

Disability Management & Absence Support Program

Administrative Procedure

Status:	Active
Effective:	January 2012
Revision Date:	January 2026
Review Date:	January 2029
Responsibility:	Superintendent of Human Resources

Intended Purpose

It is the expectation of the Halton District School Board that each employee attends work regularly as scheduled and arrives on time. The Board recognizes, however, that employees may be unable to attend work due to personal illness or injury. The employer provides reasonable accommodations for employees who are medically unable to attend work, which may include supported sick leave, short-term disability leave days, and other reasonable workplace accommodations. This procedure outlines the process and expectations for the use of sick leave and short-term disability leave days, and the requirements for reporting absences from work. The Employee Health and Wellness Department will maintain the confidentiality of medical documents and information, in accordance with the *Confidentiality of Employee Medical Records* administrative procedure, for the purpose of this *Disability Management and Absence Support Program* administrative procedure.

Procedures:

1. Absences

- 1.1. An employee who is unable to attend work due to personal illness or injury must notify their immediate supervisor or designate immediately to allow for appropriate coverage. The employee is required to provide the reason for the absences in general terms (e.g., illness, injury, or other applicable leave) and is not required to disclose specific medical details.
- 1.2. Attendance on Professional Activity (PA) days, on days following and/or preceding holidays (e.g., winter break, March break, long weekends, etc.), and on days marked by significant events (e.g., an international sporting

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event, etc.) is expected. The employer may review absences on these specific days and/or attendance patterns, including those that have been booked in advance, and may request reasonable medical documentation to support the use of sick leave or short term disability leave days..

- 1.3. Where necessary and reasonable in the circumstances, the employer may request an employee to provide medical documentation to support an absence. When medical documentation is requested by the employer, the employer will cover the cost associated with obtaining the documentation upon submission of an original invoice.
- 1.4. Employees are required to enter absences in the Board's Absence Management system to allow for necessary coverage. The correct absence code and project code, if applicable, must be entered to accurately classify the absence. For additional information, refer to the Absence Reporting Administrative Procedure.
- 1.5. When an employee is aware they are going to be absent for more than ten (10) consecutive working days for the purpose of this Disability Management and Support Program, the employee must notify their immediate supervisor or designate as soon as possible. The employee will indicate the reason for the absence, in general terms (e.g., due to accident, illness, contractual, etc.).
- 1.6. The immediate supervisor or designate shall remind the employee of their responsibility to submit an Abilities Form (see section 1.9) directly to the Employee Health and Wellness Department, as required, to support early intervention and to facilitate a safe and timely return to work.
- 1.7. The immediate supervisor or designate must forward all medical documentation received directly to Employee Health and Wellness Department, Human Resources. The immediate supervisor should advise the employee that all medical documentation should be submitted directly to Employee Health and Wellness.
- 1.8. A member of the Employee Health and Wellness Department or designate may request that the employee provide documentation completed by the

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appropriate treating medical practitioner, which may include the following information:

- 1.8.1. A completed Abilities Form, Surgery Form or Pregnancy Form outlining objective, medically-supported restrictions and/or limitations in relation to the essential duties of the employee's position;
- 1.8.2. Confirmation that the employee is participating in appropriate treatment to support a safe and timely return to work;
- 1.8.3. The anticipated date the employee may be able to participate in the Individual Work Accommodation (Medical) process;
- 1.8.4. The anticipated return-to-work date with or without accommodation and any additional information required to support a safe and timely return to work;
- 1.8.5. The treating medical practitioner's name, address, phone number and fax number; and/or
- 1.8.6. The treating medical practitioner's signature and office stamp.
- 1.9. Unless otherwise arranged, requested medical documentation must be submitted to the Employee Health and Wellness Department (via fax or hdsbmedicals@hdsb.ca) by the designated due date. If the employee is experiencing difficulty obtaining the appropriate documentation within this timeframe, the employee will discuss the matter directly with a member of the Employee Health and Wellness Department.
- 1.10. The employer will exercise discretion on a case-by-case basis in determining whether to request an Abilities Form, in accordance with section 1.9 of this Administrative Procedure.
- 1.11. If the immediate supervisor or designate requests medical documentation for any absence less than ten (10) consecutive days, they will consult with the respective Human Resources Manager prior to requesting the documentation. If medical documentation is requested by the supervisor, the medical documentation will be submitted directly to Employee Health and Wellness.

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- 1.12. Should the absence exceed ten (10) consecutive working days, the employee is responsible for submitting sufficient medical documentation/Abilities Form to Employee Health and Wellness on day eleven (11) of the absence.

2. Sick Leave and Short-Term Disability Days

- 2.1. An employee may access sick leave or short-term disability leave days for their own personal injury, illness, or disability, provided they have unused sick leave or short term disability leave days available. For the purpose of this procedure, “disability” is a state of incapacity that prevents the employee from performing their work for remuneration. Access to sick leave or short-term disability leave days is limited to the employee’s own incapacity to work.
- 2.2. The employer encourages employees to schedule preventative medical and dental appointments outside of regular working hours. However, if the appointment cannot reasonably be scheduled outside of the employee’s regular working hours, then the employee may access their sick leave or short-term disability leave days to attend the appointment.

3. Sick Leave and Short-Term Disability Days are not payable

- 3.1. Sick leave and short-term disability days are not payable in the following circumstances:
 - 3.1.1. Where the absence is compensable under the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board,
 - 3.1.2. For 12-month employees during scheduled vacation unless the illness requires hospitalization;
 - 3.1.3. Sick leave or short-term disability days may not be used in place of vacation or lieu days, or to attend personal matters. Absences to care for a dependent who is ill or injured may be covered under the Employment Standards Act or the employee’s Collective Agreement/Terms and Conditions of Employment.
 - 3.1.4. When an employee is on an authorized unpaid leave of absence;

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- 3.1.5. When an employee does not have available sick leave days or short-term disability leave days
 - 3.1.6. While in receipt of full Long-Term Disability Benefits;
 - 3.1.7. When sufficient medical documentation, as required by the Board, has been requested but not received, or if the employee refuses to provide sufficient medical documentation, the employer may take appropriate disciplinary action; or
 - 3.1.8. When a suitable and reasonable offer of accommodation has been provided by the Board and refused by the employee.
- 3.2. To be eligible for sick leave or short-term disability leave days, an employee must follow the employer's procedures for reporting absences due to their own personal illness or injury and for returning to work.
- 3.3. The employer will endeavour to accommodate the return to work and placement of employees with a temporary, permanent, and/or partial disability, in accordance with the Individual Work Accommodation (Medical) administrative procedure, as well as any applicable statutory obligations.
- 3.4. Access to sick leave or short-term disability leave days may be denied if the employee fails to provide the requested medical documentation. "Appropriate medical documentation" includes, but is not limited to, medically supported restrictions and/or limitations as they relate to the employee's ability to perform the essential duties of their position and confirmation of participation in active and appropriate treatment. It is the employee's responsibility to submit required documentation to the Employee Health and Wellness Department.
- 3.5. To maintain access to sick leave or short-term disability leave days, a member of the Employee Health and Wellness Department or designate may request that the employee to attend a Functional Abilities Evaluation (FAE), completed to determine restrictions and/or limitations related to the employee's position, a doctor-to-doctor consultation, and/or an Independent Medical Examination (IME). These assessments assist in

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supporting the identification of return-to-work and/or accommodation options. When an IME is requested, the following protocol will apply:

- 3.5.1. If a member of the Employee Health and Wellness Department or designate reasonably requires medical information to determine whether an employee is able to return to work or should remain off of work, a member of the Employee Health and Wellness Department or designate shall advise the employee in writing and request that such information be provided;
- 3.5.2. The employee is required to provide the requested consent forms to a member of the Employee Health and Wellness Department in response to the request;
- 3.5.3. A member of the Employee Health and Wellness Department will review the documentation provided by the employee. If documentation is deemed insufficient, the member of the Employee Health and Wellness Department will provide the employee with a written explanation specifying why the information is insufficient;
- 3.5.4. The employee will be given an opportunity to provide the member of the Employee Health and Wellness Department or designate with further medical information;
- 3.5.5. The member of the Employee Health and Wellness Department will review any additional documentation provided by the employee. If the medical documentation in its entirety, does not reasonably allow the member of the Employee Health and Wellness Department to determine whether the employee should return to work or remain off of work, the employee may be requested to attend an IME and/or FAE; and
- 3.5.6. If the employee fails to attend the IME and/or FAE or does not, prior to the IME and/or FAE, provide the member of the Employee Health and Wellness Department with additional sufficient medical information to r to determine whether the employee should return

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to work or remain off of work, the employee's access to sick leave or short-term disability leave days may be discontinued.

4. Responsibilities

4.1. Employee:

- 4.1.1. Report absences in the Board's Absence Management system, unless the employee is incapacitated and unable to do so. Failure to report absences at the first opportunity, in accordance with these procedures, may result in denial of pay sick leave or short-term disability leave days
- 4.1.2. Indicate, in general terms, the reason for the absence, i.e. due to accident, illness, contractual, etc.
- 4.1.3. Employees must notify their immediate supervisor or designate of all absences by phone or email. The immediate supervisor will determine the appropriate direct contact for reporting absences. Unless previously arranged with the supervisor, the employee must report each day of the absence by phone or email.
- 4.1.4. When medical documentation is provided by the employee to obtain a leave and/or workplace accommodations, the employee is to assume responsibility for the costs associated with the initial documentation from the appropriate treating medical practitioner. (Refer to section 1.9 above for appropriate medical forms for medical leave). Costs associated with any subsequent request(s) for medical documentation by a member of the Employee Health and Wellness Department or designate, will be borne by the employer, upon submission of an original invoice in accordance with current Board-approved procedures for Travel and Expense Procedures.
- 4.1.5. To be eligible for sick leave or short-term disability leave days, employees may be required to provide sufficient medical documentation completed by the appropriate treating medical practitioner, in accordance with section 1.9 of this procedure.

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- 4.1.6. Employees are expected to maintain regular contact with their immediate supervisor during their absence if they are unable to perform the essential duties of their position due to illness, injury, or disability.
- 4.1.7. Participate in appropriate treatment, as determined by the treating medical practitioner(s), to support a safe and timely return to work.
- 4.1.8. Participate and cooperate in the development of their return-to-work plan.

- 4.2. Immediate Supervisor:
 - 4.2.1. Communicate and support the Disability & Attendance Support Program and Individual Work Accommodation (Medical) procedures and guidelines to the employee.
 - 4.2.2. Ensure the daily maintenance of accurate, up-to-date records regarding employees' absences as designated by Human Resources.
 - 4.2.3. Review individual employee absenteeism records Receive call-ins or return employees' communication, as necessary, , and determine the reason for absence.
 - 4.2.4. Ensure employee confidentiality in relation to absences and medical information.
 - 4.2.5. Consult with a member of Employee Health and Wellness Department or designate to determine whether support or accommodation may be required where there are indicators that an employee's attendance, performance, or behaviour may be impacted by a medical condition or disability.
 - 4.2.6. Forward all medical documentation, if received, directly to the Employee Health and Wellness Department in a secure and confidential manner.
 - 4.2.7. Advise employees of their obligation to provide sufficient medical documentation , as required, to confirm disability and support the continued payment of sick leave or short-term disability leave days.

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- 4.2.8. Participate in the development of the employee's return-to-work plan, including workplace accommodations and/or modifications to the employee's duties and/or hours, based on recommendations from a member of the Employee Health and Wellness Department.
- 4.3. Abilities Specialist:
 - 4.3.1. Request sufficient medical documentation from the employee for absences exceeding ten (10) consecutive working days, at reasonable intervals, to maintain sick leave or short-term disability leave days, or determine if participation in a return-to-work plan or Individual Work Accommodation (Medical) is appropriate.
 - 4.3.2. Review all medical documentation as provided and/or requested and provide appropriate support to the employee during their time of disability.
 - 4.3.3. Assist the immediate supervisor by maintaining contact with employees who have a disability lasting more than ten (10) consecutive working days, verifying that the employee is under the active care of the appropriate medical practitioner and following an appropriate treatment plan. Advise the immediate supervisor of the expected return-to-work date, when known and/or the anticipated duration of the absence.
 - 4.3.4. Develop an appropriate return-to-work plan, including recommendations for accommodations and/or temporary or permanent modification recommendations based on the employee's restrictions and/or limitations.
- 4.4. Superintendent of Human Resources:
 - 4.4.1. It is the responsibility of the Superintendent of Human Resources to administer this procedure and program guidelines.
 - 4.4.2. The Superintendent of Human Resources shall review this procedure on a regular basis or as required by legislative change.

5. Other

- 5.1. For further direction beyond this procedure, refer to the Individual Work Accommodation (Medical) Procedure.
- 5.2. Refer to specific Collective Agreement language regarding sick day access and appropriate medical forms to be used, if applicable.

Cross-Reference:

Legislation

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Personal Health Information Protection Act
Human Rights Code

Board Policies, Procedures & Protocols

Attendance Support Program
Disability Management and Support
Individual Work Accommodation
Privacy and Information Management
Principal/Vice-Principal Short Term Disability Benefit (STDB) Adjudication

Revision History

- January 2026 (Updates to language and formatting. No significant content changes)
- September 2023 (format change along with revisions to align with best practices and legislation)
- January 2026 (Format changes and language updates to align with best practices and legislation)