



ATTENDANCE SUPPORT PROGRAM

June 24, 2026

Purpose

The Rainbow District School Board prides itself on the quality educational services provided to students. The Board is dependent on the contribution and commitment of all employees to achieve this goal. Regular, consistent attendance is, therefore, essential.

The Attendance Support Program (the Program) is intended to address employee absences through positive interventions whereby employees are offered assistance and support on an individual basis. Implementation of the Program will be in accordance with the Ministry of Education's Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 171, applicable laws, and Rainbow District School Board collective agreements.

Goals and Objectives

1. The long-term goal and commitment of the Attendance Support Program is to maintain and promote a healthy school and Board community that contributes to safe, stable learning and working environments that ultimately support student and staff well-being and achievement.
2. The Attendance Support Program is a non-disciplinary process and applies to all staff. The goal of the Program is to assist employees to remain at work and where injury, illness or disability prevents an employee from attending work, ensure that the necessary support is in place to promote a timely and safe return to work. The intent is to resolve concerns through positive intervention, including offering assistance such as accommodation and Employee and Family Assistance Program services.
3. Objectives of the Attendance Support Program include:
 - Supporting employees in maintaining optimal health.
 - Promoting optimal and regular attendance at work, which is essential to furthering the Board's values, mission and strategic directions.
 - Offering assistance and support to employees whose number of absences has escalated.
 - Treating all employees in a consistent and respectful manner.
 - Providing a framework to work within and establishing individualized goals for employees to work toward.
 - Reducing the financial and human impacts associated with sick leave, such as interruption of student learning, loss of productivity, overtime, replacement staff and staff morale.

Roles and Responsibilities

Employees

As the Board's greatest asset, employees are required to be at work, wherever possible. Responsibilities include:

- Maintain good health.
- Maintain regular attendance at work, as scheduled.
- Attend to personal affairs and obligations outside of working hours.
- Request early intervention services if experiencing difficulty at work that may require workplace accommodation, etc.
- Maintain communication with Human Resources throughout the absence and expect to be regularly contacted by Human Resources during the absence period.
- Actively participate in all levels of the attendance support process.
- Actively participate in medical rehabilitation and/or treatment plans, as recommended by qualified registered healthcare professionals to facilitate stay at work, an early and safe return to work and achieve optimal recovery.
- Provide all appropriate documentation including medical, during any level of the process.
- Contact their union representative if the employee wishes them to be involved.

Principal/Manager/Supervisor

The Principal/Manager/Supervisor plays a critical role with respect to attendance. Responsibilities include:

- Promoting a positive work environment, including demonstrating care and concern for employee well-being.
- Demonstrating support for the intent of the Program to all staff.
- Ensuring attendance is coded properly.
- Assessing employee absence rates and identifying trends or patterns, in consultation with Human Resources.
- Addressing potential absence concerns in a timely manner.
- Assisting staff who are struggling with attendance issues to develop an action plan to improve attendance and support them in achieving the goals of their action plan.
- Assisting in communicating the Program to employees.
- Attending and supporting attendance support meetings.
- Supporting employees, including providing available resources to assist them in their work and/or personal lives.

- Working alongside Human Resources to develop effective return to work strategies and/or accommodations for employees, including achievable attendance goals.

Human Resources

Human Resources is responsible for the overall management of the Program. The Board's Human Resources Department plays a significant role in monitoring attendance and supporting the employee to stay at work and return to work and/or accommodations. Responsibilities include:

- Promoting and maintaining a work environment that protects the overall health, safety and wellness of all staff.
- Adjudicating and approving medical leaves of absence.
- Being fair, consistent and equitable in the application of the Program.
- Interpreting sick leave provisions.
- Orient and train Principals/Managers/Supervisors and staff on the Program and its procedures.
- Monitoring staff member absence records and notifying the Principal/Manager/Supervisor when a staff member has reached the attendance threshold set by this plan.
- Providing support and advice to Principals/Managers/Supervisors dealing with attendance concerns.
- Facilitating and assisting with meetings in the attendance support process.
- Providing Principals/Managers/Supervisors with support and guidance in the various stages of the Program, including assisting to establish personalized attendance goals for staff.
- Requesting proper medical documentations, as necessary.
- Maintaining medical documentation in a secure, confidential location.
- Consulting with respective unions, as requested and/or required.
- Leading and supporting the development of return to work and/or accommodation plans, including updating plans on a regular basis.

Executive Council

Executive Council plays a critical role with respect to the development of the Program and supporting the Program. Responsibilities include:

- Promoting and maintaining a work environment that protects the overall health, safety and wellness of all staff.
- Ensuring that high quality services are provided to students and the public in an efficient and cost effective manner.
- Providing support and acting as a resource to all aspects of the attendance support process.
- Demonstrating commitment to the Program by ensuring all Principals/Managers/Supervisors maintain their own good attendance and

- ensuring that all Principals/Managers/Supervisors act consistently and equitably when dealing with attendance issues at all levels of the organization.
- Reviewing the cases of employees who have not met attendance goals following the completion of all coaching levels to determine ongoing options and employability, in conjunction with Human Resources and the Principal/Manager/Supervisor.

Unions

The employee will be advised of their right to union representation in the attendance support process. If the employee chooses to involve a union representative, the representative may attend any formal meeting(s) to discuss or review the employee's attendance. Responsibilities include:

- Working collaboratively with all parties to support their members as it relates to the Program with attendance goals, developing accommodation and/or stay at work and return to work plans.

Definitions

Non-culpable Absences are absences that are beyond the control of the employee, such as illness, injury or disability. These absences are not dealt with through progressive discipline; but rather employees are supported through the Program. Lateness or leaving early may be included as part of non culpable absenteeism.

Culpable Absences are absences that are within the control of the employee and may involve deliberate misrepresentation or misuse of a leave thereby requiring disciplinary action. Although it may identify such patterns, the Program does not deal with culpable absenteeism. Lateness or leaving early may be included as part of culpable absenteeism.

Where culpable absenteeism is identified, a separate and distinct disciplinary process will ensue in accordance with Board procedures and the respective collective agreement.

Threshold determines the number of days absent to initiate entry into the Program. The Board will determine on an annual basis the threshold and will communicate this threshold to employees.

Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) is a free and confidential counselling and information program available to all permanent employees.

Absences Included in the Program

1. In order to proactively identify and respond to potential attendance issues, it is important that accurate, up-to-date attendance records are maintained.
2. The following chart illustrates what absences are included and what absences are not included as provided for in the respective collective agreements, for the purposes of entry into the program:

Absences Included	Absences Not Included
• Illness	• Vacation
• Injury unrelated to work	• Pregnancy/Parental Leave
• Medical Appointments	• Personal Leave
	• Workplace Illness/Injury (WSIB)
	• Bereavement Leave
	• Convocation
	• Union Leave
	• Quarantine
	• Compassionate Leave
	• Jury Duty
	• Family Medical leave or other leaves as defined by the Employment Standards Act
	• General Leave of Absence
	• Leave for Examinations
	• Education Leave
	• Long Term Disability

3. It is important to recognize that each employee and their situation is unique and, therefore, each case must be considered independently with some consideration given to the individual circumstance.

Attendance Support Process

1. The process consists of several support meetings that focus on proactive intervention with the goal of reducing the number of employee absences.
2. The threshold, as it relates to consideration for placement in the Program, for individual absences has been set at nine (9) intermittent days of absence, not attributable to a long term medical issue being managed by the Abilities Case Management Advisor. The threshold will be prorated based on FTE for employees who are less than 1.0 FTE.
3. The Attendance Support Program includes four (4) levels that incorporate a total of five (5) steps – one (1) informal and four (4) formal steps. Each step is intended to raise awareness of absence rates and to provide increasing support and/or referrals to available resources to assist employees in reducing their number of absences.
4. There are several features common to each level of the Program:
 - Any level can be extended, repeated or suspended based on individual circumstances and whether attendance goals have been achieved.
 - Attendance goals can be modified, based on new medical information or other supporting information.
 - If after having been removed from the Program, the employee is required to re-enter the program, they will generally enter at Level One, unless they are re-entering the program within a one-year timeframe.
 - If the employee indicates, at any point in the process, that a medical condition or disability contributes to their attendance, they may be referred to disability management. Continued participation in the Program may not be necessary and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

The Initial Meeting - Informal

1. Once it has been identified that an employee has reached seven (7) days of absence, the employee's Principal/Manager/Supervisor, in consultation with Human Resources, will meet with the employee to share concerns, understand what may be contributing to the increasing number of absences, and problem solve strategies to reduce absences. This meeting is informal and is an opportunity to engage the employee in conversation to better understand what may be contributing to the increasing number of absences and whether there are support strategies that could be put in place to assist the employee.
2. The Program will be reviewed with the employee at this meeting, as a possible next step.

Level One - Formal

1. If the employee's absences continue to increase reaching and/or exceeding the established threshold of nine (9) days, the employee will be placed into Level One of the Program. A meeting will be scheduled to review ongoing attendance concerns and establish attendance goals moving forward. The meeting will include the employee, their Principal/Manager/Supervisor, Human Resources and the union representative (if requested). The intent of this meeting is to further explore the number of absences, contributing factors and possible solutions. During this meeting, the parties will:
 - Review the employee's number of absences.
 - Suggest available resources to assist the employee such as EFAP, workplace accommodation, where appropriate, or other sources of support.
 - Explore the possible need to request medical documentation.
 - Establish attendance goals which will be monitored over the next sixty (60) working days.
2. A summary of the meeting will be provided in writing to the employee with a copy placed in the employee's attendance file.
3. If the goals as set during the Level One meeting are met, the employee is to be acknowledged in writing. Attendance records will continue to be monitored for an additional sixty (60) working days. If no further attendance issues are identified, the employee will exit the program with a pro-rated threshold for the balance of the year, if required.
4. Where the employee is unable to meet the established attendance goals, the employee will move to Level Two, depending upon individual circumstances.

Level Two - Formal

1. In some cases, some employee absence rates may not improve after at least two (2) attempts at intervention. In this case, the Principal/Manager/Supervisor, Human Resources and union representative (if requested) will:
 - Meet with the employee to review attendance records, re-emphasize attendance expectations, including previous goals.
 - Explore the possible need to request medical documentation and discuss other options that might support the employee in reducing the number of absences, such as EFAP, accommodation and/or other potential supports.
 - Advise the employee that there is a continuing concern with respect to their attendance, emphasizing that improvement is required over the next sixty (60) working days.
 - Confirm attendance goals and expectations in writing.
 - Advise the employee that continued absences may result in termination of employment.

- Monitor attendance over the next sixty (60) working days.
2. If the goals as set during the Level Two meeting are met, the employee is to be acknowledged in writing. Attendance records will continue to be monitored for an additional sixty (60) working days. If no further attendance issues are identified, the employee will exit the program with a pro-rated threshold for the balance of the year, if required.
 3. Where the employee is unable to meet the established attendance goals, the employee may be placed in Level Three of the Program, depending upon individual circumstances.

Level Three - Formal

1. In some cases, some employee absence rates may not improve after at least three (3) attempts at intervention. In this case, the Principal/Manager/Supervisor, Human Resources and union representative (if requested) will:
 - Meet with the employee to review attendance records, re-emphasize attendance expectations, including previous goals.
 - Explore the possible need to request medical documentation and discuss other options that might support the employee in reducing the number of absences, such as EFAP, accommodation and/or other potential supports.
 - Advise the employee that there is a continuing concern with respect to their attendance, emphasizing that improvement is required over the next sixty (60) working days.
 - Confirm attendance goals and expectations in writing.
 - Advise the employee that continued absences may result in termination of employment.
 - Monitor attendance over the next sixty (60) working days.
2. If the goals as set during the Level Three meeting are met, the employee is to be acknowledged in writing. Attendance records will continue to be monitored for an additional one hundred and twenty (120) working days. If no further attendance issues are identified, the employee will exit the program with a pro-rated threshold for the balance of the year, if required.
3. Where the employee is unable to meet the established attendance goals, the employee may be placed in Level Four of the Program, depending upon individual circumstances.

Level Four - Formal

1. If there is no improvement after participating in Level Three of the Program, the employee will progress to Level Four of the Program.

2. A meeting is scheduled with the School Superintendent or designate, Human Resources, the Principal/Manager/Supervisor and their union representative (if requested) to further investigate the employee's number of absences, contributing factors and possible solutions, while raising the employee's awareness that continued excessive absences may lead to termination. At this stage, the School Superintendent, or designate, will:
 - Review the employee's past attendance record and the reason why the employee has been placed in Level Four of the Program.
 - Encourage the employee to seek additional resources to assist them such as EFAP, treating physicians, alternative leave or other sources of support.
 - Where deemed necessary, ask the employee to provide medical or other supporting documentation that clearly outlines their ability to regularly attend work.
 - Advise that a follow up meeting will be scheduled to discuss the results of the requested medical assessment, if appropriate.
 - Implement any required accommodation(s).
 - Confirm attendance goals/expectations or establish new goals for this review period, if new information is presented.
 - Advise the employee that continued absences may result in termination from employment.
 - Confirm the above in writing.
 - Monitor the employee's attendance over the next sixty (60) working days.
3. If the medical documentation is not submitted or it is determined that regular and consistent attendance cannot be expected, Human Resources will begin a review of the employee's file to determine the viability of continuing the employment relationship.
4. The employee's attendance will be monitored over the next sixty (60) working days following the Level Four meeting. The employee's attendance will determine the outcome as follows:
 1. If the employee's attendance improves, the employee is to be acknowledged in writing. Attendance records will continue to be monitored every sixty (60) working days. If after one year from the date of the employee being advised they have met the Level Four goals and no further attendance issues are identified, the employee will exit the program with a pro-rated threshold for the balance of the year, if required.
 2. If the employee is unable to meet the established goals, a determination regarding the viability of continuing the employment relationship will occur.

Termination for Non-Culpable Absences

If after progressing through the Program, the employee does not exhibit any improvement in the number of absences, a review of the employee's file will be conducted to determine the viability of continuing the employment relationship.

Program Review & Evaluation

The Board's Attendance Support Program will be reviewed regularly, and, at a minimum every five (5) years, to evaluate the effectiveness and overall impact of the program. Amendments may be made, as necessary, to meet the overall goals and objectives of the program.

The Board reserves the right to review and evaluate the program on a regular basis and amend the above-noted threshold, as necessary.