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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE: THE SAFETY DANCE

ITA MISSION STATEMENT:

*The Interlake Teachers’ Association is dedicated to **empowering members by promoting and protecting their well-being**. We strive to advance equitable public education through the support of relevant professional development, communication with members, professional advocacy, and community engagement.*

As our organization’s Mission Statement states, the ITA strives to improve the working conditions of all members. We have few, more direct and impactful avenues to do this, than through the Workplace Safety & Health ISD divisional committee. You may have noticed inspection teams around your sites recently, and here is a rundown of their role, and that of the committee:

By law ([*Workplace Safety & Health Act and Regulation*](#)), they...

- **Identify risks** to safety or health of workers.
- **Develop and promote measures to protect** the welfare of persons in the workplace, **and monitor the effectiveness of such measures.**

Chat with inspectors when they enter your space to let them know of safety concerns you have. It is their duty to report them to the employer, and it is the employer’s duty to reply within 30 days, with the action that will be taken. Safety is not optional, and it is a shared responsibility by employer and employee. The ITA is represented on the committee by myself and 2 other employee reps, as well as 2 Principal reps. By law inspections and committee meetings occur quarterly, where we review the inspections and incident reports and make recommendations. We receive PD regarding labour laws and WSH regulations, and committee members volunteer their time to ensure members have safe, healthy, inclusive and respectful work places to go to. If you have any concerns or questions, don’t hesitate to reach out to me at our new email itapres@mbteach.org. Stay safe.

Some WSH Facts. Did you know...?

It is crucial to report ALL INCIDENTS AND NEAR MISSES?

- An **incident** is an unplanned, undesired event that hinders completion of a task and may cause injury, illness, or property damage.
- A **near miss** is an unplanned event that did not result in injury, illness, or damage - **but had the potential to do so, if given a different set of circumstances.**
- The WSH committee reviews **ALL incidents and near misses that are reported.** Many go unreported unfortunately, which means future incidents could have been prevented.
- There is 1 form, it is fillable, and should be in your staff common folder. You can also access through OUTLOOK; Folders; Public Folders; All Public Folders; Forms Divisional, second from the top. We are working to get the form in a more accessible place so stay tuned.
- Examples of near misses?
 - Slips & falls where you catch yourself and no one is injured. The next person might be.
 - Students hitting or throwing but they miss, this time. Literally a near miss, but the issue still needs attention, so the next teacher or EA is not injured.
- Student or parent violence/harassment toward staff are serious. PLEASE REPORT!

As an employee, you have rights...

- **The right to know** of all hazards & be trained to recognize them and how to protect yourself.
- **The right to participate** – You can join the WSH committee in your school or division, elect members from your union to the committee, and bring forward safety concerns.
- **The right to refuse dangerous work** – Notify your supervisor and if the concern is reasonable, the employer must investigate and provide a written report to you.
- **The right to protection from reprisal** – The employer can not take or threaten discriminatory action because you exercised your rights under the WSH Act and Regulation.

You have a right to a workplace free from Harassment and Violence?

- As a worker, you are entitled to protection from harassment in the workplace. Every employer must have harassment policies and procedures in place that meet the requirements laid out in Part 1 - Definition and General Matters of the *Workplace Safety & Health Act and Regulation.*
- Harassment is objectionable conduct that creates risk to the health of a worker or severe conduct that adversely affects a worker's psychological or physical well-being.
- It can be repetitive or a single occurrence that has lasting, harmful effect on a worker, and can include written or verbal, physical acts, gestures, displays or any combination thereof.



Who is the WSH employee rep in your school? What should you find on a WSH board?

News & Current Issues

Reminder! Important Changes Benefits:

- **MTS Member and Family Assistance Program (MFAP) starts January 1, 2022**

January 1, 2022, counselling services to MTS members—and now eligible family members—will move to HumanaCare.

Services include individual therapy, and counselling for family and couples, legal and financial needs, grief and bereavement, diet and nutrition, substance abuse and crisis and trauma. Any MTS members in an existing clinical relationship with an EAP counsellor will continue to receive those services for the duration of their sessions, to March 31, 2022.

Until HumanaCare kicks in, members are encouraged to access their extended health benefits, such as Blue Cross, as they cover the following: clinical psychologist, social worker, psychotherapist, clinical counsellor, and marriage/family therapist. **Members can access up to \$850 per calendar year for these extended health services.** Links to search for counsellors/psychologists.

- [The Psychological Association of Manitoba \(cpmb.ca\)](http://cpmb.ca)
- [Find a Canadian Certified Counsellor \(CCC\) or CCC-Supervisor \(CCC-S\) - Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association \(ccpa-accp.ca\)](http://ccpa-accp.ca)
- The Province of Manitoba also offers some free services at Province of Manitoba | Be Well

Other bits...

- **MB Gov plans to repeal Bill 28 (Public Sector Sustainability Act – Wage Freeze Bill).** Minister Fielding has stated this is a “fresh start” with public sector unions. This means employers of public employees will not have to freeze wages or limit increases to government mandated amounts. We hope this will give our striking colleagues at UMFA and many other public sector workers, including many in education, hope for a new and fair deal.
- **MTS Ad Campaign – Education Matters – [LINK](#)**
- **IMPORTANT RETIREMENT DEADLINE -** Teachers should give notice by **November 30 for resignation effective December 31.**
- Did you receive your MTS **workload survey or Safe & Inclusive Space sign** from your school rep?
- Contact the President with any questions or concerns at itapres@mbteach.org. I am grateful to be out on school visits over the last two months of 2021, and look forward to chatting with many of you.

