

Medicine Hat Public School Division

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**MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC BOARD OF EDUCATION OPERATES AS MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION,
AND FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE REFERRED TO AS "MHPSD" AND/OR "DIVISION"**

SECTION 500 – Personnel and Employee Relations

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE: ATTENDANCE SUPPORT PROGRAM

<i>PROCEDURE CODE:</i>	<i>542 P 001</i>
Policy Reference: 542 - Attendance	

BACKGROUND

All employees have a responsibility to attend work regularly and to fulfill the duties for which they were employed. Employee absenteeism has a direct impact on the level of service the Division provides to students. High levels of absenteeism leads to poorer quality of service, lost productivity, and reduced morale of co-workers. The Division and all employees have an obligation to ensure regular and consistent attendance at work.

The Division has established an Attendance Support Program (ASP) as a non-disciplinary way to encourage and promote regular attendance at work and to support and coach employees to improve attendance. Consistent management of attendance problems can have highly positive effects on the workplace. An ASP can:

1. increase employee morale;
2. improve employee/employer relations;
3. improve productivity, planning, and organization of work;
4. reduce the amount of time absorbed by attendance problems; and
5. reduce overtime/staff replacement costs

PROCEDURE

1. What is the Attendance Support Program (ASP)? – The ASP is a staged approach by the Division that will enable supervisors to identify, educate, and coach employees with excessive non-culpable absences in order to manage and improve employee attendance. The stages of the ASP shall be managed and implemented by supervisors and Human Resources in accordance with the Supervisors Guide to Attendance Management.
2. Objectives - The objectives of the ASP are as follows:
 - 2.1. To promote optimal and consistent attendance at work.
 - 2.2. To raise awareness of the importance of good attendance.
 - 2.3. To promote an atmosphere of mutual respect, fairness and concern.

- 2.4. To provide a framework for responding to excessive absenteeism.
- 2.5. To assist individual employees overcome difficulties which adversely affect consistent attendance and to help prevent absenteeism problems from escalating.
- 3. Application - The ASP shall apply to all employees of the Division.
- 4. Non-culpable vs. Culpable Absences – The ASP is a non-disciplinary approach to address non-culpable employee absences. Culpable employee absences shall continue to be addressed through disciplinary measures.
 - 4.1. Non-culpable absences are absences where the employee is absent from work and either the absence is authorized (e.g. prior approval was obtained) or there are genuine, substantiated reasons for the absence. These absences are “innocent” in that the employee is not improperly absent from work. However, these absences may still impact the workplace and the services being provided by the Division and therefore the Division and the employee have an interest in reducing the amount of non-culpable absences and improving the employee’s attendance.

Examples of non-culpable absences may include:

 - 4.1.1. excessive sick leave, with or without pay;
 - 4.1.2. excessive outside appointments during working hours;
 - 4.1.3. excessive absences from work to deal with personal issues.

NOTE: Non-culpable absences are not addressed through discipline, but through coaching and assistance. However, dismissal may result from excessive non-culpable absences if there are consistently high levels of absenteeism with no prospect of improvement in the foreseeable future resulting in frustration of the employment contract.

- 4.2. Culpable absences are unauthorized absences that are within the employee’s control.

Examples of culpable absences may include:

 - 4.2.1. excessive lateness or leaving work early;
 - 4.2.2. false explanations for an absence;
 - 4.2.3. no explanation for an absence;
 - 4.2.4. unsubstantiated absence, where evidence of the reason for the absence is required (e.g. sick leave where medical substantiation is required);
 - 4.2.5. explanation for an absence is not legitimate;
 - 4.2.6. pattern absenteeism (e.g. absences on particular days of week, adjacent to scheduled days off, weekends, etc.) that is suspicious and proves to be abuse.

NOTE: Culpable absences are addressed through normal disciplinary processes.

- 5. The Division’s ASP does not affect the Division’s duty to accommodate employees with substantiated physical or psychological disabilities. The Division is obligated to accommodate these employees to the point of undue hardship. Where an employee’s non-culpable absences are associated with a physical or psychological disability which the Division is obligated to



accommodate, or for which accommodation is already being provided by the Division, this will be factored into the determination as to whether or not the ASP is applicable to the employee.

6. The determination as to whether an employee's absenteeism rate may be considered "excessive" or "unacceptable", and thus trigger the application of the ASP, will include a consideration of the following:
 - 6.1. The employee has had eight (8) or more days missed from work in the preceding twelve (12) month period;
 - 6.2. Non-culpable absences will be distinguished from culpable absences;
 - 6.3. The individual employee's circumstances and relevant information will be given appropriate consideration when assessing whether to apply the ASP or any step within the ASP.
7. Roles & Responsibilities - Attendance support is the function of many individuals and its success is dependent upon the commitment of all participants. The roles and responsibilities of each party are as follows:
 - 7.1. Employees – Employees are encouraged to strive to maintain a healthy lifestyle so as to be able to fulfil their job duties and responsibilities. Where an employee is required to be absent from work, employees are responsible for:
 - 7.1.1. Reporting and entering absences accurately into the SRB System recognizing that the absence is not verified until the absence is approved by HR.
 - 7.1.2. Employees must enter absences for themselves unless in the event of an emergency in which case they (or their representative) should speak to HR.
 - 7.1.3. Notifying the appropriate supervisor or designate as soon as possible on the first day of absence via the SRB system and provide a verbal confirmation using the established procedure if required by the supervisor.
 - 7.1.4. Notifying the supervisor and/or HR as soon as possible of the expected date of return;
 - 7.1.5. In the case of longer absences, reporting progress and expected date of return regularly;
 - 7.1.6. Making best efforts to schedule routine medical/dental appointments outside of work hours or in such a way to minimize disruptions to the employee's assigned duties;
 - 7.1.7. Where necessary, ensuring that sufficient and appropriate documentation is obtained and available to substantiate an absence;
 - 7.1.8. Notifying Human Resources as early as possible if the employee's ability to attend work is affected by a disability requiring accommodation so that the accommodation process can begin and reasonable accommodation options can be considered.



- 7.2. Division – The Division has the right to expect that its employees will attend work regularly and fulfil the job duties and responsibilities that they were hired to do. The Division is responsible for:
- 7.2.1. implementing an ASP to assist employees in maintaining regular attendance at work;
 - 7.2.2. communicating attendance expectations and how the ASP will be implemented to all employees;
 - 7.2.3. maintaining communications with absentee employees;
 - 7.2.4. assisting the employee in obtaining required medical and/or other supportive documentation to substantiate an approvable leave of absence;
 - 7.2.5. where an employee is returning to work after an extended absence, preparing for the employee's return to work;
 - 7.2.6. properly tracking employee absences and the reasons for the absences (i.e. whether they are culpable or non-culpable);
 - 7.2.7. monitoring and assessing attendance statistics regularly and identifying attendance issues promptly;
 - 7.2.8. applying the Supervisors Guide to Attendance Management appropriately and in a case-by-case contextualized manner that takes into account the individual employee's circumstances;
 - 7.2.9. responding appropriately to employees who indicate that they have a disability that may require accommodation.
- 7.3. Union – Where an employee is unionized, that employee's union has a responsibility to provide its members with practical advice. Unions also have a role to play in the accommodation process where an employee is seeking accommodation on the basis of a disability.

Approved: December 3, 2018

Revised: _____

