

Topic:	Disability Management – Early Intervention, Accommodations and Return to Work
Effective:	June 2011
Cross-Reference:	Administrative Procedure – Confidentiality of Medical Records; Attendance Support Program; Attendance Management; and Absence Reporting
Review/Revision Date:	June 2013
Responsibility:	Executive Officer of Human Resources

INTENDED PURPOSE:

The Halton District School Board recognizes that both regular contact between the employer and the employee and involvement in early intervention planning increases the likelihood of a timely return to the workplace.

A Disability Management Program is a strategy to provide structure and organization to the activity of returning absent employees to the workplace as soon as possible after an incident/accident or illness.

The Halton District School Board's commitment to its Disability Management Program and Workplace Accommodation Program illustrate the Board's view that both programs create an integrated partnership among employees, Principals/Supervisors/Managers and healthcare providers.

PROCEDURES:1.0 Background

The Board's Disability Management Program is an integrated partnership among employees, Principals/Supervisors/Managers, unions, and healthcare providers that support employees to attend work, which benefits students. This program fosters a widespread understanding that the way to reduce the incidence and duration of an employee's absences is through early intervention and support.

2.0 Purpose of the Program

- i. The Disability Management Program provides employees with a safe and timely transition from illness/injury that allows them to remain at work or return to work;
- ii. When appropriate, the program assists employees by providing rehabilitation support, accommodations or modifications to remain at work, gradually return to work and/or modified work prior to commencement of regular full-time, part-time or occasional work; and
- iii. When a permanent disability exists, the Board will endeavor to modify both the work and the workplace to accommodate the needs of the employee with a permanent disability, based on medically supported restrictions/limitations, provided that it does not cause undue hardship to the Board.

3.0 Temporary Disability

3.1 Restrictions and Limitations:

An employee who becomes ill/injured is responsible for providing medical restrictions/limitations identified by the appropriate treating medical practitioner or specialist for assessment by the Disability Management Coordinator, WSIB Administrator, WSIB Assistant, or designate if it appears that an absence from work will result. The restrictions and limitations shall be shared with the Principal/Supervisor/Manager and, at the discretion of the employee, the union representative.

4.0 Permanent Partial Disability

4.1 An employee who becomes permanently disabled from an illness or injury, such that they are unable to meet the demands of their former position, may be provided with appropriate accommodations, modifications, and/or suitable work based on their physical, mental, and vocational capabilities.

4.2 The conditions for providing such work may be:

- i. The employee provides current medical restrictions and limitations from the appropriate treating medical practitioner and/or by submitting a Functional Abilities Evaluation (F.A.E.);
- ii. The Board will promote the retraining of injured employees as circumstances warrant;
- iii. Employees who have a permanent partial disability may be given preference for suitable job postings, subject to mutual agreement by the employer and the relevant union(s); and/or
- iv. Employees are accommodated on the basis of availability of positions, ability to perform the essential duties of the job, and terms and conditions as outlined by the relevant collective agreement, individual contract and/or relevant legislation.

5.0 Responsibilities of the Disability Management Coordinator, WSIB Administrator, WSIB Assistant, or Designate:

- i. On initial contact, informs the employee that should they desire, they may have a union representative attend any meetings.
- ii. Will contact the employee directly in one of two ways:
 - Phone to discuss the Board's Disability Management Program; and/or
 - Send a letter to the employee outlining the Board's Disability Management Program.
- iii. Work with employees to assess restrictions and/or limitations.
- iv. Co-ordinate the return to work of any employees with a disability with the employee, the appropriate treating medical practitioner, the Principal/Supervisor/Manager, and the union representative at the employee's discretion.
- v. When the employee requests the union representative's involvement, notify the appropriate union(s) of an employee's participation in the Disability Management Program.
- vi. Assess the employee's work capabilities in conjunction with medically supported restrictions and/or limitations provided by the appropriate treating medical practitioner(s).

- vii. Inform the employee's Principal/Supervisor/Manager and the HR Manager of the work restrictions/limitations and initiate the development of the Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan.
- viii. Perform a workplace assessment with the Principal/Supervisor/Manager to ensure compatibility of work restrictions and the duties to be performed within the work environment:
 - Co-ordinates the modification of the work or workplace, as needed, in conjunction with medically-supported restrictions/limitations;
 - Reviews proper body mechanics with the employee and provides instruction, as required; and/or
 - Assesses the need for change in location and/or assignment.
- ix. Co-ordinate the development of a Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan with the employee, the Principal/Supervisor/Manager, the appropriate treating medical practitioner(s), the employee's union representative, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, the LTD Insurance Carrier and the Human Resources Department, as appropriate.
- x. Distribute copies of the Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan to the above parties and the employee.
- xi. Maintain regular contact with the employee and his/her Principal/Supervisor/Manager for the duration of the Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan.
- xii. Maintain an ongoing assessment of the Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan.
- xiii. Arrange regular follow-up during the Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan to modify the plan, as required.

6.0 Responsibilities of the Principal/Supervisor/Manager:

- i. Participate in the development of the employee's Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan.
- ii. Modify the work or workplace, as outlined in the Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan.
- iii. Assign work or duties according to the employee's Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan.
- iv. Closely monitor the progress of the employee through the Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan and immediately report any problems or concerns to the Disability Management Coordinator, WSIB Administrator, WSIB Assistant, or designate.

7.0 Responsibilities of the Employee:

- i. Engage in medical rehabilitation and/or treatment that can be expected to facilitate a timely return to work.
- ii. Participate in the development of their Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan and recovery goals.
- iii. Maintain regular contact, as identified in the Disability Management Program, with the Disability Management Coordinator, WSIB Administrator, WSIB Assistant, or designate, to provide updates on status, changes in condition, and review progress through their Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan.
- iv. Must provide appropriate documentation as required by the Absence Reporting Administrative Procedure.

8.0 Development of Individualized Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan

8.1 Remain at Work or Return to Work:

- i. Identification of likely candidates for the Disability Management Program shall be made initially by the Disability Management Coordinator, WSIB Administrator, WSIB Assistant, or designate, based on information received from the appropriate treating medical practitioner and, when appropriate, representatives of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board and Long Term Disability (LTD) Insurance.
- ii. A Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan, in general, may include, but is not restricted to, some or all of the following:
 - Reduced work hours;
 - Modification of duties;
 - Workplace modifications;
 - Removal of physical barriers;
 - Volunteer work; and/or
 - Reassignment to another position if the employee has the necessary skills and abilities to perform the essential duties of that position.
- iii. The employee may be provided with an outline of the Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan to be given to the appropriate treating medical practitioner with an indication that modified work and/or accommodations are available. The outline may also include information regarding the employee's job description and physical demands analysis.
- iv. Modified work is provided within the employee's own school or service area, wherever possible.
- v. While participating in the Disability Management Program, the employee's status will be monitored by the Disability Management Coordinator, WSIB Administrator, WSIB Assistant, or designate, and the Principals/ Supervisor/ Manager, in consultation with the appropriate treating medical practitioner(s).
- vi. Ongoing reviews of the employee's Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan will be conducted with any necessary adjustments made to support the employee's success. The frequency of these reviews is established prior to the placement of an employee in the Program.
- vii. The Board will endeavor to modify both the work and the workplace to accommodate the needs of permanently disabled employees, provided that it does not cause undue hardship to the Board.
- viii. The Disability Management Coordinator, WSIB Administrator, WSIB Assistant, or designate and the employee will develop a Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan based on the supported limitations or restrictions. A copy of the Plan will be distributed to all parties, as well as the WSIB for WSIB claims. The initial meeting may include the employee's Principal/Supervisor/Manager and/or union representative. A written Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan may also be shared with the employee's appropriate treating medical practitioner, Principals/Supervisor/Manager, and/or union representative.
- ix. Any necessary changes to the work environment will take place prior to the employee's commencement of Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan.

- x. Should the employee not be able to participate in a Return-to-Work Plan, the employee and the Disability Management Coordinator, WSIB Administrator, WSIB Assistant, or designate, will maintain regular contact. Ongoing, updated documentation will be obtained to determine when participation in the Return-to-Work Plan will be feasible.
- xi. The employee may be required to participate in a Functional Abilities Evaluation and/or Independent Medical Evaluation, conducted by a third party, to determine limitations and/or restrictions and to assist in the development of an individualized Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan.
- xii. The Individualized Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan may include the following information:
 - Essential job duties/tasks;
 - Specific physical requirements;
 - Restrictions and limitations;
 - Work schedule;
 - Follow-up work assessment date(s) by the Appropriate Disability Management Coordinator, WSIB Administrator, WSIB Assistant, or designate;
 - A gradual resumption of duties assigned under the Disability Management Program;
 - A gradual increase in hours worked;
 - Expected date of completion of plan;
 - Signatures of employee, appropriate Disability Management Coordinator, WSIB Administrator, WSIB Assistant, or designate, Principals/Supervisor/Manager, appropriate treating medical practitioner(s), and/or union representative;
 - Next meeting date; and/or
 - Conditions for withdrawal of the individual from the Program.
- xiii. Regular follow-up meetings may occur during the Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan to ensure that the employee's needs are being met and to make any necessary changes to the modifications or accommodations should there be a change in the employee's restrictions or limitations.
- xiv. The employee continues to participate in their Remain-at-Work Plan or Return-to-Work Plan until they have reached Maximum Medical Recovery and are working at full capacity within any restrictions or limitations, including those that may be permanent in nature.