

**TO: QTU MEMBERS**

## **Mask mandate to be lifted**

The QTU acknowledges the Premier of Queensland's announcement of the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, which will apply to all schools and education workplaces. There will be no requirement for teachers or students to wear face masks from 6pm, Friday 4 March, although members may choose to continue wearing one while at school, depending on their age, health conditions and individual circumstances.

We have been advised that schools have an adequate supply of rapid antigen tests (RATs) for use by symptomatic staff and students, and more can be requested from regional office if required.

This also applies to students who become symptomatic while in outside school hours care (OSHC).

Some members have enquired about the lifting of other restrictions. The department has confirmed that there are no plans to lift other restrictions at this stage, including the need to be vaccinated in order to work in a state school.

Normal school activities, including camps, excursions and instrumental musical classes, will resume from 7 March. The department will provide more information in the coming week.

### **Win for part-time senior teachers**

As part of the most recent certified agreement, the government agreed to remove the clauses requiring full-time equivalent service for salary progression. It was the Union's understanding that this would apply to *all* teachers, including senior teachers (STs), experienced senior teachers (ESTs), and experienced senior teacher 2s (EST2s).

However, the department chose to exclude ST, EST and EST2 when applying this gender equity provision, maintaining that, as ST was a "classification", it was outside the scope of the review.

Despite our ongoing advocacy, requests and correspondence at the highest level, the department was not prepared to review its interpretation of the senior teacher pay point.

In an effort to resolve the matter, the QTU lodged a dispute in the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC) in Term 4 last year.

Following a period of negotiation and the QTU's provision of proof that ST has been a pay point in an agreement with the department since it was established in 2000, agreement was reached last Thursday (the day before the issue was due to go back to the QIRC).

The agreement means that:

- the requirement to meet the equivalent of full-time service will be removed from ST, EST and EST2

- ST will be available following eight years' service, or one year's service at the top of the salary scale (which is now eight years)
- these arrangements, once finalised, will be backdated to take effect from 1 January.

The QTU is currently working with the department on amending the award to reflect this agreement. Further advice about the implementation timeframe will be provided once finalised.

### **Extension to timelines welcomed**

The QTU welcomes the extension to the timelines for the uploading of school performance plans (four-year strategic plan, annual implementation plan (AIP), school data plan) to OneSchool. Usually the deadline is the end of Week 5, Term 1, however in light of the disrupted start to the 2022 school year, the department **has now extended the deadline to the end of Term 1**.

Additionally, the date by which Investing for Success (I4S) agreements have to be submitted to regional offices **has now been extended to the end of Term 1**, while subsequent upload to school websites must now be completed by the end of Term 2 (previously the end of May).

### **Experienced senior teacher (EST) notifications**

Thanks to QTU advocacy, the department is now notifying teachers when they become eligible for EST and EST2 classifications.

Teachers who are expected to become eligible during Semester 1 this year should have received notification of their eligibility earlier this week. This is a new process – until now STs were expected to keep track of their eligibility themselves and to apply accordingly. Notifications will now be sent to newly eligible teachers each term.

Members who already have two or more years of satisfactory service as an ST are reminded that they are now eligible to apply for EST. The application process has become much quicker and easier in recent years, and there is no expectation for ESTs to accept further duties on top of what was outlined in their senior teacher undertaking and personal action plan. Timely application for EST is recommended, as backpay is only payable from the date of application, not eligibility.

### **EB10 – Negotiations to commence shortly**

Last week, the Director-General responded to the QTU's request to commence bargaining, and preliminary meetings to discuss the good faith bargaining protocols started this week. Members should not be misled by organisations purporting to be involved in EB10 negotiations. Under the Queensland Industrial Relations Act, only registered unions are involved in EB negotiations – there is no such thing as a "bargaining agent". The truth is that only the QTU can negotiate on behalf of teachers and school leaders in Queensland state schools. The QTU has been and will continue to be your professional and industrial voice in EB negotiations.

#qtu #yourvoice #EB10