

Memo #15

Date: December 6, 2016

To: Executive/Members

Re: **Inclement Weather and Frequently Asked Questions about Inclement Weather**

Inclement Weather

It is that time of year again, where driving conditions are often altered because of the ice and snow on our roads. Please ensure that you take the time to read and fully understand the rights that you have as outlined in our Collective Agreement, in regards to Inclement Weather.

The process for the cancelling of transportation for students has no bearing on our understanding of the inclement weather protocol outlined in Article 10:01 of our current collective agreement. Some members believe that it must be a student bus cancellation day for a teacher to ARC in Inclement Weather, although these days are often tied together, they are not one in the same. We have many members who travel long distances daily to report to work and must drive through various weather zones in the process.

There are a variety of different driving comfort levels; it is not up to others to pass judgement. The decision on road conditions is up to the individual teacher, not bus zones, administration or colleagues. I have provided Article 10:01 for you to review, if the winter weather will impact your ability to get to work. Realize that if a teacher has ARC'd out *Inclement Weather working from home*, or *working at the nearest Board location*, that there is an expectation that teachers proceed to their assigned school/workplace **if the road/weather conditions improve in relation to time of the day and distance needed to be traveled.**

10:01 Inclement Weather

Schools remain open for service to students during inclement weather conditions, including such circumstances when bus service to schools is cancelled. Schools may be closed only under the sole authorization of the Director of Education.

- A. No deduction of salary or sick leave will be made if weather conditions make it impossible, in the opinion of the Teacher, to reach their assigned school. The Teacher shall make an effort to reach the nearest school within the jurisdiction of this Board if they feel it is safe to do so.
- B. Teachers are to use the ARCS call-in system in order to advise the Board of their absence due to inclement weather and indicate **if they are at home doing school related work or if they will be working at the nearest Board location.**
- C. **In the event that road and/or weather conditions improve, the Teacher shall proceed to their assigned school if appropriate in relation to time and distance.**
- D. It is the Board's expectation that any Teacher who is unable to make it to their workplace, will be either at home doing school related work or working at their nearest Board location. Where there is clear evidence of non-compliance with any of the above, the Superintendent of Schools, in consultation with the principal, shall determine if the day's absence shall be deducted from salary.

Although the decision on whether a teacher feels that it is impossible to reach their assigned workplace, rest solely on the “*opinion of the teacher*”, the Board does have the right to ask what school related work has been done, if a teacher has ARCs out “Inclement Weather – Working from Home”. (This direction came out of a grievance settlement with the Board.) Teachers should only be asked for this type of information upon their return to work.

If teachers are concerned about the weather at the end of the day, they should communicate their concern to their principal once they arrive to school. The Director of Education has, in the past, communicated to administration that staff can make their way home early due to poor travel conditions.

FAQ:

Do I have to make an attempt to get to work, before ARCing in?

Yes and No. Our Collective Agreement language states: weather conditions make it impossible to reach your assigned school. Determining that you can't get out of your driveway may be a reason to ARC in, but remember you have to make an attempt later in the day to get to your assigned school.

When it states, “it relation to time and distance,” what does that mean?

For example, if at 1:00 pm the roads are cleared around your home – so you can drive on them – and your drive is about 45 minutes, then it wouldn't make any sense to drive to work. However, if the roads are cleared at 10:00 am and the drive is 45 minutes, then it would be logical to head to your work location.

Do I have to report to the nearest work location?

Yes and no. But please know that the Board knows where you live and if you are within a couple of kilometers of a school or work location, then the Board may expect you to report there instead of your own work location.

If busses are cancelled, why do I have to go to work?

If schools are not closed, then the expectation is that the employee attends work.

If most of the students at my school take the bus, why do I have to go to work?

If schools are not closed, then the expectation is that the employee attends work. We get paid to attend work – whether there are students at school or not.

Can I change a sick/medical day to an inclement weather day?

If you were not going to be at work because you were sick or attending a medical appointment, then you cannot change this day to an inclement weather day. The intent is that one would make an attempt to report to work or the nearest work location.

Can I be disciplined for not reporting to work?

Yes. The Board could determine that the roads were clear on the day in question and deem that you could have made it to your work location or nearest work location.

**If you have any concerns, please contact the Unit office at 705-733-9625 or 1 800 558 4815
Thank you for sharing this information with OECTA members.**