



## **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

### **Attendance Assistance Program (Policy Statement: Attendance Support)**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Attendance Assistance Procedures is to support the Board's mission to enable all learners to realize their full potential through the promotion of positive levels of employee attendance.

These procedures are intended:

- To provide support to employees who are absent from work due to reasons beyond their control so they can attend work regularly.
- To provide encouragement and assistance on an individual basis through coaching to achieve this objective.
- To reinforce the importance of good attendance.
- To develop Board wide attendance support practices that are consistently and equitably applied across the organization.

The intent of the Attendance Assistance Procedure is to provide non-disciplinary and supportive assistance to employees who exceed the school board's established absence threshold.

When an employee's absences exceed the established absence threshold the following procedures apply in accordance with the Attendance Assistance Program Guide.

Should a disability be identified that requires support or accommodation at any time during the process, the school board will support the employee's transition into the disability management program.

#### **References**

Policy Statement: Attendance Support

Administrative Procedures: Absence Reporting

Disability Management – Early Intervention, Accommodation and Return to Work

Confidentiality of Medical Records

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)

Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA)

Ontario Human Rights Code

Occupational Health and Safety Act

**Procedures**

1.0 Definitions:

1.1 Absenteeism:

1.1.1 Innocent (Non-Culpable) Absenteeism relates to absences as a result of illness or injury that arise due to circumstances beyond the employee’s control. These absences are not dealt with through a progressive discipline model; instead the employee is supported through the Attendance Assistance Program.

The Board reserves the right to consider the termination of an employee for continuous, non-culpable absenteeism, greater than 24 months.

1.1.2 Culpable Absenteeism relates to those absences for which employees can be held accountable. Failure to attend work without notifying the employer, lateness for work or leaving early and abuse of leave are examples of culpable absences. Employees with culpable absences are subject to progressive discipline. These absences are not dealt with through the Attendance Assistance Program.

DEFINITIONS	MAY INCLUDE
Absences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal illness/injury unrelated to work (paid and unpaid) if the absences are less than 5 consecutive days and the employee is not involved in the school board’s Disability Management Program/WSIB RTW Plan.</li> <li>• Medical/Dental appointments</li> <li>• Emergency leaves due to personal illness/injury under the Employment Standards Act</li> </ul>
Not considered absences under the definition of this Procedure	<p><b>MAY NOT INCLUDE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vacation</li> <li>• Culpable absences</li> <li>• Family medical leaves as defined by the Employment Standards Act</li> <li>• Pre-approved prolonged leaves of absence</li> <li>• Bereavement leave</li> <li>• Jury or subpoena leave</li> <li>• Pregnancy/parental leave</li> <li>• Union business leave</li> <li>• Examinations and convocations</li> <li>• Quarantine</li> <li>• Observance of recognized religious holy days</li> <li>• Inclement weather day</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suspensions</li> <li>• Approved Long Term Disability claims</li> <li>• WSIB absences less than 5 consecutive days</li> <li>• Paid or unpaid personal leaves</li> <li>• Emergency leaves under the Employment Standards Act not due to personal illness/injury</li> </ul>
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## 2.0 Absence Threshold

- 2.1 Absence Threshold – is the established number of absences and/or occurrences to trigger possible entry into the Attendance Assistance Program. When an employee’s absences exceed the threshold within a rolling 12 working month period, the Principal/Supervisor and/or Human Resources Officer – Disability and Wellness may meet with the employee to discuss his/her level of absenteeism having regard for the personal circumstances of the employee.
- 2.2 The threshold should be reviewed every two years by the Board. Employees should be notified of threshold changes. The threshold is used as a mechanism to trigger non-disciplinary and supportive intervention.
- 2.3 When an employee’s absences have exceeded the threshold, the attendance assistance process will be initiated.
- 2.4 Entry into any level of the multi-level process is applied consistently to all employees using discretion. The goals that are set within any level are specific and unique to each employee’s circumstances.
- 2.5 The employee may include his/her representative in the attendance assistance process. The representative may attend any meetings that occur to discuss or review the employee’s attendance.
- 2.6 The attendance assistance process includes 5 distinct components: Preliminary Meeting; Coaching Level 1; Coaching Level 2; and Coaching Level 3 and a Coaching Level 4 Meeting.
- 2.6.1 The Preliminary Meeting includes the employee and Principal/Supervisor to initiate discussion related to the employee’s absence level, gain an understanding of the issue(s) that may be preventing the employee from regularly attending work, offer support and guidance, as well as set attendance goals for the next 90 working days.
- 2.6.2 Coaching Level 1 – consists of a meeting that includes the employee, Principal and Supervisor and Principal/Supervisor and/or Human-Resources Officer, Disability and Wellness. The employee may enter into Level 1 as he/she has been unable to meet the attendance goals established in the Preliminary Meeting OR the prorated threshold is exceeded during the Preliminary Meeting review period. Attendance goals will be set with the employee that will apply for the next 90 working days.

- 2.6.3 Coaching Level 2 – consists of a meeting that includes the employee, Principal/Supervisor and/or Human Resources Officer – Disability and Wellness or designate. The employee may enter into Level 2 as he/she has been unable to meet the attendance goals established in Level 1 OR the prorated threshold is exceeded during the Level 1 review period. Attendance goals will again be set with the employee that will apply for the next 90 working days.
- 2.6.4 Coaching Level 3 – consists of a meeting that includes the employee, Principal/Supervisor and/or Human Resources Officer – Disability and Wellness or designate. The employee may enter into Level 3, as he/she has been unable to meet the attendance goals established in Level 2 OR the prorated threshold is exceeded during the Level 2 review period. Attendance goals will again be set with the employee that will apply for the next 90 working days.
- 2.6.5 Coaching Level 4 - consists of a meeting that includes the employee, Principal/Supervisor, Human Resources Officer-Disability and Wellness and Superintendent of HR or designate. The employee may enter into Level 4, as he/she has been unable to meet the attendance goal established in Level 3 OR the prorated threshold is exceeded during the Level 3 review period, OR the threshold is exceeded during the 12-month review period. Where the employee progresses to Level 4 and the board determines that:
- (a) It has fulfilled its obligation under the applicable collective agreement and/or policies and procedures, Ontario Human Rights code and any other applicable legislation; and,
  - (b) The employee's absenteeism is excessive and there is no reasonable likelihood that the employee will be able to attend work regularly in the foreseeable future; the employee may be advised that his/her employment is being terminated on a non-disciplinary basis.

2.7 When attendance goals have been met within a coaching level, the employee enters into a review period of up to 12 working months where their absences are monitored by the Human Resources Officer– Disability and Wellness, or designate.

2.8 Employees who exceed the threshold in the review period will remain in the Attendance Assistance Program. The employee may be invited to attend a meeting at the same or next Level of the program.

2.9 Employees who do not exceed the threshold in the review period (mentioned in 2.7 above) will exit from the Attendance Support Program.

### 3.0 Employee Responsibilities:

3.1 Maintain regular attendance

3.2 Participate actively in all levels of the attendance assistance process.

3.3 Cooperate in setting personal attendance goals.

3.4 Contact their union representative if the employee wishes them to be involved.

3.5 Provide any appropriate documentation, during any level of the process in accordance with 1.0 and 2.0 of the Absence Reporting Procedure.

4.0 Principal/Supervisor Responsibilities May Include:

4.1 Ensure all absences are recorded accurately and approved on a frequent, regular and consistent basis.

4.2 Communicate attendance expectations to all employees through an annual review of the Attendance Assistance Program.

4.3 Review absence reports for staff.

4.4 Identify absenteeism trends or patterns, such as the following:

4.4.1 frequent absences of short duration;

4.4.2 absences of more than ten days;

4.4.3 absences due to doctor appointments or scheduled treatment;

4.4.4 absences due to workplace injury and/or illness;

4.4.5 unauthorized absences;

4.4.6 a pattern of repeated days of absence taken in proximity to weekends,

4.4.7 absenteeism in excess of the threshold;

4.4.8 absences in excess of standard recovery time, in accordance with Canadian Medical Association, for an employee's illness or injury as identified by the Human Resources Officer– Disability and Wellness, or designate.

4.5 Address all absenteeism issues using discretion and seek support from Disability and Wellness, Human Resources.

4.6 Conduct the preliminary meeting and coaching level 1; with all employees whose absences exceed the threshold.

4.7 Support employees and act as a resource.

4.8 Advise employees of available resources (i.e. FSEAP).

4.9 Participate in all meetings as outlined in the Attendance Support Guide and provide input into the development of individualized attendance goals for each employee involved in the process.

4.10 Provide a written outcome of the preliminary meeting and coaching level 1 to the employee and the Human Resources Officer-Disability and Wellness.

4.11 Support and assist the Human Resources Officer – Disability and Wellness or designate at any level in the attendance assistance process.

4.12 Provide positive reinforcement to employees who reach their attendance goals.

5.0 Disability and Wellness, Human Resources Responsibilities May Include:

5.1 Support Principals/Supervisors in addressing absenteeism issues.

5.2 Serve as a resource to employees and Principals/Supervisors.

5.3 Assist to identify employees who exceed the threshold level of absences.

5.4 Advise employees of resources available to them.

6.0 Human Resources Officer – Disability and Wellness Responsibilities May Include:

6.1 Facilitate the meetings in Coaching Levels 2 to 4.

6.2 Provide assistance on the development of individualized goals at the conclusion of each meeting in which they are in attendance, taking into account all circumstances identified during each meeting.

6.3 Provide a written outcome of each coaching level meeting in which they are in attendance with copies to the employee, Principal/Supervisor and employee representative, if applicable.

7.0 Superintendent(s) or Designate Responsibilities May Include:

7.1 Participate in the Coaching Level 4 meeting, and other meetings, as /if required. In conjunction with Disability and Wellness Human Resources, Principals and Supervisors, review the cases of employees who have not met attendance goals (in particular those who have completed all four coaching levels) to determine ongoing employability.

7.2 Provide support and act as a resource to all aspects of the attendance assistance process.

7.3 Request regular reports to identify outcome and timeliness of meetings conducted and follow up on meetings required that have not yet been conducted.

Reviewed: November 13, 2018