
Memo #13

Date: December 11, 2020

To: Members

Re: **Inclement Weather Update; PPE; FSL in VSE; Correspondence in Print**

Inclement Weather – Bus Cancellation – Days - Update

As you are aware the Board has made recent changes to the protocol surrounding inclement weather days. Specifically, that schools would be closed, and teachers are to provide asynchronous work—while continuing to abide by the language in the Collective Agreement regarding reporting to their work location.

The Board in their communication to members clearly articulated the expectations of teachers relying on the language in the CA with threats of discipline for non-adherence:

“It is the clear expectation of the Board that all staff will follow their Collective Agreement or terms and conditions of employment regarding this matter. You are encouraged to review your relevant language and address any questions to your supervisor, union representative (if applicable) or the Human Resources Department. Non-compliance with the language will result in follow up from the supervisor/manager and can result in disciplinary action including loss of pay.”

Contrary to that messaging the Unit has become aware of supplemental information that was sent to Principals indicating the ability to make exceptions in “extenuating circumstances”.

The Association is **unequivocally** in support of members being able to work from home on inclement weather days. OECTA does not support this ability being granted on some members, some of the time with the Principal as arbiter. **In fact, this would be an example of members negotiating their own working conditions - contrary to the Collective Agreement.** This conversation is on-going, and I anticipate there will be further communication going out to all members regarding the Board’s stance on inclement weather in the near future.

PPE Requirements/Update

It is important to remind members that we need to continue wearing our PPE as cases are increasing in our regions.

Face Mask: use the Board issued medical face mask. The face mask protects others from your droplets. You should be using multiple face masks per day. There is not a limit of two per day. If you need more, you should not be denied.

Face Shield: use the face shield if you cannot maintain 2 m social distancing. The face shield protects you from others’ droplets. You should be replacing your face shield at least once every 3 weeks.

Goggles/Safety Glasses: are an alternative for the face shield. Use the Board issued goggles/safety glasses. If you are wanting to use a different type, you **MUST** seek permission from the Disability Management Office (Gord Van Clieaf).

Hand Sanitizer: reminder to use as often as necessary, along with hand washing.

It has come to our attention that the latest shipment from the Ministry Distribution Centre has a very strong fragrance. (Natural Concepts). The Board is aware and is in the process of removing supplies from schools/work locations and replacing with a truly scent-free hand sanitizer. Our hopes are this can be completed by January 4th, 2021.

Other: The Board does have gloves, and gowns for those wishing to access at any point.

FSL in the Virtual School Elementary

The Board has been trying to figure out how to provide FSL in the Virtual School since early September. This week they rolled out their plan.

They will be accessing – primarily – FSL teacher in the home school location to provide FSL to VSE students in grades 4 to 8. (The Ministry requirement is that FSL is provided to grades 4 to 8. SMCDSEB has offered FSL to students in grades 1 to 3 for many years).

Rationale: when students moved to the VSE, FSL teachers in the home school (nor SERT, Teacher-Librarian, or Itinerant Teachers) were not subsequently reorganized. Home schools did not see a proportional reduction in FSL teachers. Instead, FSL teachers were reassigned to other duties – SERT support, etc.

Now the Board is reassigning the FSL teachers in home schools to provide FSL to the VSE teachers in their building. This will not affect home school FSL, other than perhaps a change in the time FSL is received by students.

As well, some VSE teachers with FSL qualifications may be asked to teach their own FSL, and/or provide FSL to remaining VSE classes.

OECTA is reviewing the Board's decision to shift FSL to home school and VSE teachers, as a case of exceeding workload and working conditions for home school FSL teachers.

Correspondence in Print (CIP)

The Ministry mandates that school boards provide 3 modes of learning for families:

- In-school
- Remote (the Virtual Elementary School for Simcoe Muskoka Catholic Elementary)
- A 3rd option for those exempting themselves from remote learning (Correspondence in Print materials in Simcoe Muskoka Catholic Elementary)

The Board has worked through multiple methods to try to provide Correspondence in Print to students. Initially, it was run through the Virtual School, but now the Board has moved CIP to the students' home school.

The Board's rationale is as follows:

- When students were moved to the VSE, the complement of SERT, FSL, Teacher-Librarian and Itinerant Teachers was not reduced at the home school
- Therefore, the home school was able to reassign some of these teachers to perform other roles (i.e., SERT support)
- The Board is using the over-complement to reassign those teachers (SERT, FSL, Teacher-Librarian or Itinerant Teacher) to be responsible for CIP
- They are to work in consultation with the classroom teacher (where the student is assigned), the SERT and others to create print activities.

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