



61 King Street
Unit 12
Barrie, Ontario
L4N 6B5
(705) 733-9625; Fax (705) 733-9910
www.oectasimcoemuskoka.on.ca

Memo #11

Date: November 24, 2020

To: Members

Re: **Missed Preparation Time; Shared Spaces; Response to Covid-19, Covid-19 Impact Study**

Missed Preparation Time

According to our Collective Agreement:

16:01 B Preparation time not fully scheduled during a particular month, June excepted, shall be scheduled during the immediately subsequent month. A preparation time period missed for reasons discussed with the Teacher and authorized by the Principal prior to the event will be made up as soon as possible.

Please review your schools' method of organizing missed prep and ensure there is a plan to have any missed prep paid back. It should be a 'Missed Prep' binder, or some schools have moved to a shared Google Doc.

We know there has been a lack of occasional teachers, but regardless, our Collective Agreement states we are entitled to preparation time, and if missed we are entitled to have it repaid. Therefore, it is our obligation to ensure our Collective Agreement is being followed.

If you have logged missed prep, and it has not been paid back within the month, please contact the Unit Office ASAP.

Shared Spaces

In regard to preparation time, it is strongly encouraged that classroom teachers leave the classroom while the Teacher teaching a prep subject (FSL, Social Studies, Dance, etc.) is present. We must be respectful that some of our colleagues are not in the position where they have their own classroom space to deliver curriculum. As a result, they must move from classroom-to-classroom to provide instruction, which is a less than perfect scenario for many reasons.

During the time that teachers are assigned to a classroom to deliver instruction, we have to be respectful that the space becomes theirs to use. It is a professional courtesy to vacate the space, to allow the teacher sole use of the space with the students in their care. **We understand that during the Covid-19 pandemic there are limited spaces for teachers to work on their preparation time, but** when classroom teachers remain in the room, students can easily become confused as to who is “in charge” at that time. (For clarity it is the teacher who is teaching at that point-in-time, that has authority). It is recognized that there are times when classroom teachers might have to remain during a prep period due to perform a specific task that is restricted to the classroom space, but this should be the exception, not the rule. Classroom teachers should also have a professional discussion with the teacher coming in to see if it is okay with them if they stay in the classroom during their delivery of curriculum.

In the end, we are all teachers and we need to be cognisant that when another teacher is teaching, the instructional and classroom management responsibilities clearly should be shifted to our colleague.

It is not the role of the classroom teacher to interfere with the curriculum delivery of another teacher, nor to try to manage classroom behaviour.

The Education Act states:

18.1 A member shall,

- a) Avoid interfering in an unwarranted manner between other teachers and pupils;

Response to Covid-19

As Covid-19 cases increase in Ontario and we see more cases in our schools, the questions about ‘what is OECTA doing to respond and to protect teachers’ are also increasing.

It was stated in a previous memo or email, that the Unit Office only receives notification of a positive case at a school – via email. Sometimes we receive additional information that states whether it was a student, teacher or another employee, but due to privacy concerns, we don’t receive names or other information.

Once a positive case is identified, the Board passes responsibility to the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit. It is the SMDHU that leads the investigation and conducts contact tracing. They are also responsible for identifying those that may be deemed high or low risk. This information is not shared with the Unit Office. In fact, the SMDHU will inform individuals directly, and not let the Board know who they are in advance – again due to privacy concerns.

OECTA has filed a number of grievances – locally and provincially – dealing with the rollout of PPE, the September Reopening and the general safety of work locations.

The Joint Health and Safety Committee meets monthly, and they are provided updates on protocols and are allowed the opportunity to provide feedback. Regrettably, these are not the most expedient of processes.

OECTA Provincial is pursuing every legal recourse, as well as continuing to speak to as many people as they can in government to make them understand that the current approach is not working. Thanks to the government's poor planning and haphazard approach, we are at a point where there are no easy answers. OECTA Provincial continues to call on Premier Ford and Minister Lecce to finally engage in genuine dialogue with the frontline teachers and education workers who have been left to pick up the slack for the government's half measures, and to make real investments that are necessary to make schools as safe and productive as possible during the Covid-19 pandemic.

While it may seem that OECTA is not working on behalf of the membership, we are indeed pursuing what is within our contractual purview. Unfortunately, we do not have a contractual relationship with the SMDHU. Furthermore, it is the Ministry of Education that is outlining how the process of Covid-19 identification and the reliance on the local Health Units to investigate and manage the process.

Covid-19 Impact Study

Researchers hope a new survey will help them understand how working Ontarians are being affected by COVID-19 and government policies created to try to assist people during these difficult times.

Conducting timely research amid the ongoing pandemic is crucial and can help inform evolving public policy. From other studies we know COVID-19 impacts some individuals more than others. For instance, recent [research](#) found COVID-19 rates are higher among racialized populations, precarious workers and low wage earners.

Complete and share the survey:

Researchers from McMaster University are collaborating with community advocates from the [Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction](#) on a COVID-19 impact assessment. Through an online survey they will collect feedback from workers, particularly low-income, working individuals and those who may have received government support during or before the pandemic.

Along with examining the impacts of COVID-19 on working conditions, the researchers hope to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of certain government programs. Researchers hope to release the survey findings by mid-2021.

Survey participants must live in Ontario, be at least 18 years and not retired. Those who are interested may choose to participate in a follow up survey. The survey will be online until at least the end of the year. Participation in the survey is voluntary, anonymous and confidential.

Complete the online survey [here](#).

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