



NOVA SCOTIA TEACHERS UNION

Dr. Tom Parker Building, 3106 Joseph Howe Drive, Halifax, NS B3L 4L7 (902)477-5621 Toll Free 1-800-565-6788 Fax: (902)477-3517 nstu@nstu.ca www.nstu.ca

Strike of Non-NSTU Educational Workers: What to do if there is a non-NSTU strike in your workplace

A strike by support personnel within the school-system may be disruptive to the school and our teachers. These guidelines are meant to help support teachers during possible job action by others. In the event of a strike or lockout of non-NSTU personnel, we have developed a Q&A about what to do if there is a strike at your workplace:

Q&A

Do I have to go to work if non-NSTU Educational Support Workers are on strike?

Yes. NSTU teachers are not on legal strike therefore teachers must continue to go to work and perform their regular teaching duties. Teachers must continue to adhere to their Provincial and applicable Regional Collective Agreements during any job action by non-NSTU personnel.

What if I am asked to do the work of a non-NSTU Educational Support Worker?

Teachers should not perform, or request others to perform (e.g., students, parents/ guardians, etc.), exclusive bargaining unit work previously done by striking support personnel. However, if directly instructed by a principal/supervisor to do such duties, the teacher must comply and grieve later (work-now grieve-later).

What do I do if there is a picket line?

Teachers are required to go to work, so will have to cross a picket line if there is one at their school/workplace. Although teachers must cross the picket line, they may consider introducing themselves to a picket captain before proceeding to work. This demonstrates respect and support for the teacher's co-workers.

What do I do if I am uncomfortable or believe there is a threat to my safety if I cross the picket line?

If teachers are prevented from crossing a picket line by force or threat of force, they should leave to a safe area and report this immediately to their principal/supervisor; advise them of the situation and ask for instructions. Your employer may assign someone to assist teachers across the picket line or may, in certain cases, contact the police. Teachers are also encouraged to advise the NSTU so it can inform the striking union of the situation.

If the employer insists a teacher cross the picket line and the teacher still believes there is a legitimate threat their safety, they may contact the NSTU for further information. If a teacher's health or safety is being jeopardized, they may have the right to refuse under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

What if I am concerned with the state of my school, classroom, workplace?

Teachers have a duty to attend to the health, comfort and safety of students. However, it is the responsibility of the employer(s) to ensure that educational sites are safe and healthy environments for students and employees.

If a strike by non-NSTU personnel results in unsafe or unhealthy school/workplace conditions, teachers should report these unsafe and/or unhealthy conditions to their principal/supervisor, and if required, to the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee.

How can I show my support and solidarity?

Teachers can be supportive of non-NSTU Educational Support Workers on strike by bringing them coffee and/or refreshments. Teachers can always beep their car horn and wave to show encouragement and solidarity.

Teachers may join a picket line; however, they should be cautious in doing so and ensure that they only join a picket line during their own personal time and not during work hours.

Teachers should be aware of their duty of loyalty to their employer if showing support of non-NSTU Educational Support Workers on social media, and if doing so should be cautious not to criticize their employer.

What if I have a question that is not on the list, or I need further information?

Teachers should contact the NSTU and/or their Executive Staff Officer for further information.

This is meant as a general guideline only. For further information please contact your Executive Staff Officer or consult the NSTU Guidebook (Section VI (5)) and Operational Procedures (Section III (24)).