

# Important ETFO Update #6: Responding to COVID-19

April 21, 2020

In update #6 on COVID-19 related issues, you will find information related to: mastering distance learning; supporting 2SLGBTQ+ students and those with disabilities; cyberbullying; CERB; college fees and more.

Stay informed at [etfo.ca/link/covid19](https://etfo.ca/link/covid19)

The information in this newsletter is up to date to the best of our ability and current as of 1:00 p.m. on April 21, 2020. With the situation rapidly changing, ETFO will continue to provide weekly updates on our response to COVID-19.

Keep reading, stay safe, and please wash your hands!

## Frequently Asked Questions

**I'm on a fast learning curve to master distance learning tools. Are there resources to help me?**

The Ontario Ministry of Education's licensed learning platform Brightspace by D2L has tutorial videos for beginners and more advanced users on its [YouTube channel](#).

You can also join the [Brightspace Community](#) to access articles, webinars and the ability to ask questions.

**How can I support students with disabilities when conducting distance learning?**

The Ontario Human Rights Commission has identified [barriers](#) that affect students with disabilities. While schools have a duty to accommodate, households may not have the adequate resources to support learners when it comes to a quiet space to focus, professional support for one-on-one instruction or access to teaching resources that meet student needs.

Finding online resources that are appropriate for differentiated instruction can be challenging. Members should draw from their professional experience and knowledge of their students' needs to choose resources that are culturally relevant and personally meaningful. When searching for teaching resources:

- Ensure that videos have closed captioning for students who are deaf or hard of hearing;
- Use descriptive videos to support visually impaired students;



- Select texts that have appropriate fonts and adjustable sizes to ensure readability; and
- Be cautious with online games that have flashing images and sounds that can trigger seizures and panic attacks.

Don't forget that there are specialists at your school and in your Board who are also willing and able to assist you with other ways to accommodate students with special needs.

For additional resources, check the following:

[PRS Matters #108](#)

[Accessibility Tips for e-Learning](#)

[Ontario Human Rights Commission's Appropriate Accommodations](#)

### **How can I support two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (2SLGBTQ+) students and families who are now facing increased marginalization?**

COVID-19 is affecting everyone but as with any crisis, the most marginalized communities are at disproportionate risk. It is important to build awareness of the realities of cyber-bullying and find ways to keep 2SLGBTQ+ youth safe. They are [one and a half times more likely to have depression and anxiety compared to their heterosexual counterparts](#) and are likely to experience higher levels of stress during the pandemic.

Women and 2SLGBTQ+ individuals make up the majority of domestic abuse victims. This tends to worsen when people are confined to their homes. For additional supports and resources to address 2SLGBTQ+ concerns, please see [ETFO's Emerging Equity Issues in a COVID-19 World](#).

For additional curriculum resources, visit:

[www.etfo.ca/buildingajustsociety/lgbtq/pages/default.aspx](http://www.etfo.ca/buildingajustsociety/lgbtq/pages/default.aspx)

[www.the519.org/education-training/glossary](http://www.the519.org/education-training/glossary)

[www.ophea.net/webinar/human-development-and-sexual-health-elementary-hpe-curriculum-peer-sharing-session](http://www.ophea.net/webinar/human-development-and-sexual-health-elementary-hpe-curriculum-peer-sharing-session)

### **I am concerned about student cyber bullying with implied threats of violence. What are my responsibilities?**

School staff are still required to report bullying and threats of violence against other students or staff. Members should contact school administrators for their support. It is important to complete the appropriate sections of the board's online Workplace Violence and/or Safe Schools Incident Report. Document the behaviour and send screen shots to administration to assist with their investigation. More advice can be found in these resources:

[ETFO](#) and [PRS](#)

[Ontario College of Teachers](#)

[Ministry of Education](#)



Members may also wish to contact their local or ETFO Professional Relations Services (PRS) for advice. For a student that has exhibited worrisome behaviour, ask your principal to refer the issue to the Violent Threat Risk Assessment (or similar) team.

### **Who qualifies for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)?**

The CERB is available to anyone who has stopped working due to COVID-19 and does not qualify for other income supports. This applies to any worker who:

- Is out of work due to: lay off or termination; being sick, quarantined, in self-isolation or taking care of someone who is sick with COVID-19; or being working parents who must stay home without pay to care for children due to school and/or daycare closures; or
- Is continuing to work but receiving less than \$1000 (before taxes) from employment or self-employment income; or
- Received regular EI benefits for at least one week since December 29, 2019 and is no longer eligible for EI benefits.

### **I am a part-time worker who supplemented my income with casual work. Will I qualify for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)?**

The CERB has expanded to include workers who are out of work completely, workers continuing to work but earning less than \$1000 (before taxes) per four-week period and workers who were accessing EI regular benefits but are no longer eligible for EI benefits.

### **I am experiencing financial stress during the Covid-19 closure. Will my college offer fee reductions?**

While the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) has not reduced fees, members can defer the payment that was due April 15 until a future time. The College will be in touch with those who have not paid the fee to arrange for payment at a future date.

For members of the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE), the College is aware that some members are facing financial hardship and may be unable to pay their annual fees. DECEs will receive information on how to defer their fee payment.

## **Resources and Financial Support Links**

[Apply for the Provincial Child Benefit.](#) Eligible parents will receive \$200 for children up to 12 and \$250 for children with special needs up to age 21.

[Apply for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit Program](#)

[Learn more about the CERB at \[etfo.ca/link/FAQ-CERB\]\(https://etfo.ca/link/FAQ-CERB\)](#)

[COVID-19 Self-assessment Tools](#) determine what steps you should take if you exhibit symptoms.

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