

FOR PSA MEMBERS: **EASTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (MTHATHA AREA)**

11-10-2024

## Feedback: Efata School for the Blind and Deaf - Staff movement and communication issues

A bilateral meeting with Efata School for the Blind and Deaf management and food-service aid was held on 7 October 2024. The purpose of the meeting was to address the lack of synergy and communication by the School management that left food-service aiders aggrieved. The PSA learnt that the School outsourced food services and reassigned kitchen staff to other sections, including the hostel. However, owing to extortion threats, the service providers left the School. Subsequently, the School instructed the affected employees to return to the kitchen. Some employees refused, raising concerns about how this was communicated and their roles. They felt forced, not asked politely to assist in the kitchen and uncertain about their job roles, questioning whether they were kitchen staff or hostel staff asked to assist in the kitchen. They were concerned about future changes, wondering what would happen to them when the service provider returned.

The employer apologised for its approach and provided answers to employees' questions, clarifying their roles. This situation demonstrates how bilateral meetings effectively resolved the concerns of staff. The PSA's visit to Efata School, where management engaged in open dialogue, allowed for clarity and resolution. These meetings provide clear communication and answers on employee concerns, reducing confusion. The meetings further provide a respectful platform to resolve disputes, where both sides expressed concerns and collaborated on solutions. It improved relations, fostering trust between employees and management through open engagement.

In this case, bilateral engagement successfully addressed the issues. Shop stewards and members are encouraged to use bilateral meetings regularly to address workplace challenges, ensuring transparency, understanding, and a harmonious working environment.

Do not be left out, update your details on PSA Member Portal to keep informed of developments. Recruit new members between 1 October 2024 and 6 December 2024 to be entered into the competition to win one of seven portable power stations valued at R7 000 each from your Union of Choice. Submit the application forms to [Zizipho.Shukuma@psa.co.za](mailto:Zizipho.Shukuma@psa.co.za).

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