



Kootenay-Columbia School District

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To: All Support Staff Employees

Cc: CUPE Local 1285
District Leadership Team

From: Hayley Colussi, Human Resources Coordinator

Date: September 3, 2026

Re: SmartFindExpress (SFE) Reminders, Mandatory Pro-D Days and Discretionary Days

Please review the following reminders regarding submitting absences through SFE:

- The reason **“Medical/Dental Appt-For Employees only”** should only be used when the employee is attending their own medical or dental appointment. As per Article 13.09, attending your child or spouse’s medical appointment should be entered as “Family Illness-CUPE”.

13.09 Family Illness

Where no one at home other than the employee can provide for the needs during illness of an immediate family member or when the employee is the only one who can transport a family member for tests, treatment or other related medical matters an employee may use a maximum of five (5) accumulated sick leave days per year for those purposes.

- As per Article 13.08, please schedule your medical appointments outside of work hours when possible.

13.08 Medical Appointments

Reasonable time off with pay for medical and dental appointments for employees shall be permitted. All hours of absence to be charged to sick leave credit. Bus drivers will be paid one (1) extra hour for their annual bus driver medical which will be scheduled on their own time.

- There is no four-hour minimum for appointments. The four-hour minimum is only for callout of casual staff. If you have an appointment that will only require you to be absent from work for one hour or less, please submit your absence accordingly with “No Sub Required”. If you need to schedule an appointment during the day because there is no other option, please schedule your appointments at the beginning or end of the day so that you would be either a little late for work or have to leave a little early.
- Absences will be approved Monday-Friday between 7:00am and 3:30pm. **They will not be approved in the evenings or on weekends.** In the rare circumstance that you need to submit a last-minute absence that requires approval outside of this timeframe, you must email hcolussi@sd20.bc.ca.

Our vision is to be an inclusive and compassionate learning community where everyone has opportunities to learn, to achieve their full potential, and to be empowered to pursue their dreams.

Our mission is to be a responsive learning community committed to supporting every student’s success.

- To help ensure that you are replaced during your absence, please provide as much notice as possible by entering your absence in as soon as you know you will require the time off. Please also note that, as outlined in Appendix “B”:

Call Out Time Lines

Inclusion Support Employees, clerical and cafeteria meals employees must call in by 6:00am for same day emergency absences. Callouts will generally be made between 6:00am – 8:00am each day.

For afternoon shift custodians, employees must call in by 10:00am for same day emergency absences. Callouts will generally start at 11:00am.

For bus drivers and day shift custodians, employees must call in by 5:00am for same day emergency absences. Callouts will generally be made by 6:00am.

For all other known absences for Inclusion Support Employees, clerical and cafeteria, employees must call in at least five days in advance.

- Staff are responsible for entering their own absences. If assistance is needed, step-by-step instructions are available on the Staff Portal. Office staff should only enter absences on behalf of employees in emergency situations.

As per the [2026-2027 CUPE Schedules](#), available for viewing on the staff portal, please note the upcoming **mandatory** CUPE Pro-D days as follows:

Clerical

- February 12, 2027

Custodial

- October 23, 2026

Inclusion Support Employees (ISE)

- October 23, 2026
- February 12, 2027

Indigenous Inclusion Support Employees (IISE)

- October 23, 2026
- February 12, 2027

Please ensure you do not book appointments or request time off on mandatory Pro-D days for your classification. Time off will not be approved except in extreme or unusual circumstances.

Attendance at mandatory Pro-D days is required for all support staff holding a regular or temporary position.

Please see the below FAQ regarding **CUPE Discretionary Days**:

1. How do I apply for a discretionary day?

Choose the absence reason “Discretionary – CUPE” when you enter your request in SFE.

2. What does “subject to the operational needs of the district” mean?

To manage the day-to-day work of the district, the district needs to ensure adequate staffing levels. For example, if the district has already approved three custodians to be away on one day with only four casuals, the district would not approve another discretionary day request given the potential of a last-minute illness called in for that day.

3. What is a “good and sufficient reason”?

Everyone has reasons for wanting to take a day off – many things come up in our personal lives that we want to attend. The expectation is these days are used for those circumstances that arise that are out of the employee’s control (i.e. child’s graduation, wedding, hockey tournament, dance competition etc.).

4. Can I use all my days together to take a holiday?

No. Twelve-month employees can access their vacation time or banked time to book holidays. 10-, 10.5- and 11- month employees have two weeks of holidays in December, March and then two months in the summer. The district needs to focus on continuity of learning for students during the school year. To do that, staff are required to be at work during the school year.

5. Can I take a discretionary day every Friday all in a row?

Likely no. The intention of these days is not to have all staff use five days of discretionary “just because” but rather apply for them when those circumstances arise as described above.

6. I put in for a discretionary day and it was denied, what can I do?

The Collective Agreement language is clear and states “the parties agree the approval of these days is at the sole discretion of the Employer”.

7. I booked a trip and applied for two discretionary days, and they were denied. I can’t get a refund – can I still go?

No. It is important that you have received approval for your absence **BEFORE** you book and pay for trips, tickets etc. Do not assume any time off will be approved. You must go through the approval process first.

8. My partner surprised me with tickets to go to a concert – can I get the day off?

Maybe, but we would suggest that your partner contact HR to inquire in advance if the day off would be approved. Surprises are great – but again, please ensure the day off is approved **BEFORE** money is spent. Your partner can email hcolussi@sd20.bc.ca to inquire.

9. We bargained these days, so I can take them off when I want.

No. These days were negotiated, but the **approval** of the days is at the sole discretion of the Employer as they must ensure they can meet the operational needs of the district.

For assistance using SFE, please contact sfe@sd20.bc.ca.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at hcolussi@sd20.bc.ca.