# Mother challenges Gateacre School’s raised hand policy amid calls for strike



In a heated dispute that has garnered the attention of local media, Rachel Hughes and her son, Ayden Hughes, are at odds with Gateacre School in Liverpool over new disciplinary protocols implemented by headteacher Nabil Jamil. The controversy centres around a practice that Hughes describes as a ‘salute’—where students are required to raise their hands each morning as a means of gaining attention. Despite school officials' insistence that this method is merely a tool for ensuring a calm and efficient start to the school day, it has raised significant concerns among parents about its appropriateness in an educational setting.

This issue unfolded when Ayden, a year 7 pupil, informed his mother about the hand-raising requirement. Initially dismissing it as possibly exaggerated, Rachel’s subsequent inquiry led to a direct confrontation with Mr Jamil. During this discussion, Ms Hughes alleges that he clarified the raised hand directive, contradicting the notion that it constituted a salute and insisting it was part of a broader strategy for establishing classroom order. After stating her refusal to have her son participate, Hughes claims she was told to seek alternative schooling for Ayden—a remark that only deepened the rift between them.

Compounding matters, Ms Hughes took to social media to express her discontent, which resulted in a flood of supportive responses from other parents. Discontent has been echoed by multiple families, with accounts of students complaining about discomfort from holding their arms aloft repeatedly. Concerns are not limited to the raised hand policy; some parents have drawn attention to broader issues regarding school discipline and its implications for student well-being.

In its defence, Gateacre School insists that the criticism stems from a 'small minority' of parents and contends that the raised hand signal is a universal classroom management strategy. A spokesperson for the school noted that similar techniques are employed successfully in many high-achieving institutions, designed to foster an effective learning environment while minimising disruption. They communicated their commitment to addressing concerns, emphasising ongoing dialogue with parents who have expressed dissatisfaction.

Notably, this incident occurs against a backdrop of broader discontent within the school. In a recent vote, staff members at Gateacre School overwhelmingly supported strike action due to accusations of a culture of "bullying and fear", highlighting trends of excessive workloads and concerns regarding pupil behaviour management. With 80% of teachers participating in the ballot expressing a willingness to strike, the tension surrounding the school's management is palpable.

Additionally, this situation unfolds as Gateacre School is in the midst of significant transformation, transitioning towards academy status. This shift comes alongside various challenges, including financial difficulties related to school operations and student safety incidents that have prompted police investigations.

While the school has been lauded in some quarters, receiving accolades such as the Most Inspirational Secondary School award at the Educate Awards 2023, these recent controversies paint a complex picture. As the school attempts to navigate these changes, it remains to be seen how the administration will balance its push for strict discipline with the concerns of parents and teachers alike. For families like the Hughes, the question remains whether the school will adapt its methods in a manner that fosters both academic success and a supportive environment for students.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/mum-son-row-school-over-31684864> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/mum-son-row-school-over-31684864> - A mother and her son are in conflict with Gateacre School in Liverpool over the headteacher's 'salute' demands. Rachel Hughes, mother of 12-year-old Ayden Hughes, claims the headteacher, Nabil Jamil, requires students to raise their hands each morning, which she describes as a 'salute.' The school argues it's a strategy to gain attention and ensure a peaceful start to the day. Ms. Hughes has requested a transfer for her son, but the school has not responded.
3. <https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/teachers-vote-strike-city-school-30808378> - Staff at Gateacre School in Liverpool have voted overwhelmingly in favor of strike action amid claims of a culture of 'bullying and fear.' The National Education Union reported that 80% of staff voted in a ballot for industrial action, citing excessive workloads, adverse management practices, and serious pupil behavior management concerns. The first day of strike action is planned for February 5, with further dates throughout the month unless the employer engages in meaningful negotiations.
4. <https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/gateacre-comprehensive-school-pupils-take-3450281> - Gateacre Comprehensive School in Liverpool is recognized for its strong emphasis on music and the arts. Students have adapted nursery rhymes into plays addressing issues like anti-social behavior, performing them across the city. The school's student-run Open the Gate theatre company manages all aspects of these productions. Additionally, the school offers a variety of musical ensembles, including orchestra, choir, jazz band, and samba, and provides access to a fully equipped recording studio.
5. <https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/all-about/gateacre-school> - Gateacre School in Liverpool has been involved in various developments, including the resignation of its headteacher as the school transitions towards becoming an academy. The school has also faced challenges such as a significant energy bill due to a council error and incidents involving student safety, including a 12-year-old girl being kicked and punched by a boy, leading to police investigation.
6. <https://www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/Establishments/Establishment/Details/104700> - Gateacre School, located at Hedgefield Road, Belle Vale, Liverpool, Merseyside, L25 2RW, was a community school for students aged 11 to 18. The headteacher was Mr. Nabil Jamil. The school had a capacity of 1,400 pupils and an enrollment of 1,218. It closed on 30 November 2024 to transition into an academy. The school's website was http://www.gateacre.org, and the contact number was 01513631111.
7. <https://www.liverpoolexpress.co.uk/liverpool-schools-honoured-at-educate-awards-2023/> - At the Educate Awards 2023, Gateacre School was honored with the Most Inspirational Secondary School award. The event, held at Liverpool Cathedral, recognized excellence in education across the North West. Gateacre School also received recognition in the Innovative and Creative Literacy category, and staff member Catherine Chapman was a runner-up for Best Teacher. The awards celebrate achievements in various areas, including STEM, performing arts, sports, and literacy.