



# Huron-Superior Catholic

## DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

### PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES ATTENDANCE SUPPORT

#### RESPONSIBILITIES:

##### Supervisors (includes principals/vice-principals/supervisors):

Communicate the protocol for advising of absenteeism and expected attendance standards and obligations to staff.

- Monitor levels of sick leave usage in their schools and offices, based on reports generated by the Human Resources Department, and take appropriate action to correct absenteeism issues.
- Ensure staff members are aware of patterns and/or high levels of usage, should an issue with absenteeism be observed.
- Maintain written documentation where absenteeism issues have been identified.
- Identify unacceptable usage based on the individual situation.
- Meet with the employee to discuss and resolve issues regarding attendance, using the procedures outlined and guideline references. In the case of an extended absence, the supervisor will arrange with the employee to maintain contact at a reasonable frequency determined by the Board.

##### Employees:

- Attempt best efforts to be physically and mentally fit for work.
- Attend work, on time, for every scheduled day of work.
- Notify their supervisor as soon as possible when there is a reason to be absent from work (see Appendix 2 – Absence Reporting).
- Provide reasons for and report absences.
- Consult with and advise supervisor where tardiness and/or leaving early is unavoidable.
- Seek medical care when necessary. Employees should make every effort to schedule medical appointments outside of the workday, where possible.
- Maintain communication with their supervisor. This is critical when the employee is unable to return to work and the estimated length of illness is unknown.
- Co-operate with their supervisor's/designate's request for information regarding their specific limitations and restrictions, which shall be provided through their treating health care professional so that an accommodation plan that is suitable can be established. There is no requirement for employees to provide a diagnosis.

Human Resources:

- Provide monthly reports to supervisors on employee absences.
- Work with supervisors to identify the source of employee attendance issues, determine available resources and to facilitate return to work programs.
- Provide advice on the provisions of these procedures and guidelines.
- Provide advice on Human Rights, collective agreement provisions, and policy interpretations where applicable.
- Meet with the employee to discuss and resolve issues regarding attendance, using the procedures outlined and guideline references.

Unions and Staff Associations:

- Unions and staff associations can assist their employees by providing support.

DEFINITIONS:

Absence

Is an incident of non-attendance at work.

Culpable/Blameworthy Absenteeism

Absence problems for which the employee will be held responsible, as the absences are within the employee's power to address and correct.

Examples: excessively arriving late for work or leaving early; excessive absence without substantiation or abuse of sick leave; no reason provided for absence.

Non-Culpable/Non-Blameworthy Absenteeism

The consistent inability for an employee to attend work on a regular basis, due to circumstances beyond the employee's control.

Examples: absences substantiated; absences due to a disability.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE:

- Sick leave records of employees will be monitored on an ongoing basis.
- Board approved and/or legally required absences (e.g., jury duty, bereavement leave, personal leave) will be recorded; however, these types of absences will be excluded from sick leave statistics.
- All available information will be reviewed and considered before determining that an attendance problem exists.

- A potential attendance issue will be considered where usage appears to be above the norm and/or where there are patterns of usage identified.
- Once the immediate supervisor and the School Superintendent or Manager of Human Resources has determined that an attendance problem does, in fact, exist, action will be taken in accordance with the guidelines outlined in this procedural guideline.

#### MEDICAL EVIDENCE:

- Employees **will not be** required to reveal to the Board the exact nature of an illness or disability (i.e., diagnosis).
- Subject to the terms and conditions of the applicable collective agreement or Board policy, the employee may be required to provide a health care professional's certificate when:
  - An employee is absent from the workplace due to illness or injury;
  - An employee's sick leave usage is above the average (as determined by the Board);
  - A suspect pattern of usage exists or is developing.
- Discretion will be used when seeking medical verification of an absence(s) and medical certificates will not be requested simply as a deterrent.
- The certificate should state clearly the expected date of return to work and/or reassessment and whether any limitations or restrictions apply. When requesting medical evidence, it is reasonable to request clarification from the physician verifying:
  - Whether the absence from work is medically required;
  - Whether restrictions exist;
  - Identification of specific capabilities and physical and/or psychological limitations to guide return to work decisions;
  - Whether treatments or medications have been prescribed that may affect the employee's ability to perform their required responsibilities;
  - Prognosis or expectation for recovery.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY:

- Medical evidence / information received will be treated in a confidential manner and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
- Medical evidence / information concerning employees will not be discussed or requested unless required in order to verify absence from work or to ensure the employee's capabilities and/or safety in carrying out his or her job duties.

#### EARLY INTERVENTION:

- Where an attendance concern has been identified, the immediate supervisor will commence early intervention in accordance with **Appendix 1 – Early Intervention Administrative Procedures** outlined in this guideline.

CULPABLE/BLAMEWORTHY ABSENTEEISM:

- Where early intervention does not produce improvement and the attendance problem is deemed to be CULPABLE/BLAMEWORTHY, the attendance problem will be managed in accordance with progressive discipline processes.

NON-CULPABLE/NON-BLAMEWORTHY ABSENTEEISM:

- Where early intervention does not produce improvement and the attendance concern is deemed to be NON-CULPABLE/NON-BLAMEWORTHY:
  - If there is no verification of disability as defined by *The Ontario Human Rights Code*, the attendance concern will be managed through providing reasonable assistance and support as determined by the specific circumstances of each case.
  - If there is a verification of a disability as defined by *The Ontario Human Rights Code*, the attendance concern will be managed through accommodation to the point of 'undue hardship'.

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT:

- Termination of employment will be considered **only** as a last resort. In assessing the option of termination, the facts of each case will be assessed in relation to applicable laws and regulations.

FURTHER REFERENCE:

APPENDIX 1 – Early Intervention Administrative Procedures

APPENDIX 2– Absence Reporting