



## WINDSOR-ESSEX CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Human Resources Department

### ATTENDANCE SUPPORT PROGRAM

#### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

##### **Which absences are considered when triggering the program?**

Only AB20 illness will be considered for the purpose of the program. These are absences that result from illness or injury that arise due to circumstances beyond the employee's control. The Attendance Support Program recognizes that employees with non-culpable absenteeism may require assistance to attend work regularly and meet attendance expectation.

**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 and abuse of leave (including absences without authorization) are examples of culpable absences. Employees with culpable absences are subject to progressive discipline, in accordance with the associated policy and procedures. These absences are **not** dealt with through the Attendance Support Program

##### **I receive an allocation of 11 sick days each September as a full time employee. Why is the threshold less than that?**

The Board provides sick leave benefits to its employees under its various collective agreements and terms of employment. It is the expectation that such benefits are to be utilized by employees only where an employee has a legitimate illness or injury which may be substantiated by supporting medical documentation. The Board is obligated, as part of its duty for fiscal responsibility, to manage absence levels within the system, recognizing that the regular attendance of its employees is integral to maintaining quality of services and consistency of support to students, staff and the community. In fulfilling its obligation, the Board has established an "average" level of absences, based on absence data collected from across the system. This measure has become the threshold for entrance into the Board's Attendance Support Program (ASP). Where an employee has exceeded the established "average" level of absences (the "threshold"), the Board initiates the ASP as a non-disciplinary support, towards improvement in attendance.

##### **What is the threshold?**

The current threshold is 9 days in a 12 working month period.

## **What is the 12 working month period?**

The 12 working months is a “rolling” period. From any particular day you should consider the previous 12 “working” months when counting your number of absences for the period. If you are an employee who is not working in the summer, you would not include the weeks that you are not working when calculating the previous 12 working months.

For all Board employees (both 10 and 12 month), any vacation periods or leaves of absence greater than 2 weeks would not be counted in the 12 “working” month period. Therefore the “working” month period may extend past the 12 month calendar period, and all absences within the 12 “working” month period will be considered.

Example for a 10 month employee: If you wish to determine number of absences as of September 30, 2016, for the previous 12 working months, you would count your absences for September 2016, all of the previous school year (15/16 – 10 months), and June of the prior school year (14/15 – 1 month). This period would represent 12 working months.

If you wish to determine your absences as of October 30, 2016, you would count those incurred in September and October, as well as all of the previous school year (15/16).

Example for a 12 month employee: If you wish to determine your absences as of September 30, 2016 and had taken a 6 week vacation in the summer months, you would count your absences from August 15, 2015. The actual working month period spans 13 and ½ calendar months as it does not include the vacation period.

If you wish to determine your absences as of October 30, 2016 and had taken 4 weeks’ vacation in the summer months, you would count your absences from October 1, 2015. The actual working month period spans 13 calendar months as it does not include the 4 weeks vacation.

**NOTE:** The working month periods for both 10 and 12 month employees may extend farther through the calendar year if they have taken leaves of absence greater than 2 weeks.

## **Where can I look to confirm how many absences I have incurred?**

Through the Employee Self Service Portal, all employees can confirm the number of absences they have incurred over the 12 working month period. After entering the Portal, in the left menu, click “IME”; Click “Employee”; Click “Personal”; Click “Absence”; Click “History”. For purposes of the Attendance Support Program, only those absences marked “illness” will be considered. PLEASE NOTE: Administration works to ensure that absences are entered into IME in a timely fashion. There will, however, be some delay between the time of your absence and the entry into IME. You must consider those absences which may not yet have been entered, when you are calculating your absences for the 12 working months.

## **What happens when I exceed 9 days of absence?**

You will receive an initial notification that contains the following:

- The Board's concern with respect to your absence level;
- The Board's expectation for improvement in attendance, where at a minimum your absences remain below the prorated threshold (2.25 absences) over a 60 working day review period, commencing on the date of the notification;
- Information with respect to the Board's Employee Assistance Program;
- An invitation to request a meeting with your principal/supervisor, should you wish to do so, to discuss any issue(s) that may be preventing your regular attendance, and/or should you require further support and guidance;
- An invitation to contact the Board's HR Representative assigned to the Attendance Support Program, should you feel you should be exempt from the Attendance Support Program.

## **Are there exemptions from the program?**

The HR Representative responsible for the administration of the ASP, may exercise discretion for a serious illness/injury that involves surgery, hospitalization or requirement for continuous medical treatment, and exempt you from the program.

You will have 1 week from the date of receiving the Initial Notification to contact the HR Representative should you wish to be exempt from the program. To apply for an exemption you will be asked to provide satisfactory supporting medical documentation with your request. Confidentiality will be respected.

## **What happens if I am exempted from the program?**

If you are exempt from the program you will be informed by email. Depending upon the nature of your medical requirements you may be supported through the Board's Disability Management Program.

Future absences will be considered, and you may be asked to provide medical confirmation that those absences are related to the condition for which you were previously exempt. Should you trigger the threshold as a result of absences not related to the condition for which you were exempt, you may be placed into the Attendance Support Program.

## **What happens if I am not exempt from the program?**

If you do not respond within 1 week from receiving notification or should you receive notice from an HR Representative that you have not been exempt, you will continue in the Attendance Support Process in accordance with the Initial Notification.

## **What constitutes the 60 working day review period?**

The 60 working day review period will begin on the day you receive the Initial Notification and will include the following 60 working days that you are expected to be at work. This period will include those days you are scheduled to work. The review period does not include weekends, holidays, summer lieu days, or vacation days/leaves of absence greater than 2 weeks.

**What happens if I am able to maintain my absences below the prorated threshold over the 60 working day review period following the Initial Notification?**

If you are able to maintain your absences at a rate less than the prorated threshold over the 60 working day review period, you will receive a confirming letter and enter into a monitoring period of 12 working months.

**What happens if I am not able to reduce my absences to at least the prorated threshold (2.25 absences) over the 60 working day review period following the Initial Notification?**

If you have exceeded the threshold, you will be invited to attend a Coaching Level 1 meeting.

**What happens at the Coaching Level 1 meeting?**

The purpose of the Coaching Level 1 meeting with your supervisor is to gain an understanding of the issue(s) that may be preventing you from regularly attending work and to offer support and guidance. You will also be asked to set a goal for improvement for the next 60 working days. In order to move from the review period and into the “monitoring” period of the program, you will be expected to have no more than 2.25 absences in the 60 working day review period. You therefore can consider making that your goal. If you feel you are unable to meet that level of attendance within the review period, even with improvement, you may set a different goal. However, if your absences remain above 2.25 at the end of the review period, you may move into Coaching Level 2 of the ASP for further support.

**Can I bring Union representation to the Coaching Level meeting?**

You have the right to have union representation present at all meetings. It is your responsibility to invite the appropriate union/federation representative to a scheduled meeting.

**What happens should I proceed to Coaching Level 2?**

The purpose of further coaching levels is to provide additional support. At each level you will be provided opportunity to achieve improvement goals. Where you are able to maintain your absences at a rate less than the prorated threshold at any coaching level, you will receive a confirming letter and enter into a monitoring period of 12 working months.

**What happens in the 12 working months monitoring period?**

Any absences that occur from the day you exit a 60 working day review period, through the following 12 working months will be considered in the monitoring period. If at any point those absences exceed the threshold (9 absences), you will retrigger in to the program and will proceed to the next coaching level from that which you had last exited.

**How do I exit the attendance support program?**

You will exit the program if the absences you incur in a 12 working month monitoring period remain below the threshold (9 absences).

**What if I have questions or concerns with respect to the program?**

The program is intended as a support. It is non-disciplinary. Should you have any questions or concerns please contact the HR Representative assigned to the program and they will be happy to speak with you. All personal information provided will be kept confidential and secure.