

Extracurricular Activities: PPTA Guidelines

These guidelines will be updated if there are changes that alters them.

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PPTA represents the professional and industrial interests some 21,000 secondary teachers and school leaders in state secondary, area, manual training, and intermediate schools, as well as tutors in community education institutions, alternative education and activity centres, and principals in secondary and area schools. Most of eligible teachers choose to belong to the Association.

Last update October 2023

Extracurricular Activities: PPTA Guidelines

Introduction

Changes to the collective agreements in 2023 clarified that extracurricular activities count towards teachers' annual hours of work.

Extracurricular activities are regarded as part of the culture of secondary schools. Many teachers relish the opportunity to act as sports coaches, drama producers, international tour guides and musical directors and see benefits in being able to engage with students in less formal settings than the classroom. When teachers do not wish to contribute to extracurricular activities it is for good reason.

The competitive regime amongst secondary schools under Tomorrow's Schools has resulted in schools endeavouring to expand the range and extent of extracurricular activities for marketing purposes as well as for other reasons. The result has been direct and indirect pressure on teachers to increase their extracurricular participation at the same time as curriculum, administrative and assessment demands teachers find themselves with neither the time nor the energy for other activities.

The purpose of these guidelines is to clarify the obligations PPTA members have in relation to extracurricular issues and the responsibilities of employer when considering teacher participation in extracurricular. As far as possible, the guidelines endeavour to support teachers who are willingly and actively engaged in extracurricular activities and, as well, those who have reason not to participate in it. They outline teachers' rights and suggest positive ways schools can encourage and support extracurricular activities.

These guidelines do not apply when a teacher is voluntarily participating in extracurricular activities as an ordinary member of the school community, outside their terms of employment.

Extracurricular v Cocurricular

Cocurricular: Activities that arise from curriculum requirements that involve extension beyond the classroom. For example:

- a. the Head of Science may organise the Science Fair,
- b. the teacher in charge of Drama may produce a play every year as part of senior performance for assessment requirements;
- c. the music teacher has a class performance with rehearsals and/or performances that may take place outside timetabled classes; and
- d. senior Geography teachers may be expected to organise and participate in field trips.

Extracurricular: Optional student activities that involve teacher participation outside of normal school hours. For example, a teacher might be asked to take a sport team. Teachers may also voluntarily offer to participate in extracurricular activities, as a community member rather than as an employee of the school. They may offer to organise extracurricular events for students, though there are risks for teachers in arranging informal activities (see 4. Health and Safety below).

The Ministry of Education Guide to the application of the professional standards Teacher Performance Management (October, 1999) only includes cocurricular, not extracurricular, activities in its indicators for contribution to wider school activities.

Both cocurricular and extracurricular duties, when allocated, or an expected or implied condition of employment, have collective agreement implications.

- a. The duties of teachers are defined as *"any activity required to fulfil the expectations of their role or to undertake the duties assigned by them"*. One of the factors identified by the collective agreements as influencing hours of work is the extent to which individual teachers participates in the extracurricular programmes of the school. Teachers' annual working hours are to average 40 hours per week (or 1816 hours per year). These hours will include time spent on extracurricular activities required or expected of the teacher. The exception is when the teacher receives additional salary that is agreed to cover the activities.
- b. As recognised duties the school is obliged to pay the costs incurred by teachers in fulfilling those duties. Costs incurred by teachers as a result of an extracurricular activity that they have chosen to do (e.g. A weekend ski-trip involving students) cannot normally be charged to the employer. If the activity is required or expected of the teacher as part of their duties it is subject to the reimbursement and allowances provisions of the collective agreements.
- c. The hours that teachers can be required or expected by the employer to be on site (either at school or elsewhere) for extracurricular activities are limited to the normal school day on days when the school has been open for instruction. Extracurricular activities are not subject to the callback provisions of the collective agreements. Attendance at other times is subject to agreement by the teacher.

Advertising and appointments

Sometimes job ads may say something like 'applicants are expected to participate in the cocurricular activities of the school'.

Some teachers, particularly those who are new to the job or who are in fixed term positions are vulnerable when applying for jobs and often not in a position to object to presumptions being made about their availability for additional work. This is particularly the case for beginning teachers who may not have the confidence to indicate that they feel they need to concentrate their energies on becoming effective in the classroom rather than on the sports field or the stage.

The use of job advertisements to compel teachers to undertake extracurricular activities can be counter-productive when teacher shortages mean that teachers often have a choice of jobs. Schools that encourage teachers to find a work/life balance may find it easier to recruit teachers. At the same time, teachers who feel compelled to undertake extracurricular activity are less likely to be happy in that school and more likely to leave.

PPTA 's code of ethics deems it unethical for a teacher to compel any other teacher to carry out extracurricular activities. This is because it may take the teacher into areas in which they lack the training, inclination, or skills to effectively fulfil those duties.

Letters of appointment should be clear about the annual expected contribution towards extracurricular activities agreed between the employer and the teacher.

Health and Safety

Constantly rising expectations in respect of workloads mean that extracurricular activities may have implications under both the collective agreements and under the Health and Safety in Employment Act (2000).

Teachers responsible for students in situations outside the classroom need to familiarise themselves with health and safety requirements which may be read on the Ministry of Education website. (<https://eotc.tki.org.nz/EOTC-home/EOTC-Guidelines>).

Boards must have a health and safety policy with a particular reference to EOTC.

- Boards are required to ensure staff are competent, have appropriate safety training, and that adequate facilities and resources are available to meet the stated procedures.
- Staff must comply with policies set by the board. The clearest way to do this is for the board to approve procedures that comply with the policy.
- It is important that staff are aware of and understand the policies and adhere to the procedures.
- If a teacher deviates from school policy or procedures, they could be held responsible should anything go wrong.

These policies focus on cocurricular activities, but where extracurricular activity is a required or expected part of the employment of a teacher at the school similar policies should apply.

If teachers feel pressured to participate in activities that they feel may not meet the health and safety requirements, especially in relation to teacher/student ratios and the use of adult supervisors who lack appropriate safety training, they should record their concerns in writing and give them to the principal. It would also be wise to contact the local PPTA field office.

Note: A teachers' responsibility for student safety and well-being does not end because the activity has been privately arranged. PPTA's advice to teachers is not to engage in activities with students that are not sanctioned by the school.

Good Practice

The long-term solution for extracurricular demand is additional staffing and resourcing. In the interim, branches can encourage schools to establish supportive practice around extracurricular activities. Approaches used by schools include the following:

- (1) Providing units for those engaged in extracurricular activities. (In some cases outside bodies like the Rugby Union will fund the cost of a unit).
- (2) Increasing the hours of paid sports and arts co-ordinators so they can take over the administrative tasks.
- (3) Ensuring units for extracurricular activities are dispersed fairly across sports and cultural activities.
- (4) Providing time for teachers who take extracurricular activities outside the normal school day. For example, a non-contact period prior to or after lunch for a teacher who takes choir, orchestra or sports practices at lunchtime. P.E. teachers also need recognition of the extra load they carry outside school hours.
- (5) Providing relief cover for school trips so other teachers are not prevailed upon.
- (6) Timetabling an "activity period" when teachers can organise practices and allowing students not engaged in activities to go home.
- (7) Using community volunteers for coaching.
- (8) Form a school/parent club for major activities so the workload is shared.
- (9) It is crucial that teachers are reimbursed for all costs associated with extracurricular activities (travel, meals, etc) and that any equipment required is supplied in good condition.

Branches have a key role in ensuring all members are aware of their entitlements as listed in the agreement (STCA part 7)

- (10) Releasing teachers who undertake extracurricular activities from doing duty. Note: some schools have employed adults to do duty so teachers are not required to do it at all.
- (11) Ensure that staff can renegotiate their commitment to extracurricular activities on a regular basis (rather than assume that they will maintain that commitment in perpetuity).
- (12) Young and new teachers are supported in their roles by ensuring that they do not take on too great an extracurricular load, which can contribute to burn-out.

For the branch

The PPTA branch can make sure that members are familiar with these guidelines and use these to inform a branch discussion – ideally at the start of each year, to inform new members and to ensure that the school continues to operate a system grounded in good practice.

The branch can seek a meeting with the principal to clarify the branch's position about extracurricular involvements and invite the school board and leadership to review practice on an annual basis, in collaboration with staff.

The branch can also monitor job advertisements in the context of PPTA guidelines for good practice (see above).

Further information and advice

In the first instance members can go to your branch officers for advice. Depending on the issue your branch may decide to meet, or there may be a discussion between branch officers and school leadership.

PPTA field staff are the first point of contact should an issue to do with extra or cocurricular responsibilities not be resolved satisfactorily within the school.

Staff at PPTA national office are also available to respond to questions on matters of PPTA policy.

PPTA Level 5, 60 Willis St, PO Box 2119 Wellington 6140 – Email: enquiries@ppta.org.nz – Phone 04 384 9964