



Technology Use During the PANDEMIC

ETFO's position on in-person learning remains unchanged. The Federation firmly believes that the daily, in-personal model of instruction and support best meets the educational, developmental and social needs of students, provides the best experience for support, and is the most equitable learning model for all students.

ETFO's expectation is that elementary virtual learning in any capacity, including through hybrid models of instruction, will end once the pandemic ends.

Your union will continue to demand action from the government, school boards and public health units to ensure in-person learning and support can resume quickly and safely.

Given many educators our working virtually because of the pandemic, ETFO is providing this resource to assist you in exercising professional judgement, delivering quality learning and supporting students.

Devices and Connectivity Issues During the Pandemic

The Ministry has invested an additional \$15 million into technology. School boards can utilize unused GSN and Per Pupil Funding to address connectivity issues. In mid-May 2020, school boards were

provided with proposals through Ontario Together for low-cost internet connectivity for students, families and educators, and for supporting low-cost access to learning devices such as computers, tablets and portable Wi-Fi hotspots. Members should contact their school board for more information.

There are many online tools and digital resources, which tools are "board approved" and considered safe to use with students?

It is important to understand that school boards and educators must follow the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)*.

This Act outlines the rules and regulations for protecting student privacy and access to students' personal information. School boards use this guide to help develop a list of approved apps and services specific to the needs of each district. Using this approved list can protect a member from accidentally compromising a student's or family's privacy. Members are encouraged to request a list of approved apps and services from their administrator and/or direct questions about the use of online tools to their administrator.

In addition, these two guides clearly describe how *MFIPPA* needs to be followed by educators and school boards:

- [A Guide to Privacy and Access to Information in Ontario Schools](#)
- [Privacy and Access to Information in Ontario Schools: A Guide for Educators](#),

Members can also review ETFO's [PRS Matters: Use of Electronic Technology in the Classroom](#).

Are You Using a Personal Device to Provide Instruction?

The use of personal devices for work is usually discouraged by ETFO. However, if you as a member choose to use your device(s) during the pandemic for work, it is essential to connect to the school or school district's VPN and ensure that the device has been updated with all of the security maintenance to prevent cyber-attacks.

Even though you are using your personal device, you are using it as a work tool during work time.

Please note that when your personal device is connected to the employer's network, your personal information may be accessible by the employer. Employer networks may be designed to monitor unacceptable or inappropriate use of their resources, so members must continue to adhere to the acceptable use policy.

Some school boards recommend that educators call each family to reach out directly. There are risks involved should members decide to act on this recommendation.

Be sure to protect your privacy when contacting students and family members.

Using a personal device is in no way a normal or recommended course of action. Given the extraordinary situation that COVID-19 has created, we must rely on our professional judgement to guide our conduct.

Should you use a personal device to contact students/families, please take all precautions to protect privacy, including your phone number. Protecting the privacy of a phone number can be done by dialing * 6 7 before entering the destination number. The caller identification on most cell phones can also be turned off. Check settings or call the cell provider to learn more.

Internet Service Costs

The Ministry of Education advised ETFO last year that it was working with internet service providers to improve connectivity issues. Some members may exceed monthly internet capabilities and incur personal charges as a result. The Ministry is directing educators in this situation to speak to their employer about the option to work from a location where they can access internet without charges.



Specific Supports for First Nations Students With Respect to Well-Being and Technology

In the past, some First Nations children have spent years waiting for access to public services while the two levels of government battled over who would pay.

“[Jordan's Principle](#) makes sure all First Nations children living in Canada can access the products, services and supports they need, when they need them. [Funding can help with a wide range of health, social and educational needs](#) that First Nations Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA children and youth and those with disabilities may have.”

All First Nations children who are [eligible](#) under Jordan's Principle can apply for funds to support their unmet needs, which could fall under social, educational or health. A student may be eligible to apply for technology, internet supports, access to tutoring or special education supports like educational assistants, specific therapies or counselling.

Members should connect with their board's Indigenous Education Lead to review the board policy and refer the family to a Jordan's Principle support worker to assist them throughout the [process](#).

If unsure of the local Jordan's Principle support network, direct the family to the national Jordan's Principle Call Centre at 1-855-JP-CHILD (1-855-572-4453). Requests for support for Inuit children can be made [here](#).