



January 11, 2022

Personal and Confidential

Delivered by Email

Dear Mr. Penna:

Re: Requesting Reinstatement to Guest Teacher Roster

I have reviewed your email to me dated January 4, 2022 in which you request reinstatement to the District Guest Teacher roster.

In my view, the letters to you from former Superintendent Holowka and Superintendent McDonald dated June 29 and October 25, 2021 respectively are sound and reasonable in all respects under the circumstances. What you failed to understand and continue to fail to understand is that your position as a guest teacher is limited to teaching the daily lesson plan left for you to instruct students by the regular classroom teacher and secondly, to follow at all times directions received from the school principal and District supervisors. It is not to act unilaterally to evangelize our students or create needless issues when none exist.

I support the directions and District practices outlined below to you in the June 29 letter from Superintendent Holowka where she states:

Directives

In addition, I am providing to you the following directives to provide support to you as a Guest Teacher:

- (1) If you are Guest teaching a Religion or Health class, first review the lesson plan of the classroom teacher and secondly, **consult first with school administrators regarding the lesson plan prior to entering the classroom.** This is in order to obtain clear directions on what the present District practice is regarding the teaching of these subjects.
- (2) If you have any questions whatsoever on the topic under discussion in the lesson plan, **consult first with school administrators prior to teaching the lesson.**
- (3) If you are Guest teaching any other class, do **not** actively embed Catholic faith principles into the lesson plan of the classroom teacher, **unless they are provided in detail in the lesson plan - leave that responsibility to the classroom teacher.**
- (4) **If students raise sensitive issues during your teaching of the class, do not engage with them on these issues but rather, indicate they will be discussed with the classroom teacher upon his or her return.**

District Practices

I have also thought it would be useful to share with you some overarching District concepts to assist you. Please be aware that the District and other Catholic school jurisdictions must deal with many controversial subjects in present-day society, all of which have implications for the reputation of the District and the future of Catholic education in this province. With this in mind, we need to emphasize a few management practices to guide you when teaching:

- (1) In your role as a Guest teacher, you are **not** fulfilling the responsibility of a school chaplain. You are not called upon to evangelize our students.
- (2) We are subject to the guidance received from Dr. Szumlas, the District Chaplain and the Bishop of Calgary. Please be aware that Dr. Szumlas has provided over the course of the last year the direction to be more accepting of those who are from a diverse background.
- (3) We are also subject to human rights legislation and court decisions and therefore, must be careful to abide by these ever-changing societal directions in harmony with our faith.
- (4) Please understand that: (1) there is a **wide umbrella of Catholicism** within our staff and student population; (2) the majority of our staff and students have a “young” faith, which requires a **more sensitive pastoral approach** and not a challenging and combative approach that leads to polarization and disillusionment with our faith; (3) you are subject to the **direction of your school principal** and other supervisors, based upon the direction received from Dr. Szumlas and human rights legislation as interpreted by the courts.

I have placed emphasis in red portions from that letter that resonate strongly with our District approach and practices and for which you show no reason to comply or recognize.

In a similar vein I am reemphasizing in red, portions from the letter to you from Superintendent McDonald dated October 25, 2021 below, which I support and which capture succinctly the position of the District regarding your removal from the guest teacher roster.

The new training reinforces the concerns of management that Guest Teachers not act precipitously or without proper guidance when dealing with sensitive issues. Guest Teachers are casual employees who are employed occasionally under a daily pay rate and do not have the extensive knowledge and discernment of individual students in the classroom as do regular teachers. Therefore, having you specifically reject the new training, and indirectly, the directives and District practices outlined in your letter of reprimand raises serious concerns.

Given your recent emails when coupled with your numerous infractions documented in your letter of warning, I have a very low level of trust to have you return as a Guest Teacher. Your emails strongly indicate you cannot abide by the directions or practices of the District specifically pointed out to you in your letter of warning. In particular, I have little faith that I can rely upon you not to engage in the evangelization of students during classroom instruction or avoid sensitive issues without first receiving proper direction from a school principal. In the end, I have found that you are not suitable to fill any Guest Teacher role with the District in the future.

In conclusion, I see no reason and no possibility for you to return to the guest teacher roster. The explanations provided to you in the letters from both superintendents resulting in your removal from the roster are accurate and fair, and reflect my management directions.

If it is at all helpful to you, you may wish to consult with Father Adrian, who may provide assistance to you in your future endeavours.

Sincerely,



Dr. Bryan Szumlas
Chief Superintendent

cc. John McDonald, Learning Services Superintendent (South Schools)
Kathleen Kostuik, Learning Services Superintendent (North School)
David Orr, Director of Human Resources
Mike Krupa, Director, Employee and Labour Relations
Human Resources Personnel File