



MEMBERS ACTING IN ADVISORY ROLES

Your Responsibilities as a Member of ETFO...

Regardless of whether your role is as a teacher, designated early childhood educator, education support personnel, professional support personnel, mentor, consultant, team leader, coordinator or program leader, you remain a member of ETFO. As such, you have professional obligations that are outlined in your local collective agreement and other legislation. As a member who may be acting in an advisory role, you probably find yourself working through a variety of situations which may require you to juggle your obligations to other members of ETFO and to those in administrative positions who may in fact be supervising you or evaluating the members with whom you work.

You walk a fine line and may sometimes find yourself in what seems like an awkward situation where you feel caught between a member and an administrator. When facing this situation it is important to keep in mind that your obligations as a member of the Federation must frame any actions that you take.

For members of ETFO our obligations to one another are described in Article VI of the ETFO Constitution.

6.1 A member shall:

- 6.1.1 recognize the Federation as the official voice of all the active members of the Federation;
- 6.1.2 adhere to the directives, *Constitution, Bylaws* and *Directives* of the Federation;
- 6.1.3 support collective bargaining initiatives, including a strike authorized by the Executive;
- 6.1.4 refrain from undertaking or supporting actions which undermine established bargaining procedures;
- 6.1.5 honour the terms of the *Collective Agreement*;
- 6.1.6 strive to eliminate all forms of harassment between individuals in the educational system;
- 6.1.7 endeavour to ensure equity and inclusiveness in the workplace; and
- 6.1.8 strive to achieve and maintain a high degree of professionalism and to uphold the honour, dignity and ethical standards of the teaching profession.

The Teaching Profession Act and Regulations also set out the duties of members of the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF). For example,

17. A member shall co-operate with the Federation to promote the welfare of the profession.

The Duties of a Member to Fellow Members Include:

18. (1) A member shall,
- (a) avoid interfering in an unwarranted manner between other teachers and pupils;
 - (b) on making an adverse report on another member, furnish him with a written statement of the report at the earliest possible time and not later than three days after making the report. (Members are not required to comply with section 18 (1) (b) when reporting alleged sexual abuse of a student by a colleague).

Your Responsibilities as an Employee of Your District School Board...

ETFO views your role as an advisory one; to provide support and advice to colleagues while respecting their right to confidentiality. You may need to define and clarify your role with principals and members.



Very often a member in an advisory role is asked to work with colleagues who may be having professional difficulties. It is important to build trust in such situations so that the members will have confidence in your efforts to assist them. In that respect, it is not acceptable, for example, to take notes while working with a member who is being evaluated and then to provide these notes or comments to the principal.

Also, it is not appropriate to discuss concerns with the principal about a member's abilities if you have directly observed the member in the classroom. It is not your role to evaluate your colleagues. Neither is it your role to act as a counsellor for members who are having personal or professional difficulties. You can refer them to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offered by your district school board, your local office, or to Professional Relations Services (PRS) at ETFO Provincial Office.

Your Responsibilities as a Member of the College of Teachers and the College of Early Childhood Educators...

As a member of the Ontario College of Teachers or the College of Early Childhood Educators you are obligated to uphold the Ethical and Professional Standards of Practice for the Profession as defined in the *Ontario College of Teachers Act and Regulations*.

You also have a duty to students in your care to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Children's Aid Society if you have reason to believe "a child is or may be in need of protection." This responsibility is outlined in the *Child and Family Services Act* and in the *Early Childhood Educators Act*.

Such a need may arise if you suspect a child is being physically, sexually, or emotionally abused or neglected. The failure of a member to report suspected child abuse or a pattern of neglect could result in charges under the *Act* with a fine, upon conviction, of up to \$2,000.

The statutory obligation to report suspected child abuse:

1. Applies to every person who performs professional or official duties with respect to a child, including teachers, principals, supervisory officers and members of the support staff;
2. Arises if there are "reasonable" grounds to suspect a pattern of neglect or abuse or the risk of neglect or abuse regardless of whether one believes the information.

So, as a member and a member acting in an advisory role, you may have obligations to other members of ETFO and students, and you also may to the Ontario Teachers' Federation, the College of Teachers, or the College of Early Childhood Educators.

Because of your unique role, you also have to juggle any obligations you may have with the board, your supervisor and school administrators.

For more information, contact Professional Relations staff at 416-962-3836 or 1-888-838-3836 at the provincial office.

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