

Memo #10

Date: November 19, 2020

To: Members

Re: Personal Days and Serious Family Illness Days (Update); National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women; Upcoming Board Meeting

Personal Days and Serious Family Illness Days (Update)

As mentioned in a previous email, the Board has changed the application process for Leaves of Absences. In the past, we would use a paper or pdf copy and submit to your principal.

Now the Board use an online process. When applying for a Personal Day or Serious Family Illness Day there is a text box that requires something to be entered in order to apply for either day. Otherwise, the application will not go through.

In the previous message it was stated to put either Personal Day or Serious Family Illness Day in the text box. There is **NO** requirement to provide any other information. This is similar to the paper version. Requiring anything different would be a change in our Central Terms.

Furthermore, your principal or vice-principal should not be adjudicating your leave request. The system states the leave request needs to be approved. That means the principal or vice principal “rubber stamps” the request.

We have never had to provide rationale for Personal Days or Serious Family Illness Days, therefore do not change that process.

The change in process has been addressed with the Board and they have provided direction to principals and vice principals that they are not to adjudicate Personal Days or Serious Family Illness Days.

If you have been denied a Personal Day or Serious Family Illness Day, please contact the Unit Office.

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women is commemorated in Canada each year on December 6. On this day in 1989, 14 young women were murdered in a tragic act of gender violence at the École Polytechnique in Montreal. This is known as the Montreal Massacre and the anniversary is marked across the nation by vigils, discussions and prayer. This day reminds us to consider the women and girls for whom violence is an everyday reality and to remember those who have died as a result of gender-based violence.

We invite you to participate in the YWCA Rose Campaign. Ways of participating in this campaign are numerous: you can order buttons, posters, bookmarks, videos; you can send a message to your MP encouraging him/her to take action; you can participate virtually in “Light the Night” and light your school/unit office with red lights on December 6. Information about all the different aspects of the campaign, including ordering materials, can be found at:

<https://ywcacanada.ca/what-we-do/create-change/end-gender-based-violence/rose-campaign/>.

Sample Announcement and Prayer

Announcement:

December 6th is Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. No one regardless of gender should be a victim of violence. Everyone deserves to be able to go to school and live in a community, free from harm. This December 6th remember those who have been victims and pray for an end to violence.

Prayer:

God of life, today we stop and remember women and girls who are suffering from harm and abuse. We pray for open hearts and minds to support women and girls. Help us to offer hope to one another and to act to end violence against women. Help us to bring about a world where women and men – boys and girls are able to love and to be loved. Amen.

Upcoming Board Meeting

Next Wednesday (November 25th) there will be a Board Meeting at 6:30 pm where the Elementary Superintendents will be providing an update to the trustees about the possibility of moving Elementary staff and students to the hybrid model.

I have had a few discussions with the Board, addressing the letter that was sent to the trustees, the Director and upper administration outlining our concerns moving to the hybrid model.

Technology:

The Board has stated they are accelerating the technology roll out that was planned to occur over the next two to three years for staff. More information will be provided at the November 25th Board Meeting.

Training:

The Board has provided teachers time on the PA Day (November 20th) to expand on their knowledge of Google Classroom and/or Brightspace. Furthermore, Academic Services is planning some drop-in PD to be offered at various times during the coming weeks.

This is a good first step, but OECTA is pushing for more time for teachers to transition to the hybrid model – to train, ask questions, experiment etc.

Time:

Providing one day to transition from either face-to-face or virtual teaching is not enough time for teachers. OECTA has discussed with the Board the need to provide significant time to organize, learn, experiment and become “somewhat” comfortable with all the changes. The Board recognizes this request but is not comfortable shutting schools down for a week or more. Therefore, OECTA will continue to have discussions and try to find creative solutions.

Investment:

OECTA had asked the Board to use some of their reserves to invest in technology, resources etc. We have not heard if the Board plans to take this approach. Perhaps more information will be provided at the Board Meeting on November 25th.

To summarize, we don't feel the Board is ready to move to the hybrid model at this time. That does not preclude the move at a later date. OECTA will continue to have discussions with the Board. The Board is committed to further communication and consultation with OECTA. Please mark your calendar and try to attend (virtually) the Board meeting next week.

If you have any concerns, please contact the Unit office at 705-733-9625 or 1 800 558 4815