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1. General

Lakehead Public Schools is committed to creating and maintaining a respectful, healthy work environment for all employees. This Attendance Support Program Procedure intends to provide supportive and non-disciplinary assistance to Lakehead District School Board employees who exceed the established absence threshold.

When an employee's absences exceed the established absence threshold the 7045 Attendance Support Program Procedures apply. Should a medically supported disability be identified that requires support or accommodation at any time during the process, the employer will support the employee's transition into the Disability Management Program. Sporadic absences may continue to be considered within the Attendance Support Program.

2. Definitions

2.1 Absenteeism

- Non-Culpable (Innocent) Absenteeism relates to absences as a result of illness or injury that arise due to circumstances beyond the employee's control. These absences are not dealt with through a progressive discipline model; instead the employee is supported through the Attendance Support Program.
- Culpable Absenteeism relates 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 established practice. These absences are not dealt with through the Attendance Support Program as they are beyond the scope of this administrative practice.

2.2 Absences under the Attendance Support Program may include:

- Personal illness or injury (non-occupational); and
- Personal medical/dental appointments that cannot reasonably be scheduled outside of work hours.

2.3 Absences that are not included in the Attendance Support Program:

- Vacation or lieu time;
- Family medical leaves as defined by the Employment Standards Act;
- Bereavement leave;
- Pre-approved compassionate leave;
- Pre-approved prolonged leaves of absence;
- Jury or subpoena leave;
- Pregnancy/parental leave;
- Union business leave;
- Examinations and convocations;

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- Quarantine;
- Observance of recognized religious holy days;
- Inclement weather day;
- Suspensions;
- Approved Long Term Disability claims;
- WSIB approved absences;
- Pre-approved paid or unpaid personal leaves; and
- Emergency leaves under the Employment Standards Act not due to personal illness/injury.

2.4 Absence threshold

Absence threshold is the established number of absences to initiate possible entry into the Attendance Support Program. The threshold is a reasonable number based on empirical data and is used as a mechanism to initiate non-disciplinary and supportive intervention. When an employee's absences exceed the absence threshold within a rolling 12-month working period, the Attendance Support process will be initiated having regard for the personal circumstances of the employee. The employer will review the absence threshold every two years. Employees will be notified of any change.

2.5 Supervisor shall mean CEO, Superintendent, Principal, Vice Principal, Manager or Supervisor in accordance with the Ontario Labour Relations Act.

2.6 Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) is the Lakehead Public Schools confidential employee and family support program. Services include professional support and resources that are intended to assist employees with a wide range of personal problems and challenges.

2.7 The employer reserves the right to consider the termination of an employee for continuous, non-culpable absenteeism on a non-disciplinary basis.

3. Process

3.1 Entry into any level of the multi-level process is applied consistently to all employees using discretion based on their personal circumstances. The goals that are set within any level are specific and unique to each employee's circumstances.

3.2 At the employee's request, a union, association, or support representative may attend any meetings that occur to discuss or review the employee's attendance.

3.3 The attendance support process includes five (5) distinct components:

3.3.1 The Preliminary Letter via email will be sent by the Human Resources Officer (HRO) to each employee that exceeds the Board's established threshold. The purpose of the letter is to confirm the employee's absence level, offer available workplace supports, and confirm the attendance goal for the next 90 working days. The employee will be offered the opportunity to meet with their Supervisor to

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address any errors in the absence record, offer clarity regarding any issue(s) that may be preventing the employee from regularly attending work, and/or discuss the established attendance goal.

- 3.3.2 Coaching Level 1 Meeting occurs between the employee and the Supervisor. The employee may enter Level 1 because they have been unable to meet the attendance goals established in the Preliminary Meeting or the absence threshold is exceeded during the 12-working month review period. Attendance goals will be set with the employee that will apply for the next 90 working days.
- 3.3.3 Coaching Level 2 Meeting occurs between the employee and the Supervisor. The employee may enter Level 2 because they have been unable to meet the attendance goals established in Level 1 or the absence threshold is exceeded during the 12-working month review period. Attendance goals will again be set with the employee that will apply for the next 90 working days.
- 3.3.4 Coaching Level 3 Meeting includes the employee, Supervisor, and the appropriate Human Resources personnel. The employee may enter Level 3 because they have been unable to meet the attendance goals established in Level 2 or the absence threshold is exceeded during the 12-working month review period. Attendance goals will again be set with the employee that will apply for the next 90 working days. The employee will be advised that failure to meet the attendance goals set in Coaching Level 3 may advance the employee to Coaching Level 4, and that termination of employment due to non-culpable absenteeism may be a potential outcome.
- 3.3.5 Coaching Level 4 Meeting that includes the employee, Supervisor, appropriate Human Resources personnel, and Superintendent. The employee may enter Level 4 because they have been unable to meet the attendance goals established in Level 3 or the absence threshold is exceeded during the 12-working month review period (see 2.4). Where the employee progresses to Level 4 and the Board determines that:
- (a) it has fulfilled its obligations under the applicable collective agreement and/or policies and procedures, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, Ontario Human Rights Code, and any other applicable legislation; and,
 - (b) the employee's absenteeism is excessive and there is no reasonable likelihood that the employee will be able to attend work regularly in the foreseeable future; the employee may be advised that their employment is being terminated on a non-disciplinary basis.

- 3.4 When attendance goals have been met within a coaching level, the employee enters a review period of twelve (12) working months where their absences are monitored by the appropriate Human Resources personnel.

- 3.4.1 Employees who do not exceed the absence threshold in the 12-working month review period will exit from the Attendance Support Program.
- 3.4.2 Employees who exceed the absence threshold during the twelve (12) month

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review period will continue in the Attendance Support Program. The employee may be invited to attend a meeting at the same, or next, Coaching Level of the Program.

4. Employee Responsibilities

- Maintain regular attendance;
- Participate actively in all levels of the Attendance Support process;
- Cooperate in setting personal attendance goals;
- Contact their union representative if the employee wishes them to be involved; and
- Provide any appropriate documentation, during any level of the process in accordance with points 3 and 4 of the Employee Absence Reporting Practice.

5. Supervisor Responsibilities

- 5.1 Communicate attendance expectations to all employees through an annual review of the Attendance Support Program.
- 5.2 Review absence reports for staff.
- 5.3 Identify absence trends or patterns, such as the following:
 - frequent absences of short duration;
 - absences of more than five consecutive (5) days;
 - absences due to doctor appointments or scheduled treatment;
 - absences due to workplace injury and/or illness;
 - a pattern of repeated days of absence taken in proximity to weekends; and
 - absences in excess of the established absence threshold.
- 5.4 Address all absence issues using discretion and seek support from Human Resources.
- 5.5 Conduct Preliminary Level meeting when one is requested by the employee and facilitate Coaching Level meetings and development of individualized attendance goals for the employee.
- 5.6 Support employees and act as a resource.
- 5.7 Advise employees of available resources (i.e. EFAP).
- 5.8 Provide a written outcome of all Preliminary and Coaching Level meetings to the employee with copy to the appropriate Human Resources personnel.
- 5.9 Provide positive reinforcement to employees who reach their attendance goals.

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6. Human Resources Officer Responsibilities

- 6.1 Review absence reports for Staff.
- 6.2 Send Preliminary Letter/Email to identified employees.
- 6.3 Support Supervisors in addressing absence issues.
- 6.4 Serve as a resource to employees and Supervisors.
- 6.5 Assist to identify employees who exceed the absence threshold.
- 6.6 Advise employees of resources available to them.
- 6.7 Participate with Supervisor in meetings at Coaching Levels 3 and 4.

7. Disability Management Officer (DMO) Responsibilities

- 7.1 Generate monthly absence reports to identify employees who exceed either the Board's established absence threshold or their individual attendance goals as determined within each level of the Attendance Support Program.
- 7.2 Notify the appropriate HRO and/or Supervisor of employees that require either the Preliminary Letter/Email or a Coaching Level meeting.
- 7.3 Provide resources to Supervisor for Preliminary and Coaching Levels 1 to 4 meetings. Compile and manage documentation of all meetings with employees.
- 7.4 Support Supervisors in addressing absence issues.
- 7.5 Serve as a resource to employees and Supervisors.

8. Superintendent Responsibilities

- 8.1 Provide support and act as a resource for all aspects of the attendance support process.
- 8.2 In conjunction with Supervisors and Human Resources, review cases of employees who have not met attendance goals following the completion of all levels to determine ongoing employability.
- 8.3 Participate in Coaching Level 4 Meetings.
- 8.4 Provide Attendance Support Program oversight to ensure required meetings are conducted in a supportive and timely.

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