

<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Attendance Management and Support Program</b>
<b>Effective:</b>	<b>January 2012</b>
<b>Revision Date:</b>	<b>March 2017; April 2018; December 2019</b>
<b>Review Date:</b>	<b>September 2023</b>
<b>Cross-Reference:</b>	<b>Administrative Procedures – Confidentiality of Medical Records; Disability Management Support Program; Individual Work Accommodation (Medical), Progressive Discipline; Occupational Health and Safety, Absence Reporting Policy - Privacy and Information Management</b>
<b>Responsibility:</b>	<b>Executive Officer of Human Resources</b>

**INTENDED PURPOSE:**

The Halton District School Board is committed to creating a supportive and healthy environment for its employees. Individual and organizational health are important factors that affect the ability of employees to attend work on a regular basis. Attendance Management is an early intervention program designed to assist employees who are struggling to maintain regular attendance at work. The intent of the Attendance Management process is to provide non-disciplinary and supportive assistance to Halton District School Board employees who exceed the established absence threshold.

This Attendance Management and Support Program Administrative Procedure applies to all permanent staff employed by the Halton District School Board, as well as contractual staff holding a contract with the employer of six (6) months or greater. When an employee's absences exceed the established absence threshold, the following procedures apply.

**PROCEDURES:**

1. Absenteeism:
  - a) *Non-Culpable (Innocent) Absenteeism* refers to absences as a result of illness or injury that arise due to circumstances beyond the employee's control; in other words, they are blameless. These absences are not dealt with through a progressive discipline model; instead the employee is supported through the Attendance Support Program.
  - b) *Culpable Absenteeism* refers 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, in accordance with the associated Progressive Discipline Administrative Procedure. These absences are not dealt with through the Attendance Management Program, as they are beyond the scope of this administrative procedure.
2. The *Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP)* is the Halton District School Board's **free and confidential** employee support program. Services include professional support and resources that are intended to assist employees and/or their families with a wide range of personal issues and challenges.
3. The absence threshold is the established number of absences that trigger possible entry into the Attendance Management Support Program (AMSP). The threshold is a reasonable number that is based on empirical data.
  - a) When an employee's absences exceed the absence threshold, the Principal/ Supervisor/ Manager and/or a designate from Employee Health and Wellness team may meet with the employee to discuss their level of absenteeism, while having regard for the personal circumstances of the employee.

- b) The employer should review the absence threshold as determined, but no later than two years. Employees shall be notified of threshold changes. The threshold is used as a mechanism to initiate non-disciplinary and supportive early intervention.
  - c) When an employee's absences have exceeded the threshold, the attendance management process will be initiated.
4. Absences that the Attendance Management Program may include:
- a) Personal illness/injury unrelated to work (paid and unpaid) if the absences are less than five (<5) consecutive days and the employee is not involved in the employer's Disability Management and Support Program;
  - b) Medical/Dental appointments; and/or
  - c) WSIB declined claim related absences and/or the employee is not participating in the employer's Disability Management and Support Program.
  - d) Repeated absences of five (5) consecutive days, which are not part of the Disability Management Program.
5. Absences that are not included in the Attendance Management and Support Program:
- a) Vacation;
  - b) Culpable absences (refer to 1. **b** of this administrative procedure);
  - c) Family Medical leaves, Emergency leaves and any other leaves as defined by the Employment Standards Act;
  - d) Pre-approved prolonged leaves of absence;
  - e) Pre-approved Personal Business Days and Family Emergency Days;
  - f) Pre-approved Compassionate leaves of absences;
  - g) Bereavement leave;
  - h) Jury or subpoena leave;
  - i) Pregnancy/parental leave;
  - j) Union business leave;
  - k) Examinations and convocations;
  - l) Quarantine;
  - m) Observance of recognized religious holy days;
  - n) Approved Inclement weather day;
  - o) Suspensions;
  - p) Approved Long Term Disability claims;
  - q) Specialist appointments (3+ may require clarification, e.g., questionnaire, sufficient medical documentation)
  - r) WSIB approved absences;
  - s) Absences due to disability as approved by Employee Health and Wellness; and/or
  - t) Half day for appointments related to Specialist/Midwife appointments and testing (e.g., ultrasound) due to pregnancy.
6. The employee will be advised of their right to union representation in the attendance management process. At the employee's request, the union representative may attend any meeting(s) that occur to discuss or review the employee's attendance.
7. The attendance management process includes: Communication to employees as a reminder to review absences and ensure they are coded correctly and to access supports as needed; Preliminary email communication; Coaching Level 1; Coaching Level 2; Coaching Level 3 and Coaching Level 4.
- a) *The initial communication:* This communication will be posted on conference forums for all employees. This communication provides a reminder every three months i.e. Jan./May/Sept. and an opportunity for the employee to be aware of their absences, ensure corrections are made as necessary and access early intervention supports as needed.

- b) *The Preliminary Email* includes the employee, the Principal/Supervisor/Manager. The communication confirms the employee has entered the program based on the outlined recorded absences. The Employee is provided with an opportunity to contact a staff member in Employee Health and Wellness and discuss their absence level, ensure absence days and coding is correct, gain an understanding of the issue(s) that may be preventing the employee from regularly attending work, offer support and guidance, and set attendance goals for the next 90 working days. Should the employee not respond to the communication within 5 working days of the communication, it will be understood the absences are correct and attendance goals are identified for the next 90 working days. (Reference: *Absence Reporting Admin Procedure*)
  - c) *Coaching Level 1* consists of a letter that includes the employee, the Principal/Supervisor/Manager, and a member of the Employee Health and Wellness. The employee may enter into Level 1 as s/he 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. Supports will continue to be offered to the employee.
  - d) *Coaching Level 2* consists of a meeting that includes the employee, the Principal/Supervisor/Manager, a member of the Employee Health and Wellness. The employee may enter into level 2 as s/he 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. Supports will continue to be offered to the employee.
  - e) *Coaching Level 3* consists of a meeting that includes the employee, the Principal/Supervisor/Manager, the Attendance Support Officer, the appropriate Manager of Human Resources, The employee may enter into Level 3, as s/he 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. Alternative options may be discussed at this time to meet the needs of the employee and their ability to attend work as scheduled; the employee may be advised that failure to meet the attendance goals set in Coaching Level 3 may result in termination of employment; discussion for alternative considerations may occur. Supports will continue to be offered to the employee.
  - f) *Coaching Level 4* consists of a meeting that includes the employee, may include the Principal/Supervisor/Manager, Manager of Employee Health and Wellness, the appropriate Manager of Human Resources and Executive Officer of Human Resources or designate. The employee may enter into Level 4, as s/he has been unable to meet the attendance goals established in Level 3 or the prorated threshold is exceeded during the Level 3 review period. Alternative options may be discussed at this time to meet the needs of the employee and their ability to attend work as scheduled; the employee may be advised that failure to meet the attendance goals set in Coaching Level 4 may result in termination of employment; discussion for alternative options may occur. Supports will continue to be offered to the employee.
8. When attendance goals have been met within a coaching level, the employee enters into a review period of twelve (12) working months. During this review period, a member of Employee Health and Wellness monitors their absences.
- a) Employees who do not exceed the threshold in the twelve (12) month review period will exit from the AMSP.
  - b) Employees who exceed the threshold during the twelve (12) month review period will continue in the AMSP at the next relevant level or may, **in extenuating circumstances**, be offered on a one time basis only an opportunity to repeat the level in the program the employee was successful in prior to entering the 12 month review.

9. 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.
10. Should a disability be identified requiring support or accommodation at any time during the process, the Employer will support the employee's transition into the Disability Management and Support Program.
11. The Employer reserves the right to consider the termination of an employee for continuous, non-culpable absenteeism.
12. Responsibilities:
  - 12.1. Employee:
    - a) Maintain good health;
    - b) Maintain regular attendance at work as scheduled;
    - c) Participate actively in all levels of the attendance management process;
    - d) Actively participate in treatment plans as recommended by a qualified registered health care professional to achieve optimal recovery;
    - e) Cooperate in setting personal attendance goals;
    - f) Contact his/her union representative if the employee wishes them to be involved;
    - g) Provide any appropriate documentation, during any level of the process in accordance with Disability Management and Support Program and the Individual Work Accommodation (Medical) Administrative Procedure.
  - 12.2. Principal/Supervisor/Manager:
    - a) Communicate attendance expectations to all employees through an annual review of the Attendance Management and Support Program;
    - b) Review absence reports for staff;
    - c) Demonstrate support for the intent of the Attendance Support Program to all staff;
    - d) Identify absenteeism trends or patterns, such as the following:
      - (i) Frequent absences of short duration;
      - (ii) Absences of five (5) consecutive scheduled work days;
      - (iii) Absences due to doctor appointments or scheduled treatment;
      - (iv) Absences due to workplace injury and/or illness;
      - (v) Unauthorized absences;
      - (vi) A pattern of repeated days of absence taken in proximity to weekends, natural breaks, and/or holidays;
      - (vii) Absenteeism in excess of the established absence threshold.
    - e) Address all absenteeism issues using discretion and as required seek support from a member of the Employee Health and Wellness team;
    - f) Attend and support attendance support meetings;
    - g) Support employees and act as a resource as necessary;
    - h) Advise employees of available resources (e.g., EFAP);
    - i) Participate in all meetings and provide input into the development of individualized attendance goals for each employee involved in the process;
    - j) Support and assist at any level in the attendance management process;
    - k) Provide positive reinforcement to employees who reach their attendance goals.
  - 12.3. Employee Health and Wellness:
    - a) Support Principals/Supervisors/Managers in addressing absenteeism issues;
    - b) Serve as a resource to employees and Principals/Supervisors/Managers;
    - c) Assist to identify employees who exceed the absence threshold;
    - d) Advise employees of resources available to them;
    - e) Facilitate and assist with meetings in the attendance management process;

- f) Provide assistance on the development of individualized goals at the conclusion of each meeting, taking into account all circumstances identified during each meeting;
  - g) Provide a written outcome of each meeting with copies to the employee, Principal/Supervisor/Manager, Manager of HR and employee representative, if applicable.
- 12.4. Superintendent(s)/Executive Officer of HR or designate:
- a) Provide support and act as a resource to all aspects of the attendance management process.
  - b) In conjunction with Human Resources, the Principal/Supervisor/Manager and Employee Health and Wellness, review the cases of employees who have not met attendance goals following the completion of all coaching levels to determine ongoing options and employability.