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Surplus staffing - advice for when your school has a falling roll

An actual or projected falling school roll in any given year may lead the Ministry of Education to advise your school that it needs to reduce teaching staff for the following school year.

This document explains the process involved and offers you advice about what you can expect and who you should talk to if your job is affected.

Fewer students may mean fewer teachers required

At the end of term three each year, the Ministry of Education advises each school of “provisional staffing” numbers — that is the number of teachers and units that the MOE will fund for the following year.

In basic terms, if student numbers have dropped in the past year, or the projected numbers for Year 9 coming in the next year are expected to be

PPTA represents the professional and industrial interests of some 17,500 secondary teachers in state secondary, area, manual training and intermediate schools, as well as tutors in community education institutions, alternative education and activity centres, and principals in secondary and area schools.

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lower than usual, then your school might be told it needs to lose teaching staff.

Schools must follow the surplus staffing procedures

The amount of the reduction of teaching staff is commonly expressed in full-time teacher equivalents (FTTEs).

Where a school is required to reduce staffing and/or units the school must follow the procedures set out in the following sections of the Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement (STCA) or Area School Teachers' Collective Agreement (ASTCA):

- [STCA 3.9 Surplus staffing and merger provisions](#)
- [STCA Appendix H - Surplus staffing procedures](#)
- [ASTCA 2.13 Surplus staffing provisions](#)
- [ASTCA Appendix 5 - Surplus staffing procedures](#)

Contact your PPTA field officer for advice and guidance

This can often be a very stressful time for you and your colleagues. To assist you in this situation, each PPTA field office has a surplus staffing coordinator available for you to contact. The field officer for your school is also available to provide assistance.

Making contact with us is particularly important if you believe that you have been disadvantaged by decisions made by your employer at any time during the surplus staffing process.

Your local field office contact details are:

- Auckland: auckland@ppta.org.nz ph 09 815 8610
- Hamilton: hamilton@ppta.org.nz ph 07 849 0168
- Palmerston North: palmerston@ppta.org.nz ph 06 358 4036
- Christchurch: christchurch@ppta.org.nz ph 03 366 6524
- Dunedin: dunedin@ppta.org.nz ph 03 477 1311

The reduction of staff requires a three step process

At all times it's important that your employer is consulting with you throughout the process.

First step in the staff reduction process

The employer is expected to try to meet the FTTE reduction by "attrition". This means that if the reduction is small and there have been (for example) resignations or retirements in the school, the process may stop at this point.

Second step in the staff reduction process

Where a school is unable to meet reductions at the attrition stage, the employer then moves to the second step: calling for volunteers from the teaching staff. Anyone who is considering volunteering should speak with their PPTA field officer to check that they understand the options that are available. The employer has the final say over whether to accept a voluntary offer or not.

Third step in the staff reduction process

Where a school cannot meet the required reductions by attrition or voluntary offers they will need to move to the third and final step. PPTA will assign a surplus staffing nominee to the school. The nominee and field officer are available to speak to your branch in greater detail about the process.

The final and third step is the development of a curriculum and pastoral needs analysis (CAPNA) which assists the employer to make decisions on which position/s need to be disestablished or reduced in status (lose units) based on objective grounds. Issues such as competence or how well-liked a teacher is should never be considered in a CAPNA process. The nominee will monitor the surplus staffing meeting where decisions are made by the employer to make sure the provisions of the relevant collective agreement are followed. It is important to note that the nominee is not a decision maker.

The surplus staffing meeting is in two parts. The first part is to make provisional decisions. The meeting is then adjourned to give affected teachers the opportunity to seek advice and make submissions. The meeting is then reconvened and the second part of the meeting is to consider any new information and make final decisions.