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Union lodges underpayments claim for staff at Redeemer Baptist School

The union representing teachers and support staff in non-government schools in NSW and the ACT has lodged a claim in the Federal Court to recover payment for former members of staff at Redeemer Baptist School in North Parramatta.

A NSW parliamentary inquiry was recently held after [media reports](#) alleging heavy-handed control of students through excessive restrictions on dress, study choices and contact with the outside world.

“There were also allegations that the school is not paying its staff – the school claims its teachers are ‘volunteers’ not employees,” said Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews.

The union is seeking compensation for two staff members who were not paid while engaged to perform work.

“The union believes Redeemer Baptist has broken the law by not paying staff,” Matthews said. “There would be other staff who also have legitimate claims for compensation.”

Questions were also raised in the parliamentary inquiry as to whether the school had complied with work health and safety and workers’ compensation laws.

There were also disturbing allegations about child safety. “Practices such as students and teachers sharing bedrooms raised serious child protection concerns,” Matthews said.

Matthews said the school appeared to exert extreme control over both staff and students, limiting their contact with the outside world.

“This has had a chilling effect on staff seeking union support,” she said. “Redeemer claims an entitlement to take control of staff property, exerting a high degree of financial control.”

Teachers and professional and operational staff in non-government schools are covered by enterprise agreements that provide for salaries broadly comparable with salaries paid to teachers and support staff in NSW government schools.

If there is no enterprise agreement, a minimum federal award and legislated conditions (including superannuation) apply. It appears that Redeemer Baptist’s teacher “volunteers” were not receiving even these minimum conditions.

“The union is determined to ensure the school meets its legal obligations to staff,” Matthews said. “This includes proper payment of wages, superannuation and all other entitlements.”

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The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch represents over 32,000 teachers, principals and support staff in Catholic and independent schools, early childhood centres and post-secondary colleges.

Authorised by Carol Matthews, IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary