

SECTION 500 – Personnel and Employee Relations

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE: ABSENCE REPORTING RELATED TO
ILLNESS OR INJURY**

<i>PROCEDURE CODE:</i>	<i>548 AP 002</i>
Policy Reference: 548 – Employee Absence Reporting	

BACKGROUND

Employee absenteeism can have a detrimental effect on the division's operations including, but not limited to, impact to student learning, reduced facility maintenance, delayed administration, increased workload to staff, financial cost, and morale issues. To deliver quality education and services to students within Medicine Hat Public School Division, the division relies on all employees to attend work regularly and to fulfill the duties for which they were employed. The division recognizes the value each employee contributes in their role and the division's responsibility to address causes of absence from work with employees.

SCOPE

The Board requires all employees to report their absence(s) from work to ensure accurate recording of absences, timely staff replacement, and appropriate follow-up in accordance with Board policy and administrative procedures. Compliance with this policy is required by all Medicine Hat Public School Division employees.

PROCEDURE

1. Absences of three or less consecutive working days related to illness or injury:

- 1.1. Employees are required to complete a declaration of their absence through the division's Atrieve ERP absence reporting system and contact their Principal or Supervisor as soon as reasonably possible following the illness or accident that prevents them from working (where feasible) to report their absence and to identify a return-to-work timeline.
- 1.2. If an employee requires modifications of their hours or duties in the first three (3) absent days, the employee may be referred to the division's Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources, whereby medical documentation will be requested when

accommodation(s) for modified work have been requested. The required documentation should be submitted directly to the Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources. Documentation can be submitted by scanned email, facsimiles or by hand directly to Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources. Alternatively, facsimiles or email sent from the medical practitioner's office will also be accepted.

1.3. The documentation required for accommodation purposes shall minimally consist of the following:

- 1.3.1 Medical restrictions or limitations that are preventing the employee performing their full regular duties;
- 1.3.2 Anticipated date of recovery and return to full duty.

2. Absences of four or more consecutive working days related to illness or injury:

2.1. When an employee is going to be absent for four (4) or more consecutive working days, the employee will complete a declaration of their absence through the division's Atrieve ERP absence reporting system for at least the first two (2) days of absence and notify their Principal or Supervisor immediately of the absence and estimated timeline to be away.

2.2. The employee will provide medical documentation completed by a doctor who is a member in good standing with the College of Physicians and Surgeons, or a dentist who is a member in good standing with the Alberta Dental Association, to the division's Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources through scanned email, facsimile, or hand delivery.

2.3. The Principal or Supervisor shall indicate to the employee that the Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources will be notified of the employee's absence to enable early intervention and to facilitate a safe and timely return to work.

2.4. The division's Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources may require the employee to provide additional medical documentation or a completed Fitness for Work Form, or both, by the appropriate medical practitioner that shall include the following information:

- 2.4.1 the medically supported restrictions or limitations based on objective medical findings;
- 2.4.2 confirmation of a diagnosable medical illness or injury;
- 2.4.3 confirmation that the employee is participating in the appropriate treatment to expedite the employee's safe and timely return to work;
- 2.4.4 confirmation of the employee's prognosis for recovery;
- 2.4.5 any other information required to safely return the employee to work in a timely manner;
- 2.4.6 treating medical practitioner's name, address, phone number and fax number;
- 2.4.7 treating medical practitioner's signature.



- 2.5. When requested, this documentation must be submitted by the employee or appropriate treating medical practitioner to Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources as soon as reasonably possible.

The division must exercise discretion in each case when determining whether to ask for additional medical documentation in accordance with section(s) 1 and 2.

3. Sick Leave Benefit:

- 3.1. As outlined in the employee's respective Collective Agreement or Terms and Conditions of Employment Contract, an employee may access or is eligible for sick leave benefits if:
- 3.1.1 they have a credit of unused sick leave; and
 - 3.1.2 if they are disabled, which is defined as a state of incapacity due to bodily injury or sickness, preventing the employee from working for the Board for remuneration; or
 - 3.1.3 for the purpose of obtaining necessary medical or dental treatment that could not have reasonably been booked outside of working hours, preventing the employee from working for the Board for remuneration during that time.
- 3.2. Sick leave benefits are not payable:
- 3.2.1 in cases which are compensable by the Workers' Compensation Board;
 - 3.2.2 for 12-month employees during scheduled vacation unless the illness requires hospitalization. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis;
 - 3.2.3 when an employee is on an authorized unpaid leave of absence;
 - 3.2.4 when an employee has exhausted all eligible days under the sick leave plan;
 - 3.2.5 while in receipt of Extended Disability Benefits;
 - 3.2.6 when satisfactory medical documentation has not been received.
- 3.3. To be eligible for sick leave benefits, the employee must follow the Board's procedures for reporting absences and providing medical documentation when required.
- 3.4. The Board will endeavour to accommodate the return to work and placement of temporary or permanently or partially disabled employees in accordance with the Duty to Accommodate under the Alberta Human Rights Act.
- 3.5. Access to sick leave benefits may be denied for failure to provide the satisfactory medical documentation requested. Satisfactory medical documentation refers to, but is not limited to, medically supported restrictions or limitations as they relate to the employee's ability to meet the essential duties of their position. It is the employee's responsibility to submit appropriate documentation to the Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources, as applicable.



3.6. In order to maintain access to sick leave benefits, the Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources, or designate, may request the employee to attend an Independent Medical Examination (IME) or complete a Functional Capacity Evaluation (FCE) to determine the employee's restrictions or limitations. This will assist in providing return to work or accommodation options. In requesting the IME or FCE, the following protocol will apply:

- 3.6.1 If the Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources, or designate, reasonably requires medical information to determine whether an employee is able to return to work or should properly remain off of work and in receipt of sick leave benefits, the Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources, or designate, shall so advise the employee and request that such information be provided;
- 3.6.2 The employee is required to provide the requested medical documentation to the Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources, or designate, in response to the request;
- 3.6.3 The Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources, or designate, will review the documentation provided by the employee. If the Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources, or designate, is not satisfied with the adequacy of the medical information provided, the Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources, or designate, will clearly identify to the employee why the information is not adequate;
- 3.6.4 The employee will be given an opportunity to provide the Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources, or designate, with further medical information;
- 3.6.5 The Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources, or designate, will review any further documentation provided by the employee. If the entirety of the medical documentation provided does not reasonably permit the Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources, or designate, to determine whether the employee should return to work or remain off of work, the employee may be requested to submit to an IME or FCE;
- 3.6.6 The IME or FCE provider will be chosen by the Health and Wellness Manager, or designate, and the cost of the medical assessment will be borne by the division.
- 3.6.7 If the employee fails to attend the IME or does not, prior to the IME, provide the Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources, or designate, with further medical information to reasonably permit the Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources, or designate, to determine whether the employee should return to work or remain off work, the employee's wages and benefits may be discontinued.



4. Responsibilities of the Employee:

- 4.1. Personally report an absence unless the employee is incapacitated and unable to do so. Failure to report absences at the first opportunity in accordance with these procedures may result in denial of pay or benefits.
- 4.2. Indicate, in general terms, the reason for the absence, i.e. due to accident, illness, contractual, etc.
- 4.3. Communicate directly with their principal or supervisor, and if not immediately available, the principal or supervisor will respond when available. Unless otherwise arranged with their principal or supervisor, the employee is to update the principal or supervisor on each day of absence. Employees will also log their absence into the division's Atrieve ERP absence reporting system. The frequency of communication is at the discretion of the principal or supervisor and will be communicated to the employee by the principal or supervisor.
- 4.4. Assume responsibility for the cost associated with the documentation from the appropriate treating medical practitioner in relation to the absence, unless addressed specifically in the Collective Agreement specific to the employee's union/association. Employees can submit receipts for medical documentation costs to their Health Spending Account for reimbursement.
- 4.5. To be eligible for sick leave benefits, employees may be required to provide satisfactory medical documentation completed by the appropriate treating medical practitioner, in accordance with section(s) 1 and 2 of this Procedure.
- 4.6. Maintain reasonable contact with their Principal or Supervisor or Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources, or both, during their absence when they are unable to perform the essential duties of their position due to disability.
- 4.7. Participate in appropriate treatment, as determined by the treating medical practitioner(s), to ensure a safe and timely return to work.
- 4.8. Participate in the development of their Return-to-Work Plan, including taking the proposed Return to Work Plan (including accommodations or modifications) to the appropriate treating medical practitioner(s) for approval, if necessary.

5. Responsibilities of the Principal/Vice-Principal or Immediate Supervisor:

- 5.1. Communicate the applicable Policy and Administrative Procedures to the employee.
- 5.2. Monitor individual employee absenteeism records as designated by Human Resources.
- 5.3. Communicate with employees' regarding their absence, the general reason for absence, and return to work timeline.
- 5.4. Ensure employee confidentiality in relation to absences and medical information.



- 5.5. Contact the Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources for assistance when restrictions and /or limitations have been identified.
- 5.6. Direct the employee to forward medical documentation directly to the Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources, in a secure and confidential manner.
- 5.7. Participate in the development of the employee's Return to Work Plan, including providing accommodations or modifications to the employee's duties or hours, or both, based on recommendations from the Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources, or designate.

6. Responsibilities of the Health and Wellness Manager, Human Resources, or Designate:

- 6.1. Request proof of continuing disability from the employee in the case of absences exceeding four (4) or more consecutive working days, at appropriate intervals, in order to maintain the sick leave benefit or determine if participation in a Return-to-Work Program is appropriate.
- 6.2. Receive all medical documentation required and provide support to the employee during their time of disability.
- 6.3. Assist the Principal or Supervisor by maintaining contact with employees disabled for more than four (4) consecutive working days, verifying that the employee is under the active care of the appropriate medical practitioner and following an appropriate treatment plan, and advise the Principal or Supervisor of the expected return to work date, when known.
- 6.4. Develop an appropriate Return to Work Plan (including appropriate accommodation or modification recommendations) based on the employee's restrictions and limitations.

7. Responsibilities of Superintendent(s)

- 7.1. It is the responsibility of the appropriate Superintendent or Designate to administer this Policy and Administrative Procedure.
- 7.2. The appropriate Superintendent or Designate shall review this Procedure and Program Guidelines on a regular basis or as required by legislative change.

Approved: April 26, 2022

