



## **Attendance Support Program #300.47**

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<b>Adopted:</b>	TBD
<b>Last Reviewed/Revised:</b>	NEW
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Superintendent of Education
<b>Next Scheduled Review:</b>	2029-2030

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### **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 BHNCD SB Attendance Support Program (ASP) applies to all employees of the Board. Attendance expectations for casual and occasional employees are managed separately in accordance with their employment status. 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:**

- [Policy/Program Memorandum 171 – Attendance Support Program](#)
- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#)
- [Education Act](#)
- [Employment Standards Act](#)
- [Ontario Human Rights Code](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)
- [Ontario Regulation Act](#)
- [Workplace Safety and Insurance Act](#)
- [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)
- BHNCD SB Collective Agreements
- BHNCD SB Policy and Administrative Procedure 300.16 – Health and Safety
- BHNCD SB Policy and Administrative Procedure 300.20 – Workplace Violence Prevention
- BHNCD SB Policy and Administrative Procedure 300.45 – Respectful Workplace
- BHNCD SB Policy and Administrative Procedure 300.01 – Workplace Harassment
- BHNCD SB Policy and Administrative Procedure 300.19 – Progressive Discipline - Employees



**FORMS:**

- N/A

**APPENDICES:**

- N/A

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Non-Culpable Absence (Innocent Absenteeism):** An absence from work that is beyond an employee's control. These absences typically include the following:

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

**Culpable Absenteeism:** An unauthorized absence from work that is within the control of the employee. These absences 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 where evidence demonstrates avoidable or intentional conduct; and
- false explanation for absence.

**Accommodation / Duty to Accommodate:** Reasonable adjustments to duties, schedule, tools, or environment to enable safe, productive work based on functional limitations, up to undue hardship under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

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

**Medical Documentation:** Information from a licensed healthcare provider confirming functional abilities/limitations, expected duration or frequency, and fitness for work; a diagnosis is not required. Documentation is used to coordinate supports, accommodation, or return-to-work planning.

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

**Rolling 12 Month Calendar:** A continuously updated review window used to evaluate attendance: 12-month employees are reviewed over 12 consecutive working months; 10-month employees are reviewed over 12 working months spanning approximately 14 calendar months.

**Threshold:** Refers to the specific level 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.

**Wellness and Abilities Department:** The Board department that receives and reviews medical documentation, supports accommodation and return-to-work planning, and determines whether absences are managed within Wellness & Abilities or within the Attendance Support Program.



## **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

### **1.0 STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES**

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

- 1.1 The BHNCD SB Attendance Support Program is based on the following principles.
  - 1.1.1 **Commitment to Compliance:** The Board recognizes its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code (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 BHNCD SB 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 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 to all employees, subject to applicable accommodation and legal obligations.
  - 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, and resources 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 Wellness and 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 that it is culpable in 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 Wellness and Abilities Management Services, 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.

#### **3.2 Senior Administration**

- 3.2.1 Oversee program design, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of the Attendance Support Program (ASP), in consultation with relevant departments and stakeholders.
- 3.2.2 Ensure employees are informed of the purpose and expectations of the ASP.
- 3.2.3 Ensure the program is administered consistently and in compliance with applicable legislation, collective agreements, and Board policy.

#### **3.3 Principals, Vice-Principals, Managers and Supervisors**

- 3.3.1 Apply the Attendance Support Program by monitoring attendance and addressing attendance concerns in a fair, consistent, and supportive manner in accordance with this policy.
- 3.3.2 Support employees by facilitating access to appropriate resources to promote regular and consistent attendance.
- 3.3.3 Ensure the accurate and timely recording and maintenance of staff attendance records.

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

- 3.4.1 Provide leadership, oversight, and guidance in the administration of the ASP.
- 3.4.2 Support employees by facilitating access to appropriate resources and intervention to promote regular and consistent 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 in accordance with Board processes, including accessing required support and 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 that 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 twelve (12) month rolling calendar.
- 4.5 Each level of the process has a goal and threshold for progression to the next phase.
- 4.6 Each process allows reasonable time for the employee to access support 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 twelve (12) month rolling calendar period, where the absences have not been excluded from the threshold through the Wellness and Abilities Management Services.
- 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 Where attendance cannot reasonably be assessed due to protected leave, medically supported absence, or accommodation assessment, monitoring under the Attendance Support Program may be temporarily suspended, consistent with human rights and employment legislation
- 4.11 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.

### **4.12 The Attendance Support Program 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 at each level of the program.

A union or association representative may accompany the employee at any ASP meeting. The employee's union/association representative will be copied on notifications, including meeting invitations at Levels 1-5. The board will provide reasonable notice to the employee's union or association representative so they can attend the meeting.



- **Pre-Entry Communication**
  - 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 to the Attendance Support Program**
  - 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, available support mechanisms, and resources to assist them in achieving regular and consistent attendance.
- **Level 2: Coaching Meeting**
  - 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, available support mechanisms, and resources to assist them in achieving regular and consistent attendance.
  - A meeting will be conducted between the employee and their immediate supervisor.
- **Level 3: Formal Attendance Meeting**
  - Employees will receive a record of absences and notification that their absenteeism rate meets/exceeds the Board's threshold along with supportive information. 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 up to and including termination of employment for non-culpable (innocent) absenteeism, in accordance with applicable collective agreements and Board policy.
- **Level 4: Comprehensive Attendance Review**
  - Employees will receive a record of absences and notification that their absenteeism rate meets/exceeds the Board's threshold along with supportive information.
  - At this stage, due to the ongoing impact of absenteeism and lack of sustained improvement, a comprehensive attendance review is undertaken to assess next steps, reinforce expectations, and determine appropriate supports moving forward.
  - A formal Attendance Review Meeting will be scheduled and led by Human Resource Services. The meeting will include the employee and the principal/manager/supervisor.
- **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 will assess whether the employee is likely to be able to attend work regularly now and in the foreseeable future. The review may result in further action, up to and including termination of employment for non-culpable (innocent) absenteeism.



## **5.0 EXITING ATTENDANCE SUPPORT**

An employee will exit the Attendance Support Program (ASP) when they have demonstrated improvement, and their absenteeism rate falls below the established absenteeism threshold over the twelve (12) month rolling calendar period or fourteen (14)-month rolling calendar period for ten (10)-month employees. An employee may also exit the Attendance Support Program where it is determined that their absences are excluded under Section 2.3, and the employee's remaining absenteeism no longer meets ASP thresholds.

## **6.0 RE-ENTERING ATTENDANCE SUPPORT**

An employee who exits the Attendance Support Program and subsequently meets or exceeds the absenteeism threshold during the following rolling twelve (12) month rolling calendar period will re-enter the program at one level below the level they were in immediately prior to exit, with the same thresholds and expectations applying.

## **7.0 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

- 7.1 The Board is committed to continuous Improvement. The Policy and Administrative Procedure will be regularly reviewed and updated within the Board's regular policy review cycle or sooner.
- 7.2 The review will consider program success metrics, current attendance data, changing needs, new legislation, policy and program memoranda, and staff feedback.