

ATTENDANCE MONITORING GUIDELINES

Background

All employees contribute to Foothills School Division mission and their attendance is essential to maintaining quality of services, consistency of support to students, staff and the community, as well as ensuring a fair distribution of work among colleagues.

The Attendance Monitoring Guidelines are to assist principals and/or supervisors to approach attendance monitoring from a positive, proactive, and preventive perspective and in doing so, achieve acceptable and/or improved attendance. The purpose of these procedures is to:

- create a positive work culture that encourages being at work
- support the value that Foothills School Division places on attendance
- emphasize to employees the importance of their work to Foothills School Division
- clearly define roles and responsibilities of all involved parties
- create a work environment that encourages optimal attendance through guidance, support, and opportunities for employees to improve attendance
- set out the protocols and strategies to be taken when employees do not meet acceptable attendance expectations

Definitions

Absence is an incidence of non-attendance at work.

Acceptable Attendance Average is the average number of incidents or days of non-culpable absences over a defined period of time, not exceeding twelve (12) months, for employees in the division.

Culpable Absenteeism is an unapproved absence that is in the control of the employee and is subject to discipline. Culpable Absenteeism would include fraudulent use of sick time, excessive lates, failure to report for work or failure to notify the division in advance.

Excessive Absenteeism is where an employee's absenteeism is considered excessive when it does not meet the acceptable attendance average for employees in the division.

In attendance monitoring, the number of absences, or frequency of absences, or the pattern of absences, or the circumstances surrounding absences is more significant and has greater operational impact than the length of absences. Examples would include employees who miss Mondays and/or Fridays or days before and after long weekend or vacation breaks.

Monitoring Period is a six (6) month period of time following which a review of the employee's attendance will occur, if a review has not occurred sooner.

Non-culpable (innocent) Absenteeism is an approved absence, arising from circumstances beyond the control of the employee and is addressed through the Attendance Monitoring Guidelines. Innocent

Absenteeism would include accident, illness, disability, necessary medical or dental appointments and emergency family responsibilities. Employee medical and dental appointments should be scheduled in such a way as to minimize disruption to students/workplace and; where possible, booked outside work hours. Time booked off is for the length of the appointment, including travel time and should be at the start or end of the day.

Absences due to Long Term Disability (LTD), Workers' Compensation Benefits (WCB), Maternity and Parental Leaves relating to the employee's accident, illness or medical emergency will be excluded.

Sick leave absences which are part of a continuous absence of more than twenty (20) days in duration will also be excluded, only if the employee has provided the approved Division Medical Form, with adequate medical evidence justifying the absence.

Absences due to a chronic medical condition and/or "disability" as defined by the *Human Rights Act* are excluded if satisfactory medical evidence is provided by the employee, on a District Medical Form, confirming that the absence(s) are due to that disability or those disabilities, unless the employee is not receiving treatment or is not cooperating with prescribed treatment.

The Guidelines

The Attendance Monitoring Guidelines provide a process to consistently monitor attendance in schools, departments and the division. The focus of these protocols is to positively recognize optimal attendance as well as deal effectively and consistently with non-culpable (innocent) absenteeism.

The Attendance Monitoring Guidelines involve six (6) phases of attendance and all employees fall within these phases.

Phase 1 of the guidelines recognizes employees with exemplary attendance, while Phase 2 is to identify employees having excessive absenteeism. Phases 3, 4 and 5 are utilized to address employee absences, each phase having a six (6) month monitoring period.

If the employee is in Phase 3, 4, or 5 of the guidelines and the employee's absences fall below the division threshold for two (2) consecutive monitoring periods, the employee would return to Phase 1.

If an employee's absences fall below the acceptable attendance average for one (1) monitoring period but the employee is unable to sustain it and exceeds the acceptable attendance average during the next monitoring period, the employee would remain in the same phase and would not go back to an earlier phase.

If an employee's absences continue to be above the acceptable attendance average over the next monitoring period the employee will continue on to the next phase.

A successful program involves the cooperation of the employee and the active participation of their Principal/Supervisor, their Manager/Director/Superintendent, their Union/Association representative, Employee Services representatives and healthcare professionals as appropriate.

Responsibilities of Employees

- attend work on a regular and normal basis as scheduled
- maintain a record of optimal attendance
- follow appropriate notification procedures when an absence occurs or will occur, including

- providing reasons for non-attendance
- seek solutions to issues that may impede their ability to maintain optimal attendance
- participate in a plan to improve attendance with their Principal/Supervisor

Responsibilities of Principals/Supervisors

- review attendance records and determine appropriate attendance levels for each employee, considering circumstances and acceptable attendance averages
- ensure Appropriate Notification Procedures are communicated to all employees (see following pages)
- provide a safe working environment, strive to create a positive work culture, and offer help and support to every employee in meeting attendance and performance expectations
- set an optimum attendance example for employees
- recognize employees who demonstrate optimum attendance
- meet with employees concerning their absences and communicate expectations for attendance at work

Procedures

1. Appropriate Notification Procedures for Illness, Injury, Medical or Dental Appointments

1.1 For certificated staff

1.1.1 An employee shall:

1.1.1.1 Access ADS/Atrieve

- to report an absence and request a guest (substitute) teacher placement, if required
- enter start and end time of absence

1.1.1.2 Report their absence to their principal or supervisor

1.2 For support staff, exempt staff and maintenance

1.2.1 An employee shall:

1.2.1.1 Access ADS/Atrieve

- to report an absence
- enter start and end date of absence
- if absence is for part of a day, identify hours to be absent
- if no access to a computer from home, contact principal or supervisor and they can enter the absence OR enter the absence from a computer at your school/worksite. The employee may also report the absence through the telephone system 403 652 2525

1.2.1.2 Report their absence to their principal or supervisor

1.3 For support staff - education assistants

1.3.1 An employee shall:

1.3.1.1 Access ADS/Atrieve

- to report an absence
- enter start and end time of absence
- if absence is for part of a day, identify hours to be absent
- if no access to a computer from home, contact principal or supervisor and they can enter the absence OR enter the absence from a computer at your school/worksite The employee may also report an absence using the telephone 403 652 2525

1.3.1.2 Report their absence to their principal or supervisor, so that they may determine if coverage is required and make these arrangements.

1.4 For transportation staff

1.4.1 An employee shall:

1.4.1.1 Contact Transportation to report their absence

- To report/request an absence
- Enter start and end date of absence
- If absence is for part of a day, identify hours to be absent

2. Phases in Attendance Improvement

2.1 Phase 1: Identify employees having a record of optimal attendance. Principal/Supervisor meets with the employee to:

- Review attendance record with employee
- Congratulate the employee
- Encourage and emphasize the importance of the employee attending work on a regular and normal basis

2.2 Phase 2: Identify employees having excessive absenteeism. The concern is with the frequency of the absences not the validity of the absences. Principal/Supervisor meets with the employee to:

- Review attendance record with the employee
- Inform employee of the operational issues resulting from their absences
- Seek to determine from the employee any underlying causes for their absences
- Request the employee to supply assurances that their attendance will improve
- Provide assistance and support to the employee

2.3 Phase 3: Conduct an interview and advisory session between the employee and their Principal/Supervisor, afford the employee the opportunity to have their Union/Association representative present (if employee is unionized) and:

- Review attendance record with employee
- Inform employee of the operational issues resulting from their absences
- Seek to determine from the employee any underlying causes for their absences
- Request the employee to supply assurances that their attendance will improve
- Advise that the employee's attendance record will be monitored
- Provide the employee with a brochure highlighting the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)
- Provide assistance and support to the employee
- Confirm by written letter, the information gathered at the interview with the employee
- Provide letter to the employee with copies to the Union (if employee is unionized) and Employee Services personnel file

2.4 Phase 4: Failure to improve over a reasonable period of time conduct a second interview and advisory session between the employee and their Principal/Supervisor, highly recommend to the employee to have their Union/Association representative present (if employee is unionized) and:

- Review attendance record with employee and the lack of improvement
- Reinforce with the employee the operational issues resulting from their absences
- Seek to determine from the employee any underlying causes for their absences
- Request the employee to supply assurances that their attendance will improve
- Advise that the employee's attendance record will be monitored
- Provide the employee with information/ brochure highlighting the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)
- Recommend the employee to obtain assistance from the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)
- Continue to provide assistance and support to the employee
- Confirm by written letter, the information gathered at the interview with the employee
- Provide letter to the employee with copies to the Union (if employee is unionized) and Employee Services personnel file

2.5 Phase 5: Failure to improve over a reasonable period of time conduct a third interview and advisory session with the employee, their Principal/Supervisor, their Manager/Director/Superintendent, their Union/Association representative (if employee is unionized) and an Employee Services representative and:

- Prior to the interview consider options (in consultation with Superintendent, Employee Services, Manager, Wellness and Safety and/or Director, Employee & Labour Relations) of:
 - further attendance monitoring

- demotion
- transfer
- final letter, next step termination
- Review attendance record with employee and the lack of improvement
- Reinforce with the employee the operational issues resulting from their absences
- Seek to determine from the employee any underlying causes for their absences, if none then refer employee for an assessment by a district appointed doctor
- Request the employee supply assurances (medical and personal) of ability to attend work regularly in the future
- Advise that the employee's attendance record will be monitored
- Provide the employee with a brochure highlighting the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)
- May direct the employee to obtain assistance from the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)
- Continue to provide assistance and support to the employee
- Confirm by written letter, the information gathered at the interview with the employee
- Provide letter to the employee with copies to the Union (if employee is unionized) and Employee Services personnel file

2.6 Phase 6: Failure to improve over a reasonable period of time, conduct an interview with the employee, their Principal/Supervisor, their Manager/Director/Superintendent, their Union/ Association representative (if employee is unionized) and an Employee Services representative and:

- Prior to the interview, perform a thorough review of the employee's file and interview notes (letters) with your manager/director/superintendent and Employee Services personnel (i.e. Superintendent, Employee Services, Manager, Wellness and Safety and Director, Employee & Labour Relations)
- Advise the employee of the termination of their employment
- Confirm by written letter
- Provide letter to the employee with copies to the Union (if employee is unionized) and Employee Services personnel file