

Memo #12

Date: November 30, 2020

To: Members

Re: **Inclement Weather Update**

Board Decision on Inclement Weather – Bus Cancellation - Days

The Unit Office has been waiting for the Board to send out their communication to staff on their decision to close schools for students on Inclement Weather – Bus Cancellation Days. However, that communication has not yet arrived, but there are many questions left unanswered by this decision.

At the Board Meeting on Wednesday, November 25th, it was announced:

Effective immediately, and for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year a change in practice will be implemented. If bus transportation is cancelled, student learning will continue asynchronously for ALL students, both elementary and secondary.

Staff performing essential duties will report to work as per our past practice.

Understanding the need to protect staff and students by not mixing cohorts, this decision has created a number of questions.

1. Are teachers required to go to work?

The response at the Board Meeting was that teachers would still use our Collective Agreement language (Article 10:01) to determine what they need to do when buses are cancelled:

- 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.

2. Why can't teachers work from home if there are no students at school?

The Board is choosing to use the Collective Agreement, and not make any changes or discuss any possible solutions with OECTA Simcoe Muskoka Elementary on a without precedence basis.

3. What about teachers with school aged children?

The hard and fast answer is the Board has a relationship with their teachers through an employee-employer agreement. The Board is not responsible for daycare of employees' children.

Teachers have access to Personal Days (2 days per year based on 1.0 FTE).

Teachers have access to Serious Family Illness Days (2 days per year based on 1.0 FTE). However, a teacher's child would need to be sick in order to use one of these days.

Finally, if a teacher is sick, they have access to sick/medical days.

4. What about VSE teachers? Do they continue as normal or do they post asynchronously as well?

We have been told that **ALL** teachers will teach asynchronously on days when busses are cancelled. The VSE teacher determines if they are to move to asynchronous teaching for the day based on their home school, and if busses are cancelled in the region their home school presides – regardless if they are working from their home school or from home.

5. If a teacher is sick, do they still post work?

When a teacher is sick or absent, they are required to leave day plans of work for their students to perform for the day. Since there will won't be any students, there also won't be any occasional teachers to provide this work. When a teacher is sick, they are not also required to be working from home.

6. How much work gets posted? Who determines?

Teachers will use their professional judgment to determine how much work, and what subjects/strands will be posted to their Brightspace page or Google classroom.

As a reminder answering email enquiries from students is considered synchronous learning. The requirement for teachers is to teach asynchronously on days when buses are cancelled.

7. What if I live in one weather zone, but work in another weather zone?

The determination is based on where you live, not on where you work. If you determine at the time you are leaving for work, that the road conditions make it impossible for you to get to work location, please follow the ARC procedures noted above.

8. Am I breaking Board cohort protocol if I report to nearest work location?

Board cohort limits are meant for students and not staff. You are reminded to take the Covid-19 Screening Self-Assessment before leaving for work each day.

9. 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. However, and discipline results in a grievance by OECTA.

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