



New Zealand
Teachers Council

Te Pouherenga Kaiako o Aotearoa

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Ngā mihi mahana ki a koutou
Warm greetings to you all

Good Character and Fit to be a Teacher Policy

After nearly three years of consultation with the profession, the Council has approved a formal policy to determine 'good character and fit to be a teacher'. There is a transition period until February 2008 when the policy takes full effect.

When you, as principal or head teacher, endorse an application for gaining or maintaining registration as a teacher, one of the most important roles you perform is to endorse that the applicant is "fit to be a teacher". (This is quite separate from your endorsing that they are competent teachers, using the Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions as the criteria). The Council also needs to ascertain that the teacher is 'of good character' and a police vet is obtained for that purpose. Occasionally, teachers let us down and behave in ways that call their good character or fitness to be a teacher into question. These teachers are dealt with using due process. But by far the majority live up to the judgements made that they are indeed of 'good character' and 'fit to be a teacher'.

In 2005, the Council began to consult with the profession on the criteria and evidence for this important registration policy. It was decided to combine the previously separate criteria for good character and fit to be a teacher into one policy document. Opinions were canvassed on three drafts until this final list was determined:

That the teacher

- a) has a police vet satisfactory to the Council;
- b) displays respect for persons, for cultural and social values of Aotearoa New Zealand, for the law and for the views of others;
- c) upholds the public and professional reputation of teachers;
- d) promotes and nurtures the safety of learners within his or her care;
- e) is reliable and trustworthy in carrying out duties;

- f) is mentally and physically fit to carry out the teaching role safely and satisfactorily.

Please note that this last criterion does not refer to any disability that an applicant has that does not impact on their ability to carry out the teaching role. The Council is mindful of the need not to discriminate in terms of the Human Rights legislation.

This policy will apply to all registration applications received on the new (November 2007) application forms, which can now be downloaded from our website. Applications made on the old forms will be accepted up to the end of January. From February 2008, all applications for registration or renewing a Practising Certificate or for a Limited Authority to Teach will need to be made on the new application forms that have the new criteria to be endorsed by the professional leader.

The policy and further information about its provisions are available on the Council's website <http://www.teacherscouncil.govt.nz/>. If you require further information, you can contact Jenny Thomas, Manager Registration, jenny.thomas@teacherscouncil.govt.nz or Stephen Macartney, Policy Analyst stephen.macartney@teacherscouncil.govt.nz or myself.

Thank you for your contribution to the development of this policy. All our policies are periodically reviewed and we welcome any feedback on implementation of these revised provisions in the policy.

World Teachers Day Conference 26 October 2007

Earlier this year, the Council negotiated with UNESCO to have World Teachers Day celebrated in Aotearoa New Zealand on October 26 rather than October 5 which falls within school holidays. The Council celebrated World Teachers Day by hosting a one day conference *Excelling in Teaching Ū ki te Ako*, with a major focus on the Council's *Learning to Teach* induction research project

We sponsored thirty early career teachers to attend and made the conference free of charge to encourage as many other practitioners as possible to come. Time was provided on the programme for sector groups to discuss the issues and the notes were collected and disseminated after the conference. Evaluations showed that the programme was highly valued by attendees and there is now an expectation that the Council will be following through with policies and pilot programmes to strengthen the induction experiences of early career teachers. There will be ongoing consultation with the profession on how those steps will shape up.

In Conclusion

I welcome comment and feedback from you on any of this matter or other issues you may wish to raise with me. You may contact me at peter.lind@teacherscouncil.govt.nz.

Maungarongo ki te whenua. Whakaaro pai ki ngā tāngata kātoa
Seasons greetings

Dr Peter Lind

Director