# Harris Federation plans up to 45 redundancies amid unfunded pay rise crisis



The Harris Federation, one of London’s largest multi-academy trusts, is navigating significant turbulence as it plans redundancies amid funding pressures linked to national pay awards and rising costs. A spokesperson for the trust said the restructuring is necessary “in common with almost every other school in London” due to the unfunded increases in National Insurance and national pay rises that were championed by the National Education Union (NEU) and implemented by the government. They added that the NEU is seeking to disrupt what they described as the strong working relationship the Federation has with its staff.

The chief executive of the Harris Federation, Sir Dan Moynihan, has emphasised that the pay rises—especially a nearly 4% increase for teachers—were unfunded by the government and will make job losses “inevitable.” The Federation is consulting on cutting between 40 and 45 posts across 14 secondary schools. Sir Dan warned that without additional funding, such pay rises could have “catastrophic” consequences for schools. While the Department for Education claims schools have around £400 million in budget headroom for the coming year sufficient to cover a 1.3% pay rise, the Harris Federation faces a much larger financial shortfall, estimated at £6.75 million if a 2.8% teacher pay increase is adopted alongside a 3.2% rise for support staff.

Critics of the Federation’s approach have questioned the rationale behind the cuts given its financial reserves. The NEU, which represents many teachers in Harris schools, has highlighted that the Federation holds tens of millions in reserves and criticised its high executive pay. Sir Dan Moynihan reportedly earns over £500,000 annually, a point raised by union representatives who argue that such executive expenses contrast sharply with the job cuts facing teaching staff. The NEU has also accused the trust of “disgraceful behaviour,” warning that cutting teaching staff risks damaging the quality of education provided to children.

The industrial action led by the NEU reflects deeper frustrations within Harris Academy staff. Hundreds of educators—including teachers, middle leaders, and support staff—have expressed their commitment to delivering exceptional education but warn that current working conditions are becoming unsustainable. The union's fight goes beyond pay and job security to include fairer workloads and equal treatment for Caribbean and other overseas-trained teachers. Following a strong strike ballot involving over 700 members, the NEU forced the Federation into negotiations, resulting in significant concessions on some of these issues. NEU general secretary Daniel Kebede praised the collective action, calling it a “remarkable achievement” and a testament to staff solidarity.

This dispute also highlights an ongoing challenge for the Harris Federation with teacher retention. The trust is reported to have one of the worst retention rates among multi-academy trusts, with nearly 27% of teachers leaving the Federation at the end of the summer term in 2023—a rate significantly higher than the 15% departure figure typical in local authority-maintained schools. NEU members managed to secure a landmark victory following discussions at ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service), which led to a suspension of strike action and a promise from the Federation to improve employment terms and conditions.

While the Federation argues the redundancies are financially necessary due to government funding shortfalls and rising costs, the situation underscores the tension between educational leadership, unionised staff, and government funding policies. It remains to be seen how the Harris Federation will balance financial pressures with the need to retain qualified staff and maintain educational standards amidst ongoing industrial relations challenges.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/south-london-school-teachers-strike-jamaica-harris-beckenham-b1236821.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/school-job-cuts-shouldnt-be-shock-says-harris-chief-sir-dan-moynihan), [[3]](https://schoolsweek.co.uk/harris-blames-unfunded-pay-rises-as-it-plans-redundancies/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://neu.org.uk/press-releases/harris-federation-plans-cut-teaching-staff), [[3]](https://schoolsweek.co.uk/harris-blames-unfunded-pay-rises-as-it-plans-redundancies/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://neu.org.uk/get-involved/activists/local-actions/harris-educators-stand), [[6]](https://www.neuleft.org/2025/03/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[7]](https://neu.org.uk/press-releases/harris-federation-landmark-victory)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/south-london-school-teachers-strike-jamaica-harris-beckenham-b1236821.html), [[2]](https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/school-job-cuts-shouldnt-be-shock-says-harris-chief-sir-dan-moynihan), [[3]](https://schoolsweek.co.uk/harris-blames-unfunded-pay-rises-as-it-plans-redundancies/), [[5]](https://neu.org.uk/press-releases/harris-federation-plans-cut-teaching-staff), [[6]](https://www.neuleft.org/2025/03/), [[7]](https://neu.org.uk/press-releases/harris-federation-landmark-victory)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/south-london-school-teachers-strike-jamaica-harris-beckenham-b1236821.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/school-job-cuts-shouldnt-be-shock-says-harris-chief-sir-dan-moynihan> - Sir Dan Moynihan, CEO of the Harris Federation, has stated that unfunded teacher pay rises will make job losses 'inevitable'. The trust is consulting on making between 40 and 45 staff redundant across 14 of its secondary schools. Moynihan warned that without additional funding, a nearly 4% teacher pay rise could have 'catastrophic' consequences for schools. The Department for Education has indicated that schools have 'headroom' of £400 million in their budgets for next year, which will cover a 1.3% pay rise. However, the Harris Federation faces a £6.75 million bill if the government adopts its initial recommendation of a 2.8% teacher pay rise, added to a support staff rise of 3.2%.
3. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/harris-blames-unfunded-pay-rises-as-it-plans-redundancies/> - The Harris Federation is planning redundancies at around 20 of its schools, blaming 'extremely challenging' school budgets caused by 'unfunded' pay and national insurance rises. The NASUWT teaching union has accused the trust of 'disgraceful behaviour', pointing out its chief executive Sir Dan Moynihan earns over £500,000 a year and the trust has tens of millions in reserves. Harris is facing a £6.75 million bill if the government adopts its initial recommendation of a 2.8% teacher pay rise, added to a support staff rise of 3.2%.
4. <https://neu.org.uk/get-involved/activists/local-actions/harris-educators-stand> - Hundreds of NEU educators—teachers, middle leaders, support staff, and more—make Harris Federation schools thrive. We're dedicated to giving students exceptional education and our passion for educating and supporting students is unwavering, but the current conditions are making it increasingly difficult for us to continue this vital work. It doesn’t have to be like this; we’re standing up for change. We’re fighting for fairer workloads, pay, and conditions, as well as equal treatment for Caribbean and overseas-trained teachers. These improvements are crucial for us and, importantly, for the students who rely on us every day. Together, we can ensure our schools remain places where both staff and students succeed. Join us in standing up.
5. <https://neu.org.uk/press-releases/harris-federation-plans-cut-teaching-staff> - The National Education Union (NEU) has condemned the Harris Federation's decision to cut 45 teaching staff, accusing CEO Dan Moynihan of underhand tactics. The NEU points out that Harris has £21 million in reserves and that cuts to teaching staff will negatively impact children's education. The union also criticises the trust's high executive pay and calls for negotiations with staff trade unions to protect teachers and students.
6. <https://www.neuleft.org/2025/03/> - NEU members in Harris Federation schools and sixth form colleges have won an important victory following a strong result in a strike ballot of over 700 NEU members. The move to strike forced Harris to negotiate and retreat in particular on its unfair treatment of Caribbean and other Overseas Trained Teachers. The fight was also around addressing concerns over pay progression policies and workload. NEU general secretary Daniel Kebede says: 'All teachers and support staff at the 18 Harris academies who stood up for their rights should feel proud of the stance they were prepared to take for fair pay, conditions and the unjust treatment of overseas trained teacher colleagues. While there is still more to do this is a remarkable achievement and a testimony to the strength in collective action.'
7. <https://neu.org.uk/press-releases/harris-federation-landmark-victory> - NEU members have secured a landmark victory against the Harris Federation in the fight for fair terms and conditions of employment for teachers, support staff and overseas trained teachers. This is a Federation known for its intransigence in correcting unacceptable work practices throughout its workforce. The NEU’s strong strike ballot of members showed the willingness of staff to stand up to their employer in the face of unscrupulous practices that have left Harris with one of the worst teacher retention records. Harris schools have been in the bottom 10 per cent of multi-academy trusts for 9 out of the last 10 years. At the end of Summer Term 2023, a quarter of teachers (27 per cent) in Harris left their school. This is far higher than in local authority-maintained schools where one in seven (15 per cent) teachers left. Following talks at ACAS which have resulted in a significant change in Harris’s position, NEU members voted to suspend the strike ballot of over 700 members in 18 Harris schools and sixth form colleges.