



BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE
805 – Attendance Support Program
DIRECTIONAL POLICY
Nurturing Employee Relations

Title of Administrative Procedure:

Attendance Support Program (ASP)

Date Approved:

May 2026

Projected Review Date:

May 2031

Directional Policy Alignment:

The *Attendance Support Program Administrative Procedure* aligns with CDSBEO's *Nurturing Employee Relations Directional Policy* by ensuring employees understand the requirements and expectations with respect to regular attendance at work.

Alignment with Multi-Year Strategic Plan:

The *Attendance Support Program Administrative Procedure* is aligned with the CDSBEO Strategic Plan 2025–2030 as it supports creating safe, supportive, and healthy learning environments by leveraging all available resources.

[CDSBEO Strategic Plan](#)

Purpose

The Board is committed to creating and promoting a healthy school and school board community that contributes to safe, stable learning and working environments that ultimately support student and staff well-being and student achievement.

The intent of the Attendance Support Program (ASP) is to enhance employee well-being and attendance at work in a supportive and non-disciplinary manner. This approach is specifically designed for employees who exceed the school board's established absence threshold, with the ultimate goal of supporting student achievement and fostering a healthy school and board community.

Action Required

Background

All school board employees play a vital role in contributing to a supportive, positive and healthy school and school board community. Stability and continuity in the school, classroom, and Board offices are essential and staff who are consistently present help to support student well-being and build a healthy school and Board community.

Attendance support is a non-disciplinary program intended to support employees who are not able to consistently attend work by setting an attendance threshold, recording and tracking attendance, and coaching or engaging with coaching employees. The Attendance Support Program (ASP) encourages joint accountability for health and wellness by seeking employees' input in creating solutions to address overall well-being and attendance.

The ASP is aimed at positively supporting employees in achieving regular attendance at work. Regular attendance at work is a condition of employment and the ASP supports that goal. The types of support that can be offered include but are not limited to the Employee and Family Assistance Program, workplace accommodations, and support within the workplace.

The focus of the ASP is on *non-culpable* absences. These absences are not dealt with through a progressive discipline model, instead the employee is supported through the ASP. The ASP is a non-disciplinary process with the goal being to assist Employees in maintaining regular attendance. Employees who exceed the Board's established absence threshold will advance through the EASP.

Should a medically supported disability be identified that requires support or accommodation at any time during the process, the Board will support the employee's transition into the Disability Management Program by following [E1:8 - Absence Reporting](#) and [E3-2 -Disability Management - Early Intervention, Accommodations and Return to Work](#).

Sporadic absences may continue to be considered within the ASP. Culpable absences are subject to progressive discipline, in accordance with their respective Collective Agreements or Terms and Conditions and Board policies. These absences are not dealt with through the ASP.

The Board will apply the ASP in a manner consistent with the Human Rights Code, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, and other applicable legislation in place to accommodate the individual needs of employees and assist them in the performance of their duties.

Attendance Support Procedure

The following steps outline the process by which the Board will engage in non-disciplinary discussion with those employees whose non-culpable absenteeism, including illness and medical appointments, usage is above the predetermined *absence threshold*.

The threshold for entry into the ASP shall be fifteen (15) days within a rolling 12-working month period.

At each of the five (5) Levels of the Attendance Support Program the Board shall assess whether any of the absences in question were related to:

- a disability;
- a requirement for accommodation under the Human Rights Code; or
- extenuating circumstances (i.e. single event or a one-time sickness) which would indicate that it would not be appropriate for the employee to enter into the ASP.

The following absences shall **not be included** when determining the absence threshold:

- an Employment Standards Act leave;
- a leave of absence related to a workplace injury covered by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act; or
- a Long-Term Disability leave of absence.

The Attendance Support Program includes 5 distinct components:

- Preliminary Meeting;
- Coaching Level 1;
- Coaching Level 2;
- Coaching Level 3; and
- Coaching Level 4

Entry into the Attendance Support Program

An employee may enter the ASP when their absences are at or over the threshold within a rolling 12-working month period. The threshold is reviewed annually. The Board will advise all Employees when the threshold is revised.

Employees who do not exceed the threshold in the 12-working month monitoring period will exit the Attendance Support Program.

Notification of Entry into the ASP

An employee who enters the ASP will be notified by email which will outline the requirement for them to attend a meeting with their Principal or Supervisor .

The Levels of the Attendance Support Program

Preliminary Level

The Preliminary Meeting may include the employee and the employee's union or association if requested, the Principal or Supervisor, and/or a Human Resources Designate to initiate discussion related to the employee's absence level. The meeting will allow the Principal or Supervisor to gain an understanding of the issue(s) that may be preventing the employee from regularly attending work, to offer support and guidance, and to have the employee set an attendance goal for the next 90 working days or 5 working months.

Coaching Level 1

The Coaching Level 1 Meeting consists of a meeting that includes the employee, the employee's union or association if requested, the Principal or Supervisor, and/or a Human Resources Designate. The employee may enter into Level 1 if they have been unable to meet the attendance goals established in the Preliminary Level review period. 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 next 90 working days or 5 working months.

Coaching Level 2

The Coaching Level 2 Meeting consists of a meeting that includes the employee, the employee's union or association if requested, the Principal or Supervisor, and/or a Human Resources Designate. The employee may enter Level 2 if they have been unable to meet the attendance goals established for the Level 1 review period. If no extenuating circumstances have been provided for which discretion may be reasonably applied, attendance goals will be set with the employee that will apply for the next 90 working days or 5 working months.

Coaching Level 3

The Coaching Level 3 Meeting consists of a meeting that includes the employee, the employee's union or association, the Principal or Supervisor, and/or a Human Resources Designate. The employee may enter into Level 3 if they have been unable to meet the attendance goals established for the Level 2 review period. If no extenuating circumstances have been provided for which discretion may be reasonably applied, attendance goals will be set with the employee that will apply for the next 90 working days or 5 working months.

The employee will be informed that if they are unable to meet their established attendance goal during the Level 3 review period, they may progress to the Coaching Level 4 where their employment status will be reviewed. This review may include termination on a non-disciplinary basis.

Coaching Level 4

The Coaching Level 4 Meeting consists of a meeting that includes the employee, the employee's union or association, the Principal or Supervisor, and Superintendent of Human Resources or designate. The employee may enter Level 4 if they have been unable to meet the attendance goals established for the Level 3 review period. Where the employee progresses to Level 4 and the Board determines that:

- a. It has fulfilled its obligations under the applicable collective agreement and/or policies and procedures, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, Ontario Human Rights Code, an/or other applicable legislation; and,
- b. 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.
- c. The employee's employment status will be reviewed, up to and including termination on a non-disciplinary basis.

When attendance goals have been met within the Preliminary or Coaching Level review periods, the employee will enter the 12-working month monitoring period where their absences are monitored by the Human Resources Designate.

Employees who exceed the threshold in the 12-working month monitoring period will remain in the Attendance Support Program. The employee may be invited to attend a meeting at next Level of the program. Employees who do not exceed the threshold in the 12-working month monitoring period will exit the Attendance Support Program. If the employee's absences and/or occurrences exceed the Board's established threshold after existing the ASP, the employee will enter the program at the Preliminary Level.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

The Board is committed to ensuring that the Employee Attendance Support Program complies with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The Board recognizes its responsibility to provide accessible services, programs, and accommodations to all employees in accordance with the AODA, the Ontario Human Rights Code, and any other applicable legislation.

Employees requiring accommodation due to a disability will be supported in alignment with the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity. All meetings, communication, and documentation related to the ASP are available in accessible formats upon request and will provide any necessary accommodations to facilitate full participation in the process.

Supervisors, Principals, and Human Resources personnel involved in the Attendance Support Program will receive training to ensure compliance with the AODA and to enhance their understanding of providing accessible and inclusive support to employees.

Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- Ensuring this administrative procedure is in alignment with the *Nurturing Employee Relations Directional Policy*.
- Reviewing the *Attendance Support Program Administrative Procedure* as part of its regular policy and procedures review cycle.

The Director of Education is responsible for:

- Ensuring the implementation of and compliance with this Administrative Procedure, including the designation of required resources.

Superintendent of Human Resources or designate is responsible for:

- Promoting safety, wellness, and commitment to the ASP.
- Providing support and acting as a resource for all aspects of the Attendance Support process.
- Holding leaders accountable to facilitating timely meetings with employees in need of support.
- Participating in the Coaching Level 4 Meeting, and other meetings, when required. In conjunction with Human Resources, Principals, Supervisors, and Managers, review the employment status of employees who have not met attendance goals in Coaching level 3.
- Ensuring a review/audit of the Attendance Support Program occurs at a minimum of every five years or as part of the Board's regular policy/procedure review cycle, whichever is the shorter period.

Superintendents of School Effectiveness are responsible for:

- Promoting safety, wellness, and commitment to the EASP.
- Providing support and acting as a resource for all aspects of the Attendance Support process.
- Holding leaders accountable to facilitating timely meetings with employees in need of support.

Human Resources Wellness and Disability Coordinator is responsible for:

- Support Principals/Supervisors in addressing absenteeism issues.
- Serve as a resource to employees and Principals/Supervisors.

- Assist in identifying employees who exceed the threshold level of absences.
- Advise employees of resources available to them.
- Participate in supportive meetings as required.
- Facilitate the meetings in Coaching Levels 1 to 3.
- Provide assistance on the development of individualized goals at the conclusion of each meeting, taking into account all circumstances identified during each meeting.
- Provide a written outcome of each coaching level meeting with copies to the employee, Principal/Supervisor and employee representative, if applicable.

Principals and Vice-Principals are responsible for:

- Communicate attendance expectations to all employees through a regular review of the Attendance Support Program.
- Personally review and validate absences reports for staff.
- Identify absenteeism trends or patterns.
- Address all absenteeism issues using discretion and seek support from Human Resources as needed.
- Support employees and act as a resource.
- Advise employees of available resources (i.e., Employee Family Assistance Program)
- Facilitating supportive meetings as outlined in the Attendance Support Procedure and provide input into the development of individualized attendance goals for each employee involved in the process.
- Provide a written outcome of each supportive meeting with copies to the employee, the Wellness and Disability Management Coordinator, and employee representative, if applicable.
- Support and assist the Wellness and Disability Management Coordinator at any level in the Attendance Support Process.
- Provide positive reinforcement to employees who reach their attendance goals.

Employees are responsible for:

- Maintaining regular attendance.
- Entering all absences in a timely manner following the Board's established absence reporting process.
- Participating actively in all levels of the Attendance Support process.
- Cooperate in setting personal attendance goals.
- Contacting their union/association representative if the employee wishes for them to be involved.
- Providing any appropriate documentation, during any level of the process as required.

Progress Indicators

- CDSBEO Employees will achieve and maintain regular attendance at work with an absenteeism rate which does not exceed the Board’s established absence threshold.
- Regular review of Board absenteeism comparing historical and current Board-wide trends.

Definitions

Absenteeism - Instances when an employee is absent from their duties, responsibilities, or scheduled activities. There are two types of absenteeism – Non-Culpable and Culpable.

Non-Culpable (Innocent) 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; instead, the employee is supported through the Attendance Support Program. The Board reserves the right to consider termination of an employee for non-culpable absenteeism, where warranted and consistent with the provisions of applicable legislation.

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 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.

Absences – any time an employee is not present for scheduled work when attendance is expected. Absences include both authorized, pre-planned time off (e.g. vacations or medical leave) and unauthorized, unexpected absences. Absences can be short-term (e.g. sudden sickness) or long-term (e.g. extended leave).

Occurrences - considered any absence related to personal illness or injury and/or medical or dental appointments (paid or unpaid). An occurrence of ≥5 (less than or equal to) consecutive days or more will be capped at 5 days.

Absences and/or Occurrences <u>MAY</u> include:	Absences and/or Occurrences <u>DO NOT</u> include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illness/injury (paid and unpaid) that are not being supported through the Board’s Disability Support Program, WSIB Return to Work Plan, Long Term Disability Return to Work Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culpable absences • Vacation • Pregnancy/parental leave • Approved Long Term Disability claims • Approved Workplace Safety & Insurance Board Loss of Earnings Claims • Paid or unpaid personal leaves

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Medical/Dental Appointments – any portion of a day; the time missed is considered in the threshold count. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Emergency leaves under the Employment Standards Act not due to personal illness/injury ● Family medical leaves as defined by the Employment Standards Act, 2000 ● Pre-approved prolonged leaves of absence ● Bereavement leave ● Jury or subpoena leave ● Union business leave ● Examinations and convocations ● Quarantine ● Observance of recognized religious holy days ● Inclement weather day ● Suspensions
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Absence Threshold – a threshold used as a mechanism to initiate non-disciplinary and supportive intervention. It is the established number of absences and/or occurrences used to initiate possible entry into the ASP. When an employee’s absences and/or occurrences exceed the threshold within a rolling 12-working month period, the Principal or Supervisor and/or a member of the Human Resources Department will meet with the employee to review their level of absenteeism having regard for the personal circumstances of the employee.

Accommodation - Any modification to the work or the workplace, including but not limited to: reduced hours, reduced productivity requirements, and/or the provision of assistive devices, that results in work becoming available that is consistent with the Employee’s functional abilities and that respects the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Disability - As per the Ontario Human Rights Code, a disability is defined as any of the following:

- Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness, including, but not limited to, diabetes, mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device.
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability.
- A learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language.
- A mental disorder.

- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Duty to Accommodate - The obligation of an Employer to take steps to eliminate the disadvantage caused by systemic, attitudinal, or physical barriers that unfairly exclude non-culpable absence (i.e. Illness and injury are the most common examples of this kind of absenteeism). Individuals or groups protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Undue Hardship - The point at which an Employer is not legally required to accommodate an Employee's particular needs, as the action would impose significant strain or risk to the operation of the business. The Ontario Human Rights Commission prescribes at least three considerations in assessing whether an accommodation could cause undue hardship: cost, outside sources of funding, and health and safety considerations.

References

- [PPM 171: Attendance Support Programs \(ASP\)](#)
- [800 - Nurturing Employee Relations Directional Policy](#)
- [E1:8 - Absence Reporting](#)
- [E3-2 -Disability Management - Early Intervention, Accommodations and Return to Work](#)
- [Employment Standards Act](#)
- [Ontario Human Rights Code](#)
- [Workplace Safety and Insurance Act](#)
- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#)