

RETURN TO WORK PROGRAM OPERATING PROCEDURES

1. Goal

- 1.1. The goal of the Return to Work Program of the District is to ensure that, where appropriate, employees with medical conditions are maintained at work or return to work after extended sick leaves
 - With appropriate preparation,
 - In a timely fashion,
 - With appropriate workplace modifications or accommodations, and
 - With appropriate support.
- 1.2. The bottom line is effective rehabilitation and return to work; the expertise of the occupational health service provider is focused on the recovery and return to work process. An interdisciplinary health care focus by the service provider enables effective collaboration with family physicians, medical specialists, and other caregivers. The service provider has the knowledge and expertise in workplace conditions, job demands, functional assessment, and rehabilitation to act as a coordinator of individual progression from injury/illness to maximum recovery and employability.

2. District Joint Return to Work Committee

- 2.1. The return to work program will be managed by a committee made up of an employer representative, a union representative, and the occupational health service provider. This committee deals with matters related to return to work plans and will deal with those matters in a respectful and confidential manner. The committee will meet on a monthly basis or as necessary.

3. Occupational Health Service Provider

- 3.1. The employer will retain the services of a bona fide occupational health service provider.

4. Role of the Occupational Health Service Provider

- 4.1. The service provider will work with the employee and his/her health team and the employer to assess, plan, implement, coordinate, monitor, and evaluate return to work options for the employee.

5. Health Team Members

- 5.1. The objective in each case is to establish a team made up of the employee, the occupational health service provider, and the employee's health care team, including but not restricted to physicians, physiotherapist, massage therapist, and/or psychologist, to work together to support a timely, appropriate, and successful return to work for the employee.

6. Referral

- 6.1. An employee will be referred to the service provider by the employer or union. This referral will be confirmed in writing to the service provider and will:
 - 6.1.1. Authorize the provision of service;
 - 6.1.2. Provide the demographic information and job duties of the employee; and
 - 6.1.3. Provide the general circumstances related to the absence or situation.

7. Conditions for Referral

- 7.1. The employee will be informed of the referral prior to the referral.
- 7.2. Employees work with the occupational health service provider on a voluntary basis.
 - 7.2.1. Employees will be strongly encouraged to make this decision after receiving information about the program from the service provider.
- 7.3. A referral may be the result of:
 - 7.3.1. A (self) referral from the employee or the employer;
 - 7.3.2. The employee using sick leave to manage symptoms of an illness;
 - 7.3.3. The union referring the employee to the program;
 - 7.3.4. The employer referring the employee as a result of becoming aware of a circumstance where occupational health consultation may maintain an employee at work or allow for a timely and successful return to work by the employee;
 - 7.3.5. The employer and/or the employee requiring the assistance of an occupational health consultant to appropriately manage a medical leave.
- 7.4. The service provider will make an initial contact with the employee in order to explain the service, the protection of privacy, the team to be assembled to support the employee, and the options open to the employee.
- 7.5. The service provider will not contact any practitioners until a release is signed by the employee.
- 7.6. The occupational health consultant is an advisor to the employee and the employer. Within this relationship, both the employee and the employer retain their decision-making authority.

8. Records (Employer)

- 8.1. All documentation related to the return to work plan of an employee will be retained in a manner that respects the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation. The documentation will be maintained in secure storage separate from other personnel records of the employee accessible only to the employer's representative on the District Joint Return to Work Committee and his/her office, and to the employee pursuant to Access to Records provisions of the Collective Agreement.

9. Records (Service Provider)

- 9.1. All documentation obtained by the service provider is retained solely by the service provider in a manner that respects the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation for a period of time dictated by legal requirements.

10. Closure of the Case

- 10.1. A return to work case file will be closed when the employee withdraws from the program and/or when the employer is advised by the Service Provider that the services of the Service Provider are no longer required by the employee and employer.

Reference: Sections 22, 65, 85, 92 School Act
Employment Standards Act
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Collective Agreements

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