



20<sup>th</sup> May 2009

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## **President's Comment 15**

Dear Colleagues

### **Disciplinary Matters & The NZ Teachers Council**

I am a member of the Disciplinary Tribunal of the NZ Teachers Council. A few points of interest and recurrent themes with recent cases are worth noting.

1. Teachers should be made aware that behaviour in their private life may affect their registration e.g. a conviction for domestic violence may impact on their fitness to teach and ability to be a role model.
2. A number of teachers who have had inappropriate relationships with students have little understanding of professional boundaries. Many of them began their relationship as a result of text messaging.
3. There are a significant number of teachers who download inappropriate material onto laptops. Schools should have very clear internet use agreements, including:
  - a. Teachers reporting inadvertent access to inappropriate material to a designated person;
  - b. That laptops gained through the teachers' laptop scheme are not owned by them;
  - c. They are responsible for inappropriate access by third parties in their home.

### **National Government May Budget**

Although we are in an economic recession it is reassuring to hear the government reaffirm that education is a priority and will receive additional resources.

Ironically in tough economic times, investment in education becomes more important as we invest in young people rather than consign them to the unemployment queue. It is a golden opportunity to develop the skill and knowledge base of our youngsters in preparation for an eventual climb out of recession.

Let's hope a more visionary approach is adopted with this budget in regards to education.

### **Traumatic Incident Policy & Pandemic Planning**

At a recent Schools Consultative Committee Meeting the above was discussed.

Key Points worth noting were:

- \* The Ministry of Education will develop a comprehensive set of check lists in relation to traumatic incidents for schools which should be published in June. They are to be placed in the 'Green Student Support Folder'.
- \* Police have requested on line 'site plans' for all schools which will be of great assistance to them in the event of an armed offender call out to a school. The Ministry is working through the logistics of this including where the plans will be held, who has access, who pays and exactly how much detail the police and other emergency services require. Although it may appear to be another compliance issue, student and staff safety is paramount. The reality is, our schools are likely to face such an event.
- \* Frequent washing of hands with soap is one of the best preventative measures in the spread of germs and viruses. Of course, many schools do not provide soap for obvious reasons. Schools may have to reassess how they can overcome these barriers.

**Patrick Walsh**  
Vice President