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TEACHER GUIDE

What to Do in a Crisis



The Alberta
Teachers' Association

What to Do in a Crisis

Know Your Rights and Responsibilities

The rights and responsibilities of a teacher are defined in the following documents:

- The *Teaching Profession Act* prescribes the authority and process for determining and maintaining acceptable standards of professional conduct.
- The Code of Professional Conduct prescribes the minimum standard of acceptable conduct for members of the Association in most areas of professional conduct (see the Association's *Members' Handbook*).
- The *Education Act* defines a teaching contract, explains how a contract may be terminated, sets out the conditions under which a teacher may be transferred, and defines a teacher's rights, privileges, duties and responsibilities (see the Alberta Queen's Printer website www.qp.gov.ab.ca/catalogue).
- The Declaration of Rights and Responsibilities for Teachers forms part of the constitution of the Alberta Teachers' Association and outlines a teacher's rights and privileges (see the *Members' Handbook*).
- The Practice Review Bylaws of the Alberta Teachers' Association define the process by which the profession regulates the professional practice of its members.
- The Provincial Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy describes the process by which teachers maintain accountability for their professional practice.
- The Quality Standards regulations outline the standards of professional practice (TQS and LQS).
- A collective agreement defines a teacher's salary, benefits and some working conditions.

As a teacher, you should be familiar with these documents. If you are unaware of your rights and responsibilities, you may be led into situations for which there is no legal recourse.

Unexpected events, such as a notice of termination, a false accusation, a charge of unprofessional conduct or a threat of court action happen all the time. Don't assume they can't happen to you. The Association handles hundreds of cases each year involving transfers, terminations and professional disputes.

Get Advice

Contact the Association immediately if you

- are unsure of your rights in any matter;
- are experiencing a problem in any area of your professional relations (be it with other teachers, administrators, school boards, parents, the community or Alberta Education) that interferes with the performance of your job;
- are being asked or pressured to resign;
- receive a suspension notice;
- receive a notice of termination of your contract whether or not you wish to accept or protest;
- are threatened with court action because of any accident or incident connected with your duties as a teacher; or
- are accused of unprofessional conduct.

Because there are time limits on appeals for suspensions, summary dismissals, terminations and transfers, and because legal cases take time to prepare, it is essential to contact the Association as soon as a problem arises. Reinstating a teacher who has already submitted a resignation is difficult and sometimes impossible. Call the Association at Barnett House or SARO as soon as a problem arises.

Your Call Is Confidential

You have a right to contact your professional Association to discuss employment-related concerns. No action will be taken on your behalf without your authorization, and you can be assured that your call will remain confidential.