

Attendance Support Program	
Adopted: October 2009	Last Reviewed/Revised: April 3, 2023
Next Scheduled Review: 2025-2026	
Associated Policies & Procedures: III-17 Attendance Support Program	

Purpose

To establish the guidelines for managing the HCDSB's Attendance Support Program in conjunction with its Wellness initiative.

Application and Scope

This procedure applies to all HCDSB employees to:

- Support regular attendance of all employees as an essential element of their employment;
- Advise employees of the support services available; and
- Allow sufficient time for the employee to address issues so they will attend work regularly in the future.

The Human Resources Services department will monitor attendance and report attendance statistics to the Board on a regular basis.

References

[Employment Standards Act](#)

[Ontario Human Rights Code](#)

[Workplace Safety and Insurance Act](#)

Principles

This procedure applies to all personnel working under the jurisdiction of the Halton Catholic District School Board. This includes all employees represented by the CUPE, the OECTA, the APSSP, and all non-union and management employees.

Requirements

- The Halton Catholic District School Board is committed to the overall health and wellness of its staff. This is exemplified by the existence of the *Employee Assistance Program* (“EAP”), the comprehensive Wellness Program offered by the HCDSB and the existence of local site-based Joint Health and Safety Committees.
- It is a required term and condition of employment that employees will attend work on a regular basis and will provide their services in return for the salaries, wages, and benefits for which they are compensated. Irregular attendance at work has a detrimental effect on the delivery of the services provided by the HCDSB to its students, staff, and other members of the school community.
- All employees of the HCDSB are expected to attend to personal matters outside of their working hours, unless the employee has received authorization to be absent to deal with a personal matter, such as a medical/dental appointment or bereavement, where such matter is of overriding importance and cannot be dealt with outside of normal working hours, or unless the matter is an “emergency” which entitles the employee to claim emergency leave under the *Employment Standards Act* (e.g. sudden family illness or death).
- The HCDSB is committed to differentiating between culpable and non-culpable absenteeism. Culpable absenteeism is defined as absences which are in the control of the employee, whereas non-culpable absences are outside of the control of the employee.
- Culpable absenteeism will be dealt with through the HCDSB’s progressive discipline procedure. Attendance support is available for staff members whose absences are beyond the scope of their control which is referred to as *innocent absenteeism* or non-culpable absenteeism. The HCDSB endeavours to ensure that all employees are aware of and receive the appropriate support(s) that is available to them, to ensure a healthy workforce.
- The HCDSB requires that its employees properly record and report their absences in accordance with HCDSB policy and their respective Collective Agreement.
- The HCDSB supports a culture of inclusion and is committed to meeting the needs of individuals within the organization and to adhere to the legislative requirements under the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*, with respect to employment accommodation and successful return to work.

Attendance Support Process

- It is the duty of all supervisory personnel to monitor the attendance of their staff. This includes holding coaching and counselling meetings regarding attendance when there is a concern about an employee’s lack of regular attendance. It is also the duty of all supervisors within the HCDSB to report to Human Resources Services any individual absence or attendance pattern that, in their opinion, warrants further investigation.
- The following procedure is designed to provide a comprehensive guideline for adherence to the principles of attendance support:
 - Employees will be provided the opportunity to have Union representation accompany them at any meeting with Human Resources Services to discuss attendance related matters. This provision does not include an informal coaching/counselling meeting between the employee and their immediate supervisor.

- The Human Resources Services department will monitor attendance and report attendance statistics to the Board on an annual basis. An absence threshold is established and reviewed on an annual basis for the Board based on the attendance statistics and what is determined to be reasonable.
- Any staff member who exceeds the absence threshold established for the Board will be reviewed to determine if they will be required to meet with HCDSB Administration and/or a member of Human Resources Services for a Step 1 assessment meeting. The HCDSB will take relevant factors into consideration and will determine whether or not to schedule a meeting with an employee who is above or below the threshold, having regard for the particular circumstances of each case.

Step I: Assessment Meeting

- a) At the Step 1 assessment meeting, Human Resources Services and the employee will discuss:
 - 1. The employee's level of absenteeism including the attendance threshold for the Board. Depending on the circumstances, Human Resources Services and the employee may discuss the employee's attendance history with the Board.
 - 2. The HCDSB's expectations for employee attendance.
 - 3. The employee's rationale for the current absence level. This will include the reasons that prevent the employee from attending work regularly.
 - 4. The HCDSB's attendance goals based on the employee's attendance history and the information presented at the assessment meeting; these goals will be unique to the employee.
 - 5. HCDSB administration will provide the employee with information regarding the support available to them, including the Employee Assistance Program and the employee's rights under the *Employment Standards Act* regarding Leaves of Absence and the Ontario *Human Rights Code* with respect to employment accommodation.
- b) Depending on the information exchanged at the above-mentioned meeting, where appropriate, the HCDSB representative will decide whether to refer the employee for workplace accommodations.
- c) At the completion of the Step I Assessment Meeting, the HCDSB representative will advise the employee of the period for attendance review. This is a discretionary decision based on individual circumstances. Human Resource Services may meet with an employee before the end of the review period depending on the circumstances.
- d) Employees who were referred for workplace accommodations at the Step I meeting are responsible for providing any required documentation that the representative may request in assessing the identified accommodation needs.
- e) The workplace accommodation will indicate whether regular attendance at work is limited or restricted by the supporting medical documentation. Should the medical information provide a rationale for the employee's attendance (i.e., it is non-culpable), then the employee will be directed through disability management.

- f) If the employee's absenteeism rate is explained due to temporary medical reasons or extenuating circumstances acceptable to the HCDSB, the employee may exit the Attendance Support Program.
- g) If the goals established at Step I have not been met following the review period, the representative of the HCDSB will make the determination whether the employee moves into Step II of the Attendance Support Program. This is a discretionary decision and will be based on the individual circumstance outlined in the information provided at the completion of the Step I review period. The HCDSB representative also has the discretion to determine whether the employee needs to repeat a Step I review period.
- h) All employees who are required to participate in a Step I Attendance Support Meeting will receive a letter of confirmation. Discretion in applying the Attendance Support Program includes the right in certain individualized circumstances to advance an employee, following a meeting with a Human Resource Services representative, to Step II of the program. This may occur before the employee has completed Step I, or, in some circumstances, without the employee being required to complete Step I.

Step II: Attendance Support Program

1. If the attendance goals established at Step I have not been met and the absenteeism rate is not explained by extenuating circumstances or supporting medical documentation, the employee is moved to Step II of the Attendance Support Program.
2. Human Resources Services representative will meet with the employee to discuss their personal barriers, if any, to regular attendance. Where possible and appropriate, the HCDSB will offer assistance to the employee in dealing with those particular barriers.
3. At the meeting, the Human Resources Services representative will inform the employee of their attendance expectations, goals for attendance improvement, and the potential outcome should the attendance not improve. The results of the Step II Attendance Support Meeting will be confirmed in writing to the employee.
4. The Superintendent, Human Resources Services, or designate, will utilize discretion to determine whether the employee will be required to certify absences with a medical certificate for a defined review period. For the medical note to be acceptable, it must be dated within the absence period, to ensure that the employee was medically assessed during the absence period.
5. Following the completion of the defined review period, should the employee's attendance improve to the satisfaction of the HCDSB, they may exit the program. The success of each employee in achieving their defined attendance goals or a more consistent attendance practice will be based on the specifics of that individual case.
6. If the goals established at Step II have not been met following the review period, the representative of the HCDSB will make the determination whether the employee moves into Step III of the Attendance Support Program. This is a discretionary decision and will be based on the individual circumstances outlined in the information provided at the completion of the previous review period. The HCDSB representative also has the discretion to determine whether or not the employee needs to repeat the Step II review period.

7. Should the attendance goals not be met following the review period, the employee will be required to meet with the Superintendent, Human Resources Services, or designate, to discuss their future employability and move to Step III of the Attendance Support Program.

Step III – Attendance Support Program

1. When an employee enters Step III attendance support, they are required to attend a meeting with the Superintendent, Human Resources Services, or designate. At this meeting the Superintendent, or designate, upon review of the attendance history and extenuating circumstance, will set clear final attendance expectations and timelines.
2. Employees will receive a written confirmation of their Step III Attendance Support Program status. Following the meeting with the Superintendent, Human Resources Services, or designate, the employee will receive written confirmation of the attendance expectations discussed in the meeting, including the timelines discussed.
3. The Superintendent, Human Resources Services, or designate, reserves the right to move the employee back to Step II of the program to continue with their attendance support. This would be confirmed in writing to the employee, following the review period, if the attendance goals have been met.
4. At the end of the period set for review under this Step, the employee may face termination for just cause should the attendance goals and expectations not be met such that it is clear that the employee is unable to attend work regularly.
5. If the goals and expectations are met, within the timeframe established by the Superintendent, Human Resources Services, or designate, the employee may exit the program, as confirmed by the HCDSB representative. Written confirmation to the employee will accompany the end of the review period and will include the specific individualized direction as determined by the Superintendent, Human Resources Services, or designate, and communicated to the employee at their meeting.

APPROVED: Regular Meeting of the Administrative Council

AUTHORIZED BY: _____
Director of Education and Secretary of the Board