

**JAMES BAY LOWLANDS
SECONDARY SCHOOL BOARD**

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION: NO. 485**

Effective	September 1, 2026
Last Revised	

ATTENDANCE SUPPORT PROGRAM

OPERATING PROCEDURES

The intent of the Attendance Support Procedure (“ASP”) is to set clear and consistent expectations for school boards for the development and implementation of ASPs with the goal of enhancing employee well-being and attendance in a supportive and non-disciplinary manner for employees who exceed the school board’s established absence threshold.

The ASP also includes leading practices to support school boards with the development and implementation of their ASP’s which adhere to the following principles:

- All school board employees play an important role in contributing to a supportive, positive and healthy school/school board community.
- Attendance support is part of the regular operations of school boards.
- The ASP must be implemented in alignment with applicable laws including the *Human Rights Code* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and must not be inconsistent with relevant school board collective agreements.
- To ensure fair and consistent application of the ASP policy for all employees.
- To reduce absenteeism and related direct and indirect costs.
- To increase attendance awareness by communicating the importance of regular attendance to all employees.
- To promote cooperation between leaders and employees to achieve and maintain regular attendance at work.
- To ensure all employees and leaders are aware of their responsibilities in maintaining acceptable attendance.
- To assist employees who may require help in resolving health or other personal difficulties which may be affecting their ability to maintain acceptable attendance levels.
- To recognize employees who have demonstrated improved attendance.

School board monitoring of attendance through the ASP may assist with the identification of employees who require a referral to disability management, other support programs, accommodation, or other employee assistance.

An effective ASP should encourage joint accountability for health and wellness by seeking employees’ input in creating solutions to address overall well-being and attendance.

The Ministry of Education requires all school boards to develop and implement an ASP in accordance with the following principles:

- statement of principles and objectives
- definitions of absences

- attendance threshold
- defined roles and responsibilities
- documented processes and procedures
- monitoring, evaluating and reviewing processes

When an employee's absences exceed the established absence threshold the following procedures apply.

Should a medically supported disability be identified that requires support or accommodation at any time during the process, the school board will review and, where required, support the employee's transition into the disability management program. Sporadic absences may continue to be considered within the ASP.

1.0 Definitions:

1.1 Absenteeism:

- 1.1.1 Innocent (Non-Culpable) Absenteeism relates to absences as a result of illness or injury that arise due to circumstances beyond the employee's control. These absences are not dealt with through a progressive discipline model; instead, the employee is supported through the Attendance Support Program.
- 1.1.2 The Board reserves the right to consider the termination of an employee for non-culpable absenteeism, where warranted and consistent with the provisions of applicable legislation.
- 1.1.3 Culpable Absenteeism relates to those absences for which employees can be held accountable. Failure to attend work without notifying the employer, lateness for work or leaving early, and abuse of leave are examples of culpable absences. Employees with culpable absences are subject to progressive discipline, in accordance with the associated policy and procedures. These absences are not dealt with through the ASP.

DEFINITIONS	MAY INCLUDE
Absences	• An Absence is defined as any illness/injury (paid and unpaid) that is not being supported through Human Resources, WSIB RTW Plan, or LTD RTW Plan. • Medical/Dental appointments
Not considered absences under the definition of this Procedure	MAY NOT INCLUDE • Vacation • Culpable absences • Family medical leaves as defined by the Employment Standards Act, 2000. • Pre-approved prolonged leaves of absence • Bereavement leave

	• Jury or subpoena leave • Pregnancy/parental leave • Union business leave • Examinations and convocations • Quarantine • Observance of recognized religious holy days • Inclement weather day • Suspensions • Approved Long Term Disability claims • Approved Workplace Safety & Insurance Board Loss of Earnings Claims • Paid or unpaid personal leaves • Emergency leaves under the Employment Standards Act not due to personal illness/injury
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2.0 Absence Threshold

Absence Threshold – The threshold is used as a mechanism to initiate non-disciplinary and supportive intervention. It is the established number of absences and/or occurrences used to initiate possible entry into the ASP. When an employee's absences and/or occurrences exceed the threshold within a rolling 12-working month period, the Principal/Supervisor and/or Human Resources Administrator may meet with the employee to review their level of absenteeism having regard for the personal circumstances of the employee.

- 2.1 The threshold should be reviewed annually or biennially by the Board.
- 2.2 Employees should be notified of threshold changes
- 2.3 Employees should be reminded on a yearly basis of the established threshold.
- 2.4 Entry into any level of the multi-level process is applied consistently to all employees using discretion. The goals that are set within any level are specific and unique to each employee's circumstances.
- 2.5 The employee may include their union/association representative in the Attendance Support process. At the employee's request, the union/association representative may attend any meetings that occur to discuss or review the employee's attendance
- 2.6 Employees will be notified that they are entering the program/coaching level of the ASP via email from the Human Resources Administrator. Union representatives (where applicable) will be copied on this communication.
- 2.7 The Attendance Support process includes 5 distinct components: Preliminary Level; Coaching Level 1; Coaching Level 2; Coaching Level 3; and Coaching Level 4.

- 2.7.1 The Preliminary Level meeting may include the employee, the employee's union/association if requested, Principal/Supervisor, and/or Human Resources Administrator to initiate discussion related to the employee's absence level, gain an understanding of the issue(s) that may be preventing the employee from regularly attending work, offer support and guidance, as well as set attendance goals for the next 90 working days or 5 working months.
- 2.7.2 Coaching Level 1 – consists of a meeting that includes the employee, the employee's union/association if requested, Principal/Supervisor, and/or Human Resources Administrator. The employee may enter Level 1 if they have been unable to meet the attendance goals established for the Preliminary Level review period. If no extenuating circumstances have been provided for which discretion may be applied, attendance goals will be set with the employee that will apply for the next 90 working days/5 working months.
- 2.7.3 Coaching Level 2 – consists of a meeting that may include the employee, the employee's union/association if requested, Principal/Supervisor, and/or Human Resources Administrator. The employee may enter Level 2 if they have been unable to meet the attendance goals established for the Level 1 review period. If no extenuating circumstances have been provided for which discretion may be reasonably applied, attendance goals will be set with the employee that will apply for the next 90 working days/5 working months.
- 2.7.4 Coaching Level 3 – consists of a meeting that may include the employee, the employee's union/association, Principal/Supervisor, and Human Resources Administrator. The employee may enter Level 3 if they have been unable to meet the attendance goals established for the Level 2 review period. If no extenuating circumstances have been provided for which discretion may be reasonably applied, attendance goals will be set with the employee that will apply for the next 90 working days/5 working months.

The employee will be informed that if they are unable to meet their established attendance goal during the Level 3 review period, they may progress to Coaching Level 4 where their employment status will be reviewed. This review may include termination on a non-disciplinary basis.

- 2.7.5 Coaching Level 4 – consists of a meeting that may include the employee, the employee's union/association, Principal/Supervisor, and Superintendent of Business or designate. The employee may enter Level 4 if they have been unable to meet the attendance goals established for the Level 3 review period. Where the employee progresses to Level 4 and the board determines that:
- (a) It has fulfilled its obligations under the applicable collective agreement and/or policies and procedures, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, Ontario Human Rights Code, and/or any other applicable legislation; and,
 - (b) The employee's absenteeism is excessive and there is no reasonable likelihood that the employee will be able to attend work regularly in the foreseeable future.

(c) The employee's employment status will be reviewed, up to and including termination on a non-disciplinary basis.

2.8 When attendance goals have been met within the Preliminary or Coaching Level review periods, the employee will enter the 12-working month monitoring period where their absences are monitored by the Human Resources Administrator.

2.8.1 Employees who exceed the threshold in the 12-working month monitoring period will remain in the Attendance Support Program. The employee may be invited to attend a meeting at next Level of the program.

2.8.2 Employees who do not exceed the threshold in the 12-working month monitoring period will exit the Attendance Support Program.

2.8.3 If the employee's absences and/or occurrences exceed the boards established threshold after existing the ASP, the employee will enter the program at the Preliminary Level.

3.0 Employee Responsibilities Include:

3.1 Maintain regular attendance

3.2 Enter all absences in a timely manner following the board's established absence reporting process

3.3 Participate actively in all levels of the Attendance Support process

3.4 Cooperate in setting personal attendance goals

3.5 Contact their union/association representative if the employee wishes they be involved

3.6 Provide appropriate documentation during any level of the process as required.

4.0 Principal/Supervisor Responsibilities May Include:

4.1 Communicate attendance expectations to all employees through a regular review of the Attendance Support Program

4.2 Review and validate absence reports for staff

4.3 Identify absenteeism trends or patterns

4.4 Address all absenteeism issues using discretion and seek support from Human Resources as needed

4.5 Support employees and act as a resource

4.6 Advise employees of available resources (i.e., EFAP)

- 4.7 Facilitating supportive meetings as outlined in the Attendance Support Procedure and provide input into the development of individualized attendance goals for each employee involved in the process
- 4.8 Provide a written outcome of each supportive meeting with copies to the employee, **Human Resources Officer**, and employee representative, if applicable
- 4.9 Support and assist the **Human Resources Officer** at any level in the Attendance Support process
- 4.10 Provide positive reinforcement to employees who reach their attendance goals

5.0 Human Resources Responsibilities May Include:

- 5.1 Support Principals/Supervisors in addressing absenteeism issues.
- 5.2 Serve as a resource to employees and Principals/Supervisors.
- 5.3 Assist to identify employees who exceed the threshold level of absences.
- 5.4 Advise employees of resources available to them.
- 5.5 Participate in supportive meetings as required
- 5.6 Provide assistance on the development of individualized goals, taking into account all circumstances identified during each meeting.
- 5.7 Provide a written outcome of each supportive meeting with copies to the employee, Principal/Supervisor, and employee representative, if applicable

6.0 Superintendent(s) Responsibilities May Include:

- 6.1 Participate in the Coaching Level 4 meeting, and other meetings, when required. In conjunction with Human Resources, Principals and Supervisors, review the employment status of employees who have not met attendance goals in Coaching Level 3.
- 6.2 Provide support and act as a resource to all aspects of the Attendance Support process
- 6.3 Hold leaders accountable to facilitating timely meetings with employees in need of support
- 6.4 Ensure a review/audit of the Attendance Support Program occurs at a minimum of every five years or as part of the board's regular policy/procedure review cycle, whichever is the shorter period.

7.0 Union/Association Representative Responsibilities May Include:

- 7.1 Cooperate and help identify potential underlying issues affecting attendance and engage in problem-solving to explore reasonable accommodations or solutions where applicable.
- 7.2 Provide employees with clear and accurate information regarding the AS process.
- 7.3 Attend AS meetings when requested by employees.
- 7.4 Ensure that any discussions or meetings involving the employee's attendance are conducted in a respectful and confidential manner.

8.0 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

- 8.1 The Board is committed to ensuring that the ASP, complies with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).
- 8.2 The Board recognizes its responsibility to provide accessible services, programs, and accommodations to all employees in accordance with the AODA, the Ontario Human Rights Code, and any other applicable legislation.
- 8.3 Employees requiring accommodation due to a disability will be supported in alignment with the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.
- 8.4 The Board will ensure that all meetings, communication, and documentation related to the ASP are available in accessible formats upon request and will provide any necessary accommodations to facilitate full participation in the process.
- 8.5 Supervisors, Principals, and Human Resources Officers involved in the Attendance Support Program will receive training to ensure compliance with the AODA and to enhance their understanding of providing accessible and inclusive support to employees.

REFERENCES:

- Ministry of Education Policy / Program Memorandum 171, *Attendance Support Programs (ASP)*
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11
- JBLSSB AP480 Progressive Discipline