



Nova Scotia Teachers Union

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TO: NSTU Local Presidents, RRC Chairs, Provincial Executive

FROM: Staff

DATE: May 12, 2021

RE: Update for Substitute Teachers

We know this is a difficult time for all teachers, especially substitute teachers, who have the added burden of an uncertain income. Given the challenges substitute teachers are currently facing, it's crucial we provide them with as much clarity as possible on some pressing matters. Specifically, we've had a number of inquiries about when and whether substitutes must be hired for a given teacher absence as students learn from home, and we have also heard from substitutes asking about the recent changes to Employment Insurance.

When must a substitute be hired?

Article 32.21 of the Teachers' Provincial Agreement requires Centres/CSAP to hire a substitute teacher in all cases where a teacher is absent unless a substitute teacher is not operationally required.

There are 5 defined reasons why a substitute teacher would *not* be operationally required:

1. Days when the absent teacher does not instruct or supervise students;
2. Instances where the absence occurs mid school day and the school administration can assume the duties of the absent teacher;
3. Absences related to extracurricular activities;
4. If reasonable numbers of students can be regrouped for appropriate instruction;
- and
5. During exam periods when there are sufficient teachers at school to invigilate exams.

Where a Centre/CSAP has made all reasonable efforts hire a substitute and none is available, the Centre/CSAP has complied with this article.

Obviously, given the nature of remote learning, determining whether or not a substitute is required may be more complicated. If you are concerned that a substitute has not been hired in a particular case in violation of the article above, please contact the NSTU 1-800-565-6788/902-477-5621.

Employment Insurance Changes

The Federal Government has implemented changes to the qualifying requirements for Employment Insurance (EI) due to the ongoing pandemic. The three (3) significant changes are:

1. Only 120 hours (15 100% substitute days) of insurable work are required to qualify for regular EI benefits*;
2. EI benefits are now set at a minimum of \$500 per week but will be higher if the regular EI calculation provides a higher benefit; and
3. If you qualify for regular EI benefits then you will be eligible for up to 50 weeks of benefits.

(*The current unemployment rate has been set to the minimum 13.1% for purposes of COVID relief, which is a benefit to unemployed persons as the actual rate may be lower. Therefore, there is a 420 hour requirement for insurable hours with a 300 hour credit (one time) to access benefits resulting in a 120 hour requirement if the one-time credit has not been previously used. This equates to 15 sub days if the credit can be used now and 52.5 days if the credit has been previously been used.)

For further information, see www.canada.ca or contact the NSTU 1-800-565-6788/902-477-5621.

We will continue to update members as new information impacting substitute teachers becomes available.

cc. NSTU Substitutes microsite <http://substituteteachers.nstu.ca/>
NSTU Staff