

**INQUIRY INTO TEACHER SHORTAGES IN NEW SOUTH
WALES**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 21 June 2022

Partially
Confidential

Prior to the cut off date in 2021 for being double vaccinated for covid-19, I have successfully applied for 12 months leave without pay. This was to spend more time with my children, to look after my mental health as it had taken a downturn due to the mandates, and also, because I refused to get vaccinated. I did not (and still don't) believe they are safe or effective. During this time, I was working out the best path forward for myself and my children, one that didn't involve me crying all day every day. I applied for Worker's Compensation as well.

After the cut off date for the department to be double vaccinated, I was immediately investigated by PES and found guilty of misconduct. The department suspended my approved leave (it was accepted in October) and a few days before Christmas I was sent an email stating I was dismissed with failure to comply with mandates on my severance papers despite assuring the department I would comply (to try and hold out longer without losing my job) prior to my return in October 2022 and I still have Worker's Compensation claim in the process. My understanding is, the department are unable to cancel my approved leave, they even stated on their webpage that if leave was approved before a specific time, it would be honoured. This was not the case for me.

As I was mentally in a terrible position and not able to give my kids the mum they deserved, I had to move in with my parents. This also meant I moved with them when they did as I was not able to afford rent to stay. After we did this, I was given notice that I could be reinstated if I took Novovax. My principal informed my head teacher I would be doing this before I had made the decision for myself. I wanted to make sure it was safe. I was not happy to be taking any Covid-19 vaccine that did not have years of rigorous testing. However, I decided to get my first shot a few months later and informed the Department and PES.

Before getting the second shot, I emailed and called to get written confirmation that I would get my original position back. After a length wait of about a month, I received my written confirmation. As my principal had told the department I was not getting Novovax, I could not return to that position upon getting the second shot like initially stated. At no time during all this was I supported by my principal, instead I was removed as quick as possible so that he wouldn't have to deal with me. The letter did state that I could apply for a new position after getting the second shot.

By this time, my hesitancy to get the second vaccination had increased. I've had a reaction to the first shot and refuse to get the second. No doctor will write me an exemption though. I watched as my mother with an auto-immune disease had to fight tooth and nail and jump through hoops to get her exemption. She was told by her doctor initially to get no covid-19 vaccine as she would have a relapse that would be permanent or cause death. A few months later her same doctor told her it was safe. How is that possible? My sister not has regular severe migraines after getting a double vaccination to be able to maintain work and support her daughter. I know of other family and friends who also have serious health issues since getting vaccinated. As well as still contracting covid-19!

All I wanted to do was do my job and teach students. To help them with their education and support them emotionally where needed while also supporting myself and children. Instead I was immediately thrown out the door because of a personal medical choice that has nothing to do with other people. Now I find out that mandates have dropped and employees who haven't not been double vaccinated are given alternative work and might be able to return to teaching! This is extremely unfair, why was I immediately dismissed, while there are others still employed and not double vaccinated. What is the department going to do for me now that they have caused me so much distress and anxiety?? All of which has had a major impact on my family, especially my two young children.