

## Reminder of bans in schools

The PSA has received requests from members to send a bulletin outlining the bans that are currently in place for School Administrative and Support (SAS) Staff. The Schools Departmental Committee has also passed a motion requesting PSA industrial staff prepare a bulletin updating members on all the bans currently in place for schools, providing some background and history to these bans.

### **Current bans**

The current ongoing bans that members are asked to continue supporting are:

- FM Web
- Cash flow budgeting
- SMS texting to parents
- Absences – primary schools
- Use of third-party software
- AusKey

Rationale for the current ongoing bans

### **FM Web**

This ban mainly affects General Assistants, although some Admin Managers also took on work involving using FM Web. Issues arose around 2008/2009, where the PSA raised with the Minister of Education and Training the concept of having an enhanced role for GAs in site management which would include FM Web.

Instead of pursuing the opportunity, the Department floated the idea of privatising GAs. The PSA pushed back lobbying against privatisation. The Department did not proceed with privatisation and the Department advised there is no plan to privatise at this point and that this was not a preferred option.

However, the PSA was left unclear on this issue and the Department did not proceed with a review of an enhanced role of GAs in schools. The ban on FM Web was placed by the PSA to progress the issue of site management in schools and continues to be in effect.

### **Cash flow budgeting**

This ban has been in place since the 1990s. This ban was put into effect because cash flow budgeting is not the job of SAS Staff. Cash flow budgeting is the responsibility of the principal. SAS Staff (in particular Admin Managers) are not employed to perform this work and are not being remunerated for it.

The PSA does not support SAS Staff undertaking work they are not being recognised for and for this reason there is a ban on SAS Staff undertaking this work. Another historical reason for the ban was because the Department had not addressed PSA concerns about the lack of compatibility between Windows-based programs and Oasis and the fact this created a duplication of work.

The PSA was seeking that cash flow budgeting be integrated with OASIS. The introduction of LMBR has obviously has an impact on this issue. However, the substantive concern that cash flow budgeting is not the responsibility of the School Administrative Manager (SAM) remains.

### ***SMS texting to parents***

The Department has requested in the past that SAS Staff send texts to parents around various school issues or updates. This greatly adds to what is a very high workload for our already over-stretched SAS staff. SMS texting to parents/carers about student absences also led to SAS Staff dealing with an increased number of phone calls from irate parents. Therefore the PSA has put a ban on this work.

### ***Absences – primary schools***

The PSA is aware pressure has been applied to SAS staff employed in primary schools in an attempt to influence them to perform this task. This ban was implemented due to the disparity in staffing levels between high schools and primary schools with the same student numbers. High schools have a higher SAS-staff-to-student ratio and would typically allocate the task of data entry for student absences to one particular SAS staff member.

As this is not the case in primary schools, the PSA regards it as inequitable and inherently unfair to hold primary schools to the same workload standards without the appropriate staffing/resource allocation. The PSA is aware

that Home School Liaison Officers (HSLO) have applied pressure to primary school SAS staff in an attempt to influence them to perform this task. The PSA opposes any unfair pressure being placed on SASS and advises SASS in primary schools to adhere to this ban. This ban includes the entering of data for late arrivals/early leavers (partial absences).

### ***Use of third party software***

The PSA has a ban in place on the use of third party software due the duplication of data entry impacting on the workload of SAS staff. The Department has advised it will discourage the renewal of current third party licences and work to improve functions available to schools through LMBR. As soon as the Department advises of these improvements the PSA will consider lifting the ban.

### ***AusKey***

PSA members advised the Union that Unique Student Identifier implementation (USI) and AUSKey workloads had been delegated to them in VET High Schools. The PSA issued a direction to members to ban duties associated with this work and wrote to the Department threatening a dispute if this implementation wasn't immediately suspended. As a result the Department put the implementation on hold.

### ***Comments or questions***

If you have a question in relation to this bulletin please email [schools@psa.asn.au](mailto:schools@psa.asn.au)

