

Ontario Enables School Board Employees to Be Voluntarily Redeployed to Congregate Care Settings

Emergency order would help alleviate critical staffing shortages during COVID-19

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TORONTO — The Ontario government has approved an emergency order that would enable available school board employees to be voluntarily redeployed to congregate care settings during the COVID-19 pandemic, including hospitals, long-term care homes, retirement homes, and women's shelters. Many of these congregate care settings are in need of staff such as custodial and maintenance workers.

"Our priority continues to be protecting our most vulnerable citizens and the dedicated staff that care for them during the COVID-19 outbreak," said Premier Ford. "Many of our long-term care homes, and shelters are short of staff, so I am encouraging any available educational workers to help out if you can, because you can make a real difference in the lives of those most in need."

Under the emergency order, school boards would be authorized to develop and implement staff redeployment plans. Voluntarily redeployed staff would maintain their employment relationship with the school board and would continue to receive their compensation and other employment benefits. They would also be eligible for the provincial government's pandemic pay and emergency child care.

"While all the Trustee Associations that represent school boards, and many of the unions have confirmed their willingness to help out, there is no provision within the *School Boards Collective Bargaining Act* to redeploy staff to non-education employers," said Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education. "This emergency order opens the door for our educational workers to voluntarily go where they are needed most during this crisis."

Training and appropriate safety equipment will be provided to any educational worker who volunteers to be redeployed in a congregate setting.

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- Visit Ontario's [website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect Ontarians from COVID-19.
- Learn more about [Ontario's Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19](#).
- [Emergency information and orders](#)