PROCEDURE HR - #11

Title. **ATTENDANCE SUPPORT**
Adopted June 2024
Revised: June 2026
Authorization:

PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the expectations and process steps involved in an attendance support process and program for staff.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. The Bloorview School Authority (herein referred to as the "Authority") depends on the contribution of its employees to provide high-quality education services for our students.
2. The Authority is committed to assist and provide support to employees in maintaining a regular and reliable attendance in the workplace.
3. Consistent attendance facilitates increased student achievement, improvement in staff morale, a more positive work environment and decreased operating costs.
4. The Attendance Management Support Program supports BSA's commitment to a supportive, safe, and healthy work environment for its employees that supports employee well-being and regular attendance at work. The primary goal of the Attendance Management Support Program is to support and encourage regular attendance and facilitate reasonable enquire into potential accommodation needs.

DEFINITIONS

5. Innocent (Non-Culpable) 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 but, instead, the employee is supported through this Attendance Support Program.
6. 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, falsifying claims of illness and misuse of leaves are examples of culpable absences. Employees with culpable absences are subject to progressive discipline. These absences are not dealt with through the attendance support program.

DEFINITIONS	MAY INCLUDE
Approved Absences (absences where an employee is away from work through no fault of their own - not included in the Attendance Support Program)	• Approved medical leaves by HR, provided the employee has submitted the required medical evidence, the employee is in an appropriate treatment plan and is cooperating with prescribed treatment. • Vacation • Miscellaneous leaves (as per Collective Agreement) • Bereavement leaves • Jury or subpoena leave • Pregnancy/parental leave • Work related illnesses or injuries (approved by WSIB) • Union business leave • Quarantine • Approved Long Term Disability Claims • Observance of recognized religious holy days • Approved Long Term Disability claims
Non-Culpable Absences (included in the Attendance Support Program)	• Personal illness • Personal injury • Personal medical appointments
Culpable Absences (within an employee's control and may warrant disciplinary responses)	• Lateness/tardiness without a legitimate reason and/or provision of notification • Leaving work early and/or during work hours without notification or legitimate reasons for not doing so • Absence without leave or failure to notify • False explanation and/or misleading information for an absence • No reason provided for an absence • Reason given for an absence is not legitimate • Abuse of leave

PROCEDURES:

7. The employee shall be notified of their right to have a union representative present prior to a meeting under the Attendance Support Program taking place (i.e. check-in and phase meetings).

8. Notwithstanding section #7, as part of a typical supervisor/employee relationship, a principal may conduct general informal wellness reach-outs with employees without the need for union representation. Such reach-outs must be conducted with care, sensitivity, and mindfulness in the context of the interpersonal relationship between the parties.

9. The *absence threshold* is the established number of days absent to possibly trigger entry into the Attendance Support Program.

10. The *absence threshold* will be reviewed every two (2) years by the Authority. Each of the bargaining unit representatives will be consulted prior to any changes. Employees will be notified if the *absence threshold* changes.

11. When an employee's absences have exceeded the absence threshold, in any twelve (12) calendar month period, the Attendance Support process (which includes possible initiation into the Attendance Support Program) may be initiated. For clarity, absences are based on the previous twelve (12) calendar month period, do not reset upon commencement of a new school year and are independent of sick day allocation.

12. The Attendance Support Program process may also be initiated in instances where there are patterns of sick leave usages (e.g. regularly on Fridays or at the same time as another person)

13. Should a disability be identified, that requires support or accommodation at any time during the process; the Authority will support the employee with disability management while continuing to ensure that attendance is consistent and reliable, in accordance with the provided medical restrictions and limitations.

14. When an employee's absences exceed the *absence threshold* the Human Resources Manager and either the Principal or the Vice-Principal will meet with the employee to better understand the situation and make a determination as to whether the employee needs to be entered into the Attendance Support Program.

15. The applicable bargaining unit representative will be notified should a member be entered into the employee Attendance Support Program.

16. The employee will be informed of their right to include their bargaining unit representative in the Attendance Support process. The bargaining unit representative may attend any meeting that occurs to discuss or review the employee's attendance.

17. Entry into any step of the multi-step process and goal setting is specific and unique to each employee's individual circumstances.

18. The Attendance Support Program includes 4 distinct components: Preliminary Meeting and Notification Letter; Coaching Level 1; Coaching Level 2; and Coaching Level 3;

    a. The preliminary meeting is held to ensure that the days are coded correctly, gain an understanding of the issue(s) that may prevent the employee from regularly attending work, offer support and guidance and, if applicable, set attendance goals for the next 90 days.

       Following the Preliminary Meeting, a decision based on the specificity of the case, is made by the Authority as to whether or not the employee is required to enter into the Attendance Support Program. If the employee is entered into the program a Formal Notification Letter is issued notifying the employee that they have entered the Attendance Support Program, based on the recorded absences and which outlines the goals for the next 90 days

    b. Coaching Level 1 — Consists of a meeting that includes the employee, Principal/VP and HR Manager to continue to gain an understanding of the issue(s) that may be preventing the employee from regularly attending work, to continue to offer support and

guidance, and if necessary, discuss attendance strategies and/or goals for the next ninety (90) calendar days.

c. Coaching Level 2 — Consists of a meeting that includes the employee, Principal/VP, and HR Manager to continue to gain an understanding of the issue(s) that may be preventing the employee from regularly attending work, to continue to offer support and guidance, and if necessary, discuss attendance strategies and/or goals for the next ninety (90) calendar days.

d. Coaching Level 3 — Consists of a meeting that includes the employee, Principal/VP, HR Manager and Director to continue to gain an understanding of the issue(s) that may be preventing the employee from regularly attending work, to continue to offer support and guidance, and if necessary, discuss attendance strategies and/or goals for the next ninety (90) calendar days. The employee will be advised that failure to meet the attendance goals set in Coaching Level 3 may result in the discontinuation of employment.

19. When attendance goals are not met within any coaching level (90 calendar day review period), the employee proceeds to the next level of the program.

20. When attendance goals have been met within a coaching level, the employee enters into a review period of up to twelve calendar months during which their absences are monitored by the HR Manager.

21. If during the twelve (12) calendar month review period, an employee *exceeds absence threshold*, the employee will re-enter the Attendance Support Program at the most recent coaching level.

22. Employees who do not exceed the *absence threshold* in the twelve (12) calendar month review period will exit from the formal coaching process.

23. If there are reasonable grounds to believe that the absence record is due to situations where sick leave is being used inappropriately or fraudulently, the file will be transferred out of the program and into the Culpable Absences Protocol for investigation.

24. It is every employee's responsibility to;

- maintain regular attendance;
- Attend to personal affairs and obligations (including medical and other appointments) during their own personal time, and not during work hours, where possible
- Report work-related illness or injury immediately
- report absences in accordance with the Authority's policies and procedures;
- if necessary, participate actively in all levels of the Attendance Support Program;
- cooperate and collaborate in setting personal attendance goals;
- contact their bargaining unit representative if the employee wishes them to be involved and
- provide appropriate and timely documentation, during any level of the process.
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25. It is the responsibility of the Principal and/or Vice-Principal to:

- Treat employees fairly and equitably in monitoring attendance, and execute responsibilities in a consistent manner

- communicate attendance expectations to all employees through an annual review of the Attendance Support Program;
- review absence reports for staff
- in conjunction with the HR Manager, identify absenteeism trends or patterns
- ; in conjunction with the HR Manager, apply discretion by considering an employee's personal circumstances and reasons for absence when addressing all absenteeism issues;
- support employees and act as a resource;
- advise employees of available resources (i.e. Employee Assistance Program) and other leave provisions in accordance with the applicable Collective Agreement, Terms and Conditions, or Contracts;
- participate in all meetings as outlined in the Attendance Support Program and provide input into the development of individualized attendance goals for each employee involved in the process;
- communicate and collaborate with the HR Manager at any level in the attendance support process and
- provide positive reinforcement to employees who reach their attendance goals.

26. It is the responsibility of the Human Resources Manager to:

- promote wellness initiatives and provide health and wellness information
- communicate and collaborate with Principal/Vice Principal in addressing absenteeism trends;
- serve as a resource to both employees and Principal/Vice Principal;
- identify employees who exceed the *absence threshold;*
- advise employees of available resources (i.e. Employee Assistance Program) and other leave provisions in accordance with the applicable Collective Agreement, Terms and Conditions, or Contracts;
- facilitate the preliminary meeting and coaching meetings;
- provide guidance on the development of individualized goals and
- provide a written summary after each coaching level meeting to the employee, Principal /Vice Principal and bargaining unit representative, if applicable.

27. It is the responsibility of the Director to:

- provide support and act as a resource throughout all aspects of the Attendance Support Program and
- in conjunction with HR Manager, Principal and Vice Principal, review the cases of employees who have not met attendance goals following the completion of coaching level 3 to determine ongoing employability.

28. It is the responsibility of the union to:

- Provide bargaining unit employees with advice and support
- Ensure that the absence provisions negotiated are used for their intended purposes by bargaining unit employees in good faith
- Encourage employees to cooperate with the employer in ensuring a timely and successful return to work
- Ensure that bargaining unit members understand their responsibilities pursuant to the collective agreement.