



**Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)**  
**Fédération des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'élémentaire de l'Ontario (FEEO)**  
136 ISABELLA ST  
TORONTO ON M4Y 0B5  
Telephone: 416-962-3836 Toll-free: 1-888-838-3836  
Fax: 416-642-2424  
etfo.ca

## **Advice to Members Participating in Video Conference Meetings with School Boards and ETFO**

- The meeting is with your employer. As such, you need to remember that as an employee of the board you must abide by the expectations they have set out.
- Additionally, if you are a member of the College of Teachers or College of Early Childhood Educators, you must also comply with the expectations set out by those regulatory bodies.
- Dress professionally, as you would be if you were at work and attending a meeting at the board office.
- You are not allowed to record the meeting but are able to take notes. Please have a pen and paper ready to take notes or jot down information that may help in responding to the questions being asked.
- If you need any assistive devices or require any accommodations, please discuss it with the union representative prior to the start of the meeting.
- Choose an appropriate location from which to make the call:
  - Remember the background will be visible to all viewers, so make sure there is nothing personal or inappropriate within view.
  - Try to pick a place in your home where there will be minimal sound or other interruptions.
  - Turn off your cell phone, television and other devices.
  - We do not recommend participating in the video conferencing outside, it has many auditory distractions.
  - If you have headphones equipped with a microphone, this is optimal for participation in the call.

- Meetings with school boards can involve personal information which may concern a range of parties (you, other members, students, their parents, other staff). Ensure that the call is private so that no third parties will hear what is being discussed. It is not enough to plan to speak without mentioning names. Even if you are on a headphone, you need to be in a space where nobody will overhear you.
- You should not allow anyone to listen or be in the room on the call. If you feel you need someone else on the call, discuss this with your ETFO representative prior to the meeting. ETFO represents you during meetings with the employer and the school board typically will not allow other people on the call.
  - Test the computer audio and video in advance so you can be available to attend the meeting on time.
  - Add a reminder and an alarm to your calendar reminding you of the meeting.
  - Assess how to position the screen to be most comfortable with how it will be displayed to the parties.
  - Enter the zoom (or other program) conference app to make sure what is needed for the call is downloaded.
- You are expected to be available for the whole call.
- If you need a break in the course of the call or want to caucus, please let your ETFO representative know by email or text.
- Although the video conference app may have a chat option available, it is visible to everyone and not advisable to communicate that way.
- When the board representative(s) are speaking, listen to what has been said. Do not try to talk over them or interrupt. It is important to hear and listen to what is said.
- If your ETFO representative or the board representative(s) are speaking, you should remain quiet and have no reaction. Generally, you should only respond to questions asked of you. If your ETFO representative interrupts you, do not continue to speak.
- It would be best if, in addition to being able to participate on the call on screen, to communicate with your ETFO representative, for example by email or text.

- There may be a break room available in the video conference program. If you or your ETFO representative feel you should be conferencing in a separate room, your ETFO representative will signal you by email/text/icon and assess if that is possible.
- It may be difficult for your ETFO representative to direct you during the call or to discuss something with you openly while the board representative(s) are present. If, at any time you hear your ETFO representative say, “Perhaps it’s time for…” (we will have a signal word or phrase that will stand out).
- Your ETFO representative will take time to speak to you privately prior to responding to any questions.
- Your ETFO representative will have an opportunity to discuss things with you in more detail if needed when the call is over.
- Be professional always. That includes your choice of words, your demeanor, your tone and your body language.
- Recognize that any behaviour in the call considered unprofessional, harassing, threatening, or unlawful, may lead to adverse consequences.
- Although the call will not be recorded, the board staff participating in the call will be taking notes of what is discussed so they will have their own record of what occurred.
- Your ETFO representative is there to support you and to make sure your rights under the collective agreement are protected. We have experience in these types of meetings with the employer and it is advisable to follow the advice given.

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