



CUPE 4153 Update

November 15th, 2024

It's THAT time of year again....

While we start digging out winter coats, hoodies, onesies, boots and gloves - it's a reminder that with the turn of the season comes some additional challenges involving our mental health. Longer days with less sun and more darkness can make some people vulnerable with SAD. The holidays, expectations of family, finances with gifts and just the sheer volume of things to do can stretch anyone to the limit and beyond. It's a time of the year that we need to pay attention to our mental health and one of the ways we can do that is through our Employee Assistance Program or EAP. As HWDSB employees, we have access to confidential and free counseling and help on a number of issues - mental health, finances, physical health, etc. Please check the Homewood attachment with this update and make contact with them if you're struggling or someone in your family is.

CUPE 4153 Kids Christmas Party!

The time is just around the corner when kids start to get a little gleam in their eyes wondering if they've been naughty or nice as they see Christmas coming up on the calendar. We're doing our part this year again by hosting the Kids Christmas Party on December 7th.

The deadline to sign up your own kids or grandkids is November 22nd. Please email the office with the number of children, gender of the children and their ages.

Anyone willing to help out with the party can contact Kristin, Laurie or Janna in the office. Poster is up on our website at www.cupe4153.ca

Watch Your Pay Deposit (repeat)

Without going into many details, at this time it's the advice of the Local to check your pay and pay stubs every pay period. Seems like too many things in HR including Wellness are going a bit screwy and sideways lately and many mistakes are being made. Thankfully last week while I was in Toronto to assist with a few CUPE National Trials for another Local, Pat Amatangelo called me about one of our members who was paid, then the entire paycheque was taken back out of his bank account only a few minutes later because somebody up in HR made a mistake. Thankfully with Geoff and Pat on it and through the help of one reliable manager in HR, the error was rectified by the end of the day and payment was restored for our member.

Please check your pay stub when it's posted to the web portal on the Monday before payday. If you see anything that seems weird, give the office a call and let us know so we can look into it. There are far too many errors being made that can legitimately screw up a person's (and their family's) life and cause an incredible amount of stress and anxiety that's all totally unnecessary.

Do yourself a favor - check your pay rate. Are you being paid the proper amount. Check your hours - has your supervisor changed your timesheet without advising you and shorted you hours? Check your net pay - we all should know approximately what we should be paid every two weeks - is your pay way less than it normally is?

The Local, the Executive and Stewards are here to help you get what you're entitled to, when you are entitled to it. You provide the info, we get to work.

Door Locking and Unlocking (repeat)

There seems to be some confusion among members about when to lock or unlock doors in our buildings. While these questions should be going to your supervisor first (THEY are responsible for the proper running and safety of the workplace) the Local can provide some assistance on the issue.

In elementary schools, all exterior doors are to be locked during the instructional day. From the time the bell goes in the morning until students are dismissed at the end of the day. If your supervisor or Principal asks to have the doors unlocked, politely tell them no it's against the Safe Schools Act

during the instructional day. Secondary schools are not subject to the locking of doors throughout the day. As much as I'd like our board to extend those same rules to secondary schools, they have chosen not to. Makes no sense to me that in buildings with a higher risk you would leave the doors open all day.

After the instructional day - if your school has a daycare and they do not have a dedicated entrance bell that parents can ring and have the door opened for them, a door may be left unlocked that is closest to the daycare. Parents are advised to enter and exit through that door. Any reports of people other than parents coming into the school without a reason for being there should be reported to your supervisor and addressed through health & safety. We've had a number of schools over the years where community kids know a door is open and find it funny to run through the school after hours while the daycare is still open. Not acceptable at all. When that happens, a plan is usually put in place very quickly to have a dedicated doorbell installed so doors can remain locked.

For evening rentals - we are responsible for meeting the rental permit holder at the designated door 15 minutes prior to the rental starting. The doors are not unlocked and the permit holder needs to attend to the door and verify that anyone entering is part of their rental. Doors are not to be wedged or propped open in any way by the permit holder.

Locking up at night - all of our members should be aware of exterior doors in their section. The Local strongly suggests checking exterior doors a few times through the night in passing just to make sure nobody (staff, daycare, etc.) has exited the building and the door hasn't latched properly. At the end of the night in secondary locations it is usually noted on the afternoon head caretaker's job duties to ensure all exterior doors are locked. If everyone meets up at the alarm panel at 10pm and you don't have a green light, I'd like to think as a team you can figure it out BUT I'm not naive enough to think that happens in buildings where there might be some tension or personality differences with other members. We are responsible for ensuring we have the building locked up and secured - either as a team or if it's assigned to one person on the team.



API Means C.Y.A.

In case any of you haven't had the pleasure of dealing with API for security - consider yourself lucky. It's time you will never get back and you'll hang up the phone with a headache.

Seems like API aren't very good at their job. Wrong schools going on test, fire department being dispatched to schools that are already on test and now if what I'm hearing is true - API is flat out denying they got a call when there's phone evidence that there indeed was a phone call made before any testing, drills, etc.

Until the employer can figure out what to do with their new vendor - it is your union's recommendation that any member having to call API for fire or security reasons do so from one of the Facilities assigned caretaking phones and that you keep a short log of when the call was made, what the request was and the confirmation from the API employee that your request has been completed. This would include entering board facilities on weekends for any overtime or rentals.

For instance, next time I do a fire drill, my log might look something like this:

10am - called API to go on test for drill, was on hold for 1 minute, operator answered and I gave the school address and passcode (our old HP numbers). Asked that the system be put on test for 1 hour for a fire drill. Operator confirmed the system is on test until 11am.

10:20am - called API, gave address and passcode, asked to verify the signal and restore of the alarm system - operator responded they did receive the alarm and restore. Asked that the system be put back to normal monitoring and the operator confirmed that it was back to normal monitoring.

This is for your own protection at the moment - there are quite a bit of errors happening right now and with the importance of building alarms and fire systems - nobody wants to be accused of something they didn't do.



Union Meeting This Sunday

We have our last monthly union meeting for this year on Sunday at the HWETL Office where we've been meeting for quite a while now thanks to the generosity of the HWETL members and their Executive. We have a health & safety committee members meeting at 9am and following that, our regular union meeting will begin at 10am. We will going through our normal agenda & business to talk about as well as taking nominations for Bylaw Committee members. We need to elect two members who hold no other office so if you hold an Executive, Steward or Health & Safety position already, you are not eligible for the Bylaw Committee. Hope to see you Sunday morning and as usual, you bring your drink and we'll have some snacks for breakfast if you're feeling a little peckish!

Food Donations

Please find a medium to large sized delivery box in your school and keep it your caretaking office for non perishable and canned good donations. We're collecting to help our own members that are in dire need of help over the holidays. Boxes will be collected in a few weeks by elected reps, brought to the office for sorting and be distributed from there. **If you are in need of help during the holidays, please contact Janna in the office by email and we'll make arrangements from there as privately as possible.** Suggestions for donations could include pasta, pasta sauce, canned vegetables, soup, peanut butter, Kraft Dinner, cereal, etc.

I'm hoping to have more information for everyone on the seniority lists and the well water / probation issue that some of our members are still dealing with by next week. Depending on the flow of information, we may have an update on Sunday for our union meeting.

Have a great weekend everyone!

Cheers,

Blake

Your Employee and Family Assistance Program

Get to know your EFAP



Everyone faces challenging and stressful events in their lives. Most of the time we can handle these situations ourselves; other times we could benefit from some support.

Your EFAP is a professional, confidential, and proactive service to support you with a wide range of personal, family, and work-related concerns.

What benefits are available to me?

Your EFAP is here for you whenever you need it, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days of the year.

Within a confidential environment you can receive counselling for any challenge — whether it's a first step in facing a possible addiction, or managing day-to-day stress.

We guarantee your confidentiality.

We are Homewood Health, a trusted company with years of experience delivering the best possible support for clients like you. Everyone is guaranteed confidentiality within the limits of the law. You won't be identified to anybody — including your employer.

People frequently use an EFAP for personal challenges such as relationship concerns, family or parenting issues, anxiety,

depression, addictions, grief, coping with health issues, or work-related challenges.

We will match you with a counsellor who suits your needs and provide you with short-term solutions.

If you are identified as requiring additional, longer-term treatment or specialized support, our counsellors will refer you to community-based resources and programs which suit your unique needs.

How does the counselling program work?

Counselling services can be offered face-to-face, over the phone, through video, or online. Offices are local and appointments are made quickly, with your convenience in mind. If you have a preference for location, gender, or appointment time, we'll do our best to accommodate your preferences.

When you need to speak with someone, simply call Homewood Health — staff will ask you for some basic information (to establish your eligibility for this benefit)

Contact us to learn more.

1-800-663-1142 | **TTY: 1-888-384-1152** | **International (Call Collect): 604-689-1717**

Numéro sans frais - en français : 1-866-398-9505

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Your Employee & Family Assistance Program: Get to know your EFAP

and will help set up an initial appointment at a time that is convenient for you. An experienced counsellor will assess your concerns and help you develop practical solutions.

Life Smart Coaching

Life Smart Coaching is a suite of telephonic services that offers assessments, coaching, and resources; each service has been developed to allow you to take a proactive approach to managing everyday challenges.

A Life Smart intake counsellor will contact you within 72 hours to offer you an appointment with an appropriate specialist.

Life Smart Coaching Services include three major components with service options for each area:

Life Balance Solutions

- New Parent Support
- Childcare and Parenting
- Elder and Family Care
- Relationship Solutions
- Financial Coaching
- Legal Advisory Services
- Grief and Loss
- Stress Solutions

Health Smart Coaching Services

- Nutritional Coaching
- Lifestyle Changes
- Jumpstart your Wellness
- Smoking Cessation

Career Smart Coaching Services

- Career Planning
- Workplace Issues
- Pre-Retirement Planning
- Shift Worker Support

Online Services – Homeweb

Homeweb is part of your Employee and Family Assistance Program. You can access Homeweb on your phone, tablet, or desktop. Homeweb offers you the ability to create an individual profile, receive personalized content recommendations, and access lots of helpful resources — anywhere, anytime.

Access Homeweb for interactive tools, health and wellness assessments, child and elder care resource locators, and a library of health, life balance, and workplace articles.

i-Volve: Online CBT. i-Volve is an online, self-paced treatment program for depression and anxiety using the best practice treatment approach, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).

This innovative treatment program will guide you through exercises that examine and test how you interpret and perceive external stimulation. These insights will help you change and adapt the ways in which you think, feel, and react in various situations. i-Volve will help you to identify, challenge and overcome your anxious and/or depressive thoughts, behaviours and emotions.

How do I register for Homeweb?

Step One: Visit www.homeweb.ca and click 'Sign Up'.

Step Two: Enter information into the required fields, choose an email and password, and click 'Next Step'. Then, type in your company name and click 'Find it!' Select the correct company from the list provided. If you do not see your company listed, check the spelling and try again.

Step Three: Let us know how you are covered by Homewood, (e.g. through your organization or the organization of a family member), and let us know your relationship to the organization (e.g. employee, spouse, dependent, etc.). Submit the additional information required and click 'Sign In' at the bottom of the page.

Search, browse, and get expert support.

What if I'm in crisis?

Homewood Health staff are prepared to take your call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. **Help is always available.**

Who do I contact?

To speak to someone in confidence, for crisis services (24 hours a day) or to book an appointment contact us today by calling the number below.

Contact us to learn more.

1-800-663-1142 | TTY: 1-888-384-1152 | **International** (Call Collect): 604-689-1717

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