



CUPE

Safe Schools Campaign

Solidarity letter to MPPs on dangerous working conditions and expected remedies

FROM MEMBERS WORKING OFF SITE AT HOME

DRAFT solidarity letter to MPPs, cc'ing Minister Monte McNaughton (also adapted as a script for calling MPPs)

RE: Dangerous working conditions at XXXX school

I am an employee of XXXX District School Board. In the current lockdown, I can do my job as a xxxxx from home. But I am writing in support my colleagues at XXXX school who, throughout every phase of the pandemic, have been required to report to the brick-and-mortar school every day. They work as custodians / education assistants / designated early childhood educators / school secretaries [delete/add as required] and their working conditions put them at risk every day of catching COVID-19.

Of course, certain jobs cannot be done from home. The people who do those jobs are proud to be the linchpins of our schools and of our public education system. I know my colleagues are devoted to the jobs that support students with special needs / keep schools clean and safe for students and staff / as the school's administrator / etc. [delete/add as required]

But everyone has a right to a safe work environment and the maximum protection from COVID-19 and the province should be putting in place the measures that give them that protection. But because [delete/add as required]

- they haven't been prioritized for vaccination
- there hasn't been any / enough staff hired to do the extra work that the pandemic requires
- casual staff don't have paid sick days
- workers in schools don't have the right PPE [option: and haven't been trained how to use it safely]
- students cohorts are too large and don't include workers
- the ventilation in XXXX School is poor
- the daily screening process has not prevented positive cases from coming to school

my colleagues in schools are scared every day that they will catch COVID-19 and infect their families too. My co-workers have to clean isolation rooms / work with students who can't wear masks / are in daily contact with children who spit / in daily contact with children's bodily fluids / have close contact with up to xx students in a day / work in poorly ventilated rooms. They deserve every workplace protection to help lower their risk of potential exposures to COVID. [Optional: And if staff don't need to be in schools, boards should be directed to follow advice from Ontario's COVID-19 Science Table to limit the number of people in the workplace by ordering all staff who can work offsite to remain at home.]

I am aware of the health and safety rights available to workers under Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act. However, I also know that my employer, XXXX District School Board, must take every precaution reasonable for ensuring that workers don't jeopardize their health and safety when they have to come into the school to do their jobs, especially during a pandemic; and that the province has the duty to enforce the measures that will keep them healthy.

As a matter of urgency, I am demanding [delete/add as required]

- priority for vaccination / fitted N95 respirators / additional hires to share the workload at XXXX school / smaller cohorts / cohorts that include workers / paid sick days / paid sick days for casual staff / improvements to ventilation / active daily screening / enforcement of the Science Table's advice about limiting the number of people in the workplace by allowing people to work from home if their jobs don't require them to be in school.

I look forward to your reply.