



English Language Tutoring for the Ottawa Community *Volunteers Helping Newcomers*

July 6, 2021

Dear learners, tutors, and friends of ELTOC,

As we enter Stage 2 of the reopening plan for Ontario and with province-wide vaccinations rates on the rise, we hope that you and your families are well and share with us a sense of cautious optimism that better days are ahead. With this optimism remains the need to be vigilant and follow the public health measures in place including keeping apprised of changes to these measures, whether tightening or loosening. Questions are mounting around the latest variant of concern, the delta variant, and controlling its spread appears to be a major factor in preventing a fourth wave in Ontario. Globally, we have already witnessed setbacks to reopening in response to containing the spread of this variant with delays in England and a return to lockdown in Sydney, Australia. Continuing to follow safety measures, and proceeding cautiously, may help to avoid these setbacks here.

ELTOC's Covid-19 Risk Assessment Committee has reviewed the Ontario reopening plan and relevant environmental factors and agreed that, until further notice, ELTOC will continue to offer tutoring and support virtually to our tutors and learners with no in-person contact between tutors and learners, given that the contact required is too close and for too long a duration, whether inside or outdoors. However, effective immediately, curbside drop off of ESL materials (outdoors only) by counsellors to learners and tutors will be implemented to facilitate the provision of materials needed for online sessions. The office will operate within the guidelines and safety measures established by regulatory and health authorities and will operate mostly remote-based, with limited controlled access for staff to the office. The Committee will continue to evaluate current developments and exchange information with other not-for-profit organizations who depend on volunteer support as we carefully work towards in-person learning and a return to the office.

A friendly reminder that while vaccination is a topical subject, there are certain protocols around discussing it with others. Information about whether one is vaccinated is considered personal and confidential and subject to privacy legislation. We could be putting someone in a position of feeling they need to disclose personal health information if we ask them directly in conversation. Therefore, we strongly recommend, if initiating a conversation about vaccination disclosure with another person associated with ELTOC, do so around one's own vaccination experience and allow the person to choose to participate and volunteer information without feeling under duress. Please respect a person's right not to participate in the conversation and

the rights of those who voluntarily disclose that they are choosing to not be vaccinated. While we highly encourage everyone to be vaccinated, it is not a mandatory regulatory requirement at this time. The Covid-19 Risk Assessment Committee along with the Board will be assessing the regulatory framework on how to best address the issue of vaccination disclosure as relates to the delivery of our program, keeping the safety of staff, volunteers and learners as first and foremost, while respecting privacy. We will provide updates as we develop new procedures in this area.

Tutors, we ask you once again to please contact your learner(s) and let them know that this letter has been posted on our website. It would be appreciated if, where required, you could explain to your learner (s) the key messaging, as the translation tool on the website is not always reliable.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to sincerely thank you all again for your ongoing dedication, ingenuity and tremendous effort in moving ELTOC's mission forward throughout this pandemic into the not far off post-pandemic future. We also look forward to welcoming back those tutors and learners who are unable to participate in the online program but have chosen to remain as part of the "ELTOC family".

Until then, please stay safe.