

21/05/2025

Tēnā koe

Union Events

1. I am aware some staff have attended events organised by unions on Friday 16 May 2025.
2. Furthermore, I am aware that the Council of Trade Unions (CTU) are hosting hui across the country on 22 May 2025, with a planned event outside of Parliament in Wellington at 1pm to coincide with the budget.
3. I expect educational environments to remain impartial. I encourage you to consider effective channels for reminding staff of this requirement.
4. Under the Code of Conduct for State School Board Members, members of school boards must be politically impartial in their roles as a Board member, and the Board must ensure that educational environments remain impartial.

Schools must be open for instruction

5. It is expected that schools will take all necessary steps to remain open for instruction. This means that there is organised learning in place for all students, and teachers are available to actively facilitate students' learning.
6. If an employee takes sick, bereavement or another type of leave during these events, and the school has reason to be concerned, it should approach the matter on a case-by-case basis like any other unexpected and unapproved leave.

Impartiality

7. Everyone working in our schools has the same rights to freedom of speech and political activity in their private lives as any New Zealander.
8. However, when acting as an employee, best practice is to be politically neutral. This includes refraining from publicly expressing personal political, religious, or cultural views while acting in a professional capacity. Impartiality should be maintained in all communications with students, whānau, and colleagues, ensuring that interactions remain respectful, inclusive, and free from personal bias.

What does this mean for Teachers?

9. The Teaching Council has previously set out that:

In matters such as this, Ngā Tikanga Matatika mō te Haepapa Ngāiotanga | Code of Professional Responsibility provides guidance. Ngā Tikanga Matatika | Code includes a commitment to learners that teachers will “be fair and effectively manage assumptions and personal beliefs” [Code 2.6].

10. Examples of behaviour that demonstrate this include:

- a. critically reflecting on how a teacher's own beliefs or bias may impact on their teaching practice and the achievement of learners with different abilities, needs, backgrounds, genders, identities, and culture.
 - b. helping learners to think critically about issues and understand different views, theories, perspectives, and experiences.
 - c. presenting issues or subject matter in an open way and being transparent about their own beliefs or perspective.
 - d. encouraging learners to be engaged citizens.
11. Some examples of behaviour that do not demonstrate this are:
- a. using their authority as a teacher to undermine the personal beliefs of their learners or inappropriately influence them to take a course of action.
 - b. encouraging learners to vote for a particular person, party, or policy.

Further Advice

12. Staff can seek guidance from the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand for further advice.
13. Principals and Boards can contact Te Whakarōputanga Kaitiaki o te Kura o Aotearoa | the New Zealand School Boards Association.

Nāku noa nā



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