



News Report Activity: Case 5

Case 5: 'New Plymouth teacher censured for serious misconduct.' (Taranaki Daily News, 2015).

HANNAH LEE
Last updated 12:03, August 14 2015



Fairfax NZ

Francis Douglas Memorial College principal Martin Chamberlain said Johannes Stefanus Meyer no longer works at the school.

A New Plymouth teacher who called a student "cowardly" and "depressed" and shouldered him through a classroom door has been censured.

Francis Douglas Memorial College department head Johannes Stefanus Meyer has kept his teaching registration but not his job after being found guilty of serious misconduct by the New Zealand Teachers Disciplinary Tribunal. Meyer was on leave following the incident. FDMC principal Martin Chamberlain confirmed Meyer was no longer employed at the school, however he was not aware of the tribunal decision so could not comment further.

Meyer was unable to be contacted for comment.

The tribunal decision released this week found Meyer to have "behaved in an unprofessional manner amounting to serious misconduct", during a Year 12 woodwork class on November 4, 2014.

Meyer verbally abused the student, calling him a "coward" and saying "you are pretty cheerful for a depressed kid."

"Following this exchange, in the course of attempting to eject the student from the classroom, the Respondent shouldered him through the door," the tribunal said.





The tribunal outlined a key concern around Meyer's comments about the student's mental health.

"The respondent referred to that fact the student was suffering from depression, with the result that he did or may have disclosed this to other students."

In his submission to the Complaints Assessment Committee (CAC), Meyer accepted the particulars of the charges against him amounted to serious misconduct.

Meyer did not apply for suppression of his name or identifying details.

The tribunal indicated from the outset, this case had caused them some concerns.

Both Meyer and the student complainant had told the CAC Meyer's behaviour should have cost him his teaching licence, the tribunal concluded Meyer would keep his teaching registration.

"What this case involves, putting it at the very highest level, is a possible breach of confidentiality in relation to a sensitive topic, an abusive criticism and a technical assault, all of them having taken place on one occasion.

"That being so, we do not agree with the parties that this is a case in which it would be appropriate for us to make an order cancelling the respondent's registration."

The CAC asked Meyer to pay 50 per cent of the costs of their investigation into the incident, which totalled \$1618.94, and half of the costs and disbursements of the student's legal costs in the tribunal.

The student was given 10 working days from the tribunal's decision, on July 10, to apply for costs.

