

The Duties of Being a Teacher

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The job of being a teacher is varied, and it often changes every day. There are many tasks placed on teachers, and teachers new and experienced are not always aware of what is required and what is voluntary. Here are some things we all need to be aware of.

Extra-Curricular activities (Drama Productions, Sports Teams, Chess Clubs...) done by teachers are on a voluntary basis. Your principal may ask you to coach the badminton team, they may even beg you to do it, but it is important to note that this is a voluntary activity. You will not have to be given lieu time (though some principals may do so), nor do you have to do these types of things. The advantage of extra-curricular involvement for teachers is, of course, getting to know students in a different environment than the classroom, developing relationships with students, and the appreciation of students, staff, and parents for the support you give to the culture of the school. For some teachers, their years of coaching are highlights of their teaching career. You do not have to do extra-curricular activities, but they are an important part of school life.

Co-Curricular activities (Bush Camps, Community Feasts, Concerts...) These types of activities are an important part of the school program in the NWT. They are sometimes accounted for in the available non-instructional hours that schools have. Co-curricular activities are very important, though may not always have assessment, or evaluation as a component. They can be experiential in nature, and can sometimes involve the community or be done across grades. When these activities occur outside of regular school hours, teachers can be directed to attend and participate in the activities. The authority for this is in the Education Act of the NWT. As an example, if there is a school concert, it is reasonable under the legislation of the NWT to require all staff to be in attendance and helping out for such an activity. Another example is if parent teacher interviews are after school hours, staff must attend them.

The duties of a teacher are spelled out in the legislation of the NWT. This list is general in nature and the specifics are decided at the school level. Principals also must follow these duties, as well as specific duties related to the principal position. It sometimes surprises teachers when they see what is included. **The highlighted** section 2 (e, f, and g) are catch all articles. You can see when you read them there can be a lot of direction given to staff that must be complied with.

Excerpt from the NWT Education Act:

Article 45. (1) Every teacher shall, respecting the students under his or her care and instruction,

- (a) encourage the students in the pursuit of learning;
- (b) diligently teach students in a manner that promotes

- their physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual development;
- (b.1) teach the education program in accordance with the curriculum;
- (c) implement the education program and individual education plans in a way that (i) encourages the development of students' self-respect, dignity and self esteem, and (ii) encourages students to respect other students' cultural and spiritual or religious values and beliefs;
- (d) as part of a school team, develop, implement and evaluate individual education plans;
- (e) assess each student's progress in the education program or an individual education plan;
- (f) keep the student and the student's parent informed of the student's progress in an individual education plan;
- (g) review, at least twice in the academic year, with each student and, if the student is a minor, his or her parent, the student's progress and assessments and advise the student of what the student must do to advance in the education program or his or her individual education plan;
- (h) ensure, to the best of his or her ability, that students understand, and encourage their compliance with, the Territorial School Code of Conduct and any applicable school rules;
- (i) recommend to the principal the suspension of any student where, in his or her opinion, there are grounds for suspension as set out in subsection 35(1); and
- (j) inform the student's parent of the progress, behaviour and attendance of the student.

Additional duties

Article 45. (2) Every teacher shall

- (a) report, in accordance with section 8 of the Child and Family Services Act, information that the teacher has of the need of protection of a student who is a child as defined in that Act;
- (b) Repealed, S.N.W.T. 1996,c.10,s.12.
- (c) provide the reports, records and statistics that may be required by this Act, the regulations, the Superintendent or the principal;
- (d) maintain all books, materials or equipment assigned to the teacher or placed in his or her care in the best possible condition, and return them to the principal when leaving his or her position or when requested to do so;
- (e) provide assistance and support to the principal and other members of the school staff;**
- (f) at the direction of the principal, attend the meetings, activities and exercises held in connection with the school program; and**
- (g) perform any other tasks related to the implementation of the education program that are assigned to the teacher by or under this Act or the regulations.**
- (3) A teacher may assign duties of a teacher to a teacher intern and shall supervise the performance of those duties.
- (4) A teacher may assign duties to an education assistant that are consistent with that person's contract of employment and shall supervise the performance of those duties