



## VIT & Registration Process.

Several members expressed frustration and angst due to delays in graduate teachers receiving registration from VIT despite applications being lodged early and notification that such individuals had been given priority status pending start date to ensure applicants were registered in time to teach.

I raised these concerns and frustration with VIT and was advised that whilst a high number of applications have been received, processing has been compounded by amendments to the Education and Training Reform Act (2006) which has changed the way in which VIT registers teachers in Victoria. Additionally, new obligations have been imposed on VIT by the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) when undertaking criminal history checks which have severely impacted timeframes. Such complications are causing delays in both responding to queries and processing applications.

Whilst this information helps develop understanding for the delay, it doesn't assist Principals and graduates who have allocated teaching responsibilities for the start of the school year. VIT acknowledges this and is in the process of providing 'interim registration' for graduates yet to receive registration whilst awaiting further outstanding documents, criminal history check completions and assessment of these documents. Interim registration was provided to all graduates by COB last Friday. Please check your staff list on the VIT portal to see if newly appointed graduates are appearing. If not, contact me for assistance.

**UPDATE from VIT: Interim registration will be granted until 2 April 2021 or until a decision is made in relation to their application for provisional registration (whichever occurs earlier).** See attached VIT response!

## Tutor Learning Initiative (TLI)



We welcome the announcement by Minister Merlino in relation to extra tutoring support for students who require assistance and commend DET on implementation and rollout for the initiative. What was not welcomed however, was some Principals receiving calls during the holidays from SEILs asking why advertising for a tutor had not taken place and in some cases insisting that this be done before the start of term.

As we all know the work in term 4 each year is focused on future staffing, recruitment, budgets, student placements, school organisational matters, recruitment, ongoing COVID matters...just to name a few.

The TLI was announced mid-term last year and was in addition to all that happens in schools at that time of the year. To assume that because a school has not proceeded with the onboarding process means they have done nothing in implementing the initiative is misleading and fallacious. In fact, schools have worked hard to identify students in need of support, follow consultative process and discuss and identify evidenced based approaches that will work best. This all takes time and must be acknowledged and valued as part of the process.

These concerns have been raised and it has been outlined that such an inappropriate and heavy handed approach by some SEILs is not conducive to good working relationships.

As leaders and professionals we have unwavering commitment to supporting all our students and there is no doubt that with the return to school, ongoing implementation of the TLI has been undertaken. For those who have not already done so, there is opportunity to finalise the recruitment process for tutors by March and in order to ensure funding is tracked effectively, schools are required to code expenditure accordingly on eduPay (GL 80026).

There is lots of advice and support material available on DET's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) [Policy and Advisory Library](#) New advice and guidance outlining requirements relating to student



Podium 2,  
Tooronga Village,  
766 Toorak Road,  
Glen Iris, 3146.  
Tel: 0412 584 002

*Thank you for  
advocating for  
the APF—our  
membership  
growth is  
fantastic.*

*I am available to  
assist you  
Monday to  
Friday.*



Gemma Naylor  
APF Executive  
Officer

[gnaylor@apf.net.au](mailto:gnaylor@apf.net.au)

Join the APF

<https://apf.net.au>

*Forms can be  
completed on-line.*

assessment and reporting accountabilities will be forthcoming shortly.



### **Gemma Naylor, Executive Officer**

Welcome back everyone and good wishes for 2021. Members are encouraged to contact me at anytime as I am now available full time to ensure you are supported. A few reminders:

- Membership fees need to be paid by members personally. This is a private expense and schools cannot pay for this membership.
- Email address updates are now complete. Any concerns about email addresses should be sent to me.
- Finally, cancellation of membership must be in writing to [gnaylor@apf.net](mailto:gnaylor@apf.net) as per our rules.



### **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. Should APF members believe they may be at risk of an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest you are 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.

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 real COI, whether or not one actually exists.

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.

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*.



## **LESSONS FROM 2020**

**School leaders shape teachers' professional working conditions by helping them manage the rapid transformation of their jobs and helping them learn with and for their students.** When leaders simplify teachers' job to core responsibilities, minimise extraneous meetings and encourage boundary-setting, teachers can better manage their day-to-day work. When leaders model vulnerability, create open forums for teachers and student-driven conversations, and elevate and celebrate accomplishments (no matter how small), they create psychological safety and build community. Even when schools return to in-person instruction, online learning will play an important role. Now more than ever, people will be learning at school, at home and everywhere in between. Schools will be looking for teachers who have this skillset.

"2020 Year-in-Review: Five Big Ideas in Professional Learning" by GOA Staff in Global Online Academy, December 15, 2020

Quote  
from Hippocampus,  
an email publication of  
Principal's Digest

**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.

**Ombudsman's report:**

The May 2020 Victorian Ombudsman's Report titled "Investigations into Allegations of Nepotism in Government Schools" made numerous pertinent observations regarding the management of Conflicts of Interest in our schools, including:

- While conflicts should be avoided wherever possible, the existence of a conflict of interest in itself is not necessarily a problem nor inherently corrupt ... [T]he risk of corruption of occurs when individuals and their organisations fail to properly and actively identify, declare and manage a conflict in the public interest.
- When principals and other school staff employ or contract services from family members and associates, it creates a conflict of interest between these public interests and the private interests of their families.
- The Department's *Conflict of interest* policy restates the Code of Conduct's advice that employees should avoid conflicts of interest that affect their public duties. Where a conflict is identified, it requires employees to take reasonable steps to protect the public interest.

The policy stresses the need for employees to speak with managers about conflicts of interest. It explains:

- Because COI is inherently subjective and personal, individuals can be prone to underestimating or misrepresenting the extent of the influence a private interest might have. It is therefore critical that managers are involved in assisting employees to assess and address risks associated with COI. The policy advises employees to declare conflicts to their line manager and advises school principals to declare conflicts to their Regional Director in the Department.
- The policy did not say how declarations should be made until 2018, when the Department added a declaration form to its eduPay human resources system. The *Conflict of interest*

**Support  
for members**

We are here to support and offer advice to all members at any time. If you are concerned about a colleague, please let us know.

**Tina—0418 478 807**

[TKing@apf.net.au](mailto:TKing@apf.net.au)

**Mark - 0418 551 375**

[industrialofficer@apf.net.au](mailto:industrialofficer@apf.net.au)

**John—0407 557 862**

[jimhandley@gmail.com](mailto:jimhandley@gmail.com)

**Ring us direct**

"Springfox CEO, Stuart Taylor, presented on building Resilient Leadership at our AGM last year. Clearly, this is a priority for all our schools in 2021. Springfox conducts the Resilient Educators Program across all states in Australia. This program provides a deep understanding of resilience and how to build it into the daily practice of an educator. Through exploring the principles of resilience, participants are encouraged to reflect on their personal practises – where they are currently thriving and where they have opportunities for growth. [See the brochure attached to this newsletter](#) and consider how it might be relevant for your leaders and staff."

policy now requires employees to record conflicts of interests in this system, along with the steps they have put in place to manage the conflict. This obligation applies to pre-2018 conflicts of interest that are still relevant, as well as any new conflicts.



### **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 must report them to their Regional Director.**

### **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.

### **DET Support:**

The regional Integrity Liaison Officers and the Employee Conduct Branch are available to support all staff with COI queries, advice on declarations and appropriate management steps to mitigate COI risks, and questions on using the new online form.

See: [Support and Service \(Corp\) > Integrity and Assurance > Building a Culture of Integrity > Integrity Liaison Officers \(eduweb.vic.gov.au\)](#)

COI Officer - for managers and principals  
Phone: (03) 7022 1018. Email: [employee.conduct@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:employee.conduct@education.vic.gov.au)

## **eduPay update**

The eduPay team have another big year planned as they continue to focus on relieving the administrative burden for users by streamlining processes, automating repetitive tasks and making eduPay look and feel better.

**In the theme of 'looking better' there is a PeopleTools 8.58 Release scheduled for this weekend – 6/7 February 2021.**

There will be no changes to the current usability and functionality with this release, but you will notice a few things look more polished.

**For example,** the navigational arrow at the top right hand of the screen looks more like a compass now, the spinning wheel while waiting for information is now running dots, and some of the optimised pages' buttons are white with blue writing.

**Continues in the column on the next page**

### **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.

**Note: the same obligations exist for the employment of casual staff and school council employees.**

#### **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**

All employees are required to ensure that declarations and agreed plans for managing conflicts of interest are recorded in writing.

All staff are required to declare any conflict of interest using the Declaration of Conflict of Interest form in eduPay.

For further information re the declaration process please see <https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/Services/HR/Documents/Declaration-Private-Interests-FAQ.pdf>

### **APF Support**

Please feel free to contact the APF for further advice on this subject. Importantly, we are here for you should you have a confidential matter you wish to discuss or gain to a second opinion. If an issue does arise, please contact us immediately for support.

Mark Arkinstall  
0418 551 375

Oh and you can also open a new window by clicking on the three dots - in case you need to do more than one thing in eduPay at once 😊

The team don't expect any issues but just in case, a support hotline has been set up with direct access to the eduPay analysts - to answer any questions on the spot.

**So on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February, if you encounter any issues with eduPay, join the [live hotline](#) anytime from 8.00 am – 10.00 am and the team will be ready to assist you.**

#### **In respect to COVID**

**“Nearly everything about teaching has changed for teachers over the past year except the fact that students need us. And so it's incumbent upon us as a profession to learn new methods to reach them as quickly and effectively as possible.”**

Doug Lemov