

## **The Manitoba Teachers' Society Guidance on Teachers' Working Conditions effective June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020**

Pursuant to its powers under the Emergency Measures Act, the government of Manitoba has declared a provincial state of emergency and has issued a number of Public Health Orders including an order to shut down all public schools completely.

As of June 1<sup>st</sup>, Phase 2 will take effect which allows the limited use of school facilities under certain specific conditions. Notwithstanding that you may believe that you are effectively and efficiently working from home, the Division has the right to direct you to work from school, subject to individual circumstances that might require an accommodation.

The conditions that each Division must comply with include the following:

- classroom learning remains suspended, however students will be able to meet with teachers for the purpose of assessment and planning for the resumption of classes in September;
- occupancy must be based on maintaining physical distancing of 2 m. in individual rooms;
- there can be no more than 25 people per room;
- teachers and students may meet in small group or one-on-one settings so long as physical distancing is maintained;
- sports, band, and other extracurricular activities can resume so long as physical distancing is maintained;
- choirs or musical theatre activities will not be allowed;
- a separate entrance to the facility or staggered hours should be established wherever possible;
- washrooms and lunchrooms must have frequent sanitation and should be monitored to ensure appropriate physical distancing;
- water fountains that are not touchless or can't be cleaned between users should be closed;
- sharing of items including food and drink containers should be avoided;

- students must bring their own lunches, or provided lunches must be individually wrapped in disposable containers;
- COVID-19 screening must occur at the start of each day, anyone with symptoms will not be allowed to attend. On-site temperature checking is not required;
- signage must be installed outlining physical distancing protocols and floor markings where any lines of people may form, both inside and outside of the facility;
- signs highlighting the importance of hand hygiene, physical distancing, and staying home when sick must be prominently displayed;
- hand hygiene must be encouraged, and hand sanitizer must be available at all building access points;
- travel should be limited within the school throughout the day.

For more information see [Limited Use of School Facilities, May 29, 2020](#):

[https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/support/limited\\_use\\_school.html](https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/support/limited_use_school.html)

### **Some FAQs**

#### **1. What if I arrive and any of these conditions have not been met at my school?**

Under the *Workplace Safety and Health Act* a worker may refuse to work at a workplace if he or she believes on reasonable grounds that the work or the workplace constitutes a danger to his or her safety or health or to the safety or health of another worker or another person.

The first step is to report the dangerous situation to your principal and attempt to seek a reasonable solution that complies with the government's directives.

If no satisfactory solution is reached, contact a MTS Staff Officer (204-888-7961) or your Local President, and explain the situation. At that point, a phone call might be made on your behalf to provincial enforcement officials who are tasked to ensure that all businesses and workplaces comply with the government's directives. Significant fines can be levied for failure to comply.

Workplace Safety and Health may also be contacted, and they may conduct an investigation.

During all of this time, you are not obliged to perform dangerous work or in a dangerous workplace. Further, your colleagues cannot be requested or assigned to do your work unless advised that you have refused to do it on the basis of it being dangerous.

Further, the Division cannot retaliate against or punish you in any way for advocating for safety in your workplace.

## **2. What if the stress of the situation causes me to be unwell?**

If you feel sick and unable to perform your duties you should inform your principal and, subject to satisfactory arrangements being made regarding any students you are supervising, you should go home. You should report this action to your Local Association President or a MTS Staff Officer.

## **3. What will my Local Association and/or MTS do about the situation?**

Your Local and the Society will, in addition to providing you with advice; give consideration to filing grievances where your employer has not provided you with a safe workplace or accommodated you appropriately where necessary.

## **4. Where can I find out more information and contacts?**

The MTS website at [www.mbteach.org](http://www.mbteach.org) is an excellent resource for all types of information, resources and contact information that you can review and consider as we move forward with care, safety and in consideration of the well being of teachers and students during these unprecedented times.