Basic guide to:

General working conditions

This basic guide provides QTU members with information on their entitlements and can be used by school administration to help in timetabling

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This document is issued for general guidance only. It does not constitute professional advice. The issues with which it deals are complex and the document necessarily deals only with general principles. No reader should rely on this document for the purpose of making a decision as to action but should seek the appropriate advice from the Union on the particular circumstances of that reader. The Union accepts no responsibility for the consequences should any person act in reliance on this document without obtaining the appropriate advice from the Union.

* The information in these sections is a summary only. Further details about the conditions listed can be found in the advice, information and legal brochures available on the QTU website on www.qtu.asn.au

Rostered duty time

A full-time teacher will have 25 hours (1,500 minutes) of rostered duty time per week.

An instrumental music teacher/instructor will have 30 hours (1,800 minutes) of rostered duty time per week.

Rostered duty time includes face-to-face teaching duties, associated professional duties, non-contact time and the 10 minute rest pause each day.

Duties undertaken outside rostered duty time (e.g. school camps) should only occur on a voluntary basis.

Meal breaks and rest/pause*

10 minutes rest pause must be provided each day and cannot be averaged across a week.

Teachers should have a 45 minute uninterrupted meal break per day – this can be modified through consultative arrangements to provide a minimum 30 minute uninterrupted meal break per day, provided that teachers access a total of 225 minutes of uninterrupted meal breaks per week.

The meal break should fall between the hours of 11.00am and 2.00pm, unless changes are made in accordance with Clause 16.1 (a) of the Teaching in State Education Award – State 2016 (“The Award”). Any changes should be made following consultation with the local consultative committee, in accordance with clause 16.1 (c) of the Teaching in State Education Award – State 2016.

Bus and playground supervision*

A bus and playground duty roster will be developed in each school in consultation with the staff and the local consultative committee.

Teachers and other employees are required to undertake playground supervision and bus supervision as a consequence of the department’s duty of care responsibilities. The Award provides that teachers will be relieved of this responsibility as far as possible.

You can be required to perform bus supervision for up to 30 minutes after the conclusion of the school day, but this should be for school buses only – not public transport.

Teachers should be at school prior to the first bell, but cannot be rostered on for student supervision prior to this bell, as rostered duty time does not normally commence until then. Schools should not establish expectation of a before-school playground duty, as this does not form part of a teacher’s rostered duty time and the provisions relating to bus and playground duties do not extend to this period of time.

Specialist teachers who service more than two schools cannot be allocated bus and playground duty.

Non-contact time/preparation and correction time*

Non-contact time (NCT) – primary and special schools: A full-time teacher will be provided with a minimum of two hours (120 minutes) of NCT per week. This must be provided in minimum half hour (30 minute) blocks.

Non-contact time – secondary schools: A full-time teacher will be provided with a minimum of three hours and 30 minutes (210 minutes) of NCT per week. This must be provided in units no less than the length of a regular school lesson.

The main purpose of NCT is to enable a teacher to undertake the planning, preparation and correction necessary for the effective carrying out of their role. Teachers make the decisions about what tasks they complete during the award entitlement to NCT. Non-contact time should not be considered as “free time” for the purpose of pursuing personal activities.
**Face-to-face teaching**

Full-time secondary school teachers have a maximum 20 hours and 40 minutes (1,240 minutes) rostered face-to-face teaching and associated professional duties per week.

Full-time primary and special school teachers have a maximum 22 hours and 10 minutes (1,330 minutes) rostered face-to-face teaching and associated professional duties per week.

Associated professional duties include times when teachers have contact with students in forums such as assembly, form class, pastoral care, sport etc.

Within rostered duty time of 25 hours per week, the average class time for specialist teachers will be 18 hours per week, with a range of 15 – 20 hours per week. Refer to section 15.1 Teaching in State Education Award - State 2016.

**Hours of instruction**

The standard hours of instruction in schools fall between 8.30am and 3.30pm. Any changes to these hours of instruction must occur in accordance with the provisions of clause 15.8 of the Teaching in State Education Award - State 2016.

**Arriving and departing from work**

You have to ensure that you are at work and ready to start work prior to the official start of the school day, and you are allowed to leave after the official conclusion of the school day.

When departing work early or leaving the school during the school day, teachers may be requested to sign in and out of the office for workplace health and safety reasons. However, it should not be a requirement for teachers to sign in and out of school each day.

**Teachers required to sign in and out of school**

The QTU is of the view that there should be no requirement for teachers to sign in on a daily basis when they arrive at school.

Any teacher who is going to be absent from school for a day (or longer) should notify the principal/deputy/admin. All staff should then be notified of which teachers are absent, either by email or through the daily notices book, in accordance with the arrangements that apply in that particular school.

Teachers should notify personnel in administration if they are leaving the school grounds during rostered duty time, e.g. an NCT/P&C period. This notification is required for WorkCover purposes.

Staff should not need to notify administration personnel if they wish to leave the school grounds during a meal break, as the Workers’ Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003 (Qld) covers most injuries which occur when the employee is away from the workplace during such breaks. Although it is not a requirement for staff to sign in and out during meal break times, the QTU’s view would be that it would be appropriate to notify someone.

**Class sizes**

The class sizes within schools should be:

- Prep - 3, 11-12…………………25 students per class
- Years 4-10 …………………… 28 students per class

The class size target for composite classes are informed by the relevant year level target. Where composite classes exist across cohorts (e.g. year 3/4) the class size target would be the lower cohort target.

Class size targets should be exceeded only in exceptional circumstances, and only after consultation with teachers. A quid pro quo concerning other workload is often provided.

**Attendance at meetings/Professional development**

The school principal has the capacity to call a staff meeting outside of school hours. This is the only meeting you are required to attend. Consultation is required each year about the purpose, frequency and duration of staff meetings.

Staff meetings cannot be used as a means of making professional development compulsory, unless otherwise agreed through the consultation process as a substitute for attendance on student free days. Otherwise, attendance at professional development outside school hours is voluntary.

**Leave**

Teachers receive paid leave over school vacation periods. Those requiring additional leave are entitled to:

- **Sick leave** – full-time teachers accrue 10 days paid sick leave per year – this leave accumulates across the years of employment (pro-rata for part-time employees).

  A medical certificate need only be produced when an absence is greater than three days or there is an unidentified pattern of absence, a conduct issue or a formal performance process in place.

  Accrued sick leave can also be accessed as carer’s leave to care for sick family members.

- **Long service leave** – can be accessed as paid leave after seven years of continuous service and is accrued at a rate of 1.3 weeks per year worked. Access to this leave requires two clear
terms notice and approval is subject to departmental convenience.

c) **Paid maternity and adoption leave** – currently an entitlement of 14 weeks Paid Maternity Leave (PML) or Paid Adoption Leave (PAL) is available to the primary caregiver of a child. Conditions apply to the access to this leave. Additionally, teachers may be entitled to access the Commonwealth paid parental leave scheme and dad and partner pay. This payment is made in addition to the PML provided by the department. Dad and partner pay cannot be accessed while on paid leave or when working.

d) **Special leave** – this includes two days bereavement leave for each bereavement and five days compassionate/special leave per year. Bereavement leave is an entitlement. Paid special leave is discretionary and approval must be sought. Other forms of special leave are also available.

e) **Extended special leave without salary** – applications can be made after 12 months of being employed with the department. Access to this leave requires two clear terms notice and approval is subject to departmental convenience. The maximum amount of extended special leave without salary on each occasion is three years. Where the leave is for family care purposes, the maximum amount of leave that can be taken is seven years.

**Standard of dress** *

The issue of personal appearance is addressed in the department’s [Standard of Practice](#), which supports the Code of Conduct for the Queensland public service.

**Personal presentation**

*“Each of us has a responsibility to conduct and present ourselves in a professional manner and treat co-workers, clients and members of the public with courtesy and respect. In addition, we have an obligation to ensure our own safety, health and welfare in the workplace. All officers are required to ensure their private conduct maintains the integrity of the public service.

Accordingly, as representatives of the department, it is essential we ensure that our personal appearance and presentation is professional.

As a general guide, the appearance and dress of departmental employees should be clean, tidy and appropriate to their duties and the people with whom they are dealing. Examples of inappropriate dress for DoE’s work environment include thongs, singlets, revealing clothing or clothing with offensive slogans.

Employees who wear a uniform or other apparel identifying them as an employee of the department must ensure that their uniform or apparel is clean, complete and in good order.

In addition, if an employee is wearing a departmental uniform, or is otherwise identifiable as a departmental employee while off duty, they are expected to avoid conduct which may adversely affect the image of the department.

Each of us also needs to ensure that in compliance with our duty of care under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, and the requirements of the Code, we do not wear clothing or footwear that could put our own workplace health and safety at risk.”

**Tattoos and piercings**

There is no departmental policy in relation to tattoos or piercings. Jewellery may be a hazard when undertaking some activities. There is no requirement to cover a tattoo unless it is offensive or inappropriate. It is important to check the relevant curriculum risk assessment documents to check for more specific guidelines or stipulations.

**Student protection policy/code of conduct**

All teachers are required to undertake mandatory training in the department’s student protection policy and the code of conduct. The student protection policy provides examples of instances of harm, which include physical, sexual and verbal abuse as well as sexual relationships between teachers and students. The policy makes it mandatory to report instances of harm to students.

The code of conduct prescribes departmental expectations with respect to the appropriate conduct of teachers and school leaders.

**Access to departmental records**

The Public Service Regulation 2008 (Qld) gives teachers the right to be provided a copy of any document that could be considered detrimental to their interests and to 14 days to respond to it.

Employee records covered by these provisions include:

(a) reports, correspondence items or other documents about the employee’s work performance, conduct or history

(b) a medical report about the employee

(c) a written allegation of misconduct by the employee.

Additionally, you may request to inspect a record, take extracts from or copy details in the record. This inspection is required to take place within 21 days from when the request is made.
Abuse of teachers by parents and students*

Teachers, like all other employees, have the right to a safe and healthy working environment.

Schools should have a positive school-wide behaviour management policy in place that identifies the consequences that arise from inappropriate student conduct.

Additionally, in some circumstances principals are empowered under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld) to respond to abuse of teachers by parents. The QTU may provide legal assistance in relation to parental abuse/defamation.

Where members have exhausted the use of these policies and procedures or face an imminent threat to their health and safety, they may be able to access industrial action to remedy this threat.

Parent/teacher interviews

Schools are required to provide parents with at least two opportunities per year to meet face-to-face with their children’s teacher.

One of these opportunities may be in the form of a parent-teacher interview or a subject/year level information evening. However, when these are held outside of rostered duty time, attendance cannot be made compulsory.

Teacher participation outside rostered duty time should be considered voluntary. However, it is not unreasonable of a school to request that teachers arrange appropriate times for parents to meet with them. Consequently, most schools establish a designated night/week in which parent/teacher interviews are available. This assists teachers in maintaining an effective work/life balance, as well as meeting the reporting requirements of schools.

Transfer*

All permanent employees of the Department of Education are subject to transfer.

Teachers may request a transfer following a minimum period of service at a school. Compassionate transfer requests may be lodged at any time. Compassionate transfer requests are either about pressing personal circumstances or exceptional hardship. The Teacher Transfer Guidelines provide more information about compassionate transfer requests. Additionally, the department may require the transfer of a teacher from a school to another location for a variety of reasons.

Applications for transfer generally need to be submitted via the annual transfer cycle prior to a date in late term two, and the transfers are released in the last week of term three.

The transfer process is vacancy driven, and in most circumstances a transfer to a particular location will be dependent on the number of transfer points a teacher has accumulated at the time of requesting a transfer.

Teachers have an appeal right regarding unreasonable transfers. More information about the appeal process is available on the QTU website.

Temporary teachers*

The QTU and DoE are committed to the maximization of permanent employment in schools.

To fill a temporary vacancy in a school of five days or more in duration, the department may engage a teacher in a temporary capacity. Normally, temporary engagements occur to replace teachers who have taken a period of leave.

The Department of Education and Training State School Teachers’ Certified Agreement 2016 allows temporary teachers:

- access to pro-rata payment over the summer vacation period (subject to particular conditions)
- a guaranteed offer of conversion to permanency after three years continuous service and improved access to permanency when employed on successive engagements under school purchase arrangements
- payment for attendance at student free days
- access to the Annual Performance Review (APR) process and consequent professional development.

Temporary teachers are able to terminate an engagement, but must give the department notice of this intention. Temporary teachers who have been employed for less than one year must provide at least one weeks’ notice and those temporary teachers who have been engaged for more than one year must provide at least two weeks’ notice.

The department is lawfully able to terminate a temporary teaching engagement but certain conditions must be met, for example, a temporary teacher who is performing at an unsatisfactory standard should be informed of the performance issues and given an opportunity to improve his/her performance, via an informal performance review process. If that does not lead to satisfactory performance, then a formal Managing Unsatisfactory Performance (MUP) process should be completed before a contract is terminated.

Temporary teachers who believe their engagement may have been terminated inappropriately should contact the Union for advice.