



# Northeastern Catholic District School Board

## ABSENCE REPORTING:

### Illness or Injury

Administrative Procedure Number: APP013-1

## POLICY STATEMENT

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The Northeastern Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) is committed to creating and maintaining a healthy workplace. As a witness to God's healing activity in the world, the Board is called to act out of a deepened sense of responsibility for the health and wellness of its employees. The Board believes that both individual and organizational health are important factors affecting the ability of all employees to attend work and to contribute fully to its mission. This strategy combines both prevention and intervention to achieve the goals of personal and workplace wellness.

In order to carry out the NCDSB's mandate, regular attendance by all employees is essential. The Employee Support Program is a comprehensive program aimed at positively supporting the health of employees and the organization. The Employee Support Program will be supported by Disability Support, Attendance Support, and Wellness Programs.

## REFERENCES

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*Education Act*

*Ontario Human Rights Code*

*Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*

*Employment Standards Act*

*Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*

NCDSB Policy

E-24 Personal Information Management

P-13 Employee Support Program

NCDSB Administrative Procedures

APH001 Reporting of Workplace Injury/Illness

APP013-2 Confidentiality of Medical Records

APP013-3 Disability Support: Early Intervention, Accommodations, and Return to Work

APP013-4 Attendance Support

## DEFINITIONS

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### **Disabled**

A state of incapacity which is due to bodily injury or sickness, preventing the employee from working for the Board for remuneration.

## **Medical Documentation**

Refers to, but is not limited to, medically supported restrictions and/or limitations as they relate to the employee's ability to meet the essential duties of their position.

## **Supervisor**

Refers to a Supervisory Officer, Principal, or Manager

## **PROCEDURES**

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### **1.0 GENERAL**

- 1.1 Employees are required to advise their Supervisor upon any unexpected absence that prevents them from working.
- 1.2 Electronic absences are entered in the Atrieve ERP system, but employees are strongly encouraged to speak directly with a supervisor in extenuating circumstances.
- 1.3 The employee should advise the Supervisor on the day of absence, prior to the commencement of the work day, where possible.
- 1.4 Employees must indicate the nature of their absence and the anticipated length of the absence.
- 1.5 If the length of the absence is unknown, employees must contact their Supervisor on a daily basis.
- 1.6 Custodial employees responsible for the opening of schools in the morning will make arrangement with the Principal and Manager of Plant and Maintenance regarding a notification protocol.
- 1.7 The Board reserves the right to request medical information from an employee for absences due to illness or disability.
- 1.8 For further direction beyond this Administrative Procedure, refer to APP013-3 *Disability Support: Early Intervention, Accommodations, and Return to Work*.

### **2.0 ABSENCES RELATED TO ILLNESS OR INJURY**

- 2.1 Employees are required to advise their Supervisor of any illness or accident that prevents them from working in order to discuss a return to work date.
- 2.2 Documentation from the appropriate treating medical practitioner may be requested in a manner consistent with the employee's collective agreement or terms and conditions, where applicable.
- 2.3 The documentation required shall minimally consist of the following, as outlined on the Standardized Medical Certificate:

- i) Medical restrictions and/or limitation that are preventing the employee from working and which may require accommodation upon return to work, if any;
  - ii) Expected date of recovery and/or return to work date.
- 2.4 If restrictions and/or limitations have been identified by the employee's appropriate treating medical practitioner, the employee will have communication with the Manager of Human Resources or designate.

### **3.0 ABSENCES OF MORE THAN FIVE (5) CONSECUTIVE WORKING DAYS RELATED TO ILLNESS OR INJURY**

- 3.1 When an employee is going to be absent for more than five (5) consecutive working days, the employee will notify their Supervisor of the absence.
- 3.2 The Supervisor shall indicate to the employee that the Manager of Human Resources or designate will be notified of the employee's absence to enable early intervention and to facilitate a safe and timely return to work.
- 3.3 The Supervisor will notify the Manager of Human Resources or designate by email or telephone.
- 3.4 The Manager of Human Resources or designate may require the employee to provide documentation completed by the appropriate treating medical practitioner that may include the following information:
- i) A functional abilities form that describes the medically supported restrictions or limitations the employee is experiencing in relation to the essential duties of their position;
  - ii) Confirmation that the employee is participating in the appropriate treatment to expedite the employee's safe and timely return to work;
  - iii) Expected date employee could participate in the Return- to-Work Program with appropriate modifications/accommodations based on restrictions/limitations;
  - iv) Expected return to work date at regular hours and duties;
  - v) Any other information required to safely return the employee to work in a timely manner;
  - vi) Treating medical practitioner's name, address, phone number and fax number, if applicable, and email, if appropriate;
  - vii) Treating medical practitioner's signature.
- 3.5 Unless otherwise arranged, this documentation must be submitted by the employee or appropriate treating medical practitioner to the Manager of Human Resources or designate, within ten (10) working day of the date requested by the Manager of Human Resources or designate.
- 3.6 The Manager of Human Resources or designate must exercise discretion in each case in determining whether to ask for a medical certificate in accordance with the provisions above.

#### 4.0 SICK LEAVE BENEFIT

- 4.1 As outlined below, an employee may access or is eligible for sick leave benefits if they become injured or ill and have a credit of unused sick leave.
- 4.2 An employee may access or is eligible for sick leave if they are disabled.
- 4.3 Sick leave benefits are not payable:
- i) In cases which are compensable by Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, excluding top-up;
  - ii) During scheduled vacation unless the illness requires hospitalization;
  - iii) When an employee is on an authorized unpaid leave of absence;
  - iv) When an employee does not have sick credits or a bank of sick days;
  - v) While in receipt of full Long Term Disability Benefits;
  - vi) When appropriate medical documentation has not been received.
- 4.4 To be eligible for sick leave benefits, the employee must follow the Board's procedures for reporting absences related to illness or injury and for returning to work, in accordance with section 5.0 *Responsibilities of the Employee*.
- 4.5 The Board will endeavour to accommodate the return to work and placement of temporary and/or permanently and/or partially disabled employees in accordance with NCDSB Administrative Procedure APP013-3 *Disability Support: Early Intervention, Accommodations, and Return to Work*.
- 4.6 Access to sick leave benefits may be denied for failure to provide the requested medical documentation requested. It is the employee's responsibility to submit appropriate documentation to the Manager of Human Resources or designate.
- 4.7 In order to maintain access to sick leave benefits, the Manager of Human Resources or designate may request the employee to attend an independent medical assessment and/or have completed a functional abilities evaluation to determine the employee's restrictions and/or limitations related to the employee's position. This will assist in providing return to work and/or accommodation options. In requesting the independent medical assessment, the following protocol will apply:
- i) If the Manager of Human Resources or designate reasonably requires medical information to determine whether an employee is able to return to work or should properly remain off of work and in receipt of sick leave benefits, the Manager of Human Resources or designate shall so advise the employee and request that such information be provided;
  - ii) The employee is required to provide the requested medical documentation to the Manager of Human Resources or designate in response to the request;
  - iii) The Manager of Human Resources or designate will review the documentation provided by the employee. If the Manager of Human Resources or designate is not satisfied with the adequacy of the medical information provided, the Manager of

- Human Resources or designate will clearly identify to the employee why the information is not adequate;
- iv) The employee will be given an opportunity to provide the Manager of Human Resources or designate with further medical information;
  - v) The Manager of Human Resources or designate will review any further documentation provided by the employee. If the entirety of the medical documentation provided does not reasonably permit the Manager of Human Resources or designate to determine whether the employee should return to work or remain off of work, the employee may be requested to submit to an independent medical evaluation;
  - vi) If the employee fails to attend to the independent medical evaluation or does not, prior to the independent medical evaluation, provide the Manager of Human Resources or designate, with further medical information to reasonably permit the Manager of Human Resources or designate to determine whether the employee should return to work or remain off of work, the employee's wages and benefits may be discontinued.

## **5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EMPLOYEE**

- 5.1 Personally report an absence, unless the employee is incapacitated and unable to do so. Failure to report absences in accordance with the appropriate procedures may result in denial of pay or benefits.
- 5.2 Indicate, in general terms, the reason for the absence.
- 5.3 To be in regular communication with their Supervisor during their absence when they are unable to perform the essential duties of their position due to disability.
- 5.4 Assume responsibility for the costs associated with the initial documentation from the appropriate treating medical practitioner in relation to the absence, or as per the term of the employee's collective agreement of terms and conditions of employment. The Board will assume the reasonable costs of any additional medical certificates.
- 5.5 To be eligible for sick leave benefits, provide satisfactory medical documentation in the form of a Standardized Medical Certificate completed by the appropriate treating medical practitioner in accordance with relevant sections of this procedure.
- 5.6 Participate in appropriate treatment, as determined by the treating medical practitioner(s), to ensure a safe and timely return to work.
- 5.7 Participate in the development of a Return to Work Plan, including taking the proposed Return to Work Plan (including accommodations and/or modifications) to the appropriate treating medical practitioner(s) for approval, if necessary.

## **6.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SUPERVISOR**

- 6.1 Communicate the provisions of APP013-3 *Disability Support: Early Intervention, Accommodations, and Return to Work* and APP013-4 *Attendance Support* to the employee.
- 6.2 Ensure the daily maintenance of accurate, up-to-date records regarding the employee's absences as designated by Human Resources.
- 6.3 Monitor individual employee absenteeism records as designated by Human Resources.
- 6.4 Receive call-ins or return employee calls should a message be received from an employee, and determine the reason for absence.
- 6.5 Ensure employee confidentiality in relation to absences and medical information.
- 6.6 Contact the Manager of Human Resources or designate, for assistance when restrictions and/or limitation have been identified.
- 6.7 Forward all medical documentation (if received) directly to the Manager of Human Resources or designate in a secure and confidential manner.
- 6.8 Advise employees of their obligations to provide satisfactory written proof of disability, as required, confirming disability and ensuring continued payment of sick leave benefits.
- 6.9 Participate in the development of the employee's Return to Work Plan, including providing accommodations and/or modifications to the employee's duties and/or hours, based on recommendations from the Manager of Human Resources or designate.

## **7.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MANAGER OF HUMAN RESOURCES OR DESIGNATE**

- 7.1 Request proof of continuing disability from the employee in the case of absences exceeding ten (10) consecutive working days, at appropriate intervals, in order to maintain the sick leave benefit or determine if participation in a Return to Work program is appropriate.
- 7.2 Receive all medical documentation required and provide support to the employee during their time of disability.
- 7.3 Assist the Supervisor by maintaining contact with disabled employees, verifying that the employee is under the active care of the appropriate medical practitioner and following an appropriate treatment plan, and advise the Supervisor of the expected return to work date, if known.

- 7.4 Develop an appropriate Return to Work Plan (including appropriate accommodation and/or modification recommendations) based on the employee's restrictions and/or limitations.
- 7.5 The Manager of Human Resources or designate shall review this procedure and program guidelines on a regular basis or as required by legislative change.

## **8.0 RELATED FORMS AND DOCUMENTS**

Nil.

**Director of Education:** *Tricia Stephanie Welty*

**Date:** August 2021