



Nova Scotia Teachers Union

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MEMORANDUM

TO: NSTU Members

FROM: President Paul Wozney

DATE: January 24, 2022

RE: **Work for absent students**

Dear NSTU Siblings,

I know how difficult your work is right now and how much fear and stress the inadequacy of school safety measures (like abandoned contact tracing) is causing you. I know that you, like many parents and students, are legitimately worried for your safety and the safety of your school community. We also know that covid safety concerns have caused many families to keep their children at home rather than attend school at the moment.

Since the EECD memo regarding sending work home for absent students was sent to you on Saturday night, many of you have reached out asking what it means. I want to reassure you that since that memo was circulated, the Minister of Education and EECD senior staff have confirmed that there is no change in practice and teachers should continue to do what they have been doing. Teachers are *not* being asked to prepare different or additional materials for absent students. EECD has also confirmed again that it is *not* introducing hybrid learning or expecting that teachers instruct both in-person and virtually.

NSTU and EECD have already negotiated the duties required of a teacher for a student who is absent. Article 11.02(iii) of the *Teachers' Provincial Agreement* provides that it is the duty of a teacher:

to provide, upon request from the Principal, for a student enrolled in a public school who is absent, a course outline, a record of lessons taught and such other

materials as the teacher would ordinarily prepare for the student's class. A Principal, in consultation with the teacher, may require the teacher to evaluate appropriate student products. Teachers shall not be required to prepare additional materials or release test/examination materials prior to their release to the class. For greater clarity, the release of test/examinations to students who were absent shall be consistent with the practice of the school. Reasonable notice shall be given for the above requests.

Given the stress that parents and caregivers are currently under, you may receive requests that go above and beyond current practice for supporting students who are unable to attend class. If this happens it's important that you direct the request to your Principal before proceeding. Your Principal can assist the family in understanding what to expect, direct the process and they may instruct you to evaluate an absent student's work product. It is not appropriate to provide anything to an absent student in advance of when you cover that material in-person. You are entitled to reasonable notice for any such request.

If you are uncomfortable with instructions you've received from an administrator, please ask for the instruction in writing and contact the NSTU Staff Officer assigned to your region (1-800-565-6788, see nstu.ca/coronavirus for email listings of Staff Officers) with questions or for support in next steps.

We will continue to advocate for safe working conditions and appropriate protections for the entire school community. Thank you for how hard you are working to hold things together in your schools.

Sincerely

Paul Wozney
NSTU President