

School Assistants Ballot - 13 questions

Q#	Action	Ballot text, and what it means in plain English	What this looks like	What this does NOT mean
1	Work stoppages	<p><i>An unlimited number of stoppages of all work for durations of between five (5) minutes and twenty-four (24) hours?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to stop all work for a defined period. This covers everything from a brief five-minute symbolic stoppage through to a full-day strike.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A five- or ten-minute stoppage at a set time to hold a brief meeting, read a statement, or mark a moment of collective solidarity • A one- or two-hour stoppage to attend an AEU meeting or rally • A half-day or full-day strike 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voting yes doesn't mean a strike is imminent. Branch Council would make a decision on taking strike action, so sub-branches would be involved in decision-making. • It doesn't mean schools would close without warning. The employer must be given reasonable notice of any stoppage, and schools would have time to make arrangements - including notifying families. • It doesn't mean we'd jump straight to a full-day strike. We would start with shorter stoppages and escalate only if needed.
2	Speaking out	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic stoppages or interruptions of work to provide comments, statements or any other information concerning the AEU's campaign in connection with a new enterprise agreement including on personal social media, to members of the public, parents, and/or the media?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to take short breaks from work to share information about our bargaining campaign - whether that's talking to parents at the school gate, distributing AEU materials, or posting on personal social media.</p> <p>Public sector employees are ordinarily constrained by codes of conduct around making public comments. This action gives protected legal cover to speak publicly about our campaign during work time without risking disciplinary consequences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking to a parent at drop-off or pick-up about what we're seeking in bargaining • Sharing AEU campaign materials in the staffroom or at a school event • Posting on your personal Facebook, Instagram, or other social media about our bargaining campaign during a break or spare period • With the support of the AEU Branch office, speaking to a journalist about why our campaign matters to you. (Members should always coordinate with the Branch office before engaging with media.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't mean abandoning your class or your duties for long periods. The interruption should be brief and reasonable. • It doesn't oblige you to speak publicly. This action protects you if you choose to - it doesn't require you to. • It doesn't change your obligations to students while you're teaching or supporting them.
3	Wearing campaign material	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic bans on performing work unless wearing or displaying a union t-shirt, badge, insignia, slogans and/or any other material concerning the AEU campaign in connection with a new enterprise agreement?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to wear AEU campaign t-shirts, badges, or other campaign material at work - and to refuse to work unless they're wearing campaign material. It's about visible, collective identity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wearing an AEU campaign t-shirt to work instead of (or over) your usual work clothing • Wearing an AEU badge about bargaining • Displaying campaign stickers, posters, or slogans in your workspace • Everyone in the staffroom wearing the same campaign shirt on a coordinated day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't override genuine safety requirements (e.g. protective clothing in a workshop). Use your professional judgement. • It doesn't mean students or parents will be confused or alarmed - campaign clothing is commonplace during bargaining periods and our merch is positive and proud.
4	Email signature	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite bans or limitations on sending emails unless the email contains a statement in the signature block highlighting the AEU's campaign in connection with a new enterprise agreement?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to add a campaign message to the signature block of all their work emails - and to refuse to send emails without it. Every email you send, whether internal or external, would carry a short statement about our campaign.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sentence or short paragraph at the bottom of every email you send, below your usual signature, explaining that AEU members are bargaining for better staffing, conditions, and support in schools • The AEU will provide the wording so that the message is consistent across the membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't mean you stop sending emails. You keep doing your job - you just add a campaign line to your signature. • It doesn't mean the message will be inappropriate. The AEU will provide professional, factual wording that you can copy into your email settings.

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5	Ban on professional learning	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic bans on undertaking professional learning or engaging in professional learning communities?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to refuse to participate in professional learning activities - including, for teaching staff, professional learning communities. This means you would not attend PL sessions, PLC meetings, or Directorate-directed professional development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not attending scheduled professional learning sessions or PLC meetings • Declining to participate in Directorate-directed training or workshops • Not completing mandatory professional learning modules (other than any genuine safety-related training) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't mean you stop learning or developing as a professional. You can still collaborate with colleagues and improve your practice on your own terms. This ban is about directed, formal professional learning activities. • It doesn't affect your ability to seek out professional development that you find valuable and want to do. • For school assistants: our position is that professional learning should be specifically designed for SAs, delivered by specialists, and conducted during paid time. This action demonstrates that the current PL arrangements are not meeting those standards.
6	Ban on meetings (except student safety)	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic bans or limitations on attendance at meetings, except those related to student safety?</i></p> <p>This authorises school assistants to refuse to attend meetings - with the exception of meetings directly related to student safety. This is a broader ban than the equivalent teaching staff action: it covers all meetings, not just those convened by the Directorate or ESO.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declining to attend staff meetings, team meetings, or planning meetings unless they directly relate to student safety • Not attending Directorate or ESO briefings • Still attending meetings that are about student safety (e.g. a meeting about a specific student's safety plan) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't mean you can never attend any meeting. The safety exception ensures that meetings essential for student safety continue. • It doesn't mean being rude or confrontational. You let the convenor know that you are exercising the ban.
7	Stoppages during ALP MLA visits	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic stoppages of work to coincide with a visit to the workplace by an Australian Labor Party Member of the ACT Legislative Assembly?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to stop work when an ACT Labor MLA visits your school. The ACT Government is a Labor government. This action makes a political point: the people responsible for funding and resourcing our schools can't deny us what we need while using our workplaces as photo-ops.</p> <p>The AEU would coordinate this action so members know when it applies and would be on hand to help out.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If an ACT Labor MLA notifies a school that they will be visiting, the AEU Branch will let them know about our action and talk to them about what we're seeking in bargaining • If the MLA decides to go ahead with the visit, members would not perform any work in relation to the visit - no extra tidying, no hosting duties, no participation in photo opportunities or announcements • Teaching and learning continue as normal. What stops is the work of facilitating and hosting the MLA's visit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't mean refusing to supervise students or leaving students unsupervised. Student safety always comes first. • It doesn't apply to visits by non-Labor MLAs or by anyone who is not an elected member of the ACT Legislative Assembly.
8	Ban on implementing new system initiatives	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic bans or limitations on the implementation of any Education Directorate system initiative at a school, except where it poses a risk to student safety?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to refuse to implement new programs, initiatives, or reforms that have been pushed out by the Education Directorate - unless not implementing them would pose a risk to student safety. This is about the constant flow of new systems, frameworks, and initiatives that schools are expected to absorb, often with inadequate resourcing and insufficient consultation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not participating in the rollout of a new Directorate system or process • Declining to attend training, workshops, or meetings related to a new initiative • Not implementing new administrative procedures or platforms introduced by the Directorate • Continuing to do your existing work using your existing systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't mean abandoning existing practices or systems that are already embedded in your school. • The safety exception ensures that if a Directorate initiative directly concerns student safety, it proceeds as normal. • It doesn't prevent your school from making its own local decisions about how to run programs and support students.

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9	Work-to-rule	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic limitations on the performance of work, whereby employees perform no more than the minimum required by the rules of their workplace (work-to-rule)?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to do exactly - and only - what we are formally required to do. No more. The employer relies heavily on staff goodwill. Teachers stay late, arrive early, work through breaks, take on tasks that aren't their responsibility, and absorb duties that should be done by someone else. School assistants cover for absent colleagues, do work outside their position description, and stay beyond their paid hours. Work-to-rule means withdrawing that goodwill and performing only what's required by your contract, position description, and enterprise agreement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not doing work during evenings or weekends • Working normal school operating hours, then going home. The EA specifies that standard working hours for the purposes of calculating pay and leave balances are from 8:30am-4:51pm each day but this does not determine your required hours of attendance. The custom and practice of the ACT system is that once students have left for the day, unless you have set meetings, you can leave work for the day. The span of time used to determine your pay and leave balance is in recognition that you use your professional judgement of when you complete your work outside of face to face time with students. • Performing only the duties set out in your role or timetable • Not volunteering for extra duties, committees, or programs beyond your formal obligations • Not covering for colleagues informally • Following timetabled and rostered duties only, and taking your full unpaid lunch break 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't mean doing your job badly. It means doing your job - and only your job - properly and within your paid hours. • It doesn't mean abandoning students. Your core duties - teaching, learning support, supervision as rostered - continue as normal. • It doesn't mean being unhelpful to colleagues. It means not absorbing work that should be resourced separately.
10	Ban on Directorate promotional work	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic bans or limitations on participating in public promotion of the Education Directorate or responding to requests from the Education Directorate for promotional material (including contributing to the Education Directorate's social media or providing content for Directorate publications)?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to refuse to do the Directorate's public relations work. If the Directorate asks you to participate in a promotional video, provide a quote for a media release, contribute content for the Directorate's social media accounts, write or appear in a Directorate publication, or otherwise help the Directorate look good in public - you can say no.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declining a request to be featured in a Directorate social media post about a school program • Refusing to participate in a promotional video or media event organised by the Directorate • Not contributing content to the Directorate's website or social media channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't affect your normal communication with families. Contributing to the school newsletter, updating Seesaw or Google Classroom, emailing parents about student learning - all of this continues. This ban is about the Directorate's public promotion, not your communication with your school community.
11	Ban on data, surveys, audits	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic bans on completing or responding to requests for data, surveys, data collection exercises or audits initiated by or on behalf of the Education Directorate?</i></p> <p>This authorises members to refuse to complete any data collection, survey, audit, or reporting task that comes from the Education Directorate or ESO. This means we continue to do the work that matters for students and families, but we stop cooperating with constant requests for data.</p> <p>Note: AEU members work in ESO. If this action is notified, ESO-based members would receive specific guidance on how it applies to their roles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not completing Directorate-initiated surveys about school operations, programs, or staffing • Declining to participate in data collection exercises sent from the Directorate • Not completing compliance reporting that is directed by the centre rather than required for student learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't affect student-facing record-keeping. Keeping attendance rolls, maintaining student records for your own use, recording student progress - these are part of your professional work and continue as normal. • It doesn't mean refusing to do things that are directly required for student safety (e.g. incident reporting through the Safety Portal).

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12	Ban on supervision outside direct learning	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic bans or limitations on supervision of students outside of direct learning, classroom activities or individual student(s) care or support?</i></p> <p>This authorises school assistants to refuse to supervise students in situations that fall outside their core role - that is, outside of direct learning, classroom activities, or individual student care and support. This means you would not supervise students during playground duty, bus lines, transitions, assemblies, or other non-learning contexts where you've been asked to fill in.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declining to do playground or yard duty • Not supervising students during bus lines, lunch areas, or transitions between activities • Not filling in for teachers during supervision duties that aren't part of your role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't affect your work with students in the classroom or your individual support for students with additional needs. Your core role - supporting student learning and providing individual care and support - continues as normal. • If there is a genuine, immediate safety concern and you are the only person present, your professional judgement applies. This action is about routine supervisory duties assigned on top of your actual role, not about walking past a child who needs help.
13	Ban on performing duties outside position description	<p><i>An unlimited number of indefinite or periodic bans on performing duties outside of those explicitly required by an employee's job description or position description, except where it poses a risk to student or staff safety?</i></p> <p>This authorises school assistants to refuse to do work that isn't part of their position description (PD) - with an exception for anything that poses a risk to student or staff safety. Your PD defines what you were employed to do. This action draws a firm line around it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declining to do administrative tasks that aren't in your PD • Refusing to cover reception or front-office duties if that's not your role • Not taking on tasks that belong to a different classification or role (e.g. first aid coordination, IT support, stocktaking, cleaning) unless they're in your PD • Saying no to "Can you just..." requests for work that falls outside your role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't mean being uncooperative. It means being clear about the boundaries of your role - boundaries that should have been respected all along. • The safety exception is important: if a situation genuinely poses a risk to student or staff safety and you are the person best placed to respond, you should respond. This ban is about routine duties, not emergencies.