the incident eating away at you.

If you decide to act, what do you do? How do you take action without getting into an unpleasant argument which goes nowhere and just makes you feel worse?

This is where WSLG comes in. There is no guarantee that it will resolve the situation in your favour. That is down to the person who treated you unfairly. What it will do is to give you back control, enable you to express your point of view and say how you feel about how you were treated.

*Steve Waters*

Steve Waters (CEO & Founder)

Teach Well Alliance

[www.teachwellalliance.com](http://www.teachwellalliance.com)

# The WSLG Method of Dealing with Unfair Treatment

## Step 1- W: Write a statement

The first step is to write a statement of what happened and its impact on you, including how you felt. If appropriate, you can include what you would like to happen next.

## Step 2 - W: Write an email

The second step is to send an email to the person who treated you unfairly, requesting a meeting to discuss the incident.

## Step 3 - Write a second email. Attach your statement

Once you have a meeting arranged, you send the statement you wrote in Step 1 in a second email to the person who treated you unfairly.

## Step 4 - S: State Your Opinion

Step 4: Have the meeting, referring closely to the statement you wrote in Step 1.

## Step 5 - LG: Let Go

Write an email to the person who treated you unfairly, summarising the outcome(s) of the meeting. Attach an update of the statement, adding the outcomes agreed during the meeting.

# How this looks on paper

## Email 1 copy

Dear [X]

I have had time to consider our conversation on [Day and Date].

I have some concerns about what was said and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you when convenient.

Thank you

Best regards

[Your name]

## Email 2 Copy

Dear [X]

In advance of our meeting on [Day, Date and Time], I thought it would be helpful if I set out my concerns in writing.

Please find attached the document I would like the opportunity to discuss.

Thank you

Best regards

[Your name]



# Statement for Discussion during the Meeting (No more than one side A4)

Regarding our Conversation on [Day and Date]

During our conversation on [Day and Date], the following points were raised:

1. [Point 1]
2. [Point 2]
3. [Point 3]

After taking time to consider the conversation further and the points that were made, I would like to summarise my response:

[Response to Point 1]

[Response to Point 2]

[Response to Point 3]

The points that were raised also made me feel: [Summarise how you felt].

I would like to suggest that, in the interest of moving forward, that [Summarise your preferred outcome].

Thank you

Best regards

[Your name]

[Date]



# Email following meeting: Let it Go

Email copy

Dear [X]

Thank you for meeting me on [*Day and Date*]. I appreciated the opportunity to discuss my concerns.

I thought it would be helpful if I summarised what was agreed in the interests of moving forward.

Please find attached my document, including the outcomes we agreed.

If there is anything which is inaccurate, please let me know and I will review the document.

Thank you

Best regards

[*Your name*]



## Fictitious example

Alex, the Head of English, was tidying up at the end of the day when Chris, the Headteacher, burst into the classroom.

'Alex, I've just seen the predicted grades for English. They're 10% down on last year. Compared to maths, they're a disaster! They'll destroy our Progress 8 measure. I don't know what your staff have been doing but you'd better sort this out fast!'

Chris exits, slamming the classroom door.



## Email 1

Dear Chris

I have had time to consider our conversation after school last Monday, 24th September.

I have some concerns about what was said and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you when convenient.

Thank you.

Best regards

Alex

## Email 2

Dear Chris

In advance of our meeting on Friday 28th at 15.00, I thought it would be helpful if I set out my concerns about our conversation in writing.

Please find attached the document I would welcome the opportunity to discuss.

Thank you.

Best regards

Alex



# Document

## Regarding our conversation on Monday, 24th September

During our conversation on Monday, 24th September, the following points were raised:

1. The English predicted grades were 10% lower than last year
2. The maths predictions were better than English
3. The GCSE results would adversely affect the school's Progress 8 measure
4. The predicted grades called into question the competence of English teachers

After taking time to consider the conversation further and the points that were made, I would like to summarise my response:

1. While the English predicted grades are 10% lower than last year, English predicted grades in relation to the 9-1 grading scale have been shown to be conservative nationally (See TES report: 21st September). I asked English staff to be cautious until they became more familiar with the numerical grading system.
2. I have compared the maths results with English over the last 5 years. While maths has consistently predicted higher results than English, English results have consistently outperformed maths in the actual exams.
3. In addition to Point 2, GCSE English Literature has traditionally returned better results than English Language. I expect this to be the case again this year, thereby bolstering the Progress 8 measure.
4. I have a dedicated and determined set of teachers in the English department. Indeed, I am concerned that some work beyond a reasonable number of hours outside the classroom. I am confident of their professionalism and dedication.

After our conversation, I felt that my own professionalism was being questioned. For a while, I also felt demoralised. I had not had the opportunity to review the English predicted grades and was therefore not able to make a considered response to the points raised.

In the interests of moving forward, I would like to suggest the following:

1. I review the predicted grades with the English department, to reassure them that they can be more confident about their predictions and to revise my instruction to be cautious. I would like to be given the opportunity to re-submit the predicted grades, should there be a significant difference between the current and the revised predictions.

Thank you

Best regards

Alex

## E-mail following meeting

Dear Chris

Thank you for meeting me on Friday, 28th September. I appreciated the opportunity to discuss my concerns.

I thought it would be helpful if I summarised what was agreed in the interests of moving forward.

Please find attached an updated copy of my document, including the outcomes we agreed.

If there are any inaccuracies, please let me know and I will review the document.

Thank you.

Best regards

Alex



## Revised Document with outcomes added

During our conversation on Monday, 24th September, the following points were raised:

1. The English predicted grades were 10% lower than last year
2. The maths predictions were better than English
3. The GCSE results would adversely affect the school's Progress 8 measure
4. The predicted grades called into question the competence of English teachers

After taking time to consider the conversation further and the points that were made, I would like to summarise my response:

1. While the English predicted grades are 10% lower than last year, English predicted grades in relation to the 9-1 grading scale have been shown to be conservative nationally (See TES report 21st September). I asked English staff to be cautious until they became more familiar with the numerical grading system.

2. I have compared the maths results with English over the last 5 years. While maths has consistently predicted higher results than English, English results have consistently outperformed maths in the actual exams.

3. In addition to Point 2, GCSE English Literature has traditionally returned better results than English Language. I expect this to be the case again this year, thereby bolstering the Progress 8 measure.

4. I have a dedicated and determined set of teachers in the English department. Indeed, I am concerned that some work beyond a reasonable number of hours outside the classroom. I am confident of their professionalism and dedication.

After our conversation, I felt that my own professionalism was being questioned. For a while, I also felt demoralised. I had not had the opportunity to review the English predicted grades and was therefore not able to make a considered response to the points raised.

In the interests of moving forward, I would like to suggest the following:

1. I review the predicted grades with the English department, to reassure them that they can be more confident about their predictions and to revise my instruction to be cautious. I would like to be given the opportunity to re-submit the predicted grades, should there be a significant difference between the current and the revised predictions.

### **Outcomes of the meeting**

A. Revision of predicted grades agreed

B. Meeting between myself and Head of Maths to discuss underperforming students. Students underperforming in both subjects to receive additional intervention and mentoring

Thank you

Best regards

Alex

1st October, 2018

## The WSLG process: Explanatory notes

- To take back some degree of control over a situation during which the person on the receiving end of the unfair treatment had little or no control. If someone who treats others unfairly is not challenged, they are likely to repeat or escalate the mis-treatment.
- To de-escalate the conflict and tension by documenting the incident and its impact on the recipient.
- To ensure that the tone of the emails and document is polite, formal and, where possible, written as an objective account - in the passive tense - to remove the emotional charge from the situation e.g 'the points that were raised...' rather than 'you raised the points...'
- To give the protagonist a way out: notice that the incident is described as a 'conversation' in the example, although Alex did not say anything.
- To record the incident in writing. If further incidents of this nature occurred, documentary evidence would be important, especially if escalated to a union level.
- In the unlikely event that the protagonist refuses to discuss the incident further, there is written evidence that a reasonable and reasoned approach has been taken by the recipient.
- Writing down a incident in this way can help to discharge the anger and distress caused by it.



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