

IMMEDIATE

Monday 2 August 2004

NASUWT welcomes metropolitan police backing for airport-style security checks

Commenting on reports that Sir John Stevens of the Metropolitan Police has offered schools in London equipment to check for offensive weapons, **Chris Keates**, Acting General Secretary of NASUWT (the teachers' union with 223,500 members), said:

"I welcome support from the police for NASUWT's proposal for airport-style security checks but simply offering to make equipment available to schools is not the best way to proceed.

"It is important that the strategy NASUWT has proposed is handled in a co-ordinated way and supported by clear guidelines.

"The potential benefits of the scheme could be undermined by rushing to implement it without thinking through the details.

"The national Joint Home Office/DfES School Security Working Party is due to meet shortly and report back on NASUWT's proposal for these checks. This is the most appropriate route through which to develop and promote the strategy.

"I urge the Metropolitan Police not to go it alone but to consider offering to pilot the strategy once the details have been agreed."

ENDS

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Notes to Editors:

1. NASUWT called for airport style security checks immediately following the stabbing of Luke Walmsley at a Lincolnshire School.

2. NASUWT is a member of the Joint Home Office/DfES School Security Working Party and has asked for this strategy to be considered in that forum.

3. NASUWT proposes that:

- the checks are random;
- individual schools or LEAs request them;
- they are carried out by the police using a combination of bag searches and hand-held detection devices to check individuals;
- they are available nationwide.