

IMMEDIATE

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**NASUWT WELCOMES GOVERNMENT'S ZERO TOLERANCE
STANCE ON LOW-LEVEL DISRUPTION**

Commenting on reports that in an interview on the Sunday Programme on 23 January the Secretary of State, Ruth Kelly, emphasised the importance of zero tolerance of low-level disruption in classrooms, **Chris Keates, General Secretary of NASUWT**, the largest union representing teachers and headteachers throughout the UK said:

"The Secretary of State is right to recognise that an increasingly prevalent form of indiscipline is the persistent disruption which manifests itself day after day in schools through challenges to authority, refusals to co-operate and verbal abuse.

"This behaviour is as common in the rural areas and leafy suburbs as it is in inner cities.

"Teachers, headteachers and support staff work hard to maintain high standards of pupil behaviour but many schools find it increasingly difficult to maintain these in the face of this type of behaviour.

"Its effects on teachers are corrosive and when sustained over a long period can have as devastating an impact on the health of a teacher as a violent attack.

"Teachers will be pleased and relieved that the Secretary of State has recognised the importance of dealing effectively with such behaviour. It must be tackled firmly and decisively when it first appears to prevent a spiral of decline in standards of behaviour to even more serious disruption.

"A Government zero tolerance policy will provide much needed support for headteachers in managing these problems and send a powerful message to parents that good behaviour is not negotiable.

"It is a self-evident truth that pupils cannot learn and teachers cannot teach in an environment where there is constant disruption."