BRANT HALDIMAND NORFOLK
Catholic District School Board

Attendance Support Program
#300.47

Adopted:	March 2026
Last Reviewed/Revised:	NEW
Responsibility:	Superintendent of Education
Next Scheduled Review:	2030

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board ("the Board") is committed to fostering healthy, productive, and collaborative working and learning environments that contribute to student and staff well-being. Consistent attendance of educators and support staff is essential to ensuring that students receive responsive and personalized instruction, which directly impacts their academic success. A stable classroom environment, supported by the regular presence of school staff, contributes to the well-being of both students and the school community.

APPLICATION AND SCOPE:

The BHNCDSB Attendance Support Program (ASP) applies to all employees of the Board. Attendance Support is a crucial component of our broader, holistic Staff Wellness and Engagement Strategy that aims to ensure that employees are not only supported when facing barriers to attendance but are also encouraged to maintain their overall health and well-being.

REFERENCES:
- Education Act
- O.Reg
- PPM 171
- OHSA Ontario and Employers Responsibility
- Employment Standards Act
- Ontario Human Rights Code
- Collective Agreements
- HRS 300.16.P - Health and Safety Board Policy
- HRS 300.20.P - Workplace Violence Board Policy
- HRS 300.45.P - Respectful and Professional Workplace Board Policy
- HRS 300.01.P - Workplace Harassment Board Policy
- HRS 300.19.P - Staff Progressive Discipline Board Policy
- HRS.Pr - Attendance Support Program Board Protocol

FORMS:
- N/A

APPENDICES:
- N/A

DEFINITIONS:

Non-Culpable Absence: Failure to attend work for a reason that is beyond an employee's control. These absences and/or occurrences typically include the following:

- Personal illness or injury; absences arising from legitimate health reasons.
- Medical appointments.
- Other legitimate health-related reasons.

Culpable Absenteeism: Failure to attend work for a reason that is not legitimate because the unauthorized absence is within the control of the employee. These occurrences include but are not limited to:

- lateness/tardiness;
- leaving work early without authorization and/or notification;
- absence without leave or failure to notify;
- misuse of leave (e.g. using sick leave for absences unrelated to employee illness or injury);
- unsubstantiated and unapproved absences or leaves not authorized by the employer;
- patterned absenteeism that suggests avoidable conduct; and
- false explanation for absence.

Employee: All individuals who agree to work on a full or part-time basis for BHNCDSB for a specified or indeterminate period.

Monitoring Period: The period of time in which an employee's attendance is under review.

Threshold: Refers to the specific level or pattern of absenteeism that triggers a review or intervention under the Attendance Support Program. It serves as an objective benchmark to ensure consistency, fairness, and transparency in how attendance issues are addressed.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES:

1.0   STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES

The Board's Attendance Support Program (ASP) is designed to provide a supportive approach to addressing attendance concerns. The overarching goal of the program is to foster regular attendance and support employee well-being.

    1.1   The BHNCDSB Attendance Support Program is based on the following principles:

        1.1.1   Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC): The Board recognizes its obligations under the OHRC, the Employment Standards Act (ESA), other applicable legislation and collective agreements and terms of employment. The Board will operate in compliance with these obligations.

        1.1.2   Alignment: The BHNCDSB Attendance Support Program aligns closely with the goals and values of the Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

1.1.3   Transparency and Communication: Clear and consistent communication and messaging will help ensure that all employees understand the program's objectives, processes, and their role within it. Employees will be provided with opportunities to raise questions or concerns. Aspects of the program will be communicated openly and consistently reinforcing a shared commitment to a supportive and healthy workplace.

1.1.4   Fairness and Equity: The Attendance Support Program will be responsive to the diverse needs of all employees, ensuring that no group is disproportionately affected. The Board recognizes that each employee may have unique circumstances. All employees, regardless of their role, have access to the same resources, support systems, and opportunities for feedback.

1.1.5   Consistency: The Board will ensure that the program is applied fairly across all groups and individuals, without bias. The expectations are clear, procedures are followed uniformly, outcomes are predictable, and the expectation of regular attendance at work applies unvaryingly to all employees.

1.1.6   Confidentiality: Exercising discretion, upholding confidentiality of employee information and respecting the privacy of all employees involved.

1.2 The objectives of the program are to:

1.2.1   foster safe, healthy, and stable learning and working environments that ultimately support student well-being and student achievement;

1.2.2   provide education, support, resources, and corrective actions to assist employees in maintaining regular and consistent attendance while addressing any barriers they may be facing;

1.2.3   promote staff wellness and engagement where every member of our community feels supported and valued;

1.2.4   assist employees in understanding that all school board employees play an important role in contributing to a supportive, positive, and healthy community;

1.2.5   work together and value all voices to promote a healthy and supportive work environment; and,

1.2.6   treat absences in a fair and consistent manner in compliance with applicable laws and consistent with collective agreements.

2.0   COMPONENTS OF THE ATTENDANCE SUPPORT PROGRAM

2.1   Attendance support is a supportive and proactive program designed to assist employees who face challenges with consistent work attendance. The program is centered around setting clear attendance thresholds, diligently recording and tracking attendance, and engaging in supportive dialogue and/or coaching with employees.

2.2   The ASP focuses on supporting employees with non-culpable absences by identifying and tracking absence usage, providing resources, and offering guidance to improve attendance.

2.3   Absences covered under approved Abilities Management programs or supported by medical documentation for long-term recovery may be excluded from ASP thresholds, with discretion applied on a case-by-case basis.

2.4 While the Board's ASP focuses primarily on excessive non-culpable absenteeism, it regularly reviews all absenteeism holistically to establish the best support strategies for employees. Culpable absences are managed through alternative measures as outlined in collective agreements/terms of employment and Board policies including Board Policy Progressive Discipline - Employees # 300.19. However, if an absence initially appears to be non-culpable, it may be reviewed within the ASP until further information clarifies its culpable nature.

2.5 Absences for pre-approved personal leaves, statutory leaves, or other authorized purposes are excluded from ASP thresholds.

2.6 Through consistent monitoring and data collection, the ASP enables the Board to identify employees who may benefit from further assistance, such as referrals to Abilities Management Services and workplace accommodations, Employee Assistance Programs, or other relevant support programs. Early intervention is key, as timely support can often prevent small issues from escalating into long-term challenges.

3.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 **Trustees:**

3.1.1 Approve policies and governance frameworks, including approving the ASP as part of broader employee well-being and operational strategies.

3.1.2 Ensure the program aligns with legal obligations, collective agreements, and other board policies.

3.1.3 Approve the allocation of funding for any additional resources for the program.

3.2 **Senior Administration:**

3.2.1 Oversee program design and implementation and establish an Attendance Support Program Steering Committee.

3.2.2 Ensure adherence of all staff to the Attendance Support Program Protocol.

3.2.3 Ensures the Board meets its obligations under human rights legislation and employment legislation.

3.3 **Principals, Vice-Principals, Managers:**

3.3.1 Fulfill their responsibilities as outlined in the Attendance Support Program Protocol.

3.3.2 Support employees with resources they need to improve attendance.

3.3.3 Ensure the daily maintenance of accurate, up-to-date staff attendance records.

3.4 **Human Resource Services (HRS):**

3.4.1 Fulfill their responsibilities as outlined in the Attendance Support Program Protocol.

3.4.2 Support employees with resources they need and corrective actions to improve attendance.

3.4.3 Provide orientation and related information to all staff on the ASP.

3.4.4 Support the application of the program across all departments, ensuring consistency, fairness and avoiding bias.

3.5 **Employees:**

3.5.1 Attend work regularly and on time and maintain open communication regarding any absences.

3.5.2 Attending personal appointments outside of regular working hours, where possible.

3.5.3 Ensuring all absences are reported and recorded in the reporting software as required as per the relevant Collective Agreement or employment contract.

3.5.4 Indicate, in general terms, the reason for the absence (i.e., illness, bereavement, etc.).

3.5.5 Cooperate and participate in the ASP as outlined in the Attendance Support Program Protocol including access required support/resources as required.

3.5.6 Provide documentation when requested. Employees are not required to disclose personal diagnoses but may need to provide general documentation to support their absences.

3.6 **Union/Association Representatives**

3.6.1 Ensure Collective Agreement provisions are understood and followed.

3.6.2 Foster a collaborative partnership between management and employees.

3.6.3 Encourage and support employees in actively participating in the program, setting attendance goals, and following recommended support measures.

4.0 ATTENDANCE SUPPORT PROCESS

4.1 The attendance statistics of all employees will be monitored and reviewed monthly.

4.2 Attendance support is a leveled approach consisting of five (5) levels designed to support employees in attending work regularly.

4.3 The review period for each level will be three (3) months.

4.4 The Program is based on a (12) twelve month rolling calendar.

4.5 Each level of the process has a goal and threshold for progression to the next phase, as outlined in the Attendance Support Program Protocol.

4.6 Each process allows reasonable time for the employee to access supports and where reasonably possible, improve their attendance.

4.7 An employee will enter the Attendance Support Program when they:

4.7.1 meet or exceed the identified *threshold* in the ASP Protocol within a (12) twelve month rolling calendar year, which have not been deemed to be medically supported by Abilities Management Services;

4.7.2 exhibit concerning patterns of absence due to personal illness use; and/or,

4.7.3 demonstrate another identified concern relating to attendance.

4.8 Attendance thresholds are reviewed and revised regularly and may be adjusted based on current data and at the discretion of the Board.

4.9 Employees progress through Levels 1-5 of the Attendance Support Process when their absenteeism rate continues to meet/exceed the identified thresholds.

4.10 If at any time in the process information is revealed to suggest that an absence(s) is culpable, absenteeism may be referred to a disciplinary process in accordance with the principle of progressive discipline.

4.11 The Attendance Support Process Levels.

The employee enters the program at Level 1. If the employee cannot demonstrate improved attendance as required, they will progress to the next level. The goals, expectations, staff responsibilities, thresholds, and monitoring periods are clearly communicated.

- **Pre-Entry Communication**
  o Employees will receive a record of absences and notification that their level of absenteeism is approaching the Board's threshold for potential entry into the ASP, should additional absences occur. Communication is intended to promote awareness of attendance patterns and to offer support before any further steps are required. It is designed to foster a supportive environment in which employees feel informed and aware of available resources. Receipt of a pre-entry notification does not constitute entry into the ASP.
- **Level 1: Notification of Absenteeism Concern and Entry and Introduction to the Attendance Support Program**
  o Employees will receive a record of absences and notification that their absenteeism rate meets/exceeds the Board's threshold along with supportive information about the program, support mechanisms, and available resources to assist them in regular and consistent attendance.
- **Level 2: Coaching Meeting**
  o Employees will receive a record of absences and notification that their absenteeism rate meets/exceeds the Board's threshold along with supportive information about the program, support mechanisms, and available resources to assist them in regular and consistent attendance.
  o A meeting will be conducted between the employee and their immediate supervisor.
- **Level 3: Formal Attendance Meeting**
  o Employees will receive a record of absences and notification that their absenteeism rate meets/exceeds the Board's threshold along with supportive information.
  o The Supervisor and a representative from Human Resource Services will meet with the employee to discuss the Board's continued and heightened concern regarding the employees' record of absences and continue to provide support. The employee will be notified that continued high levels of absences in the future may lead to further action including progressive discipline up to and including termination of employment for non-culpable (innocent) absenteeism.
- **Level 4: Corrective Action**
  o Employees will receive a record of absences and notification that their absenteeism rate meets/exceeds the Board's threshold along with supportive information.
  o The employee is informed that the program is transitioning from supportive measures to more stringent corrective action and potentially progressive discipline. Attendance concerns may now be addressed as behavioral concerns, emphasizing accountability, adherence to attendance expectations, and compliance with organizational standards.

- **Level 5: Final Review**
  - The file will be referred to the Superintendent of Human Resource Services or designate. The Superintendent or designate will complete a comprehensive review of the employee's attendance records, information, and documentation from each level of the process. The review may result in Progressive Discipline up to and including termination.

5.0   MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

5.1   The Board is committed to continuous Improvement. The Policy, Administrative Procedure and Protocol will be regularly reviewed and updated within the Board's regular policy review cycle or sooner.

5.2   The review will consider program success metrics, current attendance data, changing needs, new legislation, policy and program memoranda, and staff feedback.