
Memo #14

Date: December 17, 2020

To: Members

Re: Inclement Weather Update; PPE Update; VSE Update; Catholic Teachers GSA; January

Inclement Weather - Update

The Board has issued correspondence to school principals and/or vice principals that should have been shared with their staff.

We understand some staff may have issues preventing them from being able to get to their work location on inclement weather days. Typically, on these days we ask administration or supervisors to follow up with staff that ARC in "Inclement Weather - Working From Home". We are making a change to this process for this year due to COVID-19.

If staff feel they need to work from home, for whatever reason, they can do so without follow up communication from their principal / supervisor or the Board.

While this is not the resolution OECTA would have preferred – allowing teachers to work from home, without having to ARC in working from home or nearest location – this is seen as a compromise from the Board. We are encouraged the Board will pause their practice of following up with members working from home, with the hope that this practice will end, and won't be necessary moving forward.

PPE Update

Masks:

OECTA has learned that Boards have been provided – by the Ministry Distribution Centre – with an allocation of two mask brands. If anyone has sensitivity issues, it has been confirmed they should be provided another option. If there continues to be an issue after receiving the second option, please contact the Unit Office.

We have been told Hypo-Allergenic masks will be arriving in the new year.

Every Board received a limited supply of clear masks, based upon the number of special education students enrolled. These masks are not medical grade, and as such they should only be used during instructional periods where the clear mask is required. Furthermore, these masks are single use only.

Face Shields, Goggles and Glasses:

OECTA has requested that the Ministry Distribution Centre procure larger face shields. Goggles provided by the Board have a 14-day usage period. The Ministry of Health is trying to procure CSA approved glasses for distribution in January.

If you are requesting, from the Disability Management Office, the use of your own goggles or glasses, please make sure you send in pictures – front and side. As well, you must wait to receive approval before wearing. Finally, the Board will not reimburse for these purchases.

VSE Update

The Board has created Parent/Student Code of Conduct for Students and Parents in the Virtual School Elementary (VSE).

After months of communication with the Board about the behaviour of some students and parents, they have sent out an Expectations for Virtual School – Elementary. In the document, it states:

Failure to adhere to the Board’s Acceptable Use of Information and Communication Technology Policy – LE-25 and the additional expectations contained in the document could result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, restriction and/or denial of access to the Board’s networks; contacting appropriate legal authorities; and consequences as outlined in the Board’s Code of Conduct (suspension or expulsion).

Furthermore, it outlines expectations for parents:

- The educator is the person of authority and responsible for establishing and maintaining class order and management
- Under no circumstance should a parent/guardian interrupt the virtual classroom
- Parents/Guardians should make every effort to remain off screen
- Parent/Guardian concerns should not be addressed during instructional time, but communicated – in the manner established by the classroom teacher
- Parents should not be recording audio/video sessions

If teachers in the VSE are experiencing inappropriate behaviour from students and/or parents, and after trying to deal with it on your own, please inform your VSE principal and vice principal. Lacking an acceptable resolution, please contact the Unit Office.

Catholic Teachers GSA

The Toronto Secondary Unit Human Rights Committee has been hosting regular GSA meetings for their members who identify as LGBTQ+ (and allies) for many years now.

Although COVID19 has meant that we are unable to gather in person, we are excited to be able to extend an invitation to interested members from units across Ontario as we host our first virtual Catholic Teacher GSA via ZOOM.

This could be an opportunity for LGBTQ members who feel isolated to connect with others in a safer environment. Our goal is to provide a medium for the sharing of stories, support, news, struggles and successes.

The meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 13 from 4:30 - 6:00, via ZOOM. Interested members are asked to RSVP to michelle.blais@tcdsb.org to receive a ZOOM link closer to the date.

January

The Ministry of Education and the Board have both communicated the following:

As a reminder, we are recommending that boards encourage students and staff to take home any materials that they may require for remote learning before they leave school for the holiday period so that we can continue to be ready for all scenarios.

There has not been an official announcement – as of creating this memo – however it is important to note that schools may be closed for staff and students, but the expectation that teaching will continue for all students virtually. Therefore, please be prepared for that eventuality.

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