

Know Your Rights

Directives & Insubordination

***My principal just gave me unreasonable things to do!
Do I have to follow these directives?***

General Rule: “Obey first, then grieve!”

Obey the Directive: Unless the directive is illegal, immoral, or hazardous to you or others, you must do as directed or you may be disciplined for insubordination. Do not take matters into your own hands!

Oral or Verbal: You must follow all directives, whether or not in writing. Of course, if the directive is oral, you should request your administrator to “put it in writing.” Often, this statement will cause the administrator to retract the directive. If he or she refuses to reduce the directive to writing and also refuses to retract it, you should give a written confirmation to him/her (i.e., “This memo is to confirm that . . .”).

File a Grievance: Ask your Chapter Chair to assist you in resolving the matter at the school site. Then, if necessary, complete the Grievance Information Sheet and fax it to your Area Representative, so that we can promptly file a grievance on your behalf.

Exceptions: The exceptions are very narrow. You can’t be forced to do anything that is illegal or immoral, or that endangers the health or safety of you or others. For example, you can’t be directed to hit a child or to falsify a document.

What if the Directive Violates the Contract? Even if the directive violates the Collective Bargaining Agreement, you must abide by it until your grievance is resolved in your favor. Arbitrators have held that the only difference between an unreasonable directive and a directive that “clearly” violates the Collective Bargaining Agreement is that in the latter case you will “clearly” win your grievance; nevertheless, you are subject to discipline for insubordination.

Confidentiality Clause: Once the grievance is filed, do not discuss the matter with anyone without express approval from your UTLA Area Representative because any breach of confidentiality may result in an automatic dismissal of your grievance. Article V, Sections 4.0-4.1.