

TO: QTU MEMBERS

Public Health Directive exemption for education; temporary teacher engagements; public sector pay freeze; online security; yesterday's Newsflash

Public Health Directive exemption for education and early childhood workers

Last night the current Queensland Public Health Directive was amended to exempt education and early childhood workers allowing them to travel to and from their home base over the Term 1 break.

"Home Confinement requirements in Queensland

6. A person who resides in Queensland must not leave their principal place of residence except for, and only to the extent reasonably necessary to accomplish, the following permitted purposes:

f. education and early childhood workers may travel to and from their home centre over the term 1 break".

The QTU has been negotiating with the Department of Education, the Health Minister and the Premier's office to see this important and sensible amendment made.

If you are intending to travel to your home base, you should consider carrying a copy of the directive with you.

Some Local Disaster Management Groups have restrictions to protect indigenous communities including the need for permits to be issued to travel to and from the community. Members should follow these processes and provide the directive as part of the applications process.

We are aware that there are high levels of sensitivity in many communities about residents travelling to and from their centre. The QTU advises members to follow all directions of the local government disaster management group and comply with appropriate social distancing advice.

If you have questions about arrangements in your community, speak to your principal in the first instance as they will have been provided with a briefing from the local disaster management group. Further advice can be provided by calling QTAD on 1300 117 823.

Temporary teacher engagements: COVID-19

Members have reported that some schools have sought to cancel engagements made with I4S funding or to replace teachers on leave etc, citing COVID-19 as the reason their program or position is no longer continuing in term two.

Decisions such as these go against the public service decision to retain casual/temporary employees whose employment would have continued but for COVID-19.

Consequently, in line with the advice from the Director-General yesterday, if a member employed in a temporary capacity has a reasonable expectation of ongoing employment, these engagements should continue into term two.

In addition, the QTU is working with the department to ensure that temporary teachers close to accessing conversion to permanency who are unable to secure a temporary engagement due to COVID-19 will not be disadvantaged.

When this and the process for supply teachers to access special pandemic leave is finalised, the QTU will communicate directly with temporary teacher and supply teacher members.

Reports of public sector pay freeze

There is no public sector pay freeze. The Premier's ad hoc comments yesterday about a pay freeze were just that.

The QTU and the government have a binding, legal agreement which includes a 2.5 per cent pay increase from 1 July 2020. That agreement can be changed – as it would need to be in the event of a pay freeze – if a ballot of employees covered by the agreement supports the change.

The pandemic has exacerbated problems in an already damaged and slowing economy. But it is the public sector that is addressing the crisis, through nurses, doctors, allied health professionals, catering and cleaning staff in public hospitals, emergency service workers including police and paramedics, and teachers changing educational delivery in a week to meet the demands of the times.

Media kites suggesting the public sector needs to “share the pain” are evidence of profound detachment from the work being done by the public sector in this emergency.

If a proposition were put that deferring wage increases for a period would directly help fund an added response to the COVID-19 pandemic and would directly help Queensland people in a way that cannot be achieved by other means, the Union would listen and talk to members. There is no such proposition at this time.

Online security

As schools gear up to deliver alternative modes of remote and online learning, the QTU is working with the department to ensure teachers and school leaders protect themselves with internet security protocols that do not breach the Public Service Code of Conduct. Until the advice is finalised, the Queensland College of Teachers has provided some advice in its [latest e-news](#) that may be of use when considering online interactions with students and parents.

Yesterday's Newsflash

We have received some feedback about some parts of the Newsflash (12-20) yesterday which seem to cut across what schools have been doing in the last week. That is regrettable but unavoidable.

From last week, it has been clear that it will not be realistic for schools to maintain delivery of the full curriculum in new modes. Unhelpful timetables were published by the department, in spite of agreement between Senior Officers of the QTU and the department on this issue. Advice was unfortunately late and sometimes contradictory.

This is a rapidly changing situation, which this week has included major issues about the definition of vulnerable workers, the definition of essential workers whose children should attend school, travel for teachers in rural and remote Queensland over the school holiday, and media reports about a public sector pay freeze, as well as the total re-organisation of education for term two.

The QTU will continue to work with the department during the school holiday to ensure that clear and consistent advice (as far as that is possible in this situation) is available to teachers and principals before the commencement of term two.

The QTU will continue to post updates to its [website](#) during the school holiday to keep members informed.

Authorised by:

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