

Essential Services

UPDATE



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By E-mail: Two pages

BC Teachers' Federation Strike

School districts will need to examine their own protocols and experiences to determine how they will operate during the teachers' withdrawal of services.

The Labour Relations Board Order directs that there be no picketing or blocking of access or egress to schools. The Order specifically provides that BCTF members will not picket, block access or egress or otherwise restrict or cause to be restricted in any way, the full and complete access to schools by members of all support unions or impede the operation of other employers who occupy the same premises as schools or school districts. Therefore:

- Districts may decide to close schools to students but remain open for support and exempt staff; or they may decide to remain open to students (with no instruction) and remain open for support and exempt staff. Whatever the determination, consideration for student safety will be paramount. Generally, school districts have a practice when faced with a strike. In 2005, we were faced with an illegal strike that closed schools for a number of days. Likely there are protocols and approaches that could apply to this situation, although this is a different situation legally.

Support and exempt staff are expected to attend at work as normal and may perform their own work during that time (e.g., catch up on outstanding work, do maintenance activities or ongoing clerical work, update files, etc.) or other meaningful work (e.g., professional development, team meetings, personal study) as directed by the employer.

We have been clear in our discussions with support staff unions that unionized support staff will not be expected to do any work that is not within the general parameters of their normal work.

- Other employers/programs that utilize school facilities should not be disrupted; e.g., StrongStart, colleges, daycare, etc.
- Districts may still encounter BCTF members at or near schools who are demonstrating and/or handing out leaflets or pamphlets to parents and others. In order for that activity not to be seen as "picketing" and therefore in contravention of the LRB Order, such conduct should not involve a large number of people so as to create an atmosphere of intimidation; should not block entrances or exits to property or prevent people from entering or leaving the premises; and must be done in a manner that is not coercive, intimidating, or unlawful.

If your district experiences any difficulty with such activities, please contact BCPSEA as soon as possible.

We will provide further information as events progress. Please contact your BCPSEA labour relations liaison if you have any questions.

Questions

School districts with questions regarding essential services should contact:

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