

**August 30, 2019**

**TO: WTA COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES**  
**FROM: MICHELLE WOLFE, PRESIDENT**  
**RE: DUTY FREE MEAL PERIOD**

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The WTA office frequently receives inquiries about the voting process undertaken to change members' entitlement for an uninterrupted meal period. Article 23 of the collective agreement states:

*Except in cases of emergency, or unforeseen similar circumstances, every full-time teacher shall be entitled to an uninterrupted meal period, of fifty-five (55) minutes duration, between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. daily, unless the majority of the teachers in a particular school and the administration responsible for that school agree to a different arrangement respecting lunch periods.*

**First and foremost, a vote is not required in every location.** A vote should only take place if administration in a building is going to assign duties and meetings during the meal period.

If an uninterrupted meal period is voted away for the 2019-2020 school year, meetings and other duties can be assigned over the noon hour. If the provision has not been voted away then participation in these activities is voluntary unless the members' lunch break can be scheduled at another time between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. each day.

Votes altering the provision of an uninterrupted meal period only affect the school year in which the voting occurred. A new vote would be required to alter the provision in the next year.

Attached please find a ballot if members are being asked to give up a 55 minute uninterrupted meal period. If the members do not agree to give up the provision, all noon hour activities such as meetings and supervision are done on a voluntary basis.

### **General Voting Information**

- Only WTA members can vote. School administrators are WTA members and have the right to cast a ballot as part of the process.
- In most locations, the WTA council representative conducts the vote and the count.
- The vote is conducted by secret ballot and the results of the vote need to be announced to the staff.
- If a vote is to occur, it should be held as early as possible in September. Otherwise, the provision under Article 23 remains in place.

### **Counting the Ballots**

To waive the provision, the majority of WTA members in the building must agree to the change. For example, if your staff consists of 20 WTA members and 6 agree to waive the provision and 3 do not agree to waive the provision, then an uninterrupted 55 minutes meal period remains in place. A majority in this case would require 11 members agreeing to waive the provision. In this process, an abstention counts as a **no** vote.

If you have questions, comments or require clarification about the information provided in the memo, please contact the WTA office at 204-831-7104 or Michelle Wolfe, President, at [pres@wta.mb.ca](mailto:pres@wta.mb.ca).

# DUTY FREE MEAL PERIOD BALLOT

## 23. Meal Period

Except in cases of emergency, or unforeseen similar circumstances, every full-time teacher shall be entitled to an uninterrupted meal period, of fifty-five (55) minutes duration, between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. daily, unless the majority of the teachers in a particular school and the administration responsible for that school agree to a different arrangement respecting lunch periods.

Be advised that if you agree to waive the above provision of the collective agreement, school administration is free to schedule duties and meetings during the noon hour meal period and members are required to attend.

### PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

I **do not** agree to waive the provisions found in Article 23, Meal Period.

I **agree** to waive the provisions found in Article 23, Meal Period.