

**Memo #30**

Date: March 20, 2018  
To: Executive/Members

**Re: Driving Students in Personal Vehicles; Staff Preference Form; Benefits and Maternity Leave**

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**Driving Students in Personal Vehicles**

The responsibility for transporting students should remain with the school board and parents. Public transportation or hired buses are the best ways to transport students. OECTA strongly recommends that teachers **do not** use their own personal vehicles for any reason to transport students. Teachers risk being personally liable, even when renting a car to transport students, such as the risk that a student or parent may sue or make a complaint. This is not a risk that any teacher should ever take.

As per the Board's Field Trip Policy:

Be aware that the School Board's Excess Automobile Liability Insurance comes into effect **only** after the owner's primary Third Party Liability limit has been exhausted. Any damage to the volunteer's vehicle, the cost of any insurance deductible or premium adjustment, as the result of an accident while the vehicle being used on board-related business is **NOT** covered by the school board's Excess Automobile Liability Insurance.

As well as personal financial liability, a student could make an accusation of professional impropriety during the trip. Without a witness, the student's statement must be weighed against the teacher's statement. This can lead to an investigation by the school board, Children's Aid Society, police and the Ontario College of Teachers, discipline – up to and including termination.

OECTA advises that teachers are under no obligation to personally transport students, for any reason. Is this worth risking your career?

**Staff Preference Form**

As per our Collective Agreement, you should have been provided with a Staff Preference Form by your principal. This is voluntary, but this form does provide information to your principal in advance of final staffing. You are to complete the form and return it to your principal by March 31<sup>st</sup>. You are to also print off a copy of your Ontario College of Teachers Certificate of Qualifications.

You also have the ability to meet with your principal to further discuss your preference for next year.

## **Benefits and Maternity or Paternity Leaves**

The determination of whether or not a member is responsible for benefit premiums is determined by their status, as reported by the school board employer.

For a member on their statutory maternity leave or paternity leave, the plan pays their monthly premiums. At the end of the leave, if the member has not returned to work, the member becomes responsible for the premiums.

Some examples:

1. Maternity leave or paternity leave ends June 20<sup>th</sup> and the member does not return to work but remains off until September. The board would report that the member's status changed on June 21<sup>st</sup> and the member is now responsible for benefit premiums from this date until he/she returns to work in September.

If the member returned to work on June 21<sup>st</sup>, their status changes to actively at work and their benefits continue to be paid going forward.

2. Maternity leave or paternity leave ends July 10<sup>th</sup>. Board will report to OTIP that the member's status changed on July 11<sup>th</sup> and the member becomes responsible for benefit premiums until she/he returns to work in September. **\*Please note it is best to enquire with the Board, if they plan to notify OTIP upon your return in the summer, before making a decision to return.**

If the member returned to work early and prior to the end of the school year, their benefits would be paid for during the summer.

**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.**