

To: ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local Members
From: Craig Smith, President, ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local (ETFO TVTL)
Date: January 8, 2021
Regarding: In-Person/Full Remote Learning Update (15)

ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local (ETFO TVTL) does not endorse the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) 2020-2021 school year “plan.”

TVDSB has not meaningfully addressed IPL/FRL workload concerns and has done nothing to reduce the ongoing pressure it is putting on all ETFO TVTL Teachers.

Teacher Vaccination

It is the understanding of ETFO TVTL that the Ministry of Education is **not** considering priority COVID-19 vaccinations for Teachers. It should be noted that next week the State of Michigan is commencing mass vaccinations for front line health care workers and Teachers.

Accommodation for Special Education Students During School Closure

A separate communication regarding in-school accommodation for special education and students in other sites is forthcoming and will be distributed shortly.

COVID-19 School Closures

Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health announced on Thursday that schools will remain closed until January 25, 2021 for most elementary Students.

What Does TVDSB Have to Say About Synchronous Learning?

“Synchronous learning is part of the 300-minute instructional day during which teachers remain available to students. It is important to note that synchronous learning may include times where the teacher is available online, but where students are working independently or in small groups (e.g., consolidation tasks such as practice questions, writing tasks, preparing a presentation, etc.). It should be noted that some flexibility for students may be required on an individual basis when students are unable to participate in synchronous learning.” (TVDSB, December 30, 2020)

It is the expectation of ETFO TVTL that during temporary closures of IPL schools that they will follow established past practices and agreed-upon protocols as per the provisions of the Collective Agreement, and articulated and explained in **IPL/FRL Weekly Updates**.

Further, it is the expectation of ETFO TVTL that, during temporary closure, Teachers will deploy learning platforms to teach synchronously / asynchronously, on an emergency remote basis, until the closure ends and there is a return to the IPL classroom or school.

ETFO TVTL does **not** presume to tell Teachers how to teach, but here are some things to consider:

- Continue to be diligent in discharging teaching duties, but remember that remote teaching is no substitute for face-to-face learning.
- Work within the parameters of the established workday.
- Follow existing timetables as per the Collective Agreement. Share those timetables with the parents of the students in your care.
- Take scheduled lunch, recess breaks, and preparation time, as per the Collective Agreement.
- Do not collapse and combine classes.
- Observe professional boundaries. Many parents are in a tough spot. They are our allies. That said, put up with no guff and report immediately to the Principal any worrisome or challenging situations.
- Teachers have a legal obligation to report to CAS any situations of concern regarding student safety.
- Synchronous teaching/learning does **not** mean that Teachers must be in front of students for 180 minutes (Kindergarten) or 225 minutes (Grades 1-8). It **does** mean that Teachers will be available to students in a variety of synchronous and asynchronous ways, as determined by the Teacher.
- When taking into consideration advice from the Board and its agents, do so with a large grain of salt. Exercise and trust your **professional judgement** (embedded in the Collective Agreement) **at all times** when supporting the learning of the students in your care. What is not exercised cannot be enforced.
- Keep your receipts.
- Put your family and self-care first. Everything else comes second.

Direction to Members

- ETFO TVTL Teachers are directed to uphold and adhere to all provisions of the Collective Agreement.
- It is the expectation of ETFO TVTL that the TVDSB, and its agents, will uphold and adhere to the provisions of the Collective Agreement.
- Questions about the interpretation of the Collective Agreement should be directed to the ETFO Local office.
- Log all absences into TVARRIS using the appropriate code and follow past practice as per the provisions of the Collective Agreement.
- Violations of the Collective Agreement must be reported to the ETFO Local office immediately.
- Use professional judgement at all times and observe professional boundaries.

Reminders

- Focus on core teaching duties.
- Do not do the work of other bargaining units or employee groups.
- Where possible, avoid unnecessary busy work.
- Report and document inappropriate parent behaviour to the Principal immediately for follow up.

- Be aware that Teacher participation in **any** TVDSB event schedule outside the instructional day, or during unassigned time (recess/lunch/nutrition breaks), is **strictly voluntary**.
- ETFO TVTL Teachers should expect that all verbal directions from Principals/Vice-Principals be put in writing upon request to ensure clarity, consistency and accountability.
- Teachers should determine whether Principals/Vice-Principals are asking or telling them to undertake assigned duties. If the Teacher is being asked, then participation in the activity is **strictly voluntary**. A Teacher's decision **not** to participate **must** be respected.
- Teachers should comply with direction if told to undertake activities that are reasonable, lawful, and in compliance with the provisions of the Collective Agreement.
- Teachers should question all direction that is unreasonable, unlawful, or in violation of the provisions of the Collective Agreement.
- ETFO TVTL Teachers **must** be free to question safely all directions given by the Board and its agents without fear of retribution, reprisal, or differential treatment.
- Professional Judgement is embedded in the Collective Agreement. It cannot be enforced if it is not exercised.
- Teachers are reminded that "expected" does not mean "mandatory."
- Teachers are further reminded that their health and the safety of Students is paramount. Questions regarding Health and Safety must first be brought to the attention of the site supervisor (Principal) as per the Occupational Health and Safety Act. ETFO TVTL will continue to provide immediate support and guidance to Members in all matters relating to Health and Safety.

Accompanying documents are for information and context.

For more information regarding this *Communiqué*, please contact the Local office by phone at 519-474-3150 or by email at etfotvtl@etfothamesvalley.com.

c. *ETFO TVTL Released Officers*
Terry Card, President, ETFO Thames Valley Occasional Teacher Local
Elizabeth Kettle, ETFO Provincial CB Staff Officer
Linda Nicholls, Human Resources Superintendent