



## Superintendent's Circular

School Year 2010-2011

NUMBER:  
HRS-PP5

DATE:  
September 1, 2010

### ATTENDANCE MONITORING SYSTEM

#### PURPOSE:

These guidelines represent a compilation and integration of previously established Boston Public School Department policies. The purpose is to improve employee attendance, provide assistance and supervision to employees, and eliminate any abuse of sick leave benefits. Their consistent application by managers, and compliance by all employees, will make a substantial contribution towards our ultimate goal of providing a more effective and stable education for the students of the Boston Public Schools.

#### SIGN-IN PROCEDURES:

**All central and school responsibility center managers are required to establish and supervise a paper sign-in / sign-out procedure that provides an accurate record of the date and time of arrival and departure of all employees assigned to the responsibility center.**

The sign-in records are vital documentation supporting attendance and payroll records, and become essential documents in the event of disputes about pay, benefits, or discipline related to tardiness or attendance. They also are consistent with audit requirements. Sign-in sheets must be kept on file in offices and schools, and must be available on request by the Office of Human Resources. All responsibility centers are subject to unannounced audits of sign-in records.

Sign-in sheets should consist of a typed list in alphabetical order of all employees assigned to the responsibility center, including the RC manager, with spaces beside each name for signature, for time of arrival and for time of departures. Each sign-in sheet should be clearly dated and labeled with the name of the responsibility center. Responsibility Center Managers should impress upon their employees that it is fraudulent to falsify sign-in / sign-out records.

#### MONITORING PROGRAM:

The program of attendance monitoring and reporting shall continue. This program will not impinge on collective bargaining agreements. Following are the procedures for attendance monitoring:

Attendance Pattern	Action Required
1. Four or more absences before and/or after holiday/vacation.	a. Automated report sent to responsibility center manager (sick days only). b. Supervisor arranges conference with employee.
2. Sick leave absences lasting six or more consecutive days without a physician's certificate. It is the responsibility of the administrator to ascertain that physician's certificate has been provided and forwarded to Human Resources.	a. Same process as noted above.
3. Scattered sick leave absences throughout the school year exceeding or projected to exceed 15 days.	a. Same process as noted above.
4. Repeated unacceptable attendance patterns (i.e. those noted in items 1 through 3 above), which continue after a manager has met with the employee will require further action.	a. Automated report sent to responsibility center manager. b. Supervisor arranges second conference with employee. c. Manager submits report to appropriate Administrator and/or Headmaster/Principal.

**YEAR-END REVIEW**

Each school year on or before June 1, the appropriate administrators will receive a report of all responsibility centers under their jurisdiction noting staff (by name, by responsibility center) who have been identified as possibly having an unacceptable attendance pattern. They shall review these reports with responsibility center managers under their jurisdiction in order to ascertain whether meetings were held with all identified staff and the outcome of those meetings.

Inasmuch as some aspects of attendance reporting and monitoring deal with employee performance evaluation and employee discipline, these portions cannot be implemented unilaterally. However, sections which pertain to the provisions of management reports and routine review of rates of absenteeism can be implemented as both are included within the framework of current policies. This system is a logical extension and expansion of our current attendance reporting process and is designed to implement fully the employee sick leave policy (see Superintendent's Circular - Employee Sick Leave Policy).

For more information about this circular, contact:

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Carol R. Johnson, Superintendent

## **ATTENDANCE MONITORING POLICY GUIDELINES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The term "manager," as used in these guidelines, refers to positions such as Academic Superintendent, Senior Officer, Headmaster, Principal, Senior Program Director, and Director. It is expected that a manager may in some cases delegate authority to carry out these procedures to supervisory personnel reporting to him/her.

### **PURPOSE**

These guidelines represent a compilation and integration of previously established Boston School Department policies. Their purpose is to improve employee attendance, provide assistance and supervision to employees, and eliminate any abuse of sick leave benefits. Their consistent application by managers, and compliance by all employees, will make a substantial contribution toward our ultimate goal of providing a more effective and stable education for the students of the Boston Public Schools.

### **THE MANAGER HAS PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTING THESE GUIDELINES**

#### **1. Managerial Responsibility**

Absenteeism is one of the primary reasons for a manager's inability to accomplish expected goals since it results in less than optimal student progress, missed deadlines, low quality of work due to inexperienced replacements, scheduling and coverage problems, and low morale of employees who must assume the absentee's workload. Employee motivation and attendance are key factors affecting the productivity of each unit in the school system. Good attendance practices with a school or department are indicative of a well-motivated and supervised workforce. Therefore, managers should realize that it is in their own best interest to develop and to maintain good attendance practices since their effectiveness is measured by the accomplishments of their schools and departments.

#### **2. Managerial Judgment**

Managers will be expected to implement these procedures, to counsel employees and take appropriate action when a pattern of abuse occurs. Each supervisor should analyze each situation based on its merits, considering such factors as length of service, total sick leave accumulation, frequency of occurrences, patterns of absenteeism, and the employee's medical history that is previously known to the manager and/or from information that may be required to be on file with the School Department.

#### **3. Managerial Intervention**

It is important that the manager intervene as soon as an absence pattern is detected. The following ATTENDANCE MONITORING procedures will be followed by all managers to ensure consistency throughout the system, and with the goals of reducing current rates of absenteeism, and offering appropriate remediation for all employees who require it. The ATTENDANCE MONITORING POLICY will provide early detection of employee illness or potential psychological, alcoholic or drug problems and will demonstrate a genuine concern for employee health-related matters. If the manager's intervention fails to produce an improvement in the employee's attendance patterns, the manager must implement corrective action, as outlined herein, in accordance with Superintendent's Circular – Employee Discipline Procedure

## **THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS MUST BE MET**

Employees must adhere to the following procedures to ensure the effective implementation of the ATTENDANCE MONITORING POLICY:

### **1. Notification**

#### **a. Employees Serving in Schools:**

These employees are not entitled to sick leave without loss of pay unless they have notified their headmaster or principal, in accordance with the schedule established by the appropriate headmaster/principal. Each employee must indicate the period of anticipated absence. If, at the expiration of the anticipated period, the employee has not recovered, the employee must again notify the headmaster/principal of the reason for the additional period of anticipated absence in accordance with established practice at his/her school. Each school must maintain and post in appropriate locations a standard school policy for notice of absence.

#### **b. Employees Not Serving In Schools:**

These employees are not entitled to sick leave without loss of pay unless they have notified their manager of the absence and anticipated duration before the expiration of the first fifteen (15) minutes after their normal reporting time, or as soon as practical. If at the expiration of the anticipated duration the employee has not recovered, the employee must again notify the manager of the additional period of anticipated absence the day before the employee is expected to return to work.

#### **c. Illness during Work Hours:**

When an employee becomes ill during regular work hours, the employee must notify the manager. The manager will record the length of absence.

#### **d. Failure to Notify:**

Employees failing to give the required proper notice shall be considered absent without authorization and subject to progressive disciplinary action.

### **2. Physician's Certificate**

If the absence lasts six (6) or more consecutive working days (unless a lesser amount as provided for in a collective bargaining agreement), a physician's certificate must be provided and must include the following:

- a.** A statement that the physician understands the nature of the employee's duties and that the employee is incapable of performing the duties and responsibilities of his/her position.
- b.** A statement of anticipated duration of the absence or the expected date of return to work. If the duration is unknown, the letter should indicate when the physician would be seeing the employee again and an updated letter would be expected at that time.

If the physician's certificate does not include these statements, the manager must notify the employee to obtain the omitted information before authorizing sick leave.

### **ALL MEDICAL INFORMATION WILL BE MAINTAINED ON A CONFIDENTIAL BASIS**

If in the course of the interview, the manager learns that an employee has a chronic or disabling condition which may qualify that person for consideration as a handicapped individual, the Office of Equity (617-635-9650) should be contacted.

A handicapped individual is defined as any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as: caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, or learning. Medical information concerning any employee must be maintained in strict confidence.

### **ATTENDANCE REPORTS WILL BE PROVIDED TO EACH MANAGER**

1. Managers will monitor the attendance of all employees on a monthly basis to identify potential patterns of abuse.

Through the Office of Human Resources, managers will be provided with regular REPORTS of the sick leave patterns noted in Section 2 a, b, and c below. Managers will be responsible for monitoring all other patterns of abuse on site.

2. The following have been identified as possible patterns of sick leave/tardiness abuse:
  - a. Four (4) or more sick leave absences before or after weekend or holiday/vacation (REPORT).
  - b. Sick leave absences lasting six (6) or more consecutive days without a physician's certificate (REPORT).
  - c. Scattered sick leave absences throughout the school year exceeding or projected to exceed fifteen (15) days (REPORT).
  - d. Two (2) or more absences, consecutive or closely patterned, following layoff notification.
  - e. Two (2) or more absences, consecutive or closely patterned, following contract non-renewal notification.
  - f. Two (2) or more absences immediately following poor performance evaluation.
  - g. Patterns of two (2) days out, two in, one out, etc.
  - h. Tardiness: two (2) or more days within a one-week period.
  - i. Tardiness: two (2) or more days within a two-week period.
3. When an employee's attendance/tardiness patterns fit those described above, THE MANAGER MUST ADHERE TO THE ATTENDANCE MONITORING PROCEDURES outlined herein. REPORTS can only be provided for the patterns noted above (i.e. Sections 2, a-c).
  - a. Schedule a meeting with the employee to discuss his/her absences and/or tardiness and the reasons for them. Notify him/her of the meeting, in writing. Inform the employee that he/she may have union representation, if desired. Keep a copy for your files.
  - b. If, after an initial meeting, the pattern of attendance/tardiness abuse persists, notify the Office of Human Resources in writing that the employee has exhibited a potential pattern

of abuse and of your scheduled meeting and results. For custodial employees, notify the Director of Facilities Management. Keep copies for your files.

- c. DOCUMENT YOUR MEETING WITH THE EMPLOYEE IN WRITING. Keep copies for your file.
- d. If the pattern of attendance/punctuality abuse persists (i.e. if a second conference is required for any individual employee), the manager must implement corrective action, as outlined herein, in accordance with the School Department's Employee Discipline Policy (See Superintendent's Circular - Employee Discipline Procedure).
- e. If the employee's reasons for absences/tardiness are insufficient, or if the pattern persists as noted above, issue him/her a WRITTEN WARNING (attached is a form to be used for this purpose) and explain the following consequences of subsequent absences/tardiness. For custodial employees, the following steps will be carried out by the Director of Facilities Management or his designee. In addition, YOU ARE TO FOLLOW THESE PROCEDURES IF THE EMPLOYEE SUBSEQUENTLY FAILS TO MEET REQUIRED STANDARDS OF ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY:
  - A physician's certificate will be required for all subsequent absences. If the employee fails to produce one, the manager will submit a PS-03 form docking the employee's pay for those days absent/tardy.
  - An employee who fails to meet required standards of attendance/punctuality will be issued an "unsatisfactory/does not meet standards" on the employee's Performance Evaluation.
  - If the pattern of abuse continues after a WRITTEN WARNING, the manager will give written notification to the employee of a meeting to discuss the employee's reasons for continued absence/tardiness. If the manager is not satisfied with the explanation, the employee will be informed that the manager will recommend to the Office of Human Resources that the employee be docked pay for additional days of absence/tardiness. The manager will attach a PS-03 form to his/her recommendation stating the days for which the employee should be docked. The employee will receive a copy of the recommendation and will be given an "unsatisfactory/does not meet standards" rating for failure to meet required standards of attendance/punctuality.
  - In addition to the manager's docking recommendation, the manager will issue to the employee, with a copy to the Office of Human Resources, a written LETTER OF REPRIMAND, signed by the employee, to be included in the employee's Personnel Record. If the employee refuses to sign the LETTER OF REPRIMAND, a neutral party, having witnessed that the employee has read the LETTER OF REPRIMAND, will sign the LETTER OF REPRIMAND attesting to that fact. The employee will be given a copy of the LETTER OF REPRIMAND.
  - If the pattern of abuse continues subsequent to the issuance of the LETTER OF REPRIMAND, the manager will recommend to the Office of Human Resources that the employee be suspended without pay. The Office of Human Resources can review the recommendation. If the Office of Human Resources is in accord, a recommendation will be forwarded to the Superintendent at which time a hearing will be held to consider the employee's case. The employee will receive a copy of the manager's recommendation to the Office of Human Resources to suspend without pay.

**4. Documentation:**

EACH STAGE OF THE ATTENDANCE MONITORING POLICY PROCEDURES MUST BE CAREFULLY DOCUMENTED. Copies must be distributed to the Office of Human Resources and/or the employee at each appropriate stage. When submitting documentation to the Office of Human resources, all previous documentation MUST BE ATTACHED, thus providing a complete record of the employee's attendance history.

**THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND OFFICE OF THE LABOR RELATIONS ARE AVAILABLE FOR ADVICE AND COUNSEL**

While the managers are the central figures in managing attendance, the Office of Human Resources and Office of the Labor Relations are prepared to provide the following technical support to them:

1. To advise managers in their efforts to change unacceptable absence patterns.
2. To provide an effective mechanism for reporting and monitoring system.
3. To interpret policy and procedures and assist in the resolution of operating problems.
4. To provide advice concerning the implementation of progressive disciplinary action.
5. To provide automated reports to managers in order to effectively implement this policy.

**EMPLOYEE NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**WRITTEN WARNING OF EXCESSIVE ABSENCES/TARDINESS**

Please be advised that your absences/tardiness on the following dates indicate a pattern of abuse of attendance/punctuality standards:

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Failure to correct these abuses will result in the following:

- You are required to submit to me a physician's certificate for any subsequent absences. The certificate should (1) be on the physician's letterhead; (2) state that the physician understands the nature of your duties and responsibilities of your position; and (3) state the anticipated duration of your absence or expected date of return. **FAILURE TO SUBMIT A PHYSICIAN'S CERTIFICATE FOR SUBSEQUENT ABSENCES WILL RESULT IN LOSS OF PAY FOR THE DAYS YOU ARE ABSENT.**
- Your failure to meet the standards required for attendance/punctuality will result in a rating of "UNSATISFACTORY/DOES NOT MEET STANDARDS" on your Performance Evaluation.
- If a pattern of attendance/punctuality abuse persists, I will recommend to the Office of Human Resources that you be docked pay for those days you are absent/tardy subsequent to receipt of this WRITTEN WARNING OF EXCESSIVE ABSENCES/TARDINESS.
- If a pattern of attendance/punctuality abuse persists, I will submit to the Office of Human Resources a LETTER OF REPRIMAND, requiring your signature. The LETTER OF REPRIMAND will become part of your Personnel record.
- If a pattern of attendance/punctuality abuse continues following your receipt of the LETTER OF REPRIMAND, I will recommend to the Office of Human Resources suspension without pay. If the Office of Human Resources is in accord with me, he/she will pass the recommendation on to the Superintendent at which time a hearing on your behalf will be held.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature (Manager)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature (Employee/Witness)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

cc: Office of Human Resources  
Employee File