

To: ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local Members
From: Craig Smith, President, ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local (ETFO TVTL)
Date: January 22, 2021
Regarding: In-Person/Full Remote Learning Update (17)

ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local (ETFO TVTL) continues to remind Teachers, and the Employer, that it does **not** endorse the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) 2020-2021 school year “plan,” which is based on Education Minister Stephen Lecce’s flawed school year “plan.”

It is the duty of the Local to:

- Defend the Collective Agreement and the rights of Teachers under it.
- Ensure that the provisions of the Occupation Health and Safety Act are vigorously enforced.
- Bring to the attention of the TVDSB ongoing Teacher concerns, with the expectation that these concerns will be taken seriously and addressed in a timely manner.

TVDSB has done nothing to address workload issues and other concerns affecting all ETFO TVTL Teachers.

The Board has the power to make different decisions but is unwilling to do so.

COVID-19 School Closures

Schools in TVDSB will remain closed until February 10, 2021 for most elementary students.

Teacher Vaccination

The Ministry of Education announced that Teachers have been designated **essential frontline workers** and will be eligible for priority vaccination as part of Phase 2 of the Provincial COVID-19 Vaccination Program (slated to commence March, 2021).

The vaccination program will be run by the Southwest Public Health Unit and the Middlesex London Health Unit.

More information will be shared when it is available.

Advice to Teachers about Abusive Parents

Remote learning and teaching is a challenge for everyone. Teachers are expected to be professional at all times and respect boundaries. It is reasonable for Teachers to expect that parents will be polite and respectful at all times. Unfortunately, more and more incidences of parental rudeness and abuse are occurring. What can you do about this?

- Set limits with parents and be clear with them about your expectations.
- Report all unacceptable incidences to the Principal immediately for follow up and resolution.

- Parents are subject to TVDSB harassment and anti-bullying procedures. Teachers are within their rights to file complaints under these procedures.
- Verbal abuse is an assault under the Criminal Code. As always, a call to the police is warranted if the safety of the Teacher or students is compromised.

Report Cards

The ETFO TVTL Report Card Communiqué was sent to all Teachers yesterday.

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.

Remote teaching is not easy, it cannot be a digital duplication of a regular school day, and it is not a replacement for in-person learning.

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.
- Set all privacy settings on devices and social media sites to maximum.
- 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

- Elementary 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.

This is clearly a school year to be gotten through. Teachers are thanked for all that they are doing in support of the learning of the students in their care.

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