Niagara Catholic District School Board

ATTENDANCE SUPPORT PROGRAM

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

200 – Human Resources **No 201.16**

Adopted Date: June 23, 2026 Latest Reviewed/Revised Date: September 8, 2026

In keeping with the Mission, Vision, and Values of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, the following are the Administrative Operational Procedures of the Attendance Support Program.

PURPOSE

The Niagara Catholic District School Board is committed to fostering a healthy and supportive workplace. Every employee is valued, and regular attendance is essential to maintaining a high standard of student learning and achievement. The primary goal of the Attendance Support Program (ASP) is to provide supportive assistance to all employees through various Board initiatives, including wellness programs, preventative health and safety measures, and the medical accommodation process to address barriers that may prevent regular attendance. All employees play a vital role in achieving the Board's vision.
Consistent attendance ensures quality services for students and the community, while promoting fairness in the distribution of work among colleagues in accordance with PPM 171, mandating that school boards develop and implement an Attendance Support Program (ASP) for their employees.

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES

The Attendance Support Program is non-disciplinary, collaborative, and focuses on wellness to:

- Promote a healthy, safe, and stable learning and working environment that supports both student and staff well-being and student achievement.
- Ensure absences are managed fairly and consistently, in compliance with applicable legislation, Collective Agreements, and Terms and Conditions.
- Support employees in achieving regular and consistent attendance at work, while considering individual circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

DEFINITIONS

Threshold: Absences due to personal illness equal to or exceeding fifteen (15) work days, calculated on a full-time equivalent (FTE) basis. Partial sick days are accumulated proportionally toward the threshold (e.g., two half-day absences equal one full sick day).

Threshold period: Rolling twelve (12) consecutive working months in a position for which sick-leave benefits apply.

Monitoring period: Three (3) working months in a position for which sick leave benefits apply.

Monitoring period threshold: Absences exceeding two (2) work days for personal illness, based on the employee's full-time equivalency (FTE).

Non-culpable absences (innocent absenteeism): Absences beyond the employee's control, such as illness, injury, or medical appointments. These count toward ASP thresholds.

Culpable absences: Absences within the employee's control (e.g., unauthorized leave, misuse of sick time). These are excluded from ASP and addressed through progressive discipline outside this program.

Approved Leaves: Employment Standards Act (ESA)-protected leaves (e.g., pregnancy/parental, family medical, critical illness, family caregiver, family responsibility, etc.), vacation, personal days, family leave days, bereavement, jury/subpoena duty, union business, observance of recognized religious holidays, approved Long Term Disability (LTD), and approved WSIB lost-time days. These do not count toward ASP thresholds.

Supervisor: Any individual with direct reports.

Accommodation: Refers to the process and implementation of changes to a job and/or to the work environment to enable a person with a disability to perform their job productively. Accommodation may occur while an employee is at work or upon their return and can be temporary or long-term.

Accommodation is guided by three principles: respect for dignity, individualization, inclusion, and full participation.

SCOPE FOR ATTENDANCE SUPPORT PROGRAM (ASP)

In scope for ASP threshold: Personal illness/injury unrelated to work (paid and unpaid), including medical/dental appointments.

Participation in the ASP and related accommodations or interventions will be determined by the Health and Wellness Team, based on individual circumstances, organizational policies, and the goal of supporting employee well-being while maintaining operational requirements.

Out of scope: Approved leaves as previously defined.
Absences supported through Health and Wellness are typically excluded from ASP scope; however, inclusion or exclusion remains at the discretion of the Health and Wellness team.

Exercise of Discretion
The program is not rigid; the application depends on individual circumstances, including the nature and frequency of absences.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees:

- **Regular attendance:** Make every effort to attend work regularly and maintain open communication regarding any absences. Actively participate in treatment plans recommended by a regulated Healthcare Professional to achieve optimal recovery.
- **Participation in the ASP:** Actively engage in meetings, follow agreed-upon improvement plans, cooperate in setting personal attendance goals, and provide documentation when required.
- **Provide documentation when requested:** Employees are not required to disclose personal diagnoses, but may need to provide general documentation to support their absences, respecting privacy rights.
- **Communication:** Check Board email regularly to ensure timely receipt of important information.

Supervisors:

- **Support & Resources:** Provide employees with resources to support attendance and overall well-being through supportive conversations. Demonstrate commitment to the intent of the ASP.
- **Coordination with Human Resources Services (HR)**: Communicate regularly with HR regarding employee progress and escalate concerns when necessary.
- **Monitoring:** Ensure accurate attendance coding at the school level, identify absenteeism trends, document absences, and participate in meetings as requested.
- **Communication**: Address absenteeism concerns through constructive discussions, applying consistent discretion. Participating in meetings as requested and contributing to individualized attendance goals.

Supervisor of Attendance Support:

- **Attendance Monitoring & Support:** Monitor employee attendance and identify emerging patterns of absenteeism while maintaining accurate attendance records as it pertains to the ASP. Provide employees with resources to support improved attendance and overall well-being.
- **Employee Engagement & Case Support:** Communicate with employees regarding attendance concerns in a respectful, supportive manner. Support the accommodation process as required.
- **Documentation & Communication:** Address absenteeism concerns through constructive discussions, applying consistent discretion, and providing documentation following communication.
- **Policy, Compliance & Collaboration:** Apply attendance policies consistently in alignment with Collective Agreements and Terms and Conditions. Collaborate with HR, school leaders, supervisors, and union representatives to address attendance matters. Prepare basic attendance reports to support informed decision-making.

Human Resources Services:

- **Training:** Provide training on the ASP implementation to ensure effective handling and understanding of attendance matters.
- **Threshold Identification:** Review absenteeism data annually to establish clear program entry thresholds.
- **Equitable Administration:** Ensure consistent, fair application of the program across all departments.
- **Data Analysis:** Monitor absenteeism trends, analyze data, and use insights for decision-making and early intervention.
- **Progress Tracking:** Track outcomes of coaching meetings and ensure that employees progress through the ASP support levels as needed.
- **Communication:** Maintain clear, timely communication with supervisors, employees, and union representatives.

Unions:

- **Compliance**: Support compliance with Collective Agreements and PPM 171.
- **Participation**: Participate in a consultative manner within the Attendance Support Program Committee and designated meeting steps.
- **Confidentiality:** Maintain confidentiality of sensitive employee information throughout the process.

ATTENDANCE SUPPORT PROGRAM (ASP) PROCEDURES

ASP is a phased, non-disciplinary approach designed to support employees in achieving regular attendance. All circumstances are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. At any point, disclosure of disability or other factors will initiate a referral to Health & Wellness/Accommodation processes, with a return to ASP when appropriate.

Entry indicators may include: employee requests assistance; threshold period reached or exceeded; unexplained sick leave patterns; Supervisor or HR identified attendance concerns. Management may exercise discretion based on circumstances, severity, attendance record, and nature/frequency of absences.

At each support level, resources will be offered to assist employees in improving attendance and provide opportunities for open discussion regarding attendance concerns.

Step 1

- The Supervisor of Attendance Support issues a letter notifying the employee of ASP entry, including absence history, expectations, and a link to the ASP SharePoint site.
- If more than two sick/illness absences occur during the monitoring period, the employee may progress to Step 2.
- If attendance improves (equal to or fewer than two sick/illness absences in the monitoring period), a letter will be issued recognizing improvement in attendance.

- Once two consecutive improved monitoring periods occur, the employee will exit the program and be issued a confirmation letter.
- If the employee has more than two sick/illness absences in the second monitoring period, the employee may re-enter the program.

Step 2

- The Supervisor of Attendance Support will meet with the employee to review absence history, discuss supports, set goals, and explain the next steps. Documentation will be provided to the employee following the meeting as a summary of what was discussed and the expectations moving forward.
- If more than two sick/illness absences occur in the monitoring period, the employee may progress to Step 3.
- If attendance improves (equal to or fewer than two sick/illness absences in the monitoring period), a letter will be issued recognizing improvement in attendance.
- Once two consecutive improved monitoring periods occur, the employee will exit the program and be issued a confirmation letter.
- If the employee has more than two sick/illness absences in the second monitoring period, the employee may re-enter the program at Step 1.

Step 3

- A meeting will be held with the Supervisor, Supervisor of Attendance Support, Human Resources (HR) Specialist, and union representative (if applicable) to review the employee's attendance concerns, discuss available supports, and establish clear attendance expectations for the upcoming monitoring period. Documentation will be provided to the employee following the meeting as a summary of what was discussed and the expectations moving forward.
- At this stage, the employee is advised that their attendance record remains of significant concern. While the purpose of Step 3 is to provide assistance and an opportunity for improvement, the employee is notified that failure to meet attendance expectations during this monitoring period may result in progression to Step 4. At Step 4, the Board will review the employee's overall attendance history, reasons, and medical prognosis to determine whether there is a reasonable prospect of future improvement. Where no reasonable prospect of improvement exists, employment status, including termination, may be considered. The employee is therefore advised that their attendance during this Step 3 monitoring period is critical in determining next steps.
- If more than two sick/illness absences occur in the monitoring period, the employee may progress to Step 4.
- If attendance improves (equal to or fewer than two sick/illness absences in the monitoring period), a letter will be issued recognizing improvement in attendance.
- Once two consecutive improved monitoring periods occur, the employee will exit the program and be issued a confirmation letter.
- If the employee has more than two sick/illness absences in the second monitoring period, the employee may re-enter the program at Step 2.

Step 4

- A meeting with the Chief Human Resource and Communications Officer or designate, HR Specialist, Supervisor, and union representative (if applicable) will take place. The employee's overall attendance history, reasons, and medical prognosis will be reviewed to determine whether there is a reasonable prospect of future improvement. Where no reasonable prospect of improvement exists, employment status, including termination, may be considered; alternatives include deferred termination subject to improvement or other appropriate action. Documentation will be provided to the employee following the meeting as a summary of what

was discussed.

- Continued review during the monitoring period if employment continues.
- If attendance improves (equal to or fewer than two sick/illness absences in the monitoring period), a letter will be issued recognizing improvement in attendance.
- Once two consecutive improved monitoring periods occur, the employee will exit the program and be issued a confirmation letter.
- If the employee has more than two sick/illness absences in the second monitoring period, the employee may re-enter the program at Step 3.

Exiting the Program
An employee must have no more than two sick/illness absences in each of 2 consecutive monitoring periods in order to successfully exit the program.

Discretionary Review
The ASP is designed to promote sustained attendance improvement. As such, discretion may be exercised in evaluating employee progress over time, including year-over-year patterns. Decisions regarding program entry, continuation, or exit may reflect overall attendance consistency on an individualized, case- by-case basis.

MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND REVIEW

The ASP will be formally reviewed by Human Resources, as required, not exceeding two years. Evaluation will consider employee and management experience with the program, consistency of application across departments, sick leave data trends, and impact on unfilled assignments.

OPERATIONAL PLAN REVIEW

The Attendance Support Program Committee will be comprised of representation from supervisors, local union representatives, senior leaders, and Human Resources. The ASP committee will provide consultation on various aspects of the ASP, with Human Resources retaining decision-making authority regarding program design and processes. The committee will also provide input into a needs assessment to be conducted every two years, using sick leave data to identify gaps and to inform goals and procedures. The committee will also support continuous improvement of the ASP through feedback on communication and training materials, and recommendations for improvement. Human Resources will provide training on the implementation and management of the ASP to ensure consistency and effectiveness.

References:

- ***Employment Standards Act***
- ***Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act***
- ***Ontario Human Rights Code***
- ***Workplace Safety and Insurance Act***
- ***Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)***
- ***Education Act and Regulations***
- ***Personal Health Information Protection Act***
- ***PPM 171 — Attendance Support Programs***
- ***Niagara Catholic District School Board Polices/Procedures***
  - ***Accessibility Standards Policy (800.8)***
  - ***Equity and Inclusive Education Policy (100.10)***
  - ***Employee Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy (201.17)***
  - ***Employee Workplace Harassment Policy (201.7)***
  - ***Employee Health and Wellness Program Policy (201.19)***
  - ***Occupational Health & Safety Policy (201.6)***
  - ***Collective Agreements***

- *Terms and Conditions*

Adopted Date:	**June 23, 2026**
Revision History:	**September 8, 2026** ***(Administrative Update)***