

To: ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local Members
From: Craig Smith, President, ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local (ETFO TVTL)
Date: October 16, 2020
Regarding: In-Person/Full Remote Learning Update (5)

ETFO Thames Valley Teacher Local endorses neither the Government of Ontario nor the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) school reopening plan.

TVDSB must move immediately to reduce the pressure it is putting on all ETFO TVTL Members.

IPL/FRL Grievances and Follow Up

Last week ETFO TVTL filed grievances to address violations of the Collective Agreement in the following areas:

- Teacher Preparation Time
- Hybrid Model of Instruction
- Hybrid Model of Teaching (Special Education Contained Classes and ESL)
- Temporary Letters of Approval (FSL)
- Notification of Assignment
- Diagnostic Assessment
- Staff Meetings
- Sick Day Usage
- Principal Access to Learning Platforms

ETFO TVTL and TVDSB Senior Administration met on Wednesday, October 14, 2020 to discuss the concerns giving rise to these grievances. Some of these will likely be resolved quickly. Others will require further discussion. ETFO TVTL and TVDSB Senior Administration will now meet weekly to resolve outstanding concerns and, more importantly, to provide Teachers with real, meaningful, and immediate relief to address crushing workload issues.

Questions and Answers

What will prep teachers be doing if we go to full remote synchronous learning? Will they keep their timetable?

It is our expectation that assignments and timetables would remain the same.

How are students being tracked if they are being sent home ill or not passing the screening to ensure that they have seen a doctor for an alternate diagnosis or have been tested and it is negative?

Public Health tracks this and gives direction regarding isolation/quarantine in the event of suspected exposure to and/or confirmation of COVID-19.

Our students now have to wear masks outside - is this a protocol from board or school?

At this point in time, staff and students are not required to wear masks outside if they are able to physically distance.

Could we get clarification on entering COVID absences and what is paid and unpaid? There's discrepancy with the message at our school.

Teachers who feel unwell are advised to access sick days for their intended purpose.

If a Teacher fails to pass the COVID-19 self-attestation they would access sick days for their intended purpose.

If a Teacher is instructed by Public Health to self-isolate for fourteen (14) days then this is quarantine with full pay and no deduction of sick days, as per the collective agreement.

While in quarantine Teachers are released from their all their teaching and associated duties. They will be replaced by an Occasional Teacher. If a Teacher tests positive for COVID-19 they will continue in quarantine. If a Teacher tests negative for COVID-19 while in isolation they would resume duties, teach students asynchronously, and return to school upon completion of the isolation period.

We have had several unfilled DECE jobs which is putting stress on our Early Years educators.

Board has apparently directed Principals that they can replace absent DECEs with Occasional Teachers who would assist the Kindergarten Teacher as a teaching partner.

If a class goes into quarantine what is the expectation of the classroom teacher to that class? Is synchronous learning an expectation?

An Occasional Teacher will replace the Teacher. Teachers, who are COVID-19 negative would be cleared teach students asynchronously until the isolation period is completed.

Our preps are only scheduled in 25 minute blocks.

New collective agreement language states that the minimum block of preparation time is 20 minutes but that every reasonable effort must be made to have blocks of 30 minutes, on the understanding that 40 minute blocks are clearly possible.

Preparation time is Teacher-owned and is to be used for professional purposes as determined by the Teacher, free of teaching, supervisory, or other assigned duties.

Why do we keep talking about hard dates for switching models when that is just not true...we have had students coming and going every week since the start. How are we supposed to assess and how are FRL teachers supposed to train these students on the Brightspace platform when they are coming and going wherever the parents feel like it?

This continues to be a big problem. We continue to push the Board to make firm decisions in this regard. The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) has cancelled the November transition in the interest of staff and student mental health and as a means to stabilize the system. We encourage TVDSB to do the same.

Full Remote Learning - attendance concerns, being instructed by administration to record students without technology or on paper package programs as "present" every day (despite not seeing or hearing from these students or families, some at all). Are there liability issues here?

ETFO believes there are huge liability issues here that could lead to career-ending interactions with the Ontario College of Teachers and that TVDSB would not support Teachers in this regard.

TVDSB must address this immediately. Teachers are advised to continue to mark students absent if their attendance cannot be confirmed.

Any information on DE teachers doing both in class and online?

ETFO opposes hybrid teaching models, has filed grievances and continues to fight to reduce the crushing workloads that have been imposed on all Teachers by TVDSB.

Are teachers expected to write full progress reports even though we have had two weeks less of time with students?

Progress Reports will look different this year. Specific advice and direction from ETFO TVTL will be shared with all Teachers next week.

What is the expectation for "meet the teacher night"? We are being told we must plan/hold this virtually. A lot of my colleagues understand that meet the teacher was always voluntary (above and beyond regular teaching duties). Is this correct? A lot of our teachers are very uncomfortable with holding this a live virtual event. Any insight/clarification is appreciated?

Teacher participation is strictly voluntary, as per past practice. Concerns regarding privacy and the necessity of such events are real. Teachers can choose not to participate and that decision must be respected.

A teacher was sent home on quarantine and was told to be online teaching within 24 hours?

No. A Teacher on quarantine is released from all teaching and associated duties.

Our school has classroom doors that open to the outside of the building, staff have been asked to unlock and lock their outside doors at the beginning and end of each day using Allen keys, is this normal practice at other schools, staff are worried they will forget to lock at end of the day.

Teachers should not be doing this as there are serious concerns about safety and liability. It is also the work of another bargaining unit, work that Teachers do not do.

What is the date that you are formally talking to the board about DE hybrid and other workload issues?

ETFO TVTL and TVDSB Senior Administration met last week to discuss major issues of concern. We are now meeting weekly to address and resolve these issues. Teachers need relief now and we are pushing to Board to provide it immediately.

For buildings without HVAC or any real ventilation systems in place, is there any consideration being given to the concerns surrounding an airborne illness in these environments? Especially with colder weather approaching, will we be continue to be required to keep our windows open as our only form of “ventilation?”

This is a critically important ongoing issue that is being addressed directly by ETFO TVTL through Health and Safety.

What will the expectation be regarding parent interviews now since the PD day has been removed?

Teachers should continue to be in regular contact with parents and that there will be no “parent-teacher interviews.”

A teacher was sick with a cold - took one day off - was planning on returning to school - her principal called and informed them they couldn't return until they got a tested - this was not from Public Health - it took 2 days to get appointment and another 2 days for results - she was instructed to use her sick days?

The Principal is wrong. Only Public Health can give direction regarding isolation and return from it.

Direction to Members

- ETFO TVTL Members 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 honour the provisions of the Collective Agreement.
- Questions about the interpretation of the Collective Agreement should be directed to the ETFO Local office.
- Violations of the Collective Agreement must be reported to the ETFO Local office immediately.
- Use professional judgement at all times.

Advice to Members

- ETFO TVTL Members should expect that all verbal directions from Principals/Vice-Principals be put in writing upon request to ensure clarity, consistency and accountability.
- Members should determine whether they are being asked or told to undertake assigned duties. **Ask this question of the Principal/Vice-Principal - “are you asking or are you telling me to...?” If it is an “ask” the activity is voluntary and Members have a choice that must be respected.**
- Members should comply with direction if told to undertake activities that are reasonable, lawful and in compliance with the provisions of the Collective Agreement.
- ETFO TVTL Members must be free to question safely all directions given by the Board and its agents without fear of retribution, reprisal, or differential treatment.

Reminders

- Professional Judgement is embedded in the Collective Agreement. It cannot be enforced if it is not exercised.
- ETFO TVTL Members are reminded that “expected” does not mean “mandatory.”
- ETFO TVTL Members are further reminded that the health of Teachers 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.

Members are thanked for everything they are doing. We continue to fight the good fight.

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
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