



## UNISON's Andrea Egan speaks out on union-busting at Leicester school

### Description

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UNISON

UNISON general secretary Andrea Egan has insisted that she will ensure "the full force" of the union works to hold an academy trust to account for its union-busting at a Leicester school.

### Andrea Egan: "I will not tolerate this"

The *Canary* has been following developments closely since an academy special school in Leicester controversially suspended union rep Tom Barker. Amid [accusations of union-busting](#) workers at the school overwhelmingly voted in favour of strike action. And their [campaign has escalated](#) in recent weeks.

Egan, who [joined the picket line](#) with these striking workers on 4 June, highlighted her "profound solidarity" at UNISON's [local government conference](#) on 14 June. She said:

I really want to express my profound solidarity with Tom Barker - a UNISON NEC rep in Leicester who's been victimised by Discovery Schools Academy Trust. And his crime? Organising other workers against staff cuts and defending and ensuring that their workplaces were safe.

And addressing Barker, she emphasised that:

I, as your general secretary, will not tolerate [this] and will defend any of our activists, including Tom, when bosses come for you because you're a trade union activist. I will make sure that this union holds them to account and you will feel the full force of this union behind you.

## UNISON â?? The struggle in Leicester continues

As *Leicestershire Live* [reported](#)

UNISON members from Ash Field Academy, in Evington, rallied outside the Discovery Schools Academy Trust (DSAT) offices on Thursday (June 18), as part of their latest demands to get teaching assistant and trade union representative Tom Barker reinstated at the Special Educational Needs (SEN) school.

Sam Randfield, UNISONâ??s branch secretary in Leicester, was on the picket line. And as he [told the paper](#).

We feel it is an act of **default watermark** union victimisationâ?!. Tomâ??s been suspended for more than seven months now. They will havenâ??t made entirely clear to him what the allegations are against him.

He insisted that Tomâ??s reinstatement could immediately solve the dispute and end the disruption students and their families have faced as a result. But he also asserted the importance of not allowing the academy to get away with its behaviour, saying:

We understand the concerns, and striking is not something we wanted to do. Itâ??s not something we take lightly. We tried to resolve this situation without resorting to strike action.

But unfortunately, without a strong union organisation in this school, the impact on families and children is likely to be greater because the school will feel empowered to make cuts to their staffing levels.

Following industrial action this week, the [next strikes will take place from 6 to 9 July \(inclusive\)](#)

*Featured image via the Canary*

By [Ed Sykes](#)

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