



*Happy Ground Hog Day!!*

*February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024*

**Volleyball nets** – We’ve had a number of concerns raised about caretaking staff being asked to set up volleyball nets for evening rentals. This is a safety issue for our members - not a workload issue. Please contact your supervisor for training on safely carrying, setting up and tearing down nets before a rental needs them. Calling at 6pm for a 7pm rental isn't practical to get hands on training. Caretakers in schools have time allotted on their schedules for maintenance and rentals already. In schools without a caretaker position - if an assistant caretaker is needed to set up the nets - they should be noting the time it takes and taking that time off their afternoon cleaning section and making note of what was not accomplished in their section if there's any questions or complaints from staff. Supervisors cannot simply tell one person how to set up the nets and transfer the responsibility to them to train everyone else. A better solution would be to do the training between 2-4pm with everyone present - and this may have to be done for each school individually since I don't recall many volleyball nets being the same from school to school. Some are fairly simple and some with cranks and pulleys under tension that can cause injuries if someone isn't trained properly.

**Safety shoes/ Boots** – We have a workplace where our employer has determined that safety shoes or boots must be worn by caretaking staff at all times during their work shift. Members who work without safety shoes and are identified by their supervisor run the risk of discipline and/or time off without pay. Vouchers for safety shoes are available through eBase and will be delivered to your school by a supervisor. For your own personal safety and to keep out of hot water – wear your safety shoes at work.

**Over Time & Qualifications** – For weekend overtime where only one member is present for the rental – that person must be fully qualified as per the collective agreement. Members need to be trained and aware of issues that can come up when they are working by themselves and responsible for the building, it's assets and safety of the occupants. This is different from weeknight overtime that happens during our regular afternoon shift and other members are present in the building. This was discussed last May by our Bargaining Committee extensively before voting on our new Local Collective Agreement. All members were encouraged to take any training courses they still needed as not having all courses would impact their ability to do weekend rental overtime. As a membership we approved the new CA by 97% and we will be following what we presented to members and agreed to.

**Money from the strike savings account** – Knowing that there's been lots of chatter about strike money after our January GMM, I wanted to address the situation with everyone. In November at our Executive meeting a motion was made to withdraw \$31,200 from our strike fund and move it to our Operating Account. We currently have \$290,000 of our strike fund in a term account with our bank for 13 months. We have a "holding" account for lack of a better term where money is put that is designated to be deposited in the term account at the end of the term and then re-invested again. The \$31,200 was removed from the holding account, not the term account. After a motion was made at the January GMM and approved by the members present at the meeting – that money was moved back to the holding account from our operating account. The intent is to deposit all funds from the holding account into the strike fund account and re-invest it again for another term and earn interest to go towards our Local strike fund ahead of August 2026 when our current contract ends. I hope this answers any questions anyone has about the issue. If there are any further questions, we can address them at the February GMM in a couple weeks.

**Getting along with co-workers** – Every once in a while we all need to be reminded about what's expected from us in the workplace. In most of our locations our members get along and support each other. In some locations there's tension and bad feelings, which happens in all workplaces. Some of our members need to remember that we work in a publicly funded place with a wide range of children, teens and adults. We have to be conscious of our speech and our actions. Any complaints about bad language or irresponsible behaviour will be investigated by HR and Facilities staff. Please keep your comments respectful at all times towards your co-workers and everyone else in the workplace. Just because you're behind a closed door doesn't mean your conversations, jokes or comments can't be heard by others.

**Report to work on time** – Reminder to all members – punctuality is key. If you're on day shift, you need to be at work and ready to go by 6 or 6:30 depending on your location. If you're on afternoons, your start time is 2, 2:30 or 3. Start time is in the school and ready to go to work. Start time is not when you roll through McDonalds drive thru and show up at 15 minutes after your shift starts and expect everyone to be ok with it. If you have an issue with your car, sickness, a child care issue or whatever and know you will be a few minutes late for an emergency situation – your responsibility is to contact Stephen Reed if you're on days and your area FOS if you're on afternoons. The supervisor is responsible for communicating that with the school. Showing up late and leaving on time and not making a deduction on your time sheet is time fraud and is dealt with harshly by the employer.

**OTIP** – Please see the attached notice from our partner OTIP about a retirement planning session coming up in April that members can enroll for and plan for their future.

**Office Administrator Contact** – Moving forward please call our Local office when you have a general information question. For example – where I can find a Copy of the seniority list, how many bereavement days do I get, the carpets in classrooms, workload schedules, the homeless camping on school grounds, I am an afternoon casual do I have to do snow removal, etc. These are the types of questions that Janna our office administrator can answer they do not need a steward or president to answer.

**Office phone number is 905-544-7733** Janna Thomson office administrator will be glad to direct your call or even answer the question you have. Members can also email our office for answers and assistance at [cupelocal4153@bellnet.ca](mailto:cupelocal4153@bellnet.ca)

**Reminder** – Janna Thomson and Marilyn MacAloney will be away at a financial conference Feb 6-9 Darlene Barrick will be available if someone needs to come to office.

In solidarity,

Darlene Barrick

President, CUPE 4153