

VIT Video

CONDUCT CASE STUDY: ELISHA

Elisha goes to a music festival with a group of friends. Elisha has been working as an early childhood teacher for the past year. Her other friends are not teachers.

It's a yearly event for them and one of their acquaintances has organised some ecstasy pills.

Elisha isn't certain, but she doesn't want to seem like a 'party pooper' to her friends. She pockets one pill and another for her friend.

Police raid the festival and Elisha is arrested for possessing the two pills.

She attends the Magistrates Court and pleads guilty to possessing a drug of dependence.

She has a clean record and the Court returns a finding of guilt without conviction.

Victoria Police had already notified VIT when Elisha was charged. Now they notify VIT of the finding.

Because this is an indictable offence, VIT are legally required to investigate the matter.

As part of the investigation, Elisha's employers are notified.

What happens next?

Even if Elisha doesn't lose her registration, she may have jeopardised her employment and damaged her reputation. She has had to endure the stress of a court appearance, followed by an investigation which could take months.

The Victorian Teaching profession Code of Conduct Section 2.1 states that:

The personal conduct of a teacher will have an impact on the professional standing of that teacher and on the profession as a whole.

Although there is no definitive boundary between the personal and professional conduct of a teacher, it is expected that teachers will be positive role models in education settings and in the community, and respect the rule of law and provide a positive example in the performance of civil obligations.

Whatever Elisha's friends had decided to do, she needed to consider her situation differently. Being part of the teaching profession brings with it certain responsibilities, even outside of the classroom.