

Upcoming Meetings

Please mark your calendars and join Staff Association at our upcoming meetings:



South Quadrant Meeting

Tonight, October 19, 2015

Carriage House Inn
9030 Macleod Trail S.

4:30 - 6:30 p.m. (Lincolnshire 1 Room)

Our Managers and Directors will be hosting an informal meeting with members to answer any questions you may have pertaining to your work or the Staff Association.

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, November 25, 2015

Coast Plaza Hotel & Conference Centre
1316 - 33 Street NE

7:00 p.m.

The information package will be sent out by the end of October and we hope to see you there!!

Message from the Chair...

The Workplace Bully

You are the workplace bully.
You rule through threat, spoken or silent;
And gain respect through fear, not unlike the
dangerous snake in the grass.

You are the workplace bully.
You surround yourself with those who feign
admiration.
They are your very own handpicked pride.
They insulate you from question or challenge and
are someone to blame when things go wrong.

You are the workplace bully.
You preen and admire your image and strength.
Those around you are food for your ego.
The clever ones parrot word, style, and deed lest
they become prey themselves.
You gain no wisdom from the false counsel they
provide, as they tell you only what you want to hear.

You are the workplace bully.
You trust few but know who to please.
You fawn over those whom you think can elevate
you.
The gold plated armour of your sergeants at arms
reflects righteousness and virtue upon you.
And, they in turn, revel in the power they gain from
following your shadow.

They join you in being the workplace bully.
They find you charming and gracious and choose not
to see your other face.
The face you use to roar, glower and scowl and
diminish those you think you do not need.
Your eyes and words cut like lasers, which you use
skillfully to pierce holes in the hearts of those who
carry the heavy burden of your work.

You rule ruthlessly as the workplace bully; but you
rule over a house of cards.
What joy, peace, or victory is there in commanding a
stage of puppets?
Who are your true friends? How can you know?
Will they remain on your side when you have been
exposed for all your insecurities and deficits?
A weakling with a lion's mane, whose iron fist is
fueled by the strength of others.
How lonely it must be this world where you listen for
whispers and cower around corners.
Always afraid of being challenged; of being exposed.

And what is lost, when all is said and done, is the
goodness, and kindness and purpose of team
that once was cherished by the many.
And now has been replaced by this new place of fear
and loss, created in your image, the workplace bully.

*Written by Dianne Harvey
SIXTY... plus 18 months,
A Chapbook of Poems*

I wanted to share this poem with you written by Dianne Harvey who has gone through the painful experience of workplace bullying; an experience which impacted her health, her family life, and her livelihood. Thank you for your courage Dianne in using your experience to help others and allowing me to use your poem.

Hearing stories like Dianne's leaves me wondering why people who bully are not held accountable. Here at CBE, we have AR4027.2 around harassment. It's a great document, but only words on paper. There is no guarantee it will result in accountability for bad behaviour(s). We know the right words, phrases, but somehow when it comes to this; nothing can be done? An apology to say I'm sorry this happened to you from anyone other than the bully/bullies is really not enough. It should not be swept under the rug. Not enough for Shauna, who was bullied over a four year period by 19 people (consisting of principals, teachers and fellow co-workers) who terrorized her (or watched her being terrorized) around a phobia she has of spiders. I admire her greatly for her courage in bringing the situation forward. I thank Shauna as well for allowing me to share her story so that others may benefit from her experience.

It saddens me to say we receive calls almost on a daily basis here at Staff Association around bullying and harassment in the workplace. Not just in schools, but in departments and other areas as well. People's livelihoods and mental and physical health are at stake. When does it stop? Statistics say that over 40 percent of those who experience workplace bullying do not report it. That happens for many reasons. People are afraid of losing their jobs, ashamed, worried that they will not be believed. They just want to try and forget about it, or they think no one will do anything about it. I don't blame them for feeling that way. The track record is not great.

In 2012, Staff Association hosted Bully Free at Work workshops by Valerie Cade. There was an amazing response from those who attended. It was so wonderful to see people realizing they were not alone in their experiences.

At that time, we assured people that we would continue to pursue this issue. Over the past three years we have given out over 200 Bully Free at Work books to members and other employees experiencing bullying in the workplace. We asked that people pass these books on to someone else experiencing bullying when they were done with them. It is astounding the impact that these books have had and continue to have. During the last round of negotiations we were able to get some language in the agreement around a respectful workplace (Clause 1.3).

Every step is a step taken towards a solution. Bullying may never be totally eradicated, but we can take a good run at making things better.

I met with a group last week who want to make positive change to get some anti-bullying legislation in Alberta that also provides supports to those who experience this behaviour (Alberta is well behind other provinces when it comes to this type of legislation). The group has already made an initial presentation to Ross Naire, Executive Director Health and Safety Policy and Program Development Alberta Ministry of Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour in relation to their own bullying experiences. Staff Association can bring more to the table as well in respect to workplace bullying, so we are joining with them to continue the push for change around this very significant issue.

Lois Robb

Personal Leave Days

There has been a change to the process for using Personal Leave days. Whereas Staff Association members previously accessed personal leave on the basis of hours, the leave is now accessed only as full days. One day is at full pay and four are at half pay.

Whereas previously you were able to use a few hours or a half day for personal reasons, you will now have to use a full day of Personal Leave regardless of how much time you actually need. Schools and departments that would previously have had to cover the work for a few hours will now have to find coverage for the full day. Support staff who work a compressed week are now entitled to take five of their work days off regardless of their weekly hours of work or FTE. For example, if you work your required weekly hours or FTE in 3 or 4 days rather than five, you are entitled to five work days regardless of the number of hours worked in each day.

Working Within the Position Description

We continue to hear from support staff who are asked to perform duties that are beyond those that are required by their position descriptions. Support staff cannot be required to work outside of their position description. There has also been some misuse of the statement, commonly found on older job descriptions: "Performs other related duties as assigned." This statement has been modified to reflect the original intent. It now states:

"Performs other related responsibilities as assigned to meet the purpose and accountabilities of the role."

For example, a Speech Language Assistant, cannot be required to provide personal care such as toileting, diapering, feeding, dressing, grooming, etc. as it is neither one of the Major Responsibilities outlined in the position description nor does it relate to the purpose and accountability of the role.

If you are asked on a regular basis to perform duties that fall outside of the Major Responsibilities section of your Position Description and these duties are not related to the stated purpose and accountability of the role, you should speak to your Principal or Supervisor or call the Staff Association office.

Mandatory Training

Recently you will have received notices from Safety Services around on-line training required of all employees. The expectation is that this will be completed during your regular work hours and that supervisors will accommodate this. If this is not possible and you are required to complete the training outside of your regular work hours, it is considered work, for which you must be paid. Please contact our office if you experience any difficulties with this or any other mandatory training taken outside of your regular hours of work.

| Staff Association Office Staff | | |
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| Lois Robb , Chairperson | 403.242.7555 ext. 1 | lmrobb@staffassociation.ca |
| Albert Herscovitch , Manager | 403.242.7555 ext. 4 | aherscovitch@staffassociation.ca |
| Mark Johnson , Manager | 403.242.7555 ext. 2 | mrjohnson@staffassociation.ca |
| Dawn Scott , SA Administrative Secretary | 403.242.7555 ext. 0 | dawn@staffassociation.ca |
| Sue Wenaas , Staff Development Fund Administrator & Convention Coordinator | 403.242.7555 ext. 3 | sue@staffassociation.ca |