

## General Assistants in Schools: Cleaning hard surfaces

The Department of Education (DoE) has had cleaning contracts with external providers for many years.

The current cleaning contract runs between 2019 through to 2023. The specific requirements of the cleaning contract are contained in the *Principals A-Z Guide to School Cleaning 2019-2023*. This document is available on the DoE intranet and is available to all DoE staff, including school principals.

The purpose of the cleaning contract, as specified in the *Principals A-Z Guide to School Cleaning 2019-2023* is to:

- provide a sanitary, clean and tidy environment consistent with the education function
- ensure safe and hygienic use of the Facilities by teachers, staff, students, parents and any other persons who have reason to visit the Facilities.

From time to time, schools direct General Assistants (GAs) to high pressure clean (Gurney/Karcher) areas of the school such as external hard surfaces, structures, drains, ramps/steps to buildings or demountable classrooms.

***The Principals A-Z Guide to School Cleaning 2019-2023 says (refer to page 29):***

Major Requirement	Specific Requirement	Relevant Information	Required Standard	Service Type	Rectification Response Time
<b>9.0 External Hard Surfaces, Structures, Drains, Ramps/steps to buildings or demountables</b>	9.1 All bitumen, concrete and other hard surfaces or similar ground surfaces in areas such as carparks, patios, paths, walkways, covered walks, assembly areas, recreation areas, must be free from cobwebs, nests, debris, build-up of grease, loose litter, stains, spillages and bird droppings.	External areas must include verandas, covered walkways, sunshade areas and covered outdoor learning areas  (COLAs), wherever these areas are not fully enclosed on all sides.  Litter, rubbish etc. is to be removed and not simply blown into gardens or other such areas.	No evidence of litter, cobwebs or accumulation of ingrained/impacted dirt, particularly in crevices, corners and edging, no build-up of grease in carpark areas.	Regular	1 hr

In addition to the *Principals A-Z Guide to School Cleaning 2019-2023*, the GA Role Description states that:



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A General Assistant **may be required**, subject to Workplace Health and Safety obligations, to perform duties from the range listed:

Identify and report maintenance / safety issues to the role supervisor; undertake minor maintenance of buildings and equipment **not covered by contracts** or requiring a qualified tradesperson.

The cleaning contract allows for schools to have regular cleaning of its hard surfaces and should additional areas require attention, the cleaning contract provides for rectification within **one hour** of being reported to either the facility management contractor for the school or the Asset Management Unit for the school's region on 132 779.

The cleaning contract also requires that

*“regular cleaning services are to be completed by 08:00 am or at other time as agreed to, in writing, by the Principal, on each term day, including pupil-free days or other staff only days. The only exception to this is where there is a day-cleaner at the school, whereupon the functions of the day-cleaner may be undertaken during the day provided that there is no disruption to activity or function of the school.”*

If you are asked to clean the hard surfaces at your school, the union advises GA members to politely and professionally refer your school to the *Principals A-Z Guide to School Cleaning 2019-2023*.

As the DoE's cleaning contract is funded by NSW taxpayers, a school should be fully utilising the services of its cleaning contractors. This will ensure NSW taxpayers and the school community receive good value for money.

Should your school continue to insist that you undertake cleaning of areas covered by the cleaning contract, your matter may require escalation to senior officers of the DoE. If your school insists that you undertake cleaning of areas covered by the cleaning contract, please contact the PSAs Member Support Centre for advice and assistance.

