



# Health & Safety

**know your rights**

## Volume 2, Issue 4

The Peel Elementary Teachers' Local aspires to promote good health, safety preventive measures, and educate members on steps they can take to keep themselves safe at work.

### HEPA Filters and UVGI

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Classroom air quality has finally been given greater attention during these last two years. HEPA filters and Ultraviolet Germicidal Irradiation (UVGI) are two methods in place to help remove Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) such as the SARS-COV2 virus from the air in our classrooms. Since these are both new to us, there have been a number of questions.

All HVAC Systems have been calibrated for increased fresh air intake as per the Ministry of Education requirements. They have also been set to start running 2 hours before the instructional day and run until 2 hours after the end of the instructional day.

Where can I find my school's Standard Ventilation Report? [Here](#)  
[Technical details for the HEPA-Carbon Air Filter](#)

What do the lights on the HEPA filter mean? [Answer](#)

How effective are the Air Sniper Ultra air purifiers? [Answer](#)

[Data sheets and user guides for HEPA filters](#)

### KISS AND RIDE

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The Kiss and Ride program is designed for students to be quickly and efficiently dropped off and picked up from schools. They can be busy places with lots of opportunities for accidents to happen. In order to keep them safe there are a number of points worth remembering:

- The Kiss and Ride program is only available for students who are able to disembark independently;
- There should be **NO** parking or waiting in the Kiss and Ride lane;
- Cars in the Kiss and Ride must stay in their designated lane, unless otherwise directed;
- Students may only exit from the passenger side of the vehicle.

For further information, you can refer to the following document prepared by the Board:

[Kiss and Ride Rules and Guidelines](#)

and the H&S section on the Board's website:

[PDSB Kiss and Ride/Driveway Supervision](#)

## NOISE

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If your voice feels strained at the end of the day, or your ears are ringing, then you may be suffering from high levels of noise at work. It can interfere with speech communication in young children and in children with special education needs.

Factors that can affect noise levels include reverberation from hard surfaces, ambient noise from HVAC and HEPA filters, and noise from other classrooms, hallways, stairwells, and even outside of the building.

[O. Reg 381/15](#) defines the maximum noise level at 85db over an 8 hour exposure period, but that should not be interpreted as a safe level for unprotected exposure.

High levels of noise in music and gym classes are well known. Hearing protection should not be a substitute for reducing noise levels with other controls, such as installing sound absorbent materials to the walls and/or floors (where possible). Ear plugs or filters can be used as a last line of protection for an educator in these settings.

Excessive noise can, and should, be reported to your principal so that it can be investigated, and measures can be taken to reduce noise levels. Below are some resources you can reference if you feel that excessive noise is a problem in your classroom.

[Noise in Classrooms](#) (ETFO)

[High Noise Levels at work? A Common Sense Approach](#) - ETFO Voice

[Noise: A Resounding Problem](#) - WHSC

## CARING FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

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The COVID-19 pandemic has been with us for over two years, and has caused a great deal of stress and anxiety for many. If members are having difficulty sleeping, feel anxious or overwhelmed, or experiencing other symptoms that affect their work or home life, they should contact their healthcare professionals. Members can also reach out to the Local office for additional support. Managing a good work/life balance and taking care of one's physical and mental health is important.

[What is your Stress Index?](#)

Additional resources:

[ETFO PRS Matters Bulletin 111: \*Mental Health and Wellness Tips for Members During the Pandemic\*](#)

[ETFO PRS Matters Bulletin 96: \*Member Mental Health\*](#)

[ETFO PRS Matters Bulletin 67: \*Member Mental Health\*](#)

[ETFO H&S: Psychosocial Hazards](#)

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Should you have concerns with any of the above items, or any Health & Safety issues, please contact the local and speak to your Vice-President liaison.