



## **ATTENDANCE SUPPORT PROGRAM POLICY**

### ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

## **DEFINITIONS AND PROCEDURES**

### **Definitions of Absenteeism**

**Non-Culpable or Innocent Absenteeism** occurs when an employee, through no fault of their own, is absent from the workplace because of a personal illness, disease or injury. The Attendance Support Program (ASP) recognizes that employees with non-culpable absenteeism may require assistance to attend work regularly.

**Culpable or Accountable Absenteeism** refers to absences from work for which the employee is found to be accountable and within the employee's control. Some examples of culpable absences are: failure to attend work without notifying the employer; late for work or leaving early; and abuse of leave. Employees with culpable absences are subject to progressive discipline in accordance with associated Board Policies, Administrative Procedures, Procedures, Collective Agreements and Terms of Employment. It is required that culpable absences be directed to Human Resource Services for further direction and advice and are not intended to be addressed in the Attendance Support Program (ASP). Board approved Leaves of Absence are excluded from the Attendance Support Program (ASP).

### **Absence Reporting**

Employees are required to attend work as scheduled, with the understanding that there will be times when employees are unable to attend work due to a legitimate personal illness, or injury.

In order to ensure a consistent and equitable approach throughout the Board, all employees are required to report their own absences for all vacancies through the normal reporting procedures (Apply to Education/Easy Connect) within the required timeframe.

### **Process of Addressing Absenteeism**

The process of addressing absenteeism is to understand the reasons for the absences, provide support and identify support services that are available to the employee. This process of addressing absenteeism will allow sufficient time for the employee to address issues so they will attend work regularly in the future.

## **ABSENCE INDICATORS**

Attendance indicators to address attendance concerns are defined as a rate of absenteeism equivalent to 11 days per year prorated to the employee's employment status. Board approved leaves are excluded from the absence indicators.

Notwithstanding the above indicators, it is the responsibility of all immediate supervising administrators (Director of Education, Superintendent of Education, Controller of Facilities Services, Principal, Vice-Principal and Managers) to identify the absences and/or circumstances which may necessitate a meeting with the employee when;

- i. the Attendance Support Program indicators has been reached or exceeded and/or;
- ii. the types of absences include, but are not limited to:
  - A pattern of absenteeism (e.g. Mondays and Fridays, P.A. Days)
  - Unclear rationale for absences
  - Unauthorized absences

## HEALTH AND MEDICAL INFORMATION

Health and medical information is among the most sensitive information that employees provide to the employer, the Board. All health and medical information will be treated with the utmost respect and confidentiality. The Board acknowledges and shall strictly adhere to the legislation pertaining to personal information under the Personal Health Information Act.

If the employee indicates at any step that there is a medical condition or disability contributing to their attendance challenges then the supervising administrator should discuss the situation with the Coordinator of Attendance Support Program so that appropriate steps can be taken.

Medical information is required for several reasons:

1. To provide the Human Resources Services Department with the necessary information to ensure that appropriate accommodation strategies can be explored and to ensure compliance with the Human Rights and Workplace Safety Insurance Legislation.
2. To medically verify absences as outlined in the respective Collective agreements or Terms and Conditions for employees.
3. To verify that the employee is sick or fit to return to work.
4. To staff and replace personnel appropriately.

The Human Resource Services Department may request medical confirmation of illness or injury confirming the dates of the absence, the reason, (omitting a diagnosis), the employee's prognosis and any limitations or restrictions. As per the Collective Agreement and/or Terms and Conditions of an employee, medical confirmation will be required to be provided by the employee as determined by the Human Resource Services Department for absences of five (5) consecutive days or greater.

The Human Resource Services Department is entitled to make reasonable follow up requests and seek periodic updates. Requests shall be sent to the employee who shall be responsible for authorizing the medical practitioner to respond in a timely fashion. The medical confirmation and follow up requests will be required to be provided in the attached Medical Certificate form ([Appendix A](#)).

## SUPPORTIVE INTERVENTION HAS TWO (2) DISTINCT STAGES

### Stage 1

1. Employees may be identified by either the supervising administrator or as a result of the attendance monitoring of the Coordinator of Attendance Support who have attendance related concerns.
2. The supervising administrator who has a concern with the employee's attendance will arrange a meeting to review the attendance concern with the employee under their supervision.

3. The areas of concern discussed at the meeting will include, but not be limited to;
  - a. Employee absences which may have a negative impact on the learning environment;
  - b. identified patterns of absence.
4. The meeting shall include the employee, the supervising administrator, union/association representative and other administrative staff as required to support the process.
5. The supervising administrator will determine whether the attendance concerns are such that they should progress to the Superintendent of Human Resources.
6. The supervising administrator will have access to attendance records of their staff.
7. The Coordinator of Attendance Support will have access to the attendance information for all employees of the Board and will provide this information to supervising administrators as required.

## **Stage 2**

1. When the attendance concern is brought forward to the Superintendent of Human Resources, a meeting will occur with the Superintendent of Human Resources, the employee, the supervising administrator, non-union or union or association representative and other administrative staff as required to support the process.
2. The Superintendent of Human Resources may notify the employee that a medical note for each absence in the future will be required until the Superintendent of Human Resources and the supervising administrator deem that the attendance has been corrected.
3. The monitoring of absences may be deemed disciplinary and if so will be managed through the process of progressive discipline consistent with the Collective Agreement, Terms and Conditions of Employment and the Education Act.
4. The Superintendent of Human Resources will determine if absences will be deemed disciplinary and will inform the employee that the appropriate sections of the Collective Agreement and/or Terms and Conditions will apply.
5. A record of the meeting will be issued to the employee via a letter and will be filed in the employee's personnel file.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Personnel involved in the Attendance Support Program will respect and protect the confidentiality and privacy of employee information.

### **Employer – Niagara Catholic District School Board**

- Expects that employees will attend work regularly as they fulfill the services they were hired to provide
- Promotes and foster the expectation of regular attendance in the work environment
- Promotes and maintain a work environment that promotes overall health, safety and wellness of all employees
- Advocates that the Attendance Support Program be administered in a fair and consistent manner.
- Provides employee training and orientation on the program, attendance expectations, supports and resources

- Promotes timely and successful return to work transitions

## **Employee**

- Attends work as scheduled and actively participate in managing their attendance
- Maintains a record of all absences due to personal illnesses and be familiar with the attendance process
- Reports all absences in Apply to Education/Easy Connect, in accordance with their appropriate Employee group procedure
- Seeks and actively participate in appropriate Counselling (Employee and Family Assistance Program) and/or medical attention to address health concerns
- Cooperates in setting personal attendance goals
- Promotes timely and successful return to work transitions
- Maintains regular contact with the Supervising Administrator during extended absences
- Contacts union representative
- Provides any appropriate documentation and relevant health information, during any level of the process, in a timely manner, or upon request.

## **Senior Administration**

- Acts as positive role models for employees and provides support to supervisors
- Promotes and maintains a work environment which protects the overall health, safety and wellness of all Employees
- Demonstrates a commitment to the Attendance Support Program
- Ensures all Supervisors act consistently in dealing with attendance issues at all levels of the organization
- Communicates expectations for attendance at work.

## **Supervising Administrator**

- The supervising administrator includes the Director of Education, Superintendents of Education, Controller of Facilities Services, Principals, Vice-Principals and Managers. The supervisors are responsible for the promotion of a positive work environment and to ensure employees are aware that their contributions are valued. As well, supervisors are responsible for;

### **Communication**

- Communicates attendance expectations to all employees and ensure that they understand the principles of the Attendance Support Program
- Advises employees of available resources (i.e. Employee and Family Assistance program (EFAP), Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan (OTIP))
- Maintains obligatory confidentiality
- Participates in all meetings as outlined in the Attendance Support Program.

### **Monitoring Attendance**

- Accesses and reviews monthly attendance reports from Apply to Education/Easy Connect for all Employees under their direct supervision
- Ensures all employees are treated fairly and equitably when monitoring attendance
- Provides assistance and support to all employees as necessary
- Maintains reasonable contact with absent employees
- Ensures a consistent and timely application of the Attendance Support Program

### **Attendance Recognition**

- Practices, expects and promotes regular attendance of all employees as advocated by the employer

- Provides positive reinforcement to employees who are progressing and reaching their attendance goals.

### **Coordinator of Attendance Support Program**

- Safeguards employee confidentiality
- Supports and offers guidance with return to work transitions
- Supports supervisors to follow the Attendance Support Program process
- Offer support and resources to assist employees to meet attendance goals, as necessary
- Supports and promotes regular and improved attendance
- Monitor and report regularly on attendance
- To provide information to employees and their respective unions or employee group representatives about excessive absenteeism and or any reoccurring attendance patterns and advise on expectations.
- To monitor the consistent application of the Attendance Support Program.
- To maintain appropriate documentation throughout the Attendance Support Program.

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