

EMPLOYEE ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK

Background

The Board of Education is committed to managing employee attendance through a positive, supportive environment that promotes the best possible attendance. Every employee has a professional responsibility to maintain regular attendance at work.

The Board realizes that some sick leave will always be utilized annually. The expectation is that employees will use sick leave only when it is required. The Board also realizes that employees have access to other types of leaves as outlined in various employee agreements, and these agreements have been duly negotiated with the Board. The expectation is that employees will only request access to these types of leaves when necessary. This guideline is not intended to limit an employee's right to utilize their sick leave for legitimate reasons, nor is it intended to deny employees appropriate access to leaves as outlined in applicable employee agreements.

The guidelines herein apply to all employees of the Light of Christ Catholic School Division.

Responsibilities:

Administrator

- Communicate the protocol for advising of absenteeism and expected attendance standards and obligations to staff
- Ensure staff are aware of patterns of usage should an issue with absenteeism be observed
- Monitor levels of sick leave usage in their schools and offices and take appropriate action to correct absenteeism issues
- Maintain written documentation where absenteeism issues have been identified
- Identify unacceptable usage based on the individual situation
- Using the procedures outlined and guideline references, meet with the employee to discuss and resolve issues regarding attendance. In the case of an extended absence, the supervisor will arrange with the employee to maintain contact at a reasonable frequency determined by the Employer.
- Maintain communication with Superintendent, Human Resources, and the Payroll Department as necessary

Employees

- To attempt best efforts to be physically and mentally fit for work
- Attend to personal affairs and obligations outside of working hours whenever possible
- Attend work, on time, for every scheduled day of work
- Provide reasons for absence, tardiness or leaving early
- Notify their supervisor as soon as possible when there is a reason to be absent from work or tardy
- Seek medical care when necessary

- Provide, as required, appropriate documentation to support the absence and/or fitness to return to work. Form 7-1 (teacher) and Verification of Sickness or Doctor's note (support staff) should be emailed to medical@loccsd.ca or faxed to the Division Office by the employee or school office.
- Maintain communication with their supervisor for each absence. This is critical when the employee is unable to return to work and the estimated length of illness is unknown.

Human Resources

- Provide advice to management on the provisions of these procedures and guidelines
- Work with administration to identify the source of employee attendance issues, determine available resources and facilitate return to work programs
- Provide advice on Human Rights, The Saskatchewan Employment Act, collective agreement provisions, and procedure interpretations where applicable
- Communicate LOCCSD expectations regarding employee attendance

Definitions:

Absence – Is an incident of non-attendance at work.

Culpable Absenteeism – Absence problems for which the employee will be held responsible as the absences are within the employee's power to address and correct; including but not limited to: failure to notify, absence without leave, abuse of leave, coming to work late or leaving early without notification. Culpable absenteeism is grounds for discipline, up to and including dismissal.

Non-Culpable Absenteeism – The consistent inability for an employee to attend work on a regular basis due to circumstances beyond the employee's control, including but not limited to: illness or non-occupational injury.

A. Monitoring Absence:

1. Records of employee attendance that include absences will be monitored on an ongoing basis.
2. All available information will be reviewed and considered before determining that an attendance problem exists.
3. A potential attendance issue will be considered when utilization appears to be above the norm, or where there are patterns of usage identified.
4. Once the immediate supervisor has determined that an attendance problem does in fact exist, action will be taken in accordance with the guidelines outlined in this procedure.

B. Medical Evidence:

1. Employees will not be required to reveal to the Employer the exact nature of an illness or disability (i.e. diagnosis).
2. Subject to the terms and conditions of the applicable collective agreement or Board procedure, the employee may be required to provide documentation (Form 7-1 for teachers and Verification of Sickness: Practitioner's Report or Doctor's note for support staff) when:
 - An employee is absent from the workplace due to illness or injury;

- An employee's sick leave usage is above the average (as determined by the Employer);
 - Or when a potential attendance issue exists or is developing.
3. The documentation must state clearly the expected date of return to work or length of leave required. When requesting medical evidence, it is reasonable to request clarification from the physician verifying:
- Whether the absence from work is medically required;
 - Whether restrictions exist;
 - Identification of specific restrictions to guide return to work decisions;
 - Whether treatments or medications have been prescribed that may affect the employee's ability to perform their required responsibilities; and
 - Prognosis of expectation for recovery.
4. If any limitations or restrictions are noted/required, please contact Human Resources so that the proper accommodation process can be started.

C. Confidentiality:

1. Medical information received will be treated in a confidential manner and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
2. Medical information concerning employees will not be discussed or requested unless required in order to verify absence from work or to ensure the employee's capabilities and/or safety in carrying out his or her job duties.

D. Early Intervention:

Where an attendance problem has been identified, the immediate supervisor will commence early intervention in accordance with The Early Intervention Procedures below.

E. Culpable Absenteeism:

Where early intervention does not produce improvement and the attendance problem is deemed to be CULPABLE; absenteeism may be grounds for discipline, up to and including dismissal.

F. Non-Culpable Absenteeism:

Where early intervention does not produce improvement and the attendance problem is deemed to be NON-CULPABLE:

- If there is no verification of a disability as defined by The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, the attendance problem will be managed through providing reasonable assistance and support as determined by the specific circumstances of each case.
- If there is verification of a disability as defined by The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, the attendance problem will be managed through accommodation to the point of undue hardship.

G. Termination of Employment:

Termination of employment may be considered for situations of culpable absenteeism. In assessing the option of termination, the facts of each case will be assessed in relation to applicable laws and regulations.

Early Intervention Procedures:

Note: These Early Intervention Procedures are intended as guidelines only.

The Board and Administrators will use their discretion to apply these procedures in a constructive, reasonable manner. The goal is to manage attendance issues to ensure appropriate attendance at work.

Step 1: Initial Discussion/Meeting (Typically dealt with by the immediate supervisor)

The immediate supervisor meets with the employee. The following provides a general framework for the discussion with the employee and is a guide to ensure the discussion remains focused:

A. Plan the meeting:

- Consult appropriate sources (Human Resources, Director, Superintendent, etc.)
- Organize information for the discussion including attendance records, appropriate average usage summaries, etc.
- Note any patterns
- Identify incidents vs. days
- Identify any known reasons for absences and whether all absences are related
- Identify the negative impact on the work unit or workplace

B. Meet with Employee

- Clarify the meeting is not intended in any way to be disciplinary
- Ensure privacy
- Describe attendance problem (trends/patterns, incidents vs. days, exceeding comparable averages, etc.)
- Provide the employee with a clear explanation of how his/her absences are negatively impacting the work environment
- Be clear that the goal is improvement
- Identify the support services which are available to division employees (see Administrative Procedure 707: Employee Assistance Program) as well as any rehabilitation services or other regional health authority or community services which may be available, where applicable
- Ask the employee if other types of support may be required

C. Establish Guidelines and Action Plan

- Determine if the employee expects his/her attendance to improve and document their responses. Ask the employee to provide suggestions on how to improve their attendance

and obtain their commitment to improvement. For support staff, at this point it may be beneficial to create a Performance Improvement Plan.

- Re-communicate procedures and guidelines for reporting absences
- Establish a follow-up date to review progress (one to two months is recommended but time frame could change based on time left in the school year)
- Document your preparation notes, meetings, dates, timeline, etc. Consider the subjective interpretations of future discussions.
- Advise the employee you will send them a letter summarizing the meeting after it has occurred and a copy will be placed on their employee file.

D. Follow-up:

- Provide positive recognition where improvement is the result
- Meet with the employee as per the previously agreed timeframe
- Document conversation between employee and immediate supervisor

Step 2: Discussion/Meeting followed by a Letter (Dealt with by HR & Supervisor)

The Human Resources designate and immediate supervisor will meet with the employee. The meeting should follow the following guidelines:

A. Human Resources plans the meeting

- Consult with appropriate sources (Director, Superintendent, SSBA, etc.)
- Organize information for the discussion including attendance records, appropriate average usage summaries, etc.
- Note any patterns
- Identify incidents vs days
- Identify any known reasons for absences and whether all absences are related
- Identify the negative impact on the work unit or workplace
- Review notes, timeline, action plan etc. from the initial meeting with employee and supervisor

B. Meet with Employee (HR & Supervisor)

- Ensure privacy
- Describe attendance problem (trends/patterns, incidents vs. days, exceeding comparable averages, etc.)
- Provide the employee with a clear explanation of how his/her absences are negatively impacting the work unit or workplace
- Be clear that the goal is improvement
- Identify the support services which are available to division employees (see Administrative Procedure 707: Employee Assistance Program) as well as any rehabilitation services or other regional health authority or community services which may be available, where applicable
- Ask the employee if any other types of support may be required

C. Establish Guidelines and Action Plan

- Where attendance has not improved and the reasons for the absence are unknown, an assessment as to whether the cause of the absence is culpable or non-culpable will be made prior to taking further action.
- If the cause of the absence is non-culpable discuss possible solutions with the employee such as voluntarily reducing FTE permanently or temporarily to allow the employee the ability to handle their work load and improve their health. If accommodations are requested as a measure to improve attendance, ensure the employee is given a Medical Certificate and accompanying letter to take to their doctor for documentation of the requested accommodation.
- Stress our desire for the employee to be healthy and that we are not trying to force employees to return to work while ill.
- Determine if the employee expects his/her attendance to improve and document responses. Ask the employee to provide suggestions on how to improve their attendance and obtain their commitment to improvement.
- Re-communicate procedures and guidelines for reporting absences
- Establish a follow-up date to review progress (one or two months is recommended but time frame could change based on time left in the school year)
- Document your preparation notes, meetings, dates, timeline, etc. Consider the subjective interpretations of future discussions.

D. Follow-up

- Provide positive recognition where improvement is the result
- Meet with employee as per the previously agreed timeframe
- Document conversation between employee and immediate supervisor

E. Summary Letter

Advise the employee they will receive a letter summarizing this meeting. The following provides general guidelines for the specific items to be included in the letter:

- Meeting date and persons in attendance
- Reference to previous discussions with the employee (including dates)
- Clear identification of the attendance issues discussed with the employee (trends/patterns, incidents vs. days, exceeding comparable averages, etc.)
- Clear identification of the expectations
- The employee's explanation for the absences
- Any commitments made by the employee, including his/her commitment to improve
- The timeframe for follow-up

F. Send letter

Step 3 – Taking Action (Supervisor & HR)

- A. Where attendance has still not improved, another meeting should be held with the employee. This meeting can be facilitated by either the immediate supervisor or Human

Resources and should follow the guidelines in Step 1 A & B. In addition, the following should be discussed where applicable:

- Advise the employee that medical verification of each sick leave absence of any duration will now be required. If this action is taken provide a timeline including the end of this requirement (at which time the employee can revert back to the standard practices regarding sick leave reporting) or the date of the next meeting to discuss progress with regard to sick leave absences.
- Provide the employee with a Medical Certificate for their doctor to fill out in order to verify the employee's ability to maintain regular attendance at work in the future. Give the employee a letter to take to their doctor explaining the Medical Certificate and its purpose.
- Emphasize that you are seeking prognosis information only, and will not accept diagnosis information.
- Emphasize that the medical information received will be kept confidential and confirm to whom the information is to be returned.
- Inform the employee that they will be required to attend a follow-up meeting to discuss the medical information received.
- Confirm that the intent of gathering the information is to assist the employee in maintaining regular attendance at work or to appropriately assess alternatives if a disability exists.
- Warn the employee that if the required medical information is not provided or the information provided does not verify the legitimacy of the absences, disciplinary action may be considered.

See E. F. & G. on pages 3 & 4 above for further actions.