



## Members Update for September 24th, 2021

**Vaccine Disclosures** – Final reminder for everyone that has not yet disclosed to the employer if you have been vaccinated or not – today is the last day to do that. If it is not done today, members will put themselves at risk for being unable to be on board property and therefore not be able to work starting next week. This was to be done by September 7<sup>th</sup> and is long overdue. This is a provincial mandate issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health and not a flimsy HWDSB policy.

For members that are not vaccinated, regular testing and daily screening will be required to be in the workplace.

For members that are vaccinated, only the regular daily screening will be required.

We cannot work remotely in caretaking and maintenance, so this is especially important for our members which is why we have reached out to members and encouraged them to be in a place that will allow them to keep working without losing any pay.

**September GMM and Bylaws Meeting** – Just a reminder that there will be no By-Laws meeting this weekend. A few of our committee members will be away and since we didn't have quorum for our monthly meeting last Sunday, we haven't been able to set a new date yet.

**CUPE National Survey on Safe Union Spaces** – CUPE National has launched a survey on Making Union Spaces Safer and free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. The survey takes about 5 minutes to complete and is very important to give your input to our National body about how to make our union meetings and events safer and more inclusive for everyone. You can find the survey link here - <https://surveys.ggi.ca/cwx.cgi?en:s3852cupe> - and we hope you take the time to give your input.

**EasyConnect** – Or should I say “Not So Easy To Connect” is a mess. The new software system has made more problems for both us and the employer than I can count on my fingers and toes. Head caretakers not being covered, enhanced cleaners not being covered, afternoon shifts not being covered, 4 and 6 hour permanent members not being topped up to 8 hours before any overtime is offered to anyone – and the list goes on and on. Some issues have been resolved as it’s been dropped in Bob’s lap now to be the go-between from the employer and Apply To Education (the same company that looks after job postings as well). We did ask in our Staff Relations meeting on Wednesday that they put Eva back in place for now until they work out the bugs in the system and that was denied. Bob did mention that he’s spending on average about 5-6 hours a day dealing with concerns along with other staff to try and get things running the way they should be. For now, we all know it’s a mess and my only hope is that within a couple weeks, there will only be the odd glitch left and the number of mixups won’t be any more than when Eva was looking after things for us.

**If you know of positions not being covered or are encountering problems with the new system, please email Pat Amatangelo or Mark Lachowicz and share your concerns so we can relay them to Bob and get them addressed as soon as possible.**

**Possible Mandatory Vaccinations** – As a follow up to the piece earlier this week on the possibility of the HWDSB requiring that all staff be vaccinated at some point – I do have a few updates for members on that issue. I will include the motion as it was put forward at the end of this update.

- 1) The motion passed by Trustees at the last board meeting does not have a start date attached to it.
- 2) Trustees are waiting on information from the Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education as well as other school boards like the Toronto District School Board which already has a policy like this in place. I did ask in a meeting with Jamie Nunn and Manny on Wednesday (yes, I had back to back to back meetings from 1pm until about 8:30pm LOL) if the HWDSB was aware of any court challenges to similar policies and they were not as of yet.

3) Next board meeting, information on vaccination numbers for all HWDSB staff will be presented to Trustees along with any other information from various Ministries and decisions will be made regarding the motion. That meeting is set for October 25<sup>th</sup> and will be put on YouTube live that night if anyone wants to listen in and hear what the discussion and results are.

4) The motion would maintain weekly rapid testing for employees that have a medical or religious exemption approved by the HWDSB. Employees who have not vaccinated because of a personal preference or belief would be impacted by this motion if they still chose to not be vaccinated. We would never want to see that happen to any of our members – restriction from the workplace would mean an unpaid leave and loss of benefits which has very negative effects on individuals and families.

5) According to numbers shared during that meeting, the HWDSB staff are currently at approximately 90% vaccinated across all employee groups.

**Ontario Human Rights Commission Statement on Vaccination Policies** – Just to be transparent with everyone, on Wednesday (seems like a lot happened on Wednesday) the Ontario Human Rights Commission issued a statement on vaccines, vaccination policies, vaccination passports, etc. I know we have a number of different views on the whole vaccine issue but statements from an organization like the OHRC can provide much needed clarity and direction on issues where words like “rights and freedoms” are often included in the conversation. You can find the article which I encourage everyone to read by following this link - [http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/news\\_centre/ohrc-policy-statement-covid-19-vaccine-mandates-and-proof-vaccine-certificates](http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/news_centre/ohrc-policy-statement-covid-19-vaccine-mandates-and-proof-vaccine-certificates)

**New Office Space** – Many months ago, the building we have occupied for decades was sold. The new owners are the dentist and pharmacist from the main floor. Guess what – they want to turn the whole building into a medical building and renovate all the space on the second floor where our office is. So, we’re looking for new office space and hope to share with you all sooner than later that we’ve found some new space that will suit our needs. Just what we needed right? Pandemic, ridiculous government, back to school issues and oh yeah – you need to find new office space too....LOL

**Duty Supervisor Coverage** – if you are working on a weekend and need help from a supervisor, you should be calling PassWord and asking them to have the HWDSB duty supervisor call you back. You'll give them a phone number where you can be reached and within 5-10 minutes you should get a call back from one of our supervisors. They rotate coverage between them for overnight and weekend issues that happen across all our locations.

**Trustees Motion on Mandatory Vaccinations** – HWDSB Board Meeting September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The motion put towards Trustees and approved is as follows:

1. HWDSB work collaboratively with Hamilton's local public health unit, local partners and HWDSB employee groups to develop a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination procedure that is grounded in education and supportive incentives;

a. Requires all employees, trustees, service providers and volunteers to provide proof of full vaccination against COVID-19 while adhering to legislated privacy standards;

b. Requires any employee, trustee or service provider who is not fully vaccinated to participate in an exemption process, with approvals where there is a legal obligation to accommodate; and

c. For anyone who is not adhering to the procedure requirements by an established deadline, that staff develop appropriate steps including limiting access to the physical environments at HWDSB;

d. Requires any employee, trustee or service provider who has an approved formal exemption and is not vaccinated be accommodated and required to complete regular asymptomatic rapid testing and demonstrate a negative test, as per the recommendations by Public Health.

I think I've rambled on enough for now – hopefully you won't have to hear from me again for another week.

Cheers,

Blake