

Ontario College of Teachers
????? Some Questions ?????

1. What should I do if I receive a call from the Ontario College of Teachers informing me that I am being investigated?

Listen to what the College staff is advising you about the complainant. Ask questions if necessary for clarification. Do not make any statements whatsoever about the complaint or respond to the investigator's questions related to the complaint.

After the telephone contact from the staff of the OCT has been made, a formal letter will be sent to you outlining the actual complaint and the investigation process. It is very important that you contact PRS at the provincial office as soon as you receive the written complaint so that PRS staff can provide support and assistance to you.

2. A parent has threatened to call the Ontario College of Teachers – can I stop them?

There is really nothing that you can do to stop this. Any member of the public can call the OCT to make a complaint. Hopefully, if a member of the public expresses a concern about you to the College, they will be encouraged to talk to you and/or the Principal in order to attempt to resolve the concern at the school level. The complainant may, however, file a formal written complaint with the College that the College is then obligated to investigate.

3. If a complaint is made about a teacher, what kind of records are maintained by the Ontario College of Teachers?

The College is obligated to keep a written record of every call even if the concern is deemed to be frivolous and vexatious. It is recorded as a "concern" and you would not be informed of this. A call does not become an official complaint until it is submitted to the College in writing. Once a complaint is in writing, you will be informed and asked to submit your response. Written records of all complaints are kept indefinitely.

(over)

4. Is there a timeline for notification by the College regarding a complaint?

The Ontario College of Teachers Act does not identify a specific time period for the member to be notified. Before the member is notified, however, College staff will clarify and confirm the complaint, if necessary, by gathering more information from the complainant. This can involve calls or letters back and forth. Based on experience to date, this can take a few days to a couple of weeks. When the College staff believes they have enough information, the member is then notified by telephone and in writing.

5. Do I have to cooperate in an investigation by the College if I am called to provide information about a colleague?

If you have concerns about participating in an investigation by the Ontario College of Teachers, it is advisable to contact PRS and consult with the person "on call" as soon as possible.

You do not have to agree to an interview over the telephone at the same time you receive a call from an investigator at the College. You might ask some questions such as: Why am I being contacted about this investigation? What specific questions will you be asking me? Can I get back to you at another time to respond to your questions?

The Regulation made under the Teaching Profession Act, section 18 (1)(b) applies in this situation. If, during an interview with a College investigator, you make an adverse report about the member being investigated, you are obligated to inform the member within 72 hours. It is our understanding that College staff does advise members of this requirement if an adverse report is made during the interview.

The Professional Misconduct Regulation in the Ontario College of Teachers Act indicates that a member could be investigated themselves for "failure to cooperate in a College investigation".

PRS advises members to contact PRS first, prior to informing the College, if you are reluctant to participate in an investigation.