



NZEI TE RIU ROA

ORGANISING UNION DISCUSSIONS IN YOUR SCHOOL

As a worksite representative, or member leader, from time to time you will hold union discussions within your school. These are an opportunity to bring your colleagues together to provide them with updates, get their opinions, have a discussion or celebrate a win!

You are stronger when more of you are informed, involved, sharing your thoughts and standing together as NZEI Te Riu Roa members. You have the power to win the support, respect and value you deserve.

Union meetings are held in various ways. They can be small or large meetings, online or in-person at your school. Union discussions don't have to be formal or take a long time. They can be organised in a way that suits you and your colleagues.

Having union discussions in your workplace can remove barriers to participation and help ensure everyone gets a say.

Tips for organising effective union discussions

Be clear about the purpose of the discussion. The purpose will influence how and when you get together. Is it to give feedback on an update, find out the pressing issues for your colleagues, show unity or a time to celebrate?

Let everyone know ahead of time. It's a good idea to keep your principal in the loop, and your colleagues will be better prepared to engage if they have notice of their upcoming union meeting.

Share info ahead of time if you can. You could leave info on staffroom tables, put up key questions on wall charts or the whiteboard, ask others to distribute information in their syndicate meetings, include information in daily notes, or make a quick announcement at morning tea or a staff meeting.

Ensure as many people as possible can input. Breaking into small groups, bus-stop activities or giving feedback using post-it notes can give more people a chance to have a say.

Asking for email feedback is tempting but often doesn't get much response. Email feedback also means people don't hear what others have to say. If you need to do this, try to also have a quick face-to-face discussion once the feedback has been gathered.

Informal feedback is fine. If you are not able to organise a staff discussion, approach your colleagues informally over a few days. Preferably they will still have the opportunity to discuss as a small group. Keep track of the opinions and ideas you hear.

Forwarding all the emails you receive to your colleagues can lead to information fatigue. If there is a need to share or discuss things with your colleagues, it will normally say this in the email you receive. At the bottom of NZEI Te Riu Roa emails, it says who has received it, so check this before forwarding.

Feedback to people. When your colleagues have given input let them know you have passed it on. When you're notified of the outcomes, share that too. This way they see their input is purposeful.