
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 36 (SURREY)

No. 7270.1

REGULATION: EMPLOYEE ATTENDANCE SUPPORT PROGRAM

1. INTRODUCTION

The Employee Attendance Support Program is designed to address the issue of employee absences in a positive manner. Its intent is to provide guidelines to supervisors so they may better address absenteeism through increased levels of communication, awareness and interaction with their employees.

2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The school district expects employees to attend work on a regular and consistent basis and is committed to making every reasonable effort to assist employees in achieving and maintaining regular attendance.
- 2.2 The school district supports programs and practices that aid in helping employees to return to work from an absence as early as possible.
- 2.3 The school district also promotes early intervention to assist employees who experience attendance problems.

3. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

It is recognized that many absences are unavoidable, but it is also recognized that pro-active, early and ongoing intervention with employees can assist greatly in improving attendance. This program will therefore focus attention on where it is believed improvement can be made through awareness, intervention and individual case management and be applied in a consistent and supportive manner.

The program supports the following principles:

- promoting the concept that good attendance matters;
- showing concern for an employee's well being;
- treating employees as self-directed individuals;
- focusing on the frequency and/or pattern of absences;

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- being consistent and reasonable;
- working with and assisting employees with attendance issues.

4. DEFINITION OF ABSENCE

Employees are absent if they have been scheduled to work and are not present at work. Approved leaves and vacation are not included in this definition for the purpose of this regulation.

5. TYPES OF ABSENCE

Absenteeism can be separated into two classifications:

- Non-Culpable (innocent) absenteeism is caused by employee illness or other occupational disabilities beyond the employee's control, and is usually for medical reasons.
- Culpable absenteeism is considered to be within the control of the employee. Examples include chronic tardiness, leaving early, being absent without authorization, and invalid use of sick leave.

This program is meant to address non-culpable (innocent) absenteeism only. The intent is to communicate more effectively with our employees in order to assure that the district assists them in coming to work regularly.

Should a supervisor determine that behaviour of a culpable nature is occurring, the supervisor should communicate with the Human Resources contact.

6. OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM

This is an administrative approach to when and how to communicate, in a non-disciplinary fashion, the legitimate employer concerns about an employee's non-culpable absence from work that is greater than would normally be expected.

The purpose of such communication is to:

- (1) encourage better attendance;

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- (2) afford the employee adequate opportunity to address issues that prevent regular attendance at work; and
- (3) allow for due consideration of any “duty to accommodate” issues.

Supervisors, when ascertaining the nature of the reasons for an employee’s absence, should display good judgment and sensitivity towards an employee’s individual circumstances.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Senior Management

Senior management are to openly and actively support the Attendance Support Program and understand the challenges supervisors face in dealing with this complex issue. They are to be supportive and ensure that supervisors are accountable for managing the program.

7.2 Supervisor

Supervisors play an important role in any attendance support program. Supervisors are responsible for managing the work performance of their employees. This includes managing employee attendance. Through regular contact with their employees, supervisors are in the best position to respond to attendance problems as they arise. They also have a significant impact on establishing a working climate that favours regular attendance. The supervisor is responsible to:

- advise employees both during their orientation and on an annual basis the importance of regular attendance;
- communicate to all employees clear procedures and expectations for providing notice at their place of work in cases of absences, in particular, to whom the absence should be reported, the frequency of the reporting, the reason for the absence and the expected duration of the absence;
- inform all employees of the resources available to provide support to them (i.e. employee and family assistance plan);

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- ensure employees are made aware of the effects of absenteeism (i.e. disrupted work schedules, increased costs and potential increased workload for fellow employees), disruption of student learning/negative effect on student learning;
- monitor and review attendance records using the available reports;
- assess attendance of individual employees and work with those employees identified as having higher than average absences or patterns of absences;
- maintain regular contact with absent employees while they are away and upon their return to work;
- identify any work related factors that may contribute to absenteeism;
- contact Human Resources to assist with specific problem situations; and
- regularly acknowledge employee's achievements if improved or exemplary attendance.

7.3 Employees

Implicit in the employment relationship is the obligation of employees to perform their work on a regular and dependable basis.

- employees with medical problems are expected to follow their health practitioners recommendation;
- when employees are not able to attend work due to illness/injury they must notify their supervisor using the procedures for providing notice at their place of work;
- during an absence, employees are to maintain communication with their supervisor by advising on their progress and the date of their anticipated return to work;

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- prior to returning from an absence, employees must notify their supervisor so relief workers can be re-scheduled or cancelled;
- keep their supervisor informed about issues that may impede their ability to be at work; and
- employees are expected to make every effort to schedule medical appointments/treatments at dates and times that do not conflict with the employee's work schedule.

7.4 Human Resources

Human Resources will provide support by:

- providing consultation and advice on the administration and operation of the Attendance Support Program;
- providing training and support;
- providing absenteeism data;
- ensuring that the attendance support program treats all employees fairly and consistently;
- participating in the development of an action plan appropriate to the situation and assisting with other specific issues as they arise; and
- monitoring the effectiveness of the program, with reports to Executive Committee.

Approved: 2003-03-25
