



Members Update for April 19th, 2022

CYA – Not as in see ya, but more like cover your a**. I have to say that for the majority of our members, this will never be an issue so many of you will read this and disregard it. But for some members, you should pay some attention to this.

Don't doubt for one second that the employer is on the hunt for sick time abuse so they can attack us during bargaining and push the Council of Trustees Association and the Crown to make reducing our access to paid sick time a major bargaining piece for them. School boards all across the province are documenting all the absences in the school system from teaching staff to support staff and will be telling the government that because of high absences, they need to make other arrangements for staffing – like unqualified teachers and yes, contracting out certain positions to the private sector to control costs. What does this mean for us? It means that if you do take a sick day – which has been bargained for you as a benefit to your job – you should make 100% sure you are using the sick day for proper reasons and that you may be followed by a contracted private investigator during your time off. This goes for the 01 – Personal Illness code and Covid80 codes on EasyConnect. We've had members followed and brought into HR meetings for both situations.

Taking a code 01 – Personal illness sick day doesn't mean you can't go get something you need from the pharmacy or grocery store. But it does mean that you shouldn't be seen working on your roof or garden all day. It means you probably should wait before visiting a couple family members for a few hours. It means you should be looking after yourself and resting so you can feel better. If you're using the Covid80 code and should be isolating – you should be isolating and not visiting friends, going shopping and doing things in the public when you're supposed to be isolating.

For perspective – on Thursday of last week we had 152 absences to cover in caretaking. We have just about 550 members. 152 absences is over 25% of our workforce. Now that includes all vacancies – vacations, pregnancy leaves, leaves of absence, WSIB injuries, 01 personal illness, Covid80 absences, etc. - but I think you would agree that more than 25% is a huge number. I would be the first person to tell all of you that if you are sick and need a day or more to recover or if you fail your screening and need to be off to keep others safe in the workplace – you NEED to be doing that for your own health and that of your co-workers. Just keep in mind that if you're caught abusing the negotiated sick time we all have access to – and plan to keep having access to – you are very likely to get an email requesting your attendance at a meeting with the HR Dept and it likely won't have a positive outcome for you.

Health & Safety Update – (From Sister Kathleen Powell our Health & Safety Chairperson) - I wanted to let our members know that the filters on our roof and heat pump units need to be a MERV 13 or higher to not have a Hepa filter in a classroom. Rooms have been identified as per the updated Ministry criteria (occupied learning spaces with mechanical ventilation, but without MERV 13 filters) so please check your units to make sure that the rating is MERV 13 or higher. If you need MERV13 filters for any of your units, please send the sizes and quantities to your FOS to order them.

Provincial Screening Tool – The provincial screening tool for Education workers was updated again last week and we all need to be completing our daily screening before coming to work. Please check the current screening tool to see if you should be at work today or not - <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>

Upcoming this week –

Wednesday night is the OSBCU Parent Consultation on Zoom.

Sunday is our April Membership Meeting @ 10am at the HWETL Hall at 105 Nebo Road.

Being another short week, I'll try and have an update on a few things for you on Friday, but in case time runs out – I hope to see many of you on Sunday at our membership meeting – the first in person in about 25 months! Agenda's, previous meeting minutes, financial statements, etc will all be available at the meeting, just like they used to be. Who knows – maybe we'll even dust off the old coffee maker and kettle so you can grab a coffee before we start. Allow yourself some extra time to get parked and settled so we can start at 10am to respect everyone's time for the rest of the day.

Cheers,

Blake