

ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY, POLICE, ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TEACHERS, OR COLLEGE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

What to do if it happens to you ...

Allegations and related investigations can be extremely stressful and isolating. As your union, we are here to support and assist you through the process. Counselling and additional support may also be available through your Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) if an EAP is available in your board for your employee group.

Has an allegation been made against you?

- Even allegations that appear to you to be frivolous or entirely false can result in Children's Aid Society (CAS) and/or criminal investigations. Many can also result in discipline by your school board and complaints to the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) or College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE).
- At the first hint of any allegation against you that could potentially lead to a criminal charge or investigation by the CAS, you should refrain from responding to the allegation or making any statements about it and should instead **immediately** contact the provincial office of ETFO for advice and support.
- If you are still at the school, find a place in the school where you can make a private call to ETFO.

DURING OFFICE HOURS

If you are contacted by the police, CAS, OCT, or CECE regarding an allegation made against you:

- DO NOT participate in or consent to an interview.
- Make no statement to anyone regarding the allegation or charges.
- Say, "I am willing to co-operate, but I am unable to comment until I contact my Federation and legal counsel."
- Get the name, title, and contact information of the police officer or CAS worker who has contacted you.
- Call ETFO's Professional Relations Services (PRS) at 1-888-838-3836 or 416-962-3836 and state that your call is urgent.

You will be put in touch with the PRS staff on call who will provide you with the necessary assistance, including legal counsel, if deemed appropriate.

“AFTER HOURS” - EMERGENCY LEGAL ASSISTANCE

What is an emergency?

- Police are on the scene or on the way.
- Police want to talk to you about an incident or allegation directly related to the performance of your professional duties.
- You are at risk of being arrested and/or incarcerated.
- **IMPORTANT** – Do not make a statement to police even if they say they do not plan to arrest or charge. Say, “I am willing to co-operate, but I am unable to comment until I contact my Federation and legal counsel.”
- Call 1-888-838-3836 or 416-962-3836
- A voice message will provide the necessary instructions to put your call through to an operator. You will be asked a few important questions.
- Where appropriate, a lawyer will be contacted and you will be connected immediately.

Has an allegation been made against a colleague?

When a member is facing an allegation and is reassigned or placed on leave by the school board, the school steward may be called upon to reassure staff colleagues that the process is being followed and that the Federation is assisting the member. Colleagues and stewards should:

- Refrain from providing any comments on the situation to students, parents, or media.
- Direct all inquiries to the school principal.
- Contact PRS for advice if contacted by anyone as a potential witness to the alleged conduct.
- Assist your colleague by not participating in gossip and discouraging gossip among staff and students. If students are talking about it, please let your administrator know.

Supporting your Colleague

Facing an allegation can be an extremely challenging and impactful experience for members. Your colleague will have been advised not to make *any* statements about the allegations or the circumstances surrounding their case, and you should be careful not to ask them any questions about the case or otherwise encourage a discussion about it. Making such statements, even in confidence, could be detrimental to your colleague’s case. If your colleague has not yet contacted PRS for assistance, you should urge them to do so immediately and remind them not to make any statements about the allegations until they have obtained advice from PRS. You should also remind your colleague that additional counselling and support may be available through your board EAP.

TB:JS