



22 February 2011 Canterbury Earthquake

Advice for PPTA Branches and Members

The thoughts of all PPTA members are with their Canterbury colleagues in these extraordinarily difficult times. For many affected members, it may be too early emotionally to read this document which deals with returning to work at school as a PPTA member. You may wish to store the document until you are ready to deal with work related matters.

The primary aim of this document is to provide employment and Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement (STCA) advice to PPTA branches and members in the Christchurch, Selwyn and Waimakariri Districts. Teachers wishing to take on relieving and/or fixed-term special project positions in the affected areas may also find this document useful.

EAP (Employee Assistance Programme)

The Ministry of Education will fund EAP counselling for teachers affected by the Earthquake. EAP provide specialised counselling for employees finding work related matters difficult. Initially, there will be an obvious strain on PPTA members in the affected area. EAP has increased its pool of counsellors as a result of the Earthquake. To discuss EAP, or to make an appointment, phone 0800 327 669 or e-mail egs@eapservices.co.nz.

A list of useful references from EAP has been posted on the PPTA website.

Schools re-opening

A full list of re-opening dates for schools can be accessed on the front page of the Ministry of Education's website www.minedu.govt.nz.

Schools require a clearance from Civil Defence, The Ministry of Education, and the Medical Officer of Health to re-open.

Members are advised not to enter a school until a full clearance has been given.

The Ministry website is the focal point for people seeking information about school re-openings in the Earthquake zone.

There is also a free phone number 0800 225 580.

PPTA communication lines

PPTA branches and members wanting industrial advice relating to the earthquake can reach a special line at National Office in Wellington by calling 0800 PPTA HELP (0800 77824357). There is also an e-mail address: earthquake@ppta.org.nz. In order to keep communication lines high, any exchange of advice will be shared with the Christchurch based Field Officers. The Christchurch Field Office is likely to re-open next week in a temporary site at 158 Cavendish Road, Redwood.

Pay roll

The Ministry of Education has transferred some School Support Ltd staff from Christchurch to Wellington. Teachers in the Earthquake area will be paid their 23 February 2011 salary or wage until the Ministry receives an alternative instruction from the school. The default position is that teachers are on *special leave with pay* until their school re-opens. An alternative instruction is unlikely to occur while schools remain closed.

All teachers should expect delays with salary assessments and other non-salary payments such as the maternity grant.

There is also likely to be delays with paying relievers who worked on 21 and 22 February 2011.

Relief work in Canterbury

As schools re-open, they may require additional temporary staff. To assist with this, the Ministry is going to fund the travel and accommodation costs for

teachers travelling from outside the Earthquake zone. Teachers will also be paid at the long-term relieving rate (STCA 4.1.1) instead of the day relief rate (STCA 4.4.1).

It is important to check that you have accommodation and likely employment before considering a move to Christchurch as a relief teacher. If you wish to be part of the relieving pool, please contact the Ministry of Education on 0800 225 580 or e-mail resourcing@minedu.govt.nz and type "RELIEVER" in the subject line. State in the e-mail: your name, your potential role (teacher, support staff, principal, etc), which part of the country you live in, your contact details, when you will be available, and your practising certificate number.

Extra staffing for school boards will be considered on a case by case basis by the Ministry of Education. You can e-mail resourcing@minedu.govt.nz and type "REQUEST" in the subject line.

Fixed-term appointments

STCA 3.2.3 allows employers to make fixed-term (non-permanent) appointments where a genuine reason exists. A special project could be a reason why a teacher is appointed to a fixed-term position. An example in this situation could involve a retired principal moving from Nelson to work at a school in Christchurch on complex time-table issues for the remainder of the 2011 school year. A further example could be a school counsellor moving to Christchurch temporarily to spend two terms working with students on grief and trauma counselling.

To meet the requirements of the Employment Relations Act s 66, all fixed-term agreements will need to be in writing and include a *genuine reason based on reasonable grounds* for the employment being fixed-term in nature.

Fixed-term part-time, or fixed-term positions for less than one school term, do not have to be advertised in the Education Gazette (STCA 3.2.2 (a)).

Hours of work and the timetabling policy

PPTA members and their employers are fortunate that STCA 5.1A.1 (d) allows for timetable flexibility in situations where for *genuine* reason non-contact fluctuations are necessary. Between 8 March 2011 and 27 January 2012, PPTA branches and members are requested to work constructively with management to ensure temporary school timetables can be delivered under these extraordinary circumstances.

Examples PPTA branches and members could face include:

1. A school opening for only part of the day, for example, 9am – 1pm. In this case, a branch and employer may agree to operate 4 x 60 minute periods within this time-frame and then take non-contact time on site or at home during the afternoon. This scenario could come into play if two schools are shifted to one site, with an early and late shift. So pressure can be removed from the school site infrastructure, teachers maybe asked to take some or all of their non-contact time at home. Members should not be working longer than twenty contact hours per week. It maybe necessary for members to claim actual and reasonable child care costs in situations where their hours of work change from a normal school day.
2. A school accepts students from another school that cannot re-open until 28 January 2012. Some senior classes are combined to assist with classroom availability. Teachers from the school that cannot re-open 'team teach' or are 'buddied up' with a teacher from the existing school. In this case, it may not be possible for the employer to deliver a class size average of under 26 while the extra students are present (STCA 5.9). The class size average can be calculated across both teachers. The extra teacher in class could be agreed compensation for the larger class sizes until 28 January 2012.

Understandably, PPTA branch and regional office holders in the affected area may not have the time to prioritise working through complex timetable issues. For this reason, the PPTA may develop a pool of timetable specialists that can assist with branches facing difficulties during this time. The role of the specialist is to communicate with one or more branches and their respective management teams over the implementation of extraordinary school timetables and temporary policies during the 2011 year. It is not intended that a specialist replace the role of management in their overall responsibility for a school timetable. The pool is made up of retired PPTA officials with timetable experience and existing PPTA staff. For a specialist, please contact 0800 PPTA HELP (0800 77824357). or e-mail earthquake@ppta.org.nz.

NOTE: This document will be updated every Monday during terms one and two 2011. It will be posted in the public section of the PPTA website. If you want a copy posted or sent by e-mail, please contact Mychael Stevenson on 021 669900, or e-mail mstevenson@ppta.org.nz or earthquake@ppta.org.nz.

School re-opening or closure dates will not be posted, as the fastest way to retrieve this information is the **Ministry of Education** website or by calling 0800 225 580.