THE PROTESTANT SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD
OF THE TOWN OF PENETANGUISHENE

POLICY MANUAL

POLICY TITLE:	SECTION/CODE:
Attendance Support Program	**Personnel A – 19**

APPROVAL DATE:	SUPERSEDES:	NUMBER OF PAGES:	REVIEW DATE:
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POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Protestant Separate School Board (PSSBP) to support a healthy, positive and respectful workplace in which employees are trusted, valued and supported. This Attendance Support Program applies to permanent employees and employees working under Long-Term Occasional (LTO) contracts. Regular attendance contributes to stability for students and staff; however, the Board recognizes that employees may experience illness, injury or other circumstances beyond their control that affect attendance.

The Attendance Support Program (ASP) is a non-disciplinary process. It will be administered fairly, consistently and respectfully, with consideration of individual circumstances, applicable law, collective agreements and the Board's duty to accommodate.

PURPOSE

To establish the requirements for the PSSBP Attendance Support Program in accordance with Policy/Program Memorandum 171 (PPM 171), while maintaining a supportive workplace culture grounded in employee well-being, professional trust and respectful relationships.

DEFINITIONS

Culpable Absences - absences which are within the control of the employee. Examples include the deliberate misrepresentation or misuse of sick leave, such as failure to report to work, or a pattern of unjustified tardiness or early departure where the employee is expected to follow established work hours, etc.

Non-Culpable Absences - absences which are outside of the control of the employee. Examples include injury, illness, mental or physical health and medical appointments

Attendance Support Program - A Non-Disciplinary program to positively support the health of staff which focuses on non-culpable absences.

Attendance Threshold - determines participation in the attendance support process and entry into the ASP. The board will determine the threshold with respect to the number of days absent and communicate it to staff. It also provides a baseline against which an individual improvement can be measured.

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ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

1. The ASP applies to all staff of the board and employees working under Long Term Occasional (LTO) contracts.

2. Administrators, Managers and the Supervisory Officer share accountability for the program.

3. Key components of the ASP include:
   3.1 reporting of absences due to illness or injury;
   3.2 management of medical leaves of absence;
   3.3 notification to the staff member of their status within the program;
   3.4 meeting and dialogue with the staff member;
   3.5 goal setting and planning for improved attendance;
   3.6 offer of assistance of outside services when required;
   3.7 opportunity for improvement;
   3.8 provision of medical documentation;
   3.9 recognition of improved attendance;

4. The Board establishes an attendance threshold of sixteen (16) days of non-culpable absence in a school year. The threshold is supported by consideration of empirical Board attendance data, including sick-leave usage and averages, together with applicable leave entitlements. The threshold will be reviewed every two (2) five years, or when changes to an applicable collective agreement may affect the threshold

5. Stage I is a supportive, pre-threshold check-in that begins when an employee reaches 75% of the established attendance threshold. Based on the current threshold of sixteen (16) days, Stage I begins at twelve (12) days of non-culpable absence. Stage I does not reduce or replace the Board's established attendance threshold

6. Communications with the employee will take place with their immediate supervisor where a meeting date will be established. At the meeting an informal discussion will take place making the employee aware of the number of absences that have taken place to date, check in on the employee’s well-being, make them aware of available supports, as well as providing the employee with the opportunity to discuss their circumstances and attendance, and seek support or resources.

7. A follow up email from the immediate supervisor to the employee will summarize the initial meeting.

8. Stage 1 continues during the year and if attendance does not reach the designated threshold, the employee would exit the program.

9. If the threshold is hit, an individual review of the absences would occur to determine if the employee would enter Stage 2 of the Attendance Support Program.

10. If after review, it is determined that the employee should enter Stage 2 of the ASP, a letter will be sent to the employee and a meeting would be set up.

11. The meeting would involve the employee, the Supervisory Officer, the immediate supervisor and the option for the employee to have union representation.

12. At the meeting, the following will be discussed:

- The employee's level of absenteeism including the attendance threshold for the PSSBP. Depending on the circumstances, the Supervisory Officer and the employee may discuss the employee's attendance history with the PSSBP.
- PSSBP 's expectations for employee attendance.
- The employee's rationale for the current absence level. This will include the reasons that prevent the employee from attending work regularly.
- PSSBP 's attendance goals based on the employee's attendance history and the information presented at the assessment meeting; these goals will be individualized to the employee, applied in a fair and consistent manner.
- information regarding the support available to them focused on their unique needs as applicable. The Board will consider employee needs on a case-by-case basis and may provide appropriate assistance based on individual circumstances. This may include workplace accommodation, wellness-related resources, access to external services, temporary workplace adjustments, and other forms of assistance that may extend beyond an employee's regular benefit coverage. The nature and extent of the support provided will depend on individual needs, available resources, and the circumstances of each situation. Information may include, but is not limited to, employee's rights under the

Employment Standards Act regarding Leaves of Absence and the Ontario Human Rights Code with respect to employment accommodation.

13. At the conclusion of this meeting, the Supervisory Officer will advise the employee of the attendance review period and the attendance goal that period. The review period for this stage and any subsequent stage would be six (6) working months; however, this is a discretionary decision based on individual circumstances. A follow up letter will be provided to the employee that will summarize the meeting.

14. If the goals established have not been met following the review period, the Supervisory Officer will make the determination whether the employee moves into Stage 3 of the Attendance Support Program. This is a discretionary decision and will be based on the individual circumstance outlined in the information provided at the completion of the Stage 2 review period or sooner. The Supervisory Officer also has the discretion to determine whether the employee needs to repeat a Stage 2 review period.

If goals established at Stage 2 of the review period are met, the Supervisory Officer shall provide such written confirmation to the employee at which time the employee would exit the ASP.

15. Stage 3 consists of a meeting that includes the employee, may include the Principal/Supervisor/Manager, the Supervisory Officer and a union representative. The employee may enter into Level 3 as they have been unable to meet the attendance goals established in Level 2 or have exceeded the prorated threshold during the Level 2 review period. Alternative options may be discussed at this time to meet the employee's needs and their ability to attend work as scheduled. The employee may be advised that failure to meet the attendance goals in Stage 3 may result in termination of employment as outlined in Policy A-8 Progressive Discipline of Staff. Discussion for alternative options may occur. Support will continue to be offered to the employee.

16. The Supervisory Officer will monitor the operation of the ASP and periodically evaluate whether it continues to meet the requirements and purpose of PPM 171. The attendance

threshold will be reviewed every two (2) years, or when changes to an applicable collective agreement may affect the threshold. This policy and the ASP will be formally reviewed every four years. The Board may review or amend the policy earlier where required by law, changes to an applicable collective agreement, or Ministry direction.

Roles and Responsibilities

Employees

Employees are responsible for:

- maintaining regular attendance at work. Sick leave is to be used for absences due to personal illness or non -occupational injury, as well as personal medical or dental appointments that cannot reasonably be scheduled outside of working hours;
- ensuring, to the extent reasonably practicable, that the Principal is notified of any absence (including late arrival) and that all absences are accurately recorded and reported in accordance with PSSBP procedures;
- making reasonable efforts to support their own health, safety, and overall well -being, recognizing the importance of both physical and mental health in workplace attendance;
- participating actively, cooperatively, and in good faith in all stages of the Attendance Support Program, with the understanding that it is intended to be supportive and non-disciplinary in nature;
- providing appropriate medical or supporting information, where required, to facilitate the PSSBP ’s duty to accommodate to the point of undue hardship.

Principals/Managers

Principals and Managers are responsible for:

- monitoring employee attendance within their area of responsibility in a reasonable, consistent and proactive manner to support employee well-being and maintain effective operations;
- communicating attendance expectations and program information to employees on at least an annual basis;
- providing appropriate support, guidance, and early intervention to employees where attendance concerns arise;
- conducting timely, supportive coaching and counselling meetings where attendance concerns arise, including referral to appropriate supports or Supervisory Officer

- consulting with and referring matters to the Supervisory Officer where an employee's absence pattern warrants further review or support.

Unions

Unions are responsible for:

- supporting employees throughout the Attendance Support Program, as appropriate;
- working collaboratively with the PSSBP to support fair, transparent, and consistent application of the program, ensuring employee accountability while promoting a healthy and safe work environment.

Supervisory Officer

The Supervisory Officer is responsible for:

- providing education and guidance to employees and administrators regarding attendance expectations, the Attendance Support Program, and available supports, and applicable leaves under the Employment Standards Act;
- supporting Principals and Managers through advice, consultation, and guidance across all stages of the Attendance Support Program, ensuring a supportive, early intervention approach;
- ensuring the program is administered in a manner that is non -disciplinary, respectful of employee dignity, and consistent with PPM 171's focus on promoting employee well - being and positive workplace culture;
- monitoring attendance trends and analyzing data on an annual basis;
- reviewing and assessing medical documentation in accordance with legal requirements, privacy obligations, and PSSBP policy;
- ensuring that the Attendance Support Program is administered consistently and in alignment with PPM 171 principles of early support, fairness, equity, inclusion, and accommodation.