

**151)**



## **JOHN PAUL II HIGH SCHOOL – GREYMOUTH**

### **SCHOOL BALL PROCEDURES**

Revised May 2004

#### **Preamble**

Each year there is publicity around the school ball, quite often this relates to when the school's responsibility begins and ends. After-ball functions sometimes attract media attention as they can have issues such as the payment of school fees as a pre-condition to attendance. The following is a response to some of the legal issues that may arise, bearing in mind that given the nature of an event such as the school ball there may be some uncertainty about the legal issues and advice should be sought if there are specific issues or concerns.

A notice to students attending the ball, and to their parents, is a good practice and is commonly provided by schools. This notice should set out important rules relating to attendance at the school ball, including the school's position on pre-ball and after-ball functions, behaviour, dress and any conditions for entry into the ball.

#### **School Responsibilities**

The school ball is an event that is prearranged through the school, and accordingly the school is responsible for the supervision and hosting of students and their partners in the same way the school is responsible for other activities and events away from the school. This means student conduct comes within the jurisdiction of section 14 of the Education Act relating to behaviour and discipline of students. It is within the principal's jurisdiction to stand down or suspend a student for gross misconduct (or, less likely, continual disobedience) that may be a harmful example to other students.

#### **Pre-Ball Functions**

While pre-ball functions are not strictly the responsibility of the school, events at a pre-ball function may impact on the management of the ball itself, and the school should therefore provide guidelines to students and parents as to the school's expectations of pre-ball function hosts. For example:

- The maximum number of guests to which these functions should be limited.
- A reminder of licensing arrangements, and the fact that the serving of liquor to minors is illegal.
- The need for food to be served.
- Supervision of the function.
- A reminder those students and their partners who arrive at the ball under the influence of alcohol will be refused entry.

#### **The Ball**

The conduct of the ball itself is the responsibility of the school, and the notice to students and parents should point out the rules that will apply. In particular:

- That there will be no alcohol at the ball and anyone suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or in possession of alcohol will be refused entry and/or asked to leave, as the case may be.

**152)**

- That there will be no smoking at the ball.
- Outlining the dress standard including an expectation that students will make their partners aware of the dress standard and the appropriate level of social behaviour, a failure to adhere to the standards will result in the student being excluded from the ball.
- The school should ensure a workable and secure coat check arrangement. It is possible that if a system were not properly supervised and administered that the school may be liable for the value of any loss of items on the grounds that reasonable care was not taken of the items held on behalf of students and their partners. A disclaimer may also help, either on tickets (if the coats check system uses chits) or by way of notice advising that valuable items should not be left in clothing and the school will not be responsible for the loss of valuables. This will obviously depend on the school's arrangements for storage of clothing and valuables.
- The school does not have jurisdiction over partners attending the ball, however as with any hosting arrangement, a partner can be excluded and removed from the property if they are intoxicated or displaying any inappropriate behaviour.
- The cost of tickets and conditions of entry to the school ball are matters for the school to decide. The only legal impediment to any condition of entry are the prohibited grounds of discrimination set out in the Human Rights Act 1993, such as race, colour, disability, religious beliefs and so on. It should be noted that not all of these grounds of discrimination apply in the school context, for example, age is not applicable. The requirement for students and their parents to have paid school fees as a condition of entry may be considered as there is no apparent legal restriction to this approach.
- The school will be responsible to ensure that a student who is turned away or removed from the ball for a breach of the rules is in a condition to leave and, as with a removal from school, parents should be contacted and asked to make arrangements to pick up their child.
- The notice to students and parents should make clear that the rules contained in the notice relating to responsibility, attendance and behaviour at the ball, and recommended guidelines for pre-ball functions are a condition of entry, and will be deemed to have been accepted by the students as a condition of attendance.

### **After-Ball Functions**

The school is not responsible for after-ball functions, and this fact shall be made clear in the notice to students and parents. The notice should set out the parameters of the school's responsibility for students (which will be the period during which the ball itself takes place, say from 7.30 pm to midnight), and expressly provide that the school's responsibility shall cease at the end of the ball.

Guidelines to students and parents regarding the school's expectations of the hosts of after-ball functions could be provided in the notice, along similar lines to the pre-ball function guidelines.

**Reviewed and Approved:** \_\_\_\_\_  
A&R Health & Safety Committee Leader

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Next Review Date:** \_\_\_\_\_