

General Certificate of Education
June 2008
Advanced Level Examination



**GENERAL STUDIES (SPECIFICATION B)
Unit 4 Conflict-Resolution**

GB4W

Thursday 5 June 2008 9.00 am to 10.00 am

For this paper you must have:

- an 8-page answer book.

Time allowed: 1 hour

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is GB4W.
- Answer **all** questions.
- Read the source and carry out the instructions.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 60.
- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- You will be marked on your ability to use good English, to organise information clearly and to use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

Study the source below and answer **all** the questions which follow.

Total for this paper: 60 marks

Ruth Hanson, a teacher at Boxhill Primary School, was dismissed from her job by the school governors for gross misconduct as a result of misuse of school funds. Governors decided that Mrs Hanson was responsible for a shortfall of £550, paid to the school in cash by parents towards the cost of a school visit to London, which was never paid into the School Fund account. Following their decision, Mrs Hanson decided to take her case to an employment tribunal claiming 45 charges of bullying and victimisation by senior staff, school governors and the Local Authority. After a 26-day hearing, the staff, governors and Local Authority were cleared of all allegations.

The school had, however, incurred huge legal costs in defending the claims, which left the school with a debt of £65 000. Sally Parker, Headteacher of the school for 14 years felt she had no choice but to resign her post in order that her £58 000 per annum salary could be used to relieve the budget problems. Mrs Parker was not replaced as Headteacher – the Deputy Headteacher became Acting Headteacher for the foreseeable future. Mrs Parker said, “I considered asking the staff if anyone would volunteer for redundancy, but then we would not have been able to replace those staff, leaving us short of classroom teachers. I was the only member of staff old enough to take retirement. It was easier for me to go than anyone else, even though I did not really want to retire and it has cost me a lot of money to do so.” Parents were unhappy that there would be no permanent headteacher in post, arguing that the situation would affect the education of the 460 pupils at the school.

The school asked the Local Authority for help with the legal costs, but it refused, saying the school was responsible for its own budgeting. A spokesperson said they had advised the school that Mrs Hanson should not be dismissed as it could result in an employment tribunal and had suggested that the governors should give her a final written warning instead. “The decision was a matter for the governors, which they took in full knowledge of the possible outcomes,” said a spokesperson.

The governors, however, felt their decision was the only viable option. The Chair of Governors commented, “The governors have disciplinary responsibilities. They have a duty of care to the children and to parents and wanted to support the headteacher’s recommendation.”

Mrs Hanson said that she was disappointed with the outcome of the tribunal and would be appealing against the decision. She said that the case had caused her serious health problems and had ruined her teaching career.

- 1 Using the source, analyse the nature of the problem and identify the underlying issues.
(15 marks)

- 2 Identify which parties you consider to be responsible for the problem and analyse the extent of their responsibility, explaining why some might be said to be more responsible than others.
(15 marks)

- 3 Explain what measures might be taken to resolve the problem in this case and to prevent a recurrence of the problem in similar cases, and evaluate the likely success of these measures.
(20 marks)

A further ten marks will be awarded for communicating in a concise, logical and appropriate way.
(10 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS

There are no questions printed on this page