

# Australian Principals Federation

## Acting President's Report—*Tina King*



We are excited to be hosting an onsite event for our upcoming Annual General Meeting and Professional Development Day. The event will provide opportunity for in person collegiate interactions, with our keynote speaker, Maria Ruberto providing insight and strategies as to how we can transition into a state of flourish given all the challenges and demands of the last two years.

The event is open to members and non-members and with limited places, we encourage you to register early. Registrations may be made by visiting our website or by following this [link](#).

If you require assistance with registration, please contact Gemma Needs either via email [gnaylor@apf.net.au](mailto:gnaylor@apf.net.au) or phone 0400 413 817.



**311/19 Milton Pde.  
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**APF Website**

<https://apf.net.au>

## Thriving and Surviving in Challenging Times

**Thursday 2 December 2021, from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm**

[Riversdale Golf Club](#)

200-280 Huntingdale Road, Mount Waverley VIC

**All attendees will need to show proof of vaccination status.**

### GUEST SPEAKER - Maria Ruberto



Maria is the founder and director of Salutegenics Psychology, a strength-based practise that moves people in personal and professional coaching toward mental fitness and life-health. Maria's work is heavily influenced by Positive Psychology theory. The core mission of her work is to transition people towards a state of flourishing, embedding respect, resilience and resolve along the way.

Maria has worked extensively for 10 years within the areas of Educational Leadership, Trauma Response and statewide initiatives relating to Student Wellbeing with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. She has worked with Travancore School of Mental Health which is a partnership with the Royal Children's Hospital, Orygen Youth Mental Health and is currently consulting with Beyond Blue to develop training around the new resilience resource Sense Ability.

### SPECIAL PRESENTATION BY DALE SIDEBOTTOM



Dale is the creator and founder of Jugar Life and Energetic Education, two multidisciplinary business platforms that provide people with the tools to make **play** a focus of their everyday. Dale is a full-time 'play' consultant who taps into his 20+ years working in the education and fitness sectors to educate individuals, schools, sporting clubs and corporate organisations globally on the benefits 'adult play' can have on mental health and wellbeing. Dale is the author of All Work No Play, TEDx speaker and the top rating 'Energetic Radio' podcast. Dale has worked face to face with students, teachers, schools and corporations in over 20 countries.

**Members: \$100 Non-Members: \$120**

**Registrations are now open on our website by following this [link](#).**

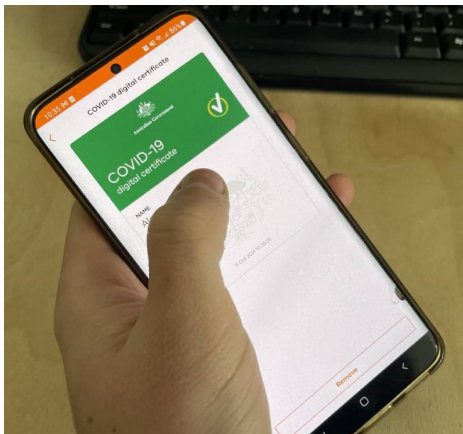
Please contact Gemma Needs on 0400 413 817 for any queries and support with registration.

**Places are limited with registration closing on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2021.**

Thank you to our partners for their ongoing support and sponsorship of this event.

## The Union exclusively for the Principal Class

## DET School Operations Guide – update



The current Operations Guide was updated last week to include key information relating to vaccination requirements for visitors, volunteers, parents and carers attending schools. The following information and guidance are provided:

### ***Vaccination requirements for visitors and volunteers performing work in schools***

Visitors and volunteers performing work on school sites (both inside and outdoors) must have had at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine and must have had two doses of COVID-19 vaccine by 29 November 2021 or have a valid medical exception. Visitors and volunteers must be

advised to adhere to COVIDSafety requirements set out in the School Operations Guide.

More information about collection of vaccination information from visitors and volunteers performing work on school sites is available at [COVID-19 Vaccinations – Visitors and Volunteers Working on School Sites : Policy | education.vic.gov.au](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/COVID-19/Vaccinations-Visitors-and-Volunteers/Working-on-School-Sites-Policy) including a template register that schools can use for recording vaccination information during visitor and volunteer sign in.

### ***Vaccination requirements for parents and carers attending schools***

All parents and carers attending schools, including for drop off and pick up must also adhere to physical distancing, density limits, face mask requirements and practise respiratory etiquette and good hand hygiene.

Parents and carers who enter school buildings must check in using the QR code.

Parents and carers who enter school buildings must also have had at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine and must have had two doses of COVID-19 vaccine by 29 November 2021 or have a valid medical exception with the following limited exceptions:

- when attending to administer medical treatment to their own child when the treatment cannot be administered by the school
- when attending to collect their child who is unwell and cannot leave the school building unaccompanied by their parent/carer.
- when attending for a momentary period that does not involve any sustained contact with staff or students, for example, to collect a completed art project or similar

Parents and carers attending any event or activity inside a school building including, but not limited to tours, graduation, kindergarten transition, whole of school events are required to show evidence of vaccination.

Meetings and other discussions (such as Student Support Group meetings) with parents and carers who do not meet vaccination requirements should be held virtually.

**Parents and carers attending school sites for drop off and pick up who do not enter school buildings do not need to comply with vaccination requirements.**

**External providers who use or hire school facilities outside of school hours must ensure that use aligns with the Open Premises Directions including vaccination requirements.**



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***Any changes to schools, addresses and credit card details, should be notified to me ASAP, so I can keep my database up to date.***



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Join the APF

<https://apf.net.au>

Forms can be  
completed on-line.

## New support for school leaders – Principal Advisory Service



The Principal Advisory Service is a new “hotline” for school leaders which was launched last week. It aims to reduce administrative burden by helping school leaders to find the right support in the right time.

Staffed by the Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) team in the People and Executive Services Group, the Principal Advisory Service helps connect principals to the right experts or contacts within the Department, so they don’t need to spend time ringing around. The team can also help schools with their local policy documentation and compliance questions.

Designed to complement PAL as a one-stop-shop, Elly Gay, Executive Director, Operational Policy, School Engagement and Compliance Division says, “if you’re a principal and you have a question, don’t spend more than 5 minutes looking for the answer – call or email the Principal Advisory Service instead.”

The Principal Advisory Service does not replace the specialist services that already exist. Principals can still directly contact all the areas they normally do for advice and assistance including Legal Division, OHS Advisory Service, COVID Hotline, Employee Conduct Branch, Services Portal, Schools Recruitment Unit and many other areas of the Department and regional supports. However, when you don’t know who to call or if you want help with finding policy information or local policy assistance, then call the Principal Advisory Service.

Principals, assistant principals, business managers, and Senior Education Improvements Leaders can contact the new Principal Advisory Service any time between 8:30am – 5pm on weekdays:

Phone: (03) 7034 6777

Email: [principal.advisory.service@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:principal.advisory.service@education.vic.gov.au)

Information about the Principal Advisory Service and a full list of key Department contacts for school leaders is on the revamped [Principals’ Page](#) on the intranet.

## School Operations Forward Planner

The Operational Policy, School Engagement and Compliance Division, in the People and Executive Services Group, has also developed a **School Operations Forward Planner** which captures key operational and administrative tasks set by the Department that recur each year, such as reporting, financial, data collection, policy and compliance requirements. The planner shows when the tasks generally fall in each term and year (e.g. week 3, Term 2) for these recurring items. It also shows items that don’t have a fixed date, but which do recur each year, so schools can choose when to schedule these activities. This has been created in response to feedback from principals (particularly new and acting principals) and peak associations about the need for forward visibility of activities that happen each year.

The planner is an optional, supportive resource for schools to assist with planning and is not an attestation or compliance monitoring tool. There are no new requirements in this planner – it simply represents existing activities in the one spreadsheet. It does not replace the use of [School Update](#) to communicate critical information and key dates as they arise throughout the year.

The School Operations Forward Planner is available on the [Principals’ Page](#) on the intranet in a downloadable MS Excel format for schools with filters to view information in certain categories (e.g. by term, primary/secondary schools, fixed/flexible dates). Changes will be noted periodically and communicated to schools once a term if needed (through the regular end of term School Update article covering policy updates).



### Support for members

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

However, from time to time you may be concerned about a colleague. Please do not hesitate in making contact with us so we can offer them appropriate support.

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## Update on the Equal Opportunity Act (Religious Exceptions) reform

The [Equal Opportunity \(Religious Exceptions\) Amendment Bill 2021](#) will limit the ability of religious organisations and schools to discriminate against an employee or potential employee on the basis of their sex, sexual orientation, lawful sexual activity, marital status, parental status or gender identity.

The Bill will preserve the rights of religious bodies and schools to practise their faith, provide religious teaching, instil their beliefs within their organisation and make employment decisions on the basis of those beliefs in appropriate circumstances.

The proposed changes will mean that:

- in employment, religious schools and bodies will only be able to discriminate:
  - ◊ on the basis of a person's religious beliefs or activities
  - ◊ where conformity with religious beliefs is an inherent requirement of the job, and
  - ◊ if it is reasonable and proportionate to discriminate in all the circumstances
- a religious body that receives government funding to provide goods or services will not be able to refuse to provide those goods or services to people based on their sex, sexual orientation, lawful sexual activity, marital status, parental status, or gender identity
- religious schools will not be able to discriminate in the course of establishing, directing, controlling or administering the educational institution with regards to people based on their sex, sexual orientation, lawful sexual activity, marital status, parental status, or gender identity; and
- there will be no general exception available to individuals (rather than religious bodies or schools) to discriminate on the basis of religion.

This reform will ensure a fairer balance between the right to religious freedom and the right to be free from discrimination.

You can find further information on the reforms and a factsheet in multiple languages at <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/equal-opportunity-act-religious-exceptions>

## Covid-19 management and impacts, Tina King, Acting President



We are receiving concerning feedback from members with expressed concern over mounting levels of work relating to the management and implementation of Covid-safe measures. In particular, many are reporting the insurmountable levels of workload and copious hours worked when there has been a positive case onsite. The need to manage primary close contacts, request for Covid PCR tests and now rapid antigen test result, and confirmation of vaccination status is leading many school leaders feeling like they are undertaking the work of Department of Health.

Additionally, some principals are reporting hostility and non-compliance from members of the public, who have a blatant disregard for DET and Department of Health advice and requirements. Such individuals are blaming principals for simply doing their job and executing their duties. This is putting principals in the firing line and the subject of venting, frustrations and sadly at times abuse.

Lockdown has been difficult and challenging for everybody and whilst we have welcomed the



### PAPER OR DIGITAL BOOKS?

**Which reading format is better suited for young readers' learning?** A meta-study has concluded that when the paper and digital versions of the story are practically the same and only differ by the voiceover or highlighted print as additional features in the digital book, then paper outperforms digital. The key factor is limits on children's cognitive load. The device seems to attract young children's attention at the expense of attention paid to the storyline. Interactive components of on-screen books can be another distraction from the content. If the bells and whistles of digital books are closely aligned with the content, comprehension improves. For enhancing children's vocabulary, digital books with a dictionary feature that defines and explains difficult words are more effective than paper books, which don't have a built-in dictionary. But it is difficult for children to juggle using the dictionary at the same time as other content-related enhancements; the dictionary is most helpful when it's used alone. An important variable is how an adult sitting with a child interacts while reading. With on-screen texts, the adult-child conversation is often mostly about the device rather than the story itself. With paper books, the adult talks mostly about the story and provides support and background knowledge that enhances the child's comprehension.

"A Comparison of Children's Reading on Paper Versus Screen: A Meta-Analysis" by May Irene Furenes, Natalia Kucirkova, and Adriana Bus in *Review of Educational Research*, August 2021

from Hippocampus,

# The Union exclusively for the Principal Class

lifting of some restrictions and the return to onsite learning, we are now faced with new challenges and demands. The onus is now on schools to implement mitigating strategies to reduce the spread of Covid-19 and this is adding workload and pressure on already hard-pressed staff and leaders.

It is widely acknowledged and stated that school leaders work well beyond their allocated hours and do not shy away from going above and beyond for the needs of their communities. What is most concerning however is that now leaders are required to be Covid commanders in addition to attending to the educational and operational aspects of the school. The demands and work expectations have not eased and are ever increasing. This is simply not sustainable with an urgent need for greater supports and interventions in order to alleviate the current burdens faced by an exhausted and wearied workforce.



## Role of the APF

### Industrial Relations 101

At the **APF** consistent with industrial relations '101' we are concerned with matters such as your salaries, classification, entitlements, protections, contracts of employment and amongst other matters, the manner in which you are assessed and the consequences thereof.

Further, your access to industrial and/or legal advice, advocacy and support in relation to matters of discipline, conflict resolution, conflict of interest, complaints and/or performance.

### 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.

## BEYOND TIME MANAGEMENT - Dane Jensen



**A major source of stress for many is the pervasive feeling that there is never enough time. The conventional advice on time management – work more efficiently, squeeze in more tasks, reduce 'unproductive' time – does not reduce overload and anxiety. As we become more efficient, we make room for even more tasks and feel even more pressure. We need to attack the root cause of workplace overload – namely, that there are too many tasks, decisions and distractions. What to do?**

### Reduce the volume of tasks.

Every time we agree to do something and add it to our to-do list, there's pressure to deliver on time. If we can't meet the deadline, we add the additional stress of letting someone down. When you are assigned a new task, ask, "Where would you like me to prioritise this against x, y, and z?" This reframes the conversation to discussing what's most important. For self-assigned or self-imposed tasks, stress occurs when we're unrealistic about when we can finish and the deadline looms. This happens because we put in our calendar the items that involve meetings, calls and interpersonal activities, but don't block out time for work we need to do on our own. The solution: put everything on the calendar, making us more realistic about how much time we have to finish a task.

### Replace decisions with principles.

Deciding what to do with imperfect information can produce cognitive overload and that increases errors and stress. The alternative is to adopt a simple principle that eliminates the need to make a number of decisions. An example is when Steve Jobs got tired of deciding what to wear every morning and began to wear the same outfit every day. We often find ourselves deciding multiple times a day which meetings to accept and which to reject and not allowing time for the deep work we need to do. A solution is to carve out a time each week for no meetings at all so that we have uninterrupted think time.

### Use structure, not will power, to minimise distractions.

Anything that pulls us away from making progress on important tasks has a corrosive effect on morale and productivity but the usual advice on self-discipline isn't helpful. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and others are brilliantly designed to steal a slice of your attention. Similarly, managers with an open door find it difficult to say no when a colleague drops in and asks, "Got a minute?" Establish a time every day when you turn off access to your devices and work without distraction. Create a standing 30-minute time when colleagues can pop in to get direction and answers to questions. Always leave a 10-minute buffer between meetings for moments of reflection.

Acknowledgement: "Time Management Won't Save You" by Dane Jensen in *Harvard Business Review*, June 23, 2021

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**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR PRINCIPAL CLASS EMPLOYEES  
& Leadership Teams**

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