

# Important Information Concerning COVID-19



As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, questions are being asked about how absences from work will effect employers and employees.

The Manitoba Teachers' Society has developed the following principles concerning potential workplace absence situations for members as follows.

1. If schools are closed: status of employment is working from home – salary and benefits continue.
2. If classes are suspended (no students): members will report to work as assigned by their school divisions – salary and benefits continue.
3. If a member is quarantined (not sick): status of employment is on an 'administrative (paid) leave' – salary and benefits continue.
4. If a member is quarantined (sick): sick leave provisions apply.
5. If a member is quarantined (sick) and sick leave provisions run out: in the case of a medically disabling condition, short-term and long-term benefits apply.
6. If the employer directs the employee to stay-at-home and the employee is not sick then the employer shall pay the employee as if they were working from home.

**NOTE:** The Government of Canada is advising that Canadians avoid all travel on cruise ships due to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak until further notice. Further, the government is now advising against all international travel to limit the spread of the virus. Members should note that their MPSE Travel insurance benefits will be void if a member chooses to ignore this guidance.

Members should contact an MTS staff officer as needed about their individual circumstances relating to their employment and leave status.

Further, **Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living** (<https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/coronavirus/>) is recommending the following:

## **Strategies for Schools and Educational Institutions:**

- ensuring ill staff and students stay home from school, and supporting those who are self-isolating at home to ensure they do not fall behind in their studies,
- reducing large group, and crowded activities,
- increasing desk distance between students, and
- considering implementing virtual or online classrooms, to reduce the number of people in classrooms.

## **Strategies for Employers:**

- relaxing sick leave policies, such as the requirement for sick notes, to encourage those who are ill to stay home and prevent the spread of illness to coworkers or customers
- allowing employees to work from home if possible
- discontinuing non-essential work-related travel outside of Manitoba, and
- encouraging virtual meetings to reduce prolonged, close contact between individuals.
- minimizing prolonged (more than 10 minutes), close (less than two meters/ six feet) contact between other individuals in public,
- avoiding greetings that involve touching such as handshakes,
- disinfecting frequently used surfaces,
- following public health advice related to self-monitoring and self-isolation if you have travelled or have been exposed to someone ill with the virus.