

# Australian Principals Federation



## President's Message – Tina King

Regular contact from members continues to highlight and emphasise current stresses and challenges our schools are facing. As announced recently by the Chief Health Officer, we are enduring the peak of a significant wave of Omicron sub-variants which continue to dominate. As a result, our schools continue to be stretched to the limit with some at breaking point. One member who wrote to me stated....

*Compared to managing lockdowns and Covid, the ongoing staffing situation (with a lack of qualified or semi qualified teachers) is far more stressful and is having a greater negative impact on student learning.*

Schools are resorting to desperate means to cover staffing absences such as cancellation of support and additional programs (including Tutor Learning Initiative), grade splitting, and leaders and all non-class based staff in classrooms. Schools continue to access the corporate pool with deployment of VIT registered staff where possible. It seems however that our schools are fast running out of options with the additional burdens weighing heavily on the wellness and mental stamina of school staff.

At a recent stakeholders meeting with Minister Hutchings, the challenges our schools continue to face were reinforced as were the extensive measures currently undertaken to address staffing shortages. It is of particular interest that when addressing staffing shortages, the independent and private school sector have great flexibility to transition to hybrid models of selective remote and face to face learning. However in the government sector we have limitations and it appears a reluctance to do the same. The reality is that school programs and continuity of learning have been adversely impacted and continue to be. There is no denying that our schools and staff are in a staffing crisis. It is time to readdress the measures and supports as this is simply not sustainable.

We have all felt the impact of extended lockdowns and remote learning and no one is advocating for a return to such drastic measures, but consideration needs to be given to possible circuit breakers given the latest wave. There are no easy, immediate or popular solutions and we commend Minister Hutchins and key DET staff for the opportunity to seek feedback on how to best manage and provide support for schools given the continuing covid challenges.

I will finish on a positive and share what I thought was a remarkable example of **flocking**. You may recall I wrote about this term a few newsletters ago after our PD with Maria Ruberto who introduced us to the latest research and the fifth response to trauma, called **flocking**. Maria encouraged us to find our flock as collectively we can group together and face challenges and offer support. In addressing staffing challenges, I know of one flock of principals who have demonstrated immense collegiality and support for each other. After exhausting all other means and avenues to cover classes, via the use of a communication app, they reach out to each other when in desperate need of staff and where possible and available they share and exchange personnel on a short term and interim basis. Now that is a flock I would love to be a part of.

*T. King*

## Happy Principals' Day

An initiative of the VPA, Principals' Day provides opportunity to recognise and appreciate the immense contributions principals and assistant principals make in our schools and across our education system.

Our school leaders are at the forefront of leading change and innovation for the betterment of the students in their care. The APF applauds and commends the commitment and passion of our



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<https://apf.net.au>

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school leaders and thanks all for their relentless efforts and self-sacrifices made. Happy Principal's Day!



## SAVE THE DATE

### Annual General Meeting & Seminar

Thursday 27 October 2022

9:00 AM – 3:30 PM

Riversdale Golf Club  
(Details to follow)

311/19 Milton Parade  
Malvern, 3144  
Tel: 0412 584 002

*Are there changes to details in relation to your membership?*

*Please inform me if there are changes to PCE status, school, home address, phone numbers and cc details.*

*Thank you!*

### Implementation of VGSA 2022

School leaders have now been entrusted with the implementation of the new VGSA 2022 which came into effect as from 25 July 2022.

The DET has released the Implementation Guide and it is important that this document, in conjunction with the VGSA 2022 are used as the key reference points and 'go to' documents. It is highly recommended that the DET Implementation Guide be presented at staff meetings and Consultative Committees so that common understandings and interpretations may be formed. There will be other versions available however such documents may contain differing interpretations which are based on selected expositions rather than interpretation of the stated words.



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APF Executive  
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Join the APF

<https://apf.net.au>

*Forms can be completed on-line.*

The [HR Web A-Z Topic Index](#) should always be your go to point with the above documents available at <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/industrial-agreements/resources>

### Key elements and provisions contained within the VGSA 2022

- Total Remuneration Package (TRP) has changed to salary for Principal Class Employees (with the exception of those in defined benefit superannuation scheme).

- Classification structures have been adjusted to ensure 5% gap between promotion levels (ie teacher, to AP to Principal). As a result of the structural adjustments and over the life of the agreement, Principals will receive 16.5% salary increase, Assistant Principals 11%, Leading Teachers/Learning Specialists 9.3%, and Teachers 8.1%.
- Positioning allowance of 1% to be paid in December each year for APs, teachers and para-professionals.
- ES translations with ranges 1 and 2 collapsed.
- ES severance payment for those in Student Support funded positions employed for less than seven years. We understand that this will be paid outside the budget but unsure at this point of the amount.
- Fixed term vacancies as a result of an employee absent on long service leave for up to one school term can be filled without advertisement.
- Allowances for Professional Practice Days to be on a common day if the school chooses. Funding for PPDs will continue to be paid via the SRP irrespective of the local school arrangements.
- Introduction of a common start date for ES to align with teachers.
- Existing attendance arrangements continue with 7 hours attendance per day commencing not less than 10 minutes prior to student instruction. In effect a teacher has three days attendance of 8 hours and two days of 7 hours (thus making up the 38 hour week). There are also provisions for 3 hours of attendance of other duties outside the 7 hours of which not more than two of those hours being used for meetings (see later re 30+8 model).
- Increases to paid parental leave from 8 to 16 weeks and partner leave increased to 4 weeks.

**Time In Lieu provisions for teachers and ES staff. As the VGSA 2022 continues to be unpacked the implications of TiL continue to cause concern and alarm as to how best to manage and acquit for staff. We will address key member concerns in our next newsletter edition.**

The Department will take action centrally to transition employees to the respective new structures with no action required at the school level. Increases in salaries will be backdated and payable on 25 August 2022. The remuneration range of each principal position will also be reviewed in light of the revised PCB (principal classification budget) parameters. It is anticipated, that any arrears as a result of movement to a higher range, will be also be paid on 25 August 2022.

Thank you to the many APF Councillors who have supported colleagues and presented at Network meetings to unpack the new agreement. We are more than happy to support members with understandings and interpretations contained within the agreement and if you would like us to attend a collegiate or network meeting please do not hesitate to make contact with such a request. It is our understanding that DET staff are providing briefings at network meetings and the upcoming principal forums.

### **Teacher work and the 30+8 hours model, Andrew Cock (APF Treasurer)**



As we all start to work with the new VGSA one of the understandings required is how the 38 hour working week is broken up and particularly the 30+8 breakdown for all teachers. This will be particularly pertinent with regard to discussions around Time in Lieu, especially when staff attendance will be adjusted during that week to ensure attendance of the teacher does not exceed 38 hours per week.

**The 38 Hour week**—The VGSA states:

- (3) (a) Teachers will be in attendance for a minimum of seven hours daily commencing no less than ten minutes before the morning pupil instructional session unless otherwise agreed between the principal, as the Employer's representative, and a



### **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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teacher.

- (b) In addition to the attendance requirements set out in subclause (a) teachers may be required to undertake other duties for up to three hours. including attendance at meetings provided that not more than two hours of the three hours can be used for meetings.
- (c) Meetings held beyond the attendance requirements set out in subclause (a) will be adjacent to the seven hours of daily attendance and not exceed one hour unless otherwise agreed using the consultative provisions of this agreement.

What this means for a school perspective is that teachers will be in attendance for (unless adjusted through standard consultative agreements):

2x 7 hour days and 3 x 8 hour days.

As an example a school which starts the day at 9:00am would have the following breakdown to the week for teachers:

- Daily 8:50am start
- 2 x Daily 3:50pm finish
- Three days which finish at 4:50pm, which includes the three additional hours – two of which can be made up of meetings.

### 30+8 Breakdown

- (8) (a) A teacher with face-to-face teaching scheduled at the maximum (as set out in clause 22(4)(b)) will be provided:
  - (i) 30 hours per week of time to undertake the work directly related to the teaching and learning program of their class(es) (such as face-to-face teaching, planning, preparation, collaboration, and assessment), with the duties undertaken within that time determined by the teacher; and
  - (ii) the remaining eight hours per week are available for lunch and other activities (such as yard duty, meetings, and/or other duties).

### What this means for a school perspective is that:

For 2023 a teacher would have the maximum face to face hours: (or on a pro-rata basis)

- 19 hours per week for a secondary school teacher or 17 hours 40 minutes per week if a teacher supervises sporting activities of students on a structured basis for a period of two hours per week;
- 21.5 hours per week for a primary school teacher or a special school teacher;

With the balance of the 30 hour week to undertake the work directly related to teaching and learning.

The remaining eight hours per week available for lunch and other activities (such as yard duty, meetings and other duties). This includes 2.5hrs of lunch breaks (30 mins per day free of any duties) and 2 hours of meetings, therefore leaving 3.5 hours of other work.

Through consultative arrangements, schools will need to be clear on the dissection and expectations of all staff for the balance of the 30 hour week and the remaining 8 hours per week.

### Misconceptions

- The 7.6 hour day exists for the purposes of pay and leave requirements (This is because 38 divided by 5 is 7.6, the Department/Edupay does not know which days are the 7 hour days vs 8 hour days so therefore just balances the days across the week). Often schools and Principals have misinterpreted this to mean that teachers are in attendance each day



## Teaching Effectively Online

This article continues for the next 3 page columns

The emergency experiment with remote and virtual learning during the pandemic left many educators eager to return to the classroom. However, some were intrigued by the one-on-one connection well-designed virtual learning can foster and the work-from-home life-style it affords. As a result, interest in full-time remote teaching has increased as has the demand for virtual-only educators.

It is no surprise that working as a remote teacher requires a willingness to use technology. There needs to be a willingness, even a desire, to be tech savvy. The following tips may be of help to those seeking to make the transition from brick and mortar to full time virtual learning.

#### 1. Good teachers can learn to use technology

Teachers who are able to engage students can learn to use technology. It is often more about a willingness to learn than having a host of existing tech skills.

#### 2. Make the most of

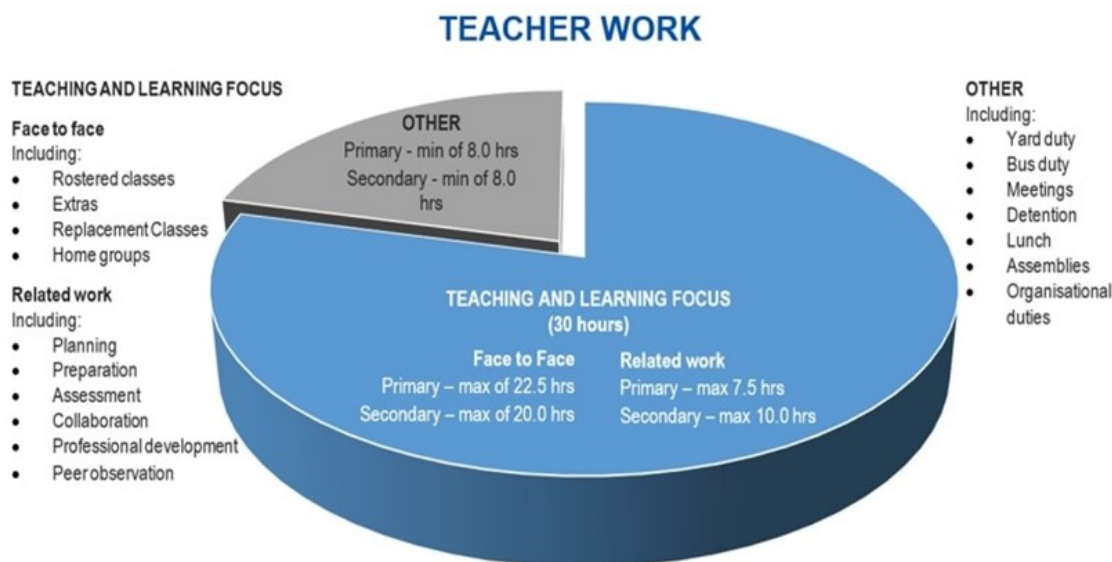
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for 7.6 hours. Unless this is agreed at a local level this is not the case, to allow for the three additional hours of duties after minimum seven hours attendance.

- Teachers are entitled to a paid lunch break of not less than thirty minutes free from assigned duties between the hours of 11:30am to 2:30pm. Therefore, this is included as part of their standard daily hours, not in addition to.
- Move away from the language of Administrative and Planning Time (APT) and refer to as 'face to face' and non-face to face' time. This is important as APT is not the only time teachers have for work – it is any hours not face to face (and includes recess).



(Note the above graphic is available in the current DET Guide and will be updated to reflect new provisions in the VGSA 2022).

Further details on the Allocation of Teacher Work can be found here - [here](#).

## Principal Workload, Mark Arkinstall, APF Industrial Officer



The article below was published by Mark back in 2019. Unfortunately, rather than improve, workplace demands seem to be more and more challenging and unrelenting than ever before. Further, where once it was just principals the system struggled to recruit, it now seems to be staff as well. Time to rethink things and we invite your opinions and feedback on this.

### Sustainable Principalship—Context

- Leading schools is a challenging and complex task for even the most highly skilled amongst us. It is also an incredibly rewarding role and all principals and assistant principals take great pride in doing their job to the absolute best of their ability. School leaders are selfless people with the highest levels of integrity and a great sense of purpose. Most in the community recognise this and hold their school leaders in very high regard.
- The APF takes calls from school principals and assistant principals on a daily basis. Some want to discuss relatively minor issues or just get a second opinion before they act. Others are incredibly distressed and need a high level of support. This is not a reflection of their abilities or skills, as many are highly regarded principals with decades of experience in leading schools, it's more that the job itself is so relentlessly demanding.



### your one-on-one time with students

Because many online programs offer asynchronous learning experiences paired with small group or one-on-one synchronous interactions, these can provide educators with more time to provide detailed individualized feedback and to form deeper relationships with students.

### 3. Ensure your personality is visible

The more of your personality and passion you can infuse into your videos and other online course material, the better. Learners prefer when educators keep it real with them, even if that means dogs barking in the background of your video.

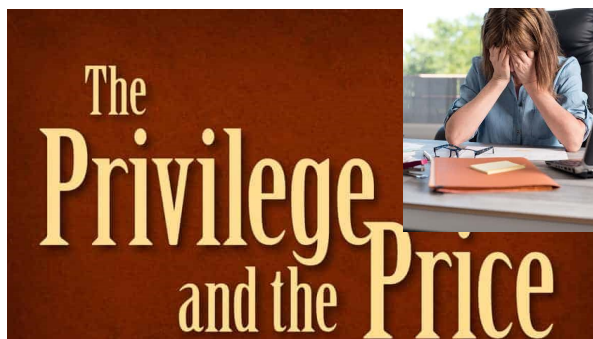
### 4. Answer emails in a timely manner

If responding to emails and, in some instances, texts in a timely manner and being organized as an educator are difficult for you, the leap to online learning can be a challenge. Developing strategies such as scheduling a time each day to answer them and funnel general questions that multiple students will have to the chat or forum function on your LMS.

### 5. Be prepared to work at least as much as if in a brick-and-mortar class-

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3. In 1998 the Department conducted a major research project on teacher stress. This resulted in the introduction of a range of organisational health initiatives such as the School Climate Survey and the annual Opinion Surveys of staff, parents and students within schools. (I'll happily leave it to the reader to consider how successful this strategy was.)
4. In 2003 the department undertook further research into principal class health and wellbeing. As a result, in August, 2004 the department published "The Privilege and the Price, A Study Of Principal Class Workload and Its Impact on Health and Wellbeing". This was an admirable and comprehensive piece of research aimed at helping the department to better understand the organisational risk factors facing the principal class and to identify those areas that require organisational interventions to protect safety and health. Amongst other things the study found that on average, principals worked 59.6 hours per week while assistant principals on average worked 57.7 hours per week.
5. In 2010 Phil Riley won an inaugural Monash Researcher Accelerator award, which funded the first two years of the now annual Principal Health and Wellbeing Surveys. The survey has run nationally every year since 2011 in response to growing concern about principals' occupational health, safety and wellbeing.



6. Some findings from the survey, as reported in the Full Report found at [https://www.healthandwellbeing.org/reports/AU/2021\\_ACU\\_Principals\\_HWB\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](https://www.healthandwellbeing.org/reports/AU/2021_ACU_Principals_HWB_Final_Report.pdf) include:

- a. Average working hours have remained stable over the 8 years of the survey. **They remain too high for a healthy lifestyle to be maintained.**
- b. On average, 53% of principals worked upwards of 56 hours per week during term with ~24% working upwards of 61-65 hours per week.
- c. During school holidays, ~40% work upwards of 25 hours per week.
- d. A new study by Australian researchers found mental health declined beyond 38 hours per week for women and 43.5 hours per week for men (Dinh, Strazdins & Welsh, 2017). In 2018, 99.7% of school leaders worked beyond this limit.
- e. The two greatest sources of stress that have remained consistently high over the length of the survey have been **Sheer Quantity of Work, and Lack of Time to Focus on Teaching and Learning**. The upward trend in both since 2015 is very concerning.
- f. Principals and deputy/assistant principals experience far higher prevalence of offensive behaviour at work each year than the general population. The prevalence rate for Threats of Violence is extremely high (in 2011, 38% of participants had been threatened. This rose to 45% by 2018; close to 1 in 2



#### room

Despite common misconceptions, teaching online does not require less time than in person. In a lot of ways, it can be much more time-consuming to be an online teacher, there's an appropriate expectation that you will provide more deep and rich feedback for individual assignments.

#### 6. Consider equity and accessibility

Approach online teaching through a lens of equity. Students take online classes for a variety of reasons, and sometimes those reasons are because they don't have equitable access to education otherwise. Perhaps they have mobility issues, or they have a family situation.

*Acknowledgement: Erik Of-gang in "Tech and Learning" July 2022*

*From the July 2022 issue of Principal's Digest*

PRINCIPALS' digests



[www.principalsdigests.com](http://www.principalsdigests.com)

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principals receiving a threat). The highest prevalence is in Government primary schools (49%).

- g. A series of recommendations are made in the report and I strongly recommend you read them all. As a snapshot though, the following recommendations particularly resonated with me:
- i. **Governments:** Stop looking for short-term quick fixes and concentrate on getting a better grip of the fundamentals (collaboration, creativity, trust-based responsibility, professionalism and equity).
  - ii. **Employer:** Take the moral choice of reducing job demands, or increase resources to cope with increased demands. Better still, do both. This will help to increase the level of social capital in schools. Trust rather than rule educators. Leave the mechanisms for producing the best educators to the educators.
  - iii. **Professional Associations and Unions:** Collaborate and speak with one voice.
  - iv. **Community:** Support your local school and stop the offensive behaviour.
  - v. **Individual Educators:** Take responsibility for your personal work-life balance. Only you can know what is reasonable for your long-term health and wellbeing. It is therefore incumbent on all of us to find and maintain a healthy balance. This cannot be done for you from outside and is too important to be left in other's control. Ensure your passions are harmonious. This means to be in control of them. For example, love your work but do not let it dominate your life

7. In July 2017, the department published its Principal Health and Wellbeing Strategy Discussion Paper. This work led to the April 2018 launch of the Principal Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018 – 2021, with a number of outstanding initiatives aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of our principals. (<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/safetyhw/Pages/PrincipalHWB.aspx>)

The strategy stated, "Schools thrive when principals thrive. A great education starts with confident, committed and passionate leaders. The wellbeing of our school leaders is central to creating a positive school culture for teaching and learning. We are all committed to supporting our principals to be their best, so that they can bring out the best in our teachers, support staff and young people.

The Victorian Government has invested over \$5 million in the key initiatives that form part of this Strategy. It has been co-designed with the profession, for the profession. We have all worked together to create a team around the principal – central and regional employees, principals and your peak associations and unions – to develop this Strategy and its key initiatives. It represents our collective commitment to strengthening the health and wellbeing of school principals in a systematic and sustainable way."

### The APF perspective:



1. The department's Principal, Health and Wellbeing Strategy is a well-thought out, admirable response to concerns about the health and wellbeing of school leaders that have been well known now for many years.
2. Despite the positives above, the fact is that several things have not changed. School leaders are still working ridiculously long hours that research shows must have a negative impact on their health. This was identified back in the early 2000s, yet the current research by Phil Riley shows that rather than improve, it is getting worse.

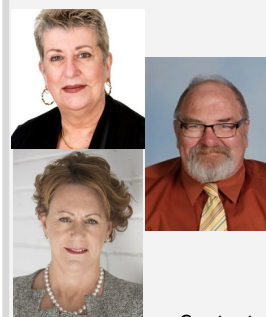


We have begun working with three schools that have networked to deliver a program titled Emerging Leaders.

It is exciting to be working with these three schools and their committed aspiring leaders.

We are delivering the program over three terms with 8 x one and a half hour programs.

This program has been tailored to the requirements of the schools.



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To have your unique program developed.

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3. Our members are constantly seeking our support, many of whom feel completely overwhelmed and are struggling to continue. I know of 4 such cases in the last week alone and of many who are really struggling to function and live a normal life. Many tell us of having issues with sleep with some members barely sleeping at all. We're here to help, call us!
4. We understand that the demands vary across schools, but the common demands of the job itself have become so large and complex that it requires immediate attention. The strategies developed so far have not had a significant impact on lightening the workload on school leaders. Phil Riley specifically refers to this when he talks about the need to either reduce the demands of the job or increase the resources available to deal with them.
5. Over time, it has become acceptable and normal for school leaders to work ridiculously long hours. Working while home either after hours or on weekends is a given. This must be challenged.
6. While our most recent agreements have included the introduction of the Learning Specialists, there has been a decrease in Leading teachers from 9.5% of the workforce to 6.8% in 2017. I'd suggest the decrease has been significantly higher if tracked back to the early 2000s. An increased leadership profile that included further leadership support in the form of more Assistant Principals or Leading Teachers to share the load would make a huge difference. In many schools, the principal has few staff available to delegate work to, leaving them to pick up more and more work.
7. The notion of support and what it really looks like is not as well defined as it might be. Further, it is apparent from the conversations we have with our members that the level of support enjoyed by some is incredibly high and hugely appreciated, yet this varies wildly according to the individuals involved. It's great to hear our members telling us how wonderful and supportive their SEIL or other regional staff are, yet it is also a real concern when our members believe the exact opposite is true leaving them feeling unsupported and abandoned. For those members on extended sick leave, we often ask if they've had a call from a SEIL or EAD to check up on their welfare. The response at times is in the negative.
8. The department's Principal, Health and Wellbeing Strategy admirably states that the collective vision is to have safe, healthy and resilient school leaders leading positive school climates, supported by strong collaborative partnerships with peers, regional and central colleagues and management. In an environment of comprehensive accountability, it would be great if the effectiveness of this shared vision was objectively measured. School leaders should be given the opportunity to provide feedback similar to that which exists for school staff in the Staff Opinion survey. A survey that allowed Principal Class members to provide anonymous feedback on how they view the effectiveness of the supports provided for them at both regional and central office level would be a welcome step. This was done many years ago with the "Your Job Your Say" surveys for school leaders.

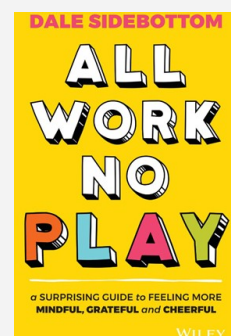


9. We also know that the number of applications for advertised principal vacancies is well and truly on the decline. One very large school has recently advertised for a new principal on two occasions without the job being filled. It is our view that people are choosing not to apply for principal roles because of the sheer workload involved. They've seen just how demanding the job is and choose not to apply.



## Mindfulness

From Dale Sidebottom's excellent book



1. Mindfulness comes in all shapes and forms, much as play does. It can mean different things to different people—and that's all right. This explains why there are so many different definitions for mindfulness.
2. The power and beauty of being present and still in the moment is something we all need and secretly crave in our busy, crazy world. For me, play is the way to find stillness and to stop my thoughts of the past and the future. It allows me to be 100 percent focused on everything around me in the present.
3. If you are yet to find what mindfulness looks and feels like

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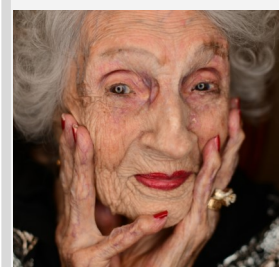


## What can we do right now?

1. **Spend less time at work!** We know that working such long hours is damaging to your health and leaving it to the department to cut back your hours simply isn't realistic. Delegate where possible, say no occasionally, shut the door to get some uninterrupted time, outsource jobs where possible, etc. I know one principal who rarely opens emails before 11.00 in the morning. This allows him a solid block of work without the constant distraction of new emails coming in and helps cut back on his time at work.
2. **Don't be alone.** For industrial needs join the APF, for professional needs join the VPA or VASSP. While our respective roles vary, we are all here to support our members. If you need us or even just want to talk to people who understand, pick up the phone and call. Membership also gives us strength in numbers when raising issues and negotiating on your behalf.
3. **Do use the initiatives the department is offering to support you.** We know from experience that the Principal Health and Wellbeing Strategy initiatives are excellent and worth exploring. <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/safetyhw/Pages/PrincipalHWB.aspx>
4. **Make the time to have a regular catch up with other principals and school leaders** to informally debrief, let off steam, share ideas and expertise and generally support each other. I was lucky enough to have a wonderful group of colleagues who all became great mates. The support we received from a regular coffee catch up with people who do the job and understand the challenges was wonderful and we were all better principals for it. (We still catch up to this day.)
5. **Take charge of your own destiny as much as possible.** Give yourself permission to get away from school at a reasonable time without feeling guilty. Enjoy your weekends without attention to work and genuinely recharge the batteries when you get a chance. Holidays are great, treat yourself to one. Many people will be aware of Stephen Covey's Sharpening the Saw story. Sharpening the Saw basically means preserving and enhancing the greatest asset you have – You. Put yourself and your family first and take action to give yourself a break.
6. **Take regular breaks during the day.** Make sure you're catching up with staff in the staffroom at recess for a cuppa and make the time to eat your lunch with others. As well as being a great break for you, it also helps build relationships in an authentic way. Taking this time out of a hectic day is vitally important.
7. **Use the holidays as a chance to rest, relax and recharge.** Stay away from school and school work.
8. **Try not to take work home, leave work for work and home for living.** We're all in the habit of constantly checking emails but it's rare that something is so important that it couldn't have waited until the next working day. Do you really need to be contactable 24/7? Don't allow emails to become part of your home routine and never check emails before going to bed. Do not check emails at all on a weekend. Whatever is there can wait until Monday.
9. **Use some of that Long Service Leave** to have a well-deserved break and treat yourself and those you care about to something special. Take that trip you've always wanted to go on
10. **Maintain a healthy lifestyle and get plenty of sleep.**
11. **Spend time with family and friends** and take the time to enjoy your hobbies and passions in life. You deserve a bit of pampering, be kind to yourself and the people who love and care about you.
12. **Begin making changes today!**



for you, I urge you to keep searching, exploring and trying new things. Your mindfulness might be just around the corner. Some people search their entire lives to find purpose, career and passion. Others know it straight away. It's the same with mindfulness, it may come easily to some and not to others, and it may come when you are 10 years old or 110 years old.



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