



STA Connection June 1-5, 2020 (Special Edition)

Accommodations Update

We have been discussing accommodations with the District, and the approach that will be taken to them for the rest of June. HR still has a significant backlog of requests for accommodation, and continues to receive them.

A. What is happening with different accommodation requests?

The duty to accommodate process is an individualized one. Each person's situation is unique, and the employer must take employees' particular circumstances into consideration. That said, in general this is what the employer is doing for different categories of accommodation request.

1. Child care for school aged children:

If you applied for an accommodation based on the fact that you have school-aged children and do not wish to send them to school (even though care is available 5 days per week for them), our understanding is that HR has denied those requests and will expect you to either report to school or take an unpaid leave. We do not believe there is anything further the union can do in such cases, but if there are additional circumstances to be considered, please contact us at sta@surreyteachers.org.

2. Child care for pre-school aged children:

Our understanding is that HR has approved accommodations in situations where reasonable alternative care does not exist, but they may need more information from you. If you have not been approved for an accommodation under these circumstances, please contact us at sta@surreyteachers.org so that we can assist.

3. Own medical condition:

If you have been asked to provide further medical information (which is likely, unless you have already provided medical information or Health Services already has information on file about it), you should take steps to get your doctor to provide information indicating that you should be working from home rather than at a school.

4. Age

You have likely been asked to provide further medical information, and you should take steps to get your doctor to provide information indicating that you should be working from home rather than at a school.

5. Pregnancy

You have likely been asked to provide further medical information, and you should take steps to get your doctor to provide information indicating that you should be working from home rather than from a school.

6. Vulnerable Family Member

Our understanding is that HR has approved at least some accommodation requests on this basis, but they are very fact-specific. They depend on factors such as the living situation and the medical condition of the vulnerable member of your household. You may have been asked to provide medical evidence about the family member; this is a reasonable request for the employer to make, and you should take steps to get the information.

B. What do I do next week?

If you have not yet received a response to your accommodation request, your principal should connect with you before the end of this week to let you know that you can continue working remotely if you choose until the request is processed.

If you have been asked to provide further medical information (whether about yourself or a family member), then please take steps to do so as soon as you are able. In the meantime, please inform your principal that you are in the process of seeking documentation to support your accommodation request, and request that you be able to continue working remotely. Our understanding is that principals have been instructed to work cooperatively with employees in such situations to organize a remote work schedule beyond this week, if that is operationally possible for the school. Such arrangements are not formal accommodations, and are only in effect this month.

If your principal has already spoken to you about being back at work next week, but did not mention the possibility of continuing to work remotely, please follow up and ask them about it, and inform the STA at sta@surreyteachers.org.

STA Statement on Racism

The police murder of George Floyd and the subsequent outpouring of demands for racial justice has focused many peoples' minds on racism, not just in the US but in Canada as well. Recently in our community we have seen an increase in racist acts against Asian Canadians and Black Canadians. These events have brought to the forefront the racism that Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour face every day. We are appalled by racist violence that is prevalent in Canada and in Surrey.

Teachers in Surrey are role models to our students and in the community. The Surrey Teachers' Association condemns and denounces all incidents of anti-Black and anti-Asian racism and the continued racism and oppression that are directed at other People of Colour and Indigenous communities. We are

willing to examine our own practices, traditions and professions to rid our schools and lives of the scourge of racism. We teachers have power in our individual and collective voices.

It is one responsibility as educators to condemn the devastating behaviour of those who seek to hold others down. It is also our responsibility to teach kindness and compassion for all humans, and to raise up those who continue to be knocked down.

In these traumatic days of racial tension, our students, our colleagues and our neighbours who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour need extra support and care from all of us.

Since racism is learned, as teachers we know we can all learn to change. A place to start is to study and then teach directly about White supremacy and racism. We can transform the education system to model a different kind of community – one where we embrace differences and work to build each other up while enacting values of dignity, mutual respect, and justice.

Colleagues, are you wondering what you can do?

We need to educate ourselves to be able to educate our students. Canada is built on land stolen from the Indigenous peoples. Residential schools attempted cultural genocide. Slavery was practiced by settlers in Canada.

So, we should first ask ourselves some questions:

- Do we really know the history of racism?
- Do we really understand the impact of slavery or residential schools?
- If we see or hear anything offensive, do we ignore it, or do we call it out?
- What is my own privilege (or lack), how can I be more aware of it, and how can my self-awareness be part of my teaching work?

Actions we can take:

- Using the First Peoples Principles of Learning framework, sharing stories is a good place to start. (<https://www.embracerace.org/resources/26-childrens-books-to-support-conversations-on-race-racism-resistance>)
- Learn and teach about White privilege, and how it can be used to support others.
- Take the time to educate yourself and take some action. Read a book (<https://culturallyresponsiveleadership.com/antiracistbooks/>),
- Watch a documentary <https://www.buzzfeed.com/natashajokic1/racial-injustice-documentaries-and-movies>
- Sign a petition, write a letter, make a donation, join a protest. (<https://www.refinery29.com/amp/en-ca/2020/06/9851684/black-lives-matter-how-to-help-donate-support>)
- Check out curriculum resources to get your teaching up to date!
<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/daily-videos/the-death-of-george-floyd-sets-off-massive-protests/>
<https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/george-floyd-racism-and-law-enforcement>
<https://www.teachingforblacklives.org>
<https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race>
<https://www.tolerance.org/moment/racism-and-police-violence>

- Attend rallies and actions organized in your community, or donate to organizations working hard in the struggle.

We stand with the BC Federation of Labour in saying we know our work is not done. The systems that have generated wealth and prosperity over centuries in this world have done so in large part by ravaging and destroying Black lives, Black communities, and the ancestral and present homes of Black people. The onus is on each of us individually, and all of us together, to bring an end to this violence and dehumanization.

STA AGM coming up June 10th

Our first ever virtual AGM will take place at **4 pm June 10th on Zoom** All members are encouraged to register and attend. Elections for our executive and table officers will be held. Please refer to our [website](#) to read candidates' statements.

Christie Weigel, our current Professional Support Services Officer, has just accepted a job in Round 2, so she is no longer putting her name forward for that position. If any members are planning to put their name forward for that election who have not already submitted a statement (the deadline for statements was May 15th) we will accept a statement from them if submitted by Friday June 5th, 4 pm. Please contact us as soon as possible to let us know this is coming. Candidates who have already submitted a statement for another position, and who want to now put their names forward for Professional Support Services Officer, may submit a supplemental statement by **4 pm Friday June 5th**.



The illustration shows a large laptop screen displaying a voting interface with a prominent 'VOTE' button. Several stylized human figures are interacting with the screen, some holding up documents. To the left of the laptop is a smartphone also displaying a voting interface. The entire scene is set against a solid green background.

MEMBERS NEED TO REGISTER IN ADVANCE TO ATTEND THE VIRTUAL AGM ON JUNE 10TH

REGISTER NOW