

Australian Principals Federation

President's Message—Julie Podbury

Dealing with Complaints against the Principal

One of the more stressful and challenging times our members will face will be upon receipt of allegations from the Regional Office arising from a complaint or concern about you or a matter in your school/office. This can occur to anyone no matter how skilled or experienced you are. As we are fond of saying: It is not a matter of **if** you get a complaint against you, but **when** you will get one. Sadly, many of our younger Principal Class members think they are bullet proof. It is far better to be a member of the APF when the allegation comes, not join when it arrives.

To put a complaint into perspective it is worth remembering the advice you would give your own staff when complaints are made about them; that you determine it is appropriate to seek their input so you might properly consider both sides of a matter. It is only when both sides are at hand that you can fairly form a view and decide what to do next. Just as you seek support and advice from Employee Conduct Branch and use the latest [guidelines](#), so does the Region. And while they are responsible for establishing the truth in any matter, they also have a role to support us as employees. It is a difficult tightrope to walk, particularly in these post IBAC times where our views in some matters, are more challenging.

We advise that you seek APF support as soon as possible, in order that we can assist you to respond in a timely fashion. We have plenty of experience in responding to these matters and can often speed up the process for you. Sometimes we will need to seek an extension of time to respond, particularly if it is a lengthy or detailed complaint or allegation. We rely on the notes, minutes and other documentation that you keep to provide a fulsome and truthful response to assist the region come to the right conclusion and determine what should happen next. We aim for the matter to be dismissed, but cannot guarantee that as the outcome.

Information from the AEC—APF Board Vacancies

Nominations Close at 5pm AEDT on Tuesday 21 March 2017

Postal Ballot Opens: Tuesday, 18 April 2017

Postal Ballot Closes at 10am AEST on Tuesday, 9 May 2017

In this newsletter:

Packed full of useful and important information, this newsletter contains:

- ◆ [Dealing with Complaints against the Principal](#), Julie Podbury
- ◆ [APF Board Elections, Nominations and Ballot](#)
- ◆ [Building Capacity: Recruitment, Orientation, Induction and Mentoring](#), John Handley
- ◆ [Conflict of Interest](#), Mark Arkinstall
- ◆ [Victorian School Building Authority meeting report](#)
- ◆ [Principal Talk](#), John Handley
- ◆ [Case Study](#), Cyberhound

Role of the APF — Industrial Relations: 102

Industrial matters arising from the management and implementation of one's professional role. Specifically as a function of the Principal Class Employee interpreting and performing their accountabilities and obligations as defined by their contract of employment; the operation of industrial agreements, Ministerial Orders and the changing compliance environment determined by legislation, regulations and policy.



Suite 1315A
401 Docklands Drive
Docklands Vic 3008
Tel: +613 8566 7627
email: apf@apf.net.au

It is not a matter of if you get a complaint against you, but when you will get one.

Sadly, many of our younger Principal Class members think they are bullet proof.

It is far better to be a member of the APF when the allegation comes, not try to join when it arrives.



Julie Podbury
APF President
Vic Branch

The industrial organisation for the Principal Class

Building Capacity, Recruitment, Orientation, Induction and Mentoring, John Handley, APF

Part A – Recruitment and Orientation



Essential to the process of building and sustaining our culture for high quality school performance is the development of the staff we have, supplemented by the quality of our recruiting practices for the additional staff we desire.

In essence, a school leader who wants their school to have a rich and supportive learning culture, there's no better place to start than in the Recruitment, Orientation, Induction and Mentoring of staff. If you refer back to the three previous articles in this series, the common thread is the importance and value of leadership in influencing school culture and performance.

Recruitment

For some, recruitment is considered a technical task; typically to replace somebody leaving, to cater for student population growth, to introduce new programs where current staff are not qualified. And as such a recruitment online position is created, people apply, shortlisting then interviews, hopefully referee checks and then selection and notification. Sounds easy, doesn't it?

Thankfully many more recognise the value of recruitment as an opportunity for adding to our desired school culture. As such, careful consideration of the important role each new staff member must play for your school to continue to flourish is vital in the recruitment process. This may include the strategic identification of a new role in leadership to support performance and cultural change and growth.



Hence, our most successful school leaders identify the interpersonal skill set and expert knowledge required; using recruitment as a vital stage of building a high capacity workforce - who will be best suited to be a quality contributor to the school improvement plan, and be the type of person you would be proud of. And in following the concept of reciprocal accountability, consider for each candidate what might be needed to support them in adjusting to your school's life, and nurturing them in their career progression as lifelong learners.

It would be strongly recommended that the Principal be on the selection panel for each ongoing employment position; and depending upon the size of your school and where on the Leadership Development spectrum your Leadership Team is, maybe contract positions as well. Having the team leaders of the prospective staff member engaged in selection is another important element in building capacity.

In fact, during the selection process, particularly in the interview process, there is an ideal opportunity to model your identified and expected professional and personal behaviour and standards.

Orientation

Orientation and Induction are two different but interdependent processes, essential to the successful introduction of new staff to our schools; and even more importantly for any graduate teachers.

Orientation, an essential early stage of induction, may take a variety of forms, with a variety of appropriate personnel in support. Suffice to say, be it for multiple new staff in preparation for a school year, or for one or few throughout the year, attention to the quality and importance of orientation should not be different.



Consistent in all would be the role of a School Principal in setting the scene and welcoming new staff into their community - remembering the importance of vision and narrative. Self-perception of what it will be like as your employee and as a member of your community is critical to a person's likelihood of success in being a satisfied, quality professional practitioner and contributor to your school's improvement journey.

Typically, this would include (a) Understanding of context of the work at your school, (b) Identifying the school values and goals, in the context of current school performance and aspirations, linking to SSP, AIP (overview only as appropriate), (c) Understanding of expectations of each staff member as a colleague, community member and member of the profession, and (d) Understanding the school's teaching & learn-



Suite 1315A
401 Docklands Drive
Docklands Vic 3008
Tel: +613 8566 7627
email: apf@apf.net.au

Membership is burgeoning...

Because members who have been supported by the APF are telling their colleagues!

Thank you!!!



Angela Stefani
APF Executive
Officer

astefani@apf.net.au

Join the APF

www.apf.net.au

Forms can be
completed on line.



join

The industrial organisation for the Principal Class

ing practices, both explicit and implicit, what we should see, what we hope to see, what is each staff member's responsibility in this context.

Consistent with our previous articles, the typical responsibilities to each other in considering a school's values and how to apply them to our professional and collegial practices might include:

- ◆ Team orientation, collaboration, peer observations
- ◆ Shared responsibility, shared decision making, shared support
- ◆ Mutual respect, trust and tolerance through our behaviour
- ◆ Maintain high levels of optimism, be curious, take risks, always aim to learn and improve practice!
- ◆ Highlight and celebrate successes – be proud

Clearly orientation is not just about the teaching and learning agenda. It requires introductions to a range of school and professional practices; some simple "need to knows", others more complex processes. And, as mentioned above, an understanding of the school and professional culture, the mutual responsibilities and supports shared around teacher well-being, together with professional and emotional development.

In a nutshell if we hope for our employees to joyfully go about their daily professional lives over extended periods of time - and for many of us it's been a lifetime – the opportunity for our leadership influence starts at recruitment!

Attention to induction and mentoring will be the focus in **Part B - Induction and Mentoring** of our **Building Capacity – Recruitment, Orientation, Induction and Mentoring**.

Conflict of Interest, Mark Arkinstall, APF Industrial Officer

The APF strongly encourages all members to ensure they are aware of their obligations regarding the DET Conflict of Interest policy and expectations. We are increasingly being called upon to support members in this area and hope that with some informed and proactive actions, our members can avoid distressing issues in this space. The following information reflects DET policy arising from the recommendations of an Internal Audit and Review (2012) into the Department's management of COI.

Should APF members believe they may be at risk of an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest you are strongly encouraged to contact the APF office for further advice. All relevant documentation can be found at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/workm/Pages/Conflict-of-Interest.aspx> . However, as a basic summary please note:

Conflict of Interest (COI) arises in circumstances where an employee's public duty is influenced, or can be seen to be influenced, by a private interest. Conflicts of interest (COIs) can arise for employees at all levels of seniority and in every area of work in the Department. They are an inevitable fact of organisational life and they are not in themselves a sign of wrongdoing, but they create risks which should be identified and managed.

Responsible management of COI in the Department is based on the following four principles:

- ◆ Protecting the public interest through upholding public sector values
- ◆ Supporting transparency and accountability
- ◆ Promoting individual responsibility for integrity and impartiality
- ◆ Developing an organisational culture which encourages effective management of COI.

COI can be **actual**, **potential** or **perceived**.

An **actual** COI refers to the situation where an employee's private interest is capable of unduly influencing their exercise of a current public duty.

A **potential** COI describes circumstances where an actual conflict of interest may arise in future if a certain condition is fulfilled.

A **perceived** COI occurs where a reasonable person might suspect that an employee is subject to a



"Yes, I am employee of the month again. And yes, I'm the one who chooses the employee of the month. And no, I don't see a conflict of interest."



Suite 1315A

401 Docklands Drive

Docklands Vic 3008

Tel: +613 8566 7627

email: apf@apf.net.au

"Developing individual teachers' knowledge and skills is important but not sufficient. The challenge facing schools is expanding the ability of a team of teachers to achieve goals for all their students and developing the ability of the entire faculty to move the school toward its vision."

Rick DuFour

Quote

from Hippocampus,
an email publication of
Principal's Digest

The industrial organisation for the Principal Class

real COI, whether or not one actually exists.

The **Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees** (the Code) is binding on all public sector employees, which includes members of the Teaching Service and the Victorian Public Service (VPS). School Council employees are also considered public sector employees by virtue of the fact that they are employed by the School Council, which is a public entity for the purposes of the *Public Administration Act 2004*.

Public Sector Employees:

- ◆ Remain apolitical when carrying out their duties.
- ◆ Are open and transparent when making decisions.
- ◆ Do not use their power at work to provide a private benefit to themselves, their family, friends or associates. They exercise their power in a way that is fair and reasonable, and family or other personal relationships do not improperly influence their decisions.



- ◆ Maintain a strict separation between work-related and personal financial matters and only use or authorise the use of public financial resources or facilities for work-related purposes.
- ◆ When making a public comment in a private capacity, public sector employees ensure their comments are not related to any government activity that they are involved in or connected with as a public sector employee and make it clear they are expressing their own view. They ensure personal comments do not compromise their capacity to perform their public sector role in an unbiased manner, and that their comments are not seen or perceived to be an official comment.

- ◆ Only engage in other employment where the activity does not conflict with their role as a public sector employee. Employment includes a second job, conducting a business, trade or profession, or active involvement with other organisations (paid employment or voluntary work). Managers or supervisors can assist public sector employees to determine if such activities will cause an actual or perceived conflict of interest.
- ◆ Make decisions and provide advice that is free of prejudice or favouritism, and is based on sound judgment. Their decisions are not affected by personal influences.
- ◆ Do not, for themselves or others, seek or accept gifts or benefits that could be reasonably perceived as influencing them.

Typical Conflict of Interest Scenarios

The following are typical situations where conflicts of interest for principals may arise. In each of these circumstances the minimum obligation on the employee will be to report the conflict to their manager:

- ◆ A family member has applied for a job at the school.
- ◆ A family member already works at the school.
- ◆ Your child attends the school.
- ◆ You are in a relationship with another staff member.
- ◆ You are in a relationship with a parent.
- ◆ The school wishes to purchase something or use the service of a company owned by a family member or close associate.
- ◆ You are affiliated with a club or interest group that regularly makes public comment about education.
- ◆ You wish to write a textbook.
- ◆ You have been offered part-time work for an education consultancy.
- ◆ You have been invited to give a lecture at university related to your role as principal.
- ◆ You wish to engage a contractor who regularly does work for the school to do some work for you in a private capacity.
- ◆ You own shares in a company that has a significant contract with the Department.

Line Manager's Role

Identified conflicts must be reported to the employee's line-manager. **School principals who have COI situations are to report them to their Regional Director.**



Suite 1315A
401 Docklands Drive
Docklands Vic 3008
Tel: +613 8566 7627
email: apf@apf.net.au



Mark Arkinstall
APF Industrial Officer
0418 551 375

If you become aware of a colleague who is not coping or who needs help, please contact the APF without delay.

We are here to support and offer advice to all members at any time.

Julie - 0419 103 664

jpodbury@apf.net.au

Mark - 0418 551 375

industrialofficer@apf.net.au



John Handley
APF Adviser
0407 557 862

The industrial organisation for the Principal Class

The Department's Role

- ◆ Providing a sound framework, policies and procedures, to guide employees in the exercise of their obligations to address the risks associated with COI.
- ◆ Building an organisational culture that supports implementation of COI policy through appropriate communication, training and enforcement activities.
- ◆ Reviewing this Framework regularly to ensure that it meets the needs of its employees and public in effectively managing COI.
- ◆ Implementing appropriate disciplinary procedures in relation to alleged breaches of COI policy.
- ◆ Monitoring compliance with COI policies and responses to alleged breaches of the policies.

COI Officer

The Department's COI Officer is responsible for providing advice to managers and members of the Principal Class on applying COI policy to situations where COI have been reported to them, or where they anticipate situations of conflict involving their staff. The Manager, Conduct and Ethics Branch, is the designated COI Officer. Contact: 9637 2591 Email: Conduct.Ethics.CE@edumail.vic.gov.au

Disciplinary Action for Breach of COI policy

A breach of the *Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees* or *Ministerial Order 199* may constitute misconduct and give rise to action under Division 10, Part 2.4 *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. Disciplinary action may include a reprimand, a fine, a reduction in classification, or termination of employment; it must be proportionate with the seriousness of the misconduct.

Practical Advice on the Recruitment of Principals' Family Members in Schools

Importantly, a person is not precluded from working in any school because they have a personal relationship with the Principal. It does however require the Principal to take a range of actions to address their conflict of interest responsibilities.

During Recruitment:

- The Principal does not sit on the selection panel.
- The panel is not comprised only of subordinates of the Principal.
- The selection panel's recommendation is referred to the Regional Director.

The Principal must notify the Regional Director of the conflict of interest and the measures they intend to take **before the selection process is undertaken**. In some cases the Regional Director may nominate a representative to sit on the selection panel, or require other measures to be taken. The Regional Director's approval must be obtained before the recruitment takes place.

Where a Family Member is Employed in the School

Ensure that decisions taken by the Principal that may affect the applicant's rights or obligations are free from any perception that they have been influenced by their personal relationship with the applicant. This includes:

- Ensuring that decisions that affect the employee's progression or salary or are considered to provide a benefit or reward to the employee are not made by the Principal and cannot reasonably be seen to be influenced by the Principal.
- Ensuring that the Principal does not receive or manage complaints about the employee. Often an Assistant Principal can be identified as the person to whom complaints are directed for triage. The management of serious complaints about the employee should involve someone who is not subordinate to the Principal.

Declarations of Private Interest

If a family member of the Principal is appointed to a position at their school, the Principal must update their Declaration of Private Interest to indicate whether they have reported the conflict of interest to the Regional Director and obtained their approval of the proposed measures for mitigating the risks.

Conflict of Interest definition

A situation that has the potential to undermine the impartiality of a person because of the possibility of clash between the person's self interest and professional interest or public interest

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any concerns in this area.



Suite 1315A
401 Docklands Drive
Docklands Vic 3008
Tel: +613 8566 7627
email: apf@apf.net.au

Where a Family Member is Employed in the School

Ensure that decisions taken by the Principal that may affect the applicant's rights or obligations are free from any perception that they have been influenced by their personal relationship with the applicant.

The APF strongly encourages all members to ensure they are aware of their obligations regarding the DET Conflict of Interest policy and expectations. We are increasingly being called upon to support members in this area and hope that with some informed and proactive actions, our members can avoid distressing issues in this space.

The industrial organisation for the Principal Class

Victorian Schools Building Authority Reference Group, February 2017

VBSA reports time frames for building works now 40% quicker due to improved processes. 90,000 more students expected in the system in the next 5 years.

Air Conditioning Policy

VBSA is reviewing current policy to determine if an update is required. Currently, schools north of the Great Dividing Range and all SDS schools are eligible for air conditioning as are PPP schools. Master Plan Schools don't have air conditioning included. The disparity was raised.

Individual Learning Spaces - ILS

VBSA looking at providing a checklist for ILS, specifically for withdrawal spaces. Any school that has an Individual Learning Space / Confinement rooms and has concerns about their validity, based on Restraint of Student Policy (Mandy Donnelly) can access emergency funding for their removal from VBSA. Schools are advised to be explicit with parents about the use and purpose of the rooms.

Essential Safety Measures in Schools

Schools reminded to maintain facilities such as fire extinguishers to the state when they were in when initially installed.

Community Engagement Team

VBSA website lists all current works that are funded. 20% of all schools will have an annual audit. So every school should have an audit completed every 5 years.

Point of Discussion - concern of schools with the cost of phone system upgrades due to NBN. APF will follow this up. Thank you to the VPA for the provision of these meeting notes.



Suite 1315A
401 Docklands Drive
Docklands Vic 3008
Tel: +613 8566 7627
email: apf@apf.net.au

DO AS I DO?

According to a new survey sponsored by Common Sense Media, parents of tweens and teens spend more than nine hours a day on average on screens.

More than 80% of that time was for pleasure, not work, with parents watching television, playing video games, social networking, browsing websites, or doing other things on a computer, smartphone or tablet. Yet, 78% of parents felt that they were good role models for their children when it comes to media and technology. When it comes to media multitasking - using more than one screen at a time, such as watching TV while writing a proposal for work on your laptop - about two-thirds of parents said it had no impact on the quality of their work. In a survey of tweens and teens about the same number said that multitasking like texting or watching TV while doing homework didn't affect the quality of their work. While parents want to monitor what their kids are doing online, they overwhelmingly view technology as beneficial when it comes to their children's academic achievements. 94% said technology supports their children's education and school work.

CNN (Hippocampus)

Principals Talk

In November 2016 the Federal Branch of the APF launched a new initiative – **Principals Talk**. It is intended that Principals Talk provides an opportunity for two - way communication on issues of importance to Principals across Australia.

Analysis shows 34.5% of Victorian APF members opened the initial Principals Talk communication. The first embedded research paper, on [Principals Work by Dr Wendy Cahill](#), was viewed by far fewer members. This outstanding article was commissioned to provide insight into current research and to promote feedback from members as to how valid, in your minds, are the major points of the paper. And to potentially provide further evidence of the realities of Principalship and its inherent expectations and workload.

The feedback questionnaire relating to the Principals Work paper will be open until 01 April 2017. We will be adding further articles over coming months, including replicating some of the advisory articles included in our fortnightly APF newsletters for wider viewing across the country.

Feedback on the value of such papers and articles to you as Principal Class officers would be appreciated. It is our intention to continually provide improvements in the quality and range of services to members as your industrial body.

Feedback may be given via enquiries@principalstalk.net.au or direct to me via jjmhandley@gmail.com



A recent interview with [Suncoast Christian College](#) and [Immanuel Lutheran College](#) reveals how **an increase in predatory behaviour, cyberbullying, and pornography** is forcing schools to take action. Find out how CyberHound is helping these schools tackle these issues by reading the [full story](#).



A unique learning enablement and cybersafety solution for K-12 schools



1300 737 060 / cyberhound.com / info@cyberhound.com