

PSA GA and FA Update: Training, Cleaning, Language and Workload

On 18 May the General Assistants Advisory Group delegates met to talk about the following issues and work through possible solutions with our PSA Industrial Staff.

Conversations and Language Use

During the meeting it was noted that some conversations happening within the workplace have become out of line with the current decade. Please be mindful that what once was considered acceptable banter in the workplace may be offensive to staff or the school community.

The [Code of Conduct](#) and the newly added [Social Media Policy](#) cover the more appropriate language that can be used.

Second Engagements and Other Work

Be mindful that any employment outside of Department of Education must be disclosed to your Principal regardless if it is related or not to the GA role.

Please seek the help of the PSA if you have any questions or need advice. Members are reminded that seeking help from other organisations, that don't know the employment rights and responsibilities of Gas, when you have an issue may hinder your overall outcome and that the PSA is the best source of information or support.

Call the PSA on 1300 772 679.

Training and PLNTS

Access to training, especially face to face, is an uphill battle that all non-teaching staff are currently fighting. It is not just the GA's feeling they don't

have enough work specific training. The GA Advisory Group has been fighting along with the Schools Departmental Committee for better access to training and will continue until we get a positive outcome.

Your delegates also want to highlight that there is mandatory training for GAs and recommends all members have these items completed within the time guidelines. This extends to any causals that the school puts on. As these are mandatory the school must give you time within working hours to complete the training.

PSA Position on GA Staffing in Schools

The PSA's position on staffing is that there should be at least one fulltime GA in every school. The GA Advisory Group and PSA staff have asked for a review of the staffing formula and have provided a lot of feedback on the issues with GA staffing and workload.

School numbers are growing and we now have only one GA for 1800 students in some schools. In some areas the Department are combining schools. For example, in Armidale two schools closed and a super school was built, with another in Murwillumbah happening over the next few years.

It is important that all schools are properly resourced with a GA.

Cleaning Hard Surfaces

Members are reminded that current cleaning contracts cover hard surface cleaning. The PSA



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has sent out a detailed bulletin about hard surface cleaning that can be accessed [HERE](#)

School Holidays – quick reminders for GAs

1. Members should also make sure that risk assessments are done if you are working over the holidays.
2. If your school is part of the Come Share Our Space program the risk assessment should include reviewing this and any Covid restrictions that may be in place.
3. General Assistants are not required to look after contractors.
4. Stay safe - make sure you have the contact name and phone number of the person, usually the Principal, who you are going to ring or text each day you arrive and leave the school.

Farewell and Happy Retirement

The GA Advisory Group had a chance to officially say happy retirement to Brett Hammond in true GA style with a BBQ lunch. He will be missed and has left some big shoes to fill.

Next meeting is 17th August 2021

