

Attendance Support Program

Administrative Procedure

Topic:	Attendance Support Program
Status:	Active
Effective:	January 2012
Revision Date:	October 2024
Review Date:	October 2026
Responsibility:	Superintendent of Human Resources

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 regularly, which has a direct impact on student achievement. Attendance Support is an early intervention program designed to assist employees who are struggling to maintain regular attendance at work. The intent of the Attendance Support process intends to provide non-disciplinary and supportive assistance to Halton District School Board employees who exceed the established absence threshold.

This Attendance Support Program Administrative Procedure applies to all permanent staff employed by the Halton District School Board and 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:

- 1.1. *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 (ASP).

Attendance Support Program

Administrative Procedure

- 1.2. *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 Support Program, as they are beyond the scope of this administrative procedure.

2. Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)

- 2.1. 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. Absence Threshold

- 3.1. The absence threshold is the established number of absences to initiate entry into the ASP. The threshold is a reasonable number that is based on empirical data.
- 3.2. When an employee's absences exceed the absence threshold, the Principal/Supervisor/Manager and/or designate from the 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.
- 3.3. The employer should review the absence threshold as determined, but no later than two years with the exception of when the employee has had nonmedical leaves during this time. Employees shall be

Attendance Support Program

Administrative Procedure

notified of threshold changes. The threshold is used as a mechanism to initiate non-disciplinary and supportive early intervention.

- 3.4. The attendance support process will be initiated when an employee's absences have exceeded the threshold.

4. Absences that the Attendance Support Program may include

- 4.1. 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 and/or supported in the employer's Disability Management and Support Program.
- 4.2. Medical/Dental appointments; and/or
- 4.3. WSIB declined claim-related absences and/or the employee is not participating in the employer's Disability Management Program.
- 4.4. 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 Support Program

- 5.1. Vacation
- 5.2. Culpable absences (refer to 1.b of this administrative procedure)
- 5.3. Family Medical leaves, Emergency leaves and any other leaves as defined by the Employment Standards Act
- 5.4. Pre-approved prolonged leave of absence
- 5.5. Pre-approved Personal Business Days and Family Emergency Days
- 5.6. Pre-approved Compassionate leaves of absences
- 5.7. Bereavement leave
- 5.8. Jury or subpoena leave
- 5.9. Pregnancy/parental leave
- 5.10. Union business leave
- 5.11. Examinations and convocations

Attendance Support Program

Administrative Procedure

- 5.12. Quarantine
 - 5.13. Observance of recognized religious holy/creed days
 - 5.14. Approved Inclement weather day
 - 5.15. Suspensions
 - 5.16. Approved Long Term Disability claims
 - 5.17. Specialist appointments (3+ may require clarification, e.g. questionnaire, sufficient medical documentation)
 - 5.18. WSIB approved absences
 - 5.19. Absences due to disability as approved by Employee Health and Wellness
 - 5.20. 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 support process. At the employee's request, the union representative may attend any meeting(s) to discuss or review the employee's attendance.

Attendance Support Process

7. The attendance support 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.
- 7.1. The *initial communication* will be posted on conference forums for all employees. This communication provides a reminder every three months i.e. January/May/September 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.

Attendance Support Program

Administrative Procedure

- 7.2. 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 the opportunity to contact an Employee Health and Wellness member 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 ninety (90) working days. Should the employee not respond to the communication within five (5) working days, it will be understood that the absences are correct and attendance goals are identified for the next ninety (90) working days (Reference: *Absence Reporting Admin Procedure*)
- 7.3. *Coaching Level 1* consists of a letter that includes the employee, the Principal / Supervisor/Manager, and an Employee Health and Wellness member. The employee may enter into Level 1 as he/she/they has been unable to meet the attendance goals established in the preliminary meeting or the prorated threshold is exceeded during the preliminary meeting review. Attendance goals will be set with the employee that will apply for the next ninety (90) working days. Support will continue to be offered to the employee.
- 7.4. *Coaching Level 2* consists of a meeting that includes the employee, Principal / Supervisor/Manager, and an Employee Health and Wellness member. The employee may enter into Level 2 as she/he/they 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 ninety (90) working days. Support will continue to be offered to the employee.

Attendance Support Program

Administrative Procedure

- 7.5. *Coaching Level 3* consists of a meeting that includes the employee, Principal / Supervisor/Manager, an Employee Health and Wellness member, and the appropriate Manager of Human Resources. The employee may enter into Level 3 as she/he/they has been unable to meet the attendance goals established in Level 2 or has exceeded the prorated threshold during the Level 2 review period. Attendance goals will again be set with the employee that will apply for the next ninety (90) working days. Alternative options may be discussed at this time to meet the employee's needs 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. Support will continue to be offered to the employee.
- 7.6. *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 the Superintendent of Human Resources or designate. The employee may enter into Level 4 as she/he/they has been unable to meet the attendance goals established in Level 3 or have exceeded the prorated threshold during the Level 3 review period. Alternative options may be discussed at this time to meet the employee's needs and their ability to attend work as scheduled. The employee may be advised that failure to meet the attendance goals in Coaching Level 4 may result in termination of employment. Discussion for alternative options may occur. Support will continue to be offered to the employee.

Attendance Support Program

Administrative Procedure

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, an Employee Health and Wellness member will continue to monitor their absences.
 - 8.1. Employees who do not exceed the threshold in the twelve (12) month review period will exit from the ASP.
 - 8.2. Employees who exceed the threshold during the twelve (12) month review period will continue in the ASP 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 twelve (12) review period.
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 and or accommodation 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.

Attendance Support Program

Administrative Procedure

12. Responsibilities

12.1. Employee:

- 12.1.1. Maintain good health
- 12.1.2. Maintain regular attendance at work as scheduled
- 12.1.3. Participate actively in all levels of the attendance support process
- 12.1.4. Actively participate in treatment plans as recommended by qualified registered Healthcare professional to achieve optimal recovery
- 12.1.5. Cooperate in setting personal attendance goals
- 12.1.6. Contact her/his/their union representative if the employee wishes them to be involved
- 12.1.7. Provide any appropriate documentation, during any level of the process in accordance with the Disability Management and Support Program and the Individual Work Accommodation (Medical) Administrative Procedures

12.2. Principal/Supervisor/Manager:

- 12.2.1. Communicate attendance expectations to all employees through an annual review of the Attendance Support Program
- 12.2.2. Review absence reports for staff
- 12.2.3. Demonstrate support for the intent of the Attendance Support Program to all staff
- 12.2.4. Identify absenteeism trends or patterns, such as the following:
 - 12.2.4.1. Frequent absences of short duration
 - 12.2.4.2. Absences of five (5) consecutive scheduled work days
 - 12.2.4.3. Absences due to doctor appointments or schedule treatment
 - 12.2.4.4. Absences due to workplace injury and / or illness

Attendance Support Program

Administrative Procedure

- 12.2.4.5. Unauthorized absences
- 12.2.4.6. A pattern of repeated days of absence taken in proximity to weekends, natural breaks, and / or holidays
- 12.2.4.7. Absenteeism in excess of the established absence threshold
- 12.2.5. Address concerns related to absenteeism by engaging in discussions with the employee. Support and consistent discretion should be applied throughout the process. If necessary and/or if the employee states medical reasons for absenteeism, seek additional support and interventions from a member of Employee Health and Wellness
- 12.2.6. Attend and support attendance support meetings
- 12.2.7. Support employees and act as a resource as necessary
- 12.2.8. Advise employees of available resources (e. g., EFAP)
- 12.2.9. Participate in all meetings and provide input into the development of individualized attendance goals for each employee involved in the process
- 12.2.10. Support and assist at any level in the attendance support process
- 12.2.11. Provide positive reinforcement to employees who reach their attendance goals
- 12.3. Employee Health and Wellness:
 - 12.3.1. Support Principal/Supervisor/Manager in addressing absenteeism issues
 - 12.3.2. Serve as a resource to employees and Principal/Supervisor/Manager
 - 12.3.3. Assist in identifying employees who exceed the absence threshold

Attendance Support Program

Administrative Procedure

- 12.3.4. Advise employees of resources available to them
- 12.3.5. Facilitate and assist with meetings in the attendance support process
- 12.3.6. Assist in the development of individualized goals at the conclusion of each meeting, taking into account all circumstances identified during each meeting
- 12.3.7. 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 of HR or designate:
 - 12.4.1. Provide support and act as a resource to all aspects of the attendance support process
 - 12.4.2. 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

Attendance Support Program

Administrative Procedure

Cross-Reference:

Legislation

Ontario Human Rights Code

Ministry Policy & Program Memoranda

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 171-Attendance Support Programs (ASP)

Board Policies, Procedures & Protocols

Absence Reporting

Confidentiality of Medical Records

Disability Management Support Program

Individual Work Accommodation (Medical)

Occupational Health and Safety

Privacy and Information Management

Progressive Discipline

Revision History

- October 2024
 - Updates to terminology and additional guidance regarding employee-employer discussions.