Statement on mandatory sentencing



SSTUWA President Pat Byrne has responded to recent comments on introducing mandatory sentencing for school principals.

"The SSTUWA is very concerned about the increase in assaults against all school staff, however, the union does not believe mandatory sentencing is the appropriate way to deal with this.

"Teachers and school leaders are already classified as public officers, for the purpose of assault, and assaults against them can attract harsh penalties imposed by the courts up to 10 years if an assailant is armed.

"Mandatory sentencing removes the discretion of the courts to deal with school assault on a case by case basis and, in the situation of a single parent being involved, would create major problems for the children concerned.

"The first step is for school staff to press charges after they've been assaulted, something they are currently reluctant to do. Staff need support in taking this action and the SSTUWA would strongly encourage our members to report all assaults to police so that the matter can be dealt with appropriately by the courts."

Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
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