

Procedural Guideline – Superior-Greenstone DSB

Attendance Support Program

People & Culture		
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Purpose

Superior-Greenstone District School Board believes that regular attendance by all employees is essential for the delivery of high-quality education for students.

The Board supports the health and well-being of its employees by creating a positive, supportive environment where employees are offered assistance on an individual basis to support their regular attendance.

Scope

This procedure applies to all employees.

Definitions

Non-Culpable Absence: Non-culpable absences are beyond the control of the employee. Examples include illness, injury and medical or dental appointments. Non-culpable absences do not include Employment Standards Act leaves, other approved leaves contained within Collective Agreements, or absences approved by WSIB.

Absences approved under the Disability Support Program (DSP) do not apply to absence thresholds or goals.

Culpable Absence: Unauthorized absences that are within an employee's control and for which the employee is responsible. Examples include lateness, leaving work early without approval, or calling in sick when not ill. Employees with culpable absences are subject to progressive discipline in accordance with applicable policies and procedures. These absences are not addressed through the Attendance Support Program.

Absence Threshold: The absence threshold is the established number of days to initiate possible entry into the program. When an employee's absences exceed the absence threshold within a rolling 12 working month period the Attendance Support Process will be considered, based on the employee's individual circumstances. The Absence Threshold will be reviewed by the Board biennially.

Attendance Goal: While an employee is in the Attendance Support Program, attendance goals may be set within each review period. The default attendance goal is 2.5 days over 3 working months. Attendance goals may be added, revised, or deleted

depending on the receipt of new medical information or based on discussion during an Attendance Support Meeting.

Discretion: The Attendance Support Program is intended to deal with the specific circumstances of each individual employee; at any point along the continuum the Board will use discretion which includes whether an employee is entered, progressed along, or extended in any review period within the Program.

Confidentiality: The Employer will maintain the confidentiality of an employee's health information in accordance with Policy 725 Confidentiality of Medical Records.

Progression through the Attendance Support Program: An employee who is unable to meet their attendance goal in any 3 working-month review period or is unable to stay under the threshold in the 12 working-month monitoring period may progress to the next Level of the Program from where they left off.

Exiting the Attendance Support Program: An employee in the Attendance Support Program will exit the Program following successful completion of both the 3-working month review period and subsequent 12-working month monitoring period.

Union Representation: The employee may include their union representative in the Attendance Support process. At the employee's request, the union representative may attend any meetings that occur to discuss or review the employee's attendance

Medically Supported Disability: Should a medically supported disability be identified that requires support or workplace accommodation at any time during the AS process, the Board will review, and where required, refer the employee to the Disability Support Program. Absences approved under Disability Support do not apply to the Attendance Support Program.

Re-entering the Attendance Support Program: An employee who exits the Attendance Support Program but is unable to stay under the threshold, may re-enter the Program at the Review Period 1 Level

Responsibilities

Employee

- Attend work on a regular basis.
- Timely reporting of any absences from the workplace.
- Maintaining regular contact with their immediate Supervisor and People & Culture.
- Providing timely and complete medical information as requested.
- Collaborate with their Supervisor on the development of attendance goals within each Review Period of the ASP.
- Participating in attendance meetings and demonstrating actions that are consistent with a commitment to improving one's attendance.
- Contact their union representative if they wish to have them involved
- Provide appropriate documentation as required.

Supervisor

- Review employee attendance on an ongoing basis

- Communicate attendance expectations to employees on a regular basis
- If instances of culpable absences are identified through the AS Program, they will be managed in a timely way through performance management.
- Facilitate supportive meetings with employees who exceed the Attendance Threshold (upon request) or Attendance Goal within a Review Period
- Collaborate with employees on the development of attendance goals within each Review Period
- Complete Attendance Meeting Summary Form for each meeting and forward to asp@sgdsb.on.ca

People & Culture

- Provide training to employees.
- Provide guidance and coaching on the interpretation and application of the Attendance Support Program
- Participate in meetings as requested
- Provide advice, guidance and make recommendations in situations involving disability, return to work and employment accommodation.

Union Representative

- Cooperate and help identify potential underlying issues affecting attendance and engage in problem-solving to explore reasonable accommodations or solutions where applicable
- Provide employees with clear and accurate information regarding the AS process
- Attend AS meetings when requested by employees

Guideline Steps

1. When an employee exceeds the Absence threshold within any twelve (12) working-month period:
 - a. A letter will be sent by the People & Culture to employees who exceed the Absence Threshold. The purpose of the letter is to confirm the employee's absence level, offer available workplace supports, and confirm the attendance goal for the next 3 working months. The employee will be offered the opportunity to meet with their Supervisor and provided the option to bring union representation to address any errors in the absence record, offer clarity regarding any issues that may be preventing the employee from regularly attending work, and/or discuss the default attendance goal.
 - b. The employee will have 1 week from email date to review absences, advise of any inaccuracies to asp@sgdsb.on.ca and/or contact their Supervisor to request a meeting.
 - c. If the employee requests a meeting with the Supervisor, the Supervisor will:
 - offer support and EFAP to the employee and encourage the employee to seek additional support from the union, family physician, and other community resources if applicable and.
 - complete the Attendance Meeting Summary Form. A copy will be provided to

- the employee, and a copy will be forwarded to People & Culture at asp@sgdsb.on.ca
- d. The Supervisor will monitor the employee's attendance over the next three (3) working months (Review Period 1).
2. If, at any point during Review Period 1, the employee exceeds the attendance goal the following may occur:
- a. The Supervisor will meet formally with the employee (who will be offered the option to bring union representation).
 - b. The employee's absences will be reviewed and supports, and guidance offered. If no extenuating circumstances have been provided for which discretion may be applied, attendance goals will be set with the employee that will apply for the following three (3) working months (Review Period 2).
 - c. The Supervisor will offer support and EFAP to the employee and encourage the employee to seek additional support from the union, family physician, and other community resources if applicable.
 - d. The Supervisor will complete the Attendance Meeting Summary Form, and a copy will be provided to the employee, and a copy will be forwarded to People & Culture at asp@sgdsb.on.ca
 - e. The Supervisor will review the employees' attendance over the next three (3) working month review period (Review Period 2).
3. If, at any point during Review Period 2 the employee exceeds the attendance goal the following will occur:
- a. The Supervisor will meet formally with the employee (who will be offered the option to bring union representation).
 - b. The employees' absences will be reviewed and support and guidance offered. If no extenuating circumstances have been provided for which discretion may be applied, attendance goals will be set with the employee that will apply for the following three (3) working months (Review Period 3).
 - c. The Supervisor will offer support and EFAP to the employee and encourage the employee to seek additional support from the union, family physician, and other community resources if applicable
 - d. The Supervisor will complete the Attendance Meeting Summary Form, and a copy will be provided to the employee, and a copy will be forwarded to People & Culture at asp@sgdsb.on.ca
 - e. The Supervisor will monitor the employees' attendance over the next three (3) working months (Review Period 3).

4. If, at any point during Review Period 3 the employee exceeds the attendance goal, the following will occur:
 - a. The Supervisor and People & Culture will meet formally with the employee (who will be offered the option to bring union representation).
 - b. The employees' absences will be reviewed and support and guidance offered. If no extenuating circumstances have been provided for which discretion may be applied, attendance goals will be set with the employee that will apply for the following three (3) working months (Review Period 4).
 - c. The will offer support and EFAP to the employee and encourage the employee to seek additional support from the union, family physician, and other community resources if applicable
 - d. The Supervisor will complete the Attendance Meeting Summary Form, and a copy will be provided to the employee, and a copy will be forwarded to People & Culture at asp@sgdsb.on.ca
 - e. The Supervisor will monitor the employees' attendance over the next three (3) working months (Review Period 4).
 - f. The employees will be informed that if they are unable to meet their attendance goal during Review Period 4, their ongoing employment status may be reviewed. This review may include termination on a non-disciplinary basis.
5. If, at any point Review Period 4 the employee exceeds the attendance goal the following will occur:
 - a. The Supervisor will meet formally with the employee and employee's union representative, The Superintendent or designate, and People & Culture will also attend
 - b. The employees' absences will be reviewed.
 - c. Where the employee has been unable to meet the attendance goals established in Review Period 4 and the Board determines that:
 - It has fulfilled its obligations under the applicable collective agreement and/or policies and procedural guidelines, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, Ontario Human Rights Code, and/or any other applicable legislation; and,
 - The employee's absenteeism is excessive and there is no reasonable likelihood that the employee will be able to attend work regularly in the foreseeable future.
 - The employee's employment status will be reviewed, up to and including termination on a non-disciplinary basis

Appendices

- **Appendix A** - Link to – [Attendance Meeting Summary Form](#)
- **Appendix B** - Frequently Asked Questions

Appendix B – Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Attendance Support Program?

The Superior-Greenstone District School Board is committed to creating and maintaining a healthy workplace for all employees. The Attendance Support Program is one component of the Healthy Workplace Initiative, which also includes the Disability Support and Psychologically Healthy and Safe Workplace programs.

The Attendance Support Program is a supportive and non-disciplinary process that is aimed at positively supporting the health and wellness of employees so they can attend work regularly.

2. Why do we have an Attendance Support Program?

Regular employee attendance provides stability, continuity and equitable workload distribution, which contributes to the Board's ability to deliver services and quality education to our students.

The Board recognizes its responsibility to provide a working environment that supports employee well-being through prevention, early intervention and individual case management.

The Attendance Support Program was established in recognition that employees sometimes require assistance and support in attending work on a regular basis. The program is designed to assist employees in a supportive, non-disciplinary manner.

3. What if I need to be away from work for reasons that are not related to my personal illness?

Employees may have access to time off work for reasons related to family assistance, compassionate leave, etc. These days are not included in the 11 full day threshold of the Attendance Support Program. Please refer to your Collective Agreement or Terms and Conditions of Employment to learn more about available days. You may also contact your union representative (if applicable) or the People & Culture department.

4. What is the absence threshold?

The absence threshold is the number of absences that may initiate support through the Attendance Support Program. The absence threshold is 11 full-day absences over a 12 working-month period. This threshold is based on Board absence data averages over several years.

5. What is the 12 working-month period?

The absence threshold is 11 full days within a rolling 12 working-month period. A rolling year is defined as a 12 working-months, measured backward from the present date. If an employee exceeds 11 full days of absence in the 12 working-month period, they will receive an email initiating their entry into the Review Period 1 of the Program.

6. What types of absences may be included in the ASP?

Appendix B – Frequently Asked Questions

Absences that may be included in the Attendance Support Program are any days deducted from an employee's sick leave allocation including personal illness/injury and medical appointments. Any unpaid leaves of absences for personal illness/injury and medical appointments also count towards the threshold. Absences related to a workplace injury and supported through the WSIB or approved under the Disability Support Program are not counted towards the threshold.

7. How will I know if I have entered the ASP?

The process is initiated if an employee's absence exceeds the established absence threshold within the rolling 12 working-month period. Should you exceed the threshold, you will receive an email indicating your entry into the Review Period 1 of the Program.

8. What is the Attendance Support Process?

The process consists of an initial email and if required, four additional Review Periods. The intention of the initial email is to provide your attendance record, offer support and provide you with a new attendance goal for the next 3 working months.

Included in the process, is support offered by the Attendance Support Team. If you meet your goal by the end of the Review Period 1, then you will enter the 12-working month monitoring period, where your attendance will continue to be monitored. Following the 12-working month review period, you may exit the program or move to the next Review Period level of the program.

9. How do I exit the Attendance Support Program?

If your absences do not exceed the attendance goal absence threshold during the 12-working month monitoring period, you will exit the program.

10. Who will participate in the AS Meeting(s)?

Attendance Support meetings are confidential, between you and your direct Supervisor. You may also invite a union representative (if applicable, or if you choose to).

11. Am I being disciplined in the Attendance Support Program?

No, the ASP is a non-disciplinary process. The intention of the program is to offer support to improve your attendance.

12. What if the reason for my absences is due to a disability or medical condition?

If your absences are due to a medical condition or disability that is expected to continue, you will be referred to the Disability Support Program.

13. What if the reasons for my absences are personal?

You are not required to divulge a medical diagnosis or personal issues. However, you must indicate in general terms the reason for your absence. Please be assured that any information that is shared at an AS meeting is strictly confidential.

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14. What Supportive Services may be available to me?

The Board's Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) provides confidential supportive services to employees and their family members in the form of counseling on a wide variety of life challenges. You may contact your EFAP via Homewood Health: Call: (844)-939-0282. If absences are related to an ongoing medical condition and/or disability, please contact Disability and Wellness at disabilityandwellnes@sgdsb.on.ca.

15. What if I have more questions?

For further information regarding the Attendance Support Program, asp@sgdsb.on.ca or your union representative (if applicable).