



WRITING LETTERS AND EMAILS

WRITING EFFECTIVE LETTERS AND EMAILS

- A letter, especially a hand-written one, is a forceful form of advocacy.
- The information that is included in any form of advocacy should be current, well-researched and valid. Remember to verify any information, especially that found on the Internet, for accuracy and political orientation.
- Know who to write to – is the concern at the municipal, regional or county level?; is it federal, provincial, municipal or an issue with ramifications at all levels?
 - Where to find out? Municipal life in Ontario is very complicated. Two links sponsored by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario might help:
 - Your Local Government www.yourlocalgovernment.com
 - Ontario Municipal Home Pages, which lists all the websites of the local governments in Ontario www.yourlocalgovernment.com/ylg/ontario.html , as well as
 - the Government Pages, or Blue Pages, in the telephone book
- Know the policies of the person to whom you are writing, whether they are Liberal, Conservative, etc, and also whether the concern is federal, provincial, municipal or an issue with ramifications at all levels.
- Send letter on letterhead, use the “boilerplate” description of the Club and of CFUW the first time you write to a person.
- When writing your letter, refer to your elected official as follows:
 - A Mayor should be addressed as His/Her Worship (full name), Mayor of (name), the salutation of the letter should be Dear Sir/Madam: or Dear Mr./Madam Mayor:
 - MPPs who are in Cabinet should be addressed using *The Honourable* and *M.P.P.* after their name. For example:
 - The Honourable Deborah Matthews M.P.P.
Minister Responsible for Women’s Issues

- The salutation for the letter should be Dear Minister:
 - An M.P.P. not in Cabinet is addressed, for example, as Ms. Susan Rhodes M.P.P. The salutation would be Dear Ms. Rhodes,
 - For more information concerning styles of address, check out www.pch.gc.ca/progs/cpsc-ccsp/pe/address3_e.cfm
- When writing, always use a subject line. If discussing a bill or an agenda item, identify it clearly. Refer to it by number and name.
- Keep the letter to one page if possible. Remember short paragraphs invite further reading.
- State your concern; note the policy that justifies your CFUW involvement; use 2-3 well researched points from current, valid sources to support your position; restate your concern and what action you want. Ask a question, then you might get an answer
- Have contact information available in the letter, not just on the envelope.
- Email is particularly appropriate for time-sensitive situations – just before a vote or an important discussion in caucus.
- Be careful of email. It is not private. It can be easily **forwarded** to others or misdirected accidentally.
- When you send an email to your elected official, always include your mailing address in your email.
- **Never** send emails in haste; always proofread.
- An effective email letter should follow guidelines similar to those for a letter, but should be briefer.
- Send copies of your letter to the appropriate people, including other organizations.
- For more information, see the **Advocacy Primer**

Think of the letter as the culmination of your thought processes.
A good letter is succinct, states your position, and sticks to the issue.

FINDING CFUW POLICY

A quick way to link to all of our policy is through the Ontario Council website at www.cfuwontcouncil.ca/Policy.html .

Here there are links to the specific Ontario Council resolutions, the main CFUW Policy Book Online, as well as the IFUW Resolutions page.

CFUW ADVOCACY GUIDELINES

THREE SIMPLE RULES TO FOLLOW IN LETTER WRITING

- ◆ When writing, or speaking, “on behalf of CFUW” and asking for some action, this **must be based on CFUW policy** as found in the *CFUW Policy Book* or *Ontario Council Resolutions*.

The words “on behalf of CFUW” can then be used.

When there is no policy, letters may be written asking for information only – “Our club is studying ...”

If a Club needs to react to a local situation when there is no policy, a vote shall be taken of its membership before committing the Club to any course of action. Any action must be consistent with CFUW purposes.

- ◆ **Local clubs write to their local MPs, MPPs**, and other local elected officials, but not to the Premier, the Prime Minister or Cabinet Minister (unless he/she is the local MPP or MP).

Dealing with your own MPs and MPPs is what creates the momentum and potentially adds to the pressure. .

- ◆ **Letters must be sent out under the signature of the Club President, or designated member of the Executive, on Club letterhead.** The Club President or designated member of the executive committee should have the support and authorization of her executive.

The individual club member is encouraged to write to any politician on any issue about which she has a concern.

She may use information from CFUW sources, but she may not write “on behalf of CFUW”, or use CFUW letterhead.