

<i>Rainy River District School Board</i>	SECTION 3 <i>Personnel</i>
ABSENCE REPORTING PROCEDURE	3.59

PURPOSE

The Rainy River District School Board's Absence Reporting Procedure provides a guideline for access to sick leave benefits and applies to all Rainy River District School Board employees who, under the terms of their employee group collective agreement or terms and conditions of employment, have access to paid sick leave.

RATIONALE

This procedure will ensure all employees understand the requirements, roles and responsibilities for reporting absences due to illness or injury and accessing sick leave.

GUIDELINES

1.0 Absences of More Than Five Consecutive Working Days Related to Illness or Injury

- 1.1 When an employee is going to be absent for more than five consecutive working days, the employee will notify his/her principal or supervisor immediately of absence and also enter the absence into the **SmartFind Express** (SFE) system.
- 1.2 The principal or supervisor shall indicate to the employee that the Manager of Human Resources, or designate, will be notified of the employee's absence to enable early intervention and to facilitate a safe and timely return to work.
- 1.3 The principal or supervisor will notify the Manager of Human Resources, or designate by email or telephone. Alternately, Human Resources will notify the principal or supervisor of employees who are absent for greater than 5 consecutive days via monthly reporting.
- 1.4 The Manager of Human Resources, or designate, may require the employee to provide documentation completed by the appropriate treating medical practitioner that may include the following information:
 - a standard medical certificate and/or functional abilities form that describes the medically supported restrictions or limitations the employee is experiencing in relation to the essential duties of their position;
 - confirmation that the employee is participating in the appropriate treatment to expedite the employee's safe and timely return to work;
 - expected date employee could participate in the Return to Work Program with appropriate modifications/accommodations based on restrictions/limitations;
 - expected return to work date at regular hours and duties;
 - any other information required to safely return the employee to work in a timely manner;
 - treating medical practitioner's name, address, phone number and fax number;
 - treating medical practitioner's signature.

- Unless otherwise arranged, this documentation must be submitted by the employee or appropriate treating medical practitioner to the Manager of Human Resources, or designate, within ten working days of the date of the request.
- The Manager of Human Resources will exercise discretion in each case in determining whether to ask for a medical certificate in accordance with 1.0.

2.0 Sick Leave Benefit

2.1 As outlined below, an employee may access or is eligible for sick leave benefits if he/she becomes injured or ill and have unused sick leave.

2.2 An employee may access or is eligible for sick leave if he/she is disabled, which is defined as a state of incapacity which is due to bodily injury or illness, preventing the employee from working for the Board for remuneration. It may not be accessed in place of vacation (except as outlined in 2.3 below) or lieu days, and are not to be used to tend to other personal issues related to family, such as a dependent that is ill or injured. Sick leave may include preventative medical or dental appointments when the employee cannot reasonably schedule the appointment outside of the employee's regular working hours.

2.3 Sick leave benefits are not payable:

- in cases which are compensable by Workplace Safety & Insurance Board;
- for 12 month employees during scheduled vacation leave unless serious medical illness occurs, which must be supported by appropriate medical documentation;
- when an employee is on an authorized unpaid leave of absence;
- when an employee has exhausted all eligible days under their sick leave plan;
- while in receipt of full Long Term Disability Benefits;
- when appropriate medical documentation has not been received as per 1.4;
- when a reasonable offer of accommodation has been provided.

2.4 To be eligible for sick leave benefits, the employee must follow the Board's procedures for reporting absences related to illness or injury and for returning to work, in accordance with 3.0 of this procedure.

2.5 The Board will endeavor to accommodate the return to work and placement of temporary and/or permanently and/or partially disabled employees in accordance with the Disability Management – Early Intervention, Accommodations and Return to Work Procedure.

2.6 Access to sick leave benefits may be denied for failure to provide all appropriate medical documentation requested. Appropriate medical documentation refers to, but is not limited to, medically supported restrictions and/or limitations as they relate to the employee's ability to meet the essential duties of their position. It is the employee's responsibility to submit appropriate documentation to the Manager of Human Resources, or designate, as applicable.

2.7 In order to maintain access to sick leave benefits, the Manager of Human Resources, or designate, may request the employee to attend an Independent Medical Assessment (IME) and/or have completed a Functional Abilities Evaluation to determine the employee's restrictions and/or limitations related to the employee's position, This will assist in providing return to work and/or accommodation options. In requesting the IME, the following protocol will apply:

- The costs associated with the provision of the required IME and/or FAE will be paid by the Board;

- The Board shall inform the employee of his/her right to Union representation;
- If the Manager of Human Resources, or designate, reasonably requires medical information to determine whether an employee is able to return to work or should properly remain off of work and in receipt of sick leave benefits, the Manager of Human Resources, or designate, shall so advise the employee and request that such information be provided;
- The employee is required to provide the requested medical documentation to the Manager of Human Resources, or designate, in response to the request;
- The Manager of Human Resources, or designate, will review the documentation provided by the employee. If the Manager of Human Resources, or designate, is not satisfied with the adequacy of the medical information provided, the Manager of Human Resources, or designate, will clearly identify to the employee why the information is not adequate;
- The employee will be given an opportunity to provide the Manager of Human Resources, or designate, with further medical information;
- The Manager of Human Resources, or designate, will review any further documentation provided by the employee. If the entirety of the medical documentation provided does not reasonably permit the Manager of Human Resources, or designate, to determine whether the employee should return to work or remain off of work, or if the employee is not progressing through an approved return to work plan, the employee may be requested to submit to an IME;
- If the employee fails to attend the IME or does not, prior to the IME, provide the Manager of Human Resources, or designate, with further medical information to reasonably permit the Manager of Human Resources, or designate, to determine whether the employee should return to work or remain off of work, the employee's wages and/or benefits may be discontinued.

3.0 Responsibilities of the Employee

- 3.1 Personally report an absence, and enter it into SFE, unless the employee is incapacitated and unable to do so. Failure to report absences at the first opportunity in accordance with these procedures may result in denial of pay and/or benefits.
- 3.2 Indicate, in general terms, the reason for the absence, i.e. due to accident, illness, etc.
- 3.3 Call in directly to their principal or supervisor and if not immediately available, the principal or supervisor will return the call. Unless otherwise arranged with the principal or supervisor, the employee is to call in on each day of absence and also enter absence into the SFE system.
- 3.4 Assume responsibility for the costs associated with the initial documentation from the appropriate treating medical practitioner in relation to the absence, unless covered by WSIB. Reasonable costs associated with subsequent request(s) for medical documentation by the Manager of Human Resources, or designate, will be paid by the Board.
- 3.5 Provide satisfactory medical documentation in the form of a Standardized Medical Certificate completed by the appropriate treating medical practitioner, in accordance with 1.0 of this Procedure to be eligible for sick leave benefits.
- 3.6 Maintain regular contact with their Principal or Supervisor during his/her absence when he /she is unable to perform the essential duties of their position due to disability.
- 3.7 Participate in appropriate treatment, as determined by the treating medical practitioner(s), to ensure a safe and timely return to work.

- 3.8 Participate in the development of his/her Return to Work Plan, including taking the proposed Return to Work Plan (including accommodations and/or modifications) to the appropriate treating medical practitioner(s) for approval, if necessary.

4.0 Responsibilities of the Principal/Vice-Principal or Immediate Supervisor

- 4.1 Communicate the Accessible and Healthy Workplace Program Procedures and Guidelines to the employee.
- 4.2 Ensure the daily maintenance of accurate, up-to-date records regarding employees' absences as designated by Human Resources.
- 4.3 Monitor individual employee absenteeism records as designated by Human Resources.
- 4.4 Receive call-ins or return employees' calls should a message be received from employees, and determine the reason for absence.
- 4.5 Ensure employee confidentiality in relation to absences and medical information.
- 4.6 Contact the Manager of Human Resources, or designate, for assistance when restrictions and /or limitations have been identified.
- 4.7 Forward all medical documentation (if received) directly to the Manager of Human Resources, or designate, in a secure and confidential manner.
- 4.8 Advise employees of their obligation to provide satisfactory written proof of disability, as required, confirming disability and ensuring continued payment of sick leave benefits.
- 4.9 Participate in the development of the employee's Return to Work Plan, including providing accommodations and/or modifications to the employee's duties and/or hours, based on recommendations from the Manager of Human Resources, or designate.
- 4.10 Advise the employee of his/her right to Union representation throughout the process.

5.0 Responsibilities of the Manager of Human Resources, or Designate

- 5.1 Request proof of continuing disability from the employee in the case of absences exceeding 5 consecutive working days, at appropriate intervals, in order to maintain the sick leave benefit or determine if participation in a Return to Work Program is appropriate.
- 5.2 Receive all medical documentation required and provide support to the employee during their time of disability.
- 5.3 Assist the principal or supervisor in maintaining contact with employees disabled for more than 5 consecutive working days, verifying that the employee is under the active care of the appropriate medical practitioner and following an appropriate treatment plan, and advise the principal or supervisor of the expected return to work date, when known.
- 5.4 Co-ordinate the development of an appropriate Return to Work Plan (including appropriate accommodation and/or modification recommendations) based on the employee's restrictions and/or limitations.
- 5.5 Inform employees of their right to Union representation throughout the process.

6.0 Responsibilities of Superintendent(s)

- 6.1 It is the responsibility of the appropriate Superintendent to administer this Procedure and Program Guidelines.
- 6.2 The appropriate Superintendent shall review this Procedure and Program Guidelines on a regular basis or as required by legislative change.

For further direction beyond this Procedure, refer to Disability Management – Early Intervention, Accommodations and Return to Work Procedure.

<u>CROSS REFERENCE</u>	<u>Date Reviewed</u>	<u>LEGAL/MINISTRY OF EDUCATION REFERENCE</u>
Policy 3.56 Accessible and Healthy Workplace Program Procedure 3.58 Disability Management Procedure 3.57 Confidentiality of Medical Record	January, 2015	<i>Education Act</i> <i>Ontario Human Rights Code</i> <i>Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act</i> <i>Accessibility for Ontarians (AODA) Act</i> <i>Employment Standards Act</i> <i>Occupational Health and Safety Act</i> <i>Workplace Safety and Insurance (WSIB) Act</i>