

## ATTENDANCE SUPPORT

H.M.06

## POLICY

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board (HWCDsB) is committed to promoting and maintaining high standards of attendance in order to provide a safe and healthy environment for both staff and students. The HWCDsB believes that individual and organizational health are important factors affecting the ability of all employees to attend work and to contribute to our collective mission.

**The Attendance Support Policy** is intended for the purpose of providing a supportive approach in addressing attendance issues. Absenteeism occurs when employees do not attend work when they are scheduled to do so. Absences are normally unscheduled and often occur for reasons that are outside the control of the employee. This absenteeism is referred to as “innocent absenteeism”.

The Attendance Support **Policy** is designed to address “innocent absenteeism” by providing the employee with the assistance so that an acceptable level of attendance is achieved. The Attendance Support **Policy does not** affect existing benefits accorded under the various collective agreements and terms and conditions documents. Instead it reinforces that sick leave is to be used only for the purpose for which it was intended i.e. providing wage loss replacement in the event of personal illness or personal injury. Sick leave is not an entitlement and shall not be used without limitation to attend to personal affairs, family matters, emergencies or for other non-legitimate reasons. These situations may be covered through specific provisions of collective agreements or terms and condition agreements or through other relevant employment legislation i.e. *Employment Standards Act*.

This program contrasts with the process to deal with “blameworthy” absenteeism, which will be addressed through the Board’s Progressive Disciplinary measures.

The purpose of the Attendance Support Procedures is to support the Board’s mission to enable all learners to realize the fullness of humanity of which our Lord Jesus Christ is the model through the promotion of positive levels of employee performance and attendance.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Innocent Absenteeism:** Also referred to as blameless absenteeism. Absences incurred by an employee as a result of circumstances beyond their control, *example:* illness or injury.

**Blameworthy Absenteeism:** Absences for which the employee should be held responsible because they are within their control, *example:* Lateness/leave early, failure to notify, absent without leave, abuse of leave. This issue is addressed through the Progressive Disciplinary Procedures.

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REGULATIONS**Employment Standards Act (2000)****Ontario Human Rights Code R.S.O. 1990****The Workplace Safety and Insurance Act (1997)****Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA)(2004)**PROCEDURES

The procedures are intended:

- To provide support to employees who are absent from work due to reasons beyond their control so that they are enabled to attend work regularly.
- To provide encouragement and assistance on an individual basis through coaching to achieve this objective.
- To address employee attendance and outline the responsibility of management staff and employees to ensure high levels of performance.
- To reinforce the importance of good attendance.
- To develop Board wide attendance support practices that are consistently and equitably applied across the organization.
- To reduce overall absences of staff in the Board.
- To allow the Board to meet its legal obligations under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and *The Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*.

**Medical Information**

Health/medical information is among the most sensitive information that employees provide to the Board and it shall be treated with the utmost respect. The Board acknowledges and shall strictly adhere to the legislation pertaining to personal information under the *Personal Health Information Protection Act*.

Medical information is required for several reasons:

- To provide the Human Resource Department with the necessary information to ensure that appropriate accommodation strategies can be explored and to ensure compliance with the Human Rights and Workplace Safety Insurance legislation.
- To medically verify absences as outlined in the respective collective agreements or terms and condition documents.

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## Medical Information cont'd

- To verify that the employee is sick or fit to return to work.
- To staff and replace personnel appropriately.

Where an absence exceeds five (5) consecutive working days, a medical certificate will be required. Human Resources may also request the completion of a Functional Abilities Form from the employee's treating physician outlining a prognosis, restrictions, necessary accommodations and an expected return to work date. Notwithstanding this practice, the Administration may request medical information at any time to substantiate an absence. Paid sick leave may not be authorized unless a certificate from a recognized physician or licensed medical care provider is forwarded to the Board. Any information provided by the employee relating to explanations for the absence will be shared among the Attendance Support Team members only, to provide return to work guidelines and capability to perform work.

General Roles and ResponsibilitiesEmployee

1. Every employee shall attend to all scheduled hours of work and shall perform his/her duties adequately and safely.
2. Shall follow proper safety rules and procedures by practicing accident prevention, both on and off the job.
3. Shall report their absence(s) when they are unable to attend work, as soon as possible by following the established protocol for their respective employee group.
4. Shall also notify his/her Principal/Supervisor about the absence.
  - If an absence extends beyond the anticipated duration as noted on the first day absent, the employee shall inform his/her Principal/Supervisor or report according to the normal reporting procedures i.e. **SFE. (Smart Find Express)**
  - If an absence exceeds 5 consecutive working days medical information will be required for the purpose of determining and identifying appropriate accommodation strategies. This may require the completion of a Functional Abilities Form. Medical certificates should be provided directly to the Administrative Assistant, Human Resources.
  - Further medical documentation will be required for long-term absences due to illness.

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- It is the responsibility of the employee, when absent from work, to maintain contact with his/her Principal/Supervisor and the Administrative Assistant, Human Resources.
5. Shall cooperate with the Human Resources Departments request for information regarding their specific limitations and restrictions, which shall be provided through their treating physician so that an accommodation plan that is suitable can be established.
  6. Shall at various stages of the Attendance Support Procedures participate in setting desired attendance targets that are realistic and attainable.
  7. May involve their union or employee representative at any point in the Attendance Support procedure.
  8. Shall attend to personal affairs and obligations outside their scheduled working hours. Employees should make every effort to schedule medical appointments and other personal business outside of the workday, where possible.

Human Resources

Human Resources shall be responsible for the following:

1. To monitor and report regularly on attendance.
2. To provide information to Employees and their respective union or employee group representatives about excessive absenteeism and or any recurring attendance patterns and advise on expectations.
3. To provide coaching sessions to the employee to encourage and advise on resources available to them.
4. To establish accommodation strategies based on medical information, which are applicable and appropriate under the circumstances.
5. To provide guidance and support so that the employee may improve attendance.
6. To establish attendance targets at the various stages of the Attendance Support Procedures in consultation with the employee and their union representative(s) based on individualized circumstances.
7. To monitor the consistent application of the Attendance Support Procedures.

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8. To meet with employees to discuss the effects of absenteeism on daily operations and co-workers
9. To provide an opportunity to the employee for improvement of absences through the use of the employee assistance program and/or coaching sessions.
10. To maintain appropriate documentation of the discussions throughout the Attendance Support Procedures.

Definitions of terms utilized in this document are found in Appendix A.

BM 4 March 08, 05 Mar 13

RELATED BY-LAW(S): **7.03**

RELATED BOARD COMMITTEE: Committee of the Whole

POLICY REVIEW DATE: **Five (5) years**