

Corporate and Administrative Manual

Category:	Human Resources	Policy Number:	SHN-ADMIN-HR-020
Subject:	Attendance Support Program	Date:	2018/06
Issued By:	Executive Vice President, People and Transformation	Revision Date (s):	2024/04
Approved By:	Senior Leadership Team	Page	Page 1 of 8
Rescinded Policies:	RVHS – Admin-OH-0020; TSH – 1.50.001		
Harmonized:	☐ Yes ☐ No		

NOTE: A PRINTED COPY OF THIS DOCUMENT MAY NOT REFLECT THE CURRENT, ELECTRONIC VERSION ON SHN INTRANET. ANY COPIES APPEARING IN PAPER FORM SHOULD ALWAYS BE CHECKED AGAINST THE ELECTRONIC VERSION PRIOR TO USE.

PURPOSE:

- To emphasize the value of regular attendance and outline the responsibility of every employee to be at work except when they are on an approved leave (ex. vacation, *Employment Standards Act* leaves).
- For employees to become aware of internal and external resources available to assist them to attend work more regularly.
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in the Attendance Support Program (ASP).
- To outline the responsibility of every leader to manage the absenteeism of their employees, create a positive work culture, and implement strategies that encourage regular attendance.
- To create a consistent, evidence-based approach to manage and support employee attendance.

Scarborough Health Network (SHN) values each one of their employees. While SHN recognizes that a certain level of absenteeism is unavoidable, SHN also recognizes the importance of providing support and resources when an employee is frequently absent from work due to any non-occupational or occupational illness, injury or other reason.

POLICY STATEMENT:

SHN is committed to providing the highest level of quality care and prompt service to our patients. Each employee contributes to these objectives and their regular attendance at work is essential to maintaining a high level of care and service. It is an expectation of employment that all SHN employees be responsible for achieving and maintaining regular attendance at work as an integral component of required job performance. The Attendance Support Program (ASP) applies to all full-time, part-time and casual employees.

This policy will: help increase staff awareness regarding the need to be at work on a regular basis, provide feedback to employees regarding attendance, and show leaders how to provide support to those employees who are having difficulty maintaining regular attendance. While it is a basic expectation that employees must stay away from the workplace if they are sick, it is expected that employees attend work regularly.

The policy provides a consistent approach with respect to the management of frequent and excessive absenteeism. It is aligned with and will be administered consistent with SHN collective agreements and applicable legislation including the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and the *Employment Standards Act*.

The ASP provides a process to address absenteeism that meets or exceeds an established threshold. Enrollment or progression through the program will be triggered when managers receive a report that identifies the employee has met or exceeded the established threshold. Absence management and administering of the ASP is a leader's responsibility. The ASP is not the only avenue to begin a conversation with an employee about their absences; a leader can begin a supportive discussion with employees about their absences at any time. The ASP letters guide the conversation in a consistent manner and provide supporting data on absences for an employee in a standardized letter format.

Corporate and Administrative Manual

Category:	Human Resources	Policy Number:	SHN-ADMIN-HR-020
Subject:	Attendance Support Program	Date:	2018/06
Issued By:	Executive Vice President, People and Transformation	Revision Date (s):	2024/04
Approved By:	Senior Leadership Team	Page	Page 2 of 8
Rescinded Policies:	RVHS – Admin-OH-0020; TSH – 1.50.001		
Harmonized:	☐ Yes ☐ No		

NOTE: A PRINTED COPY OF THIS DOCUMENT MAY NOT REFLECT THE CURRENT, ELECTRONIC VERSION ON SHN INTRANET. ANY COPIES APPEARING IN PAPER FORM SHOULD ALWAYS BE CHECKED AGAINST THE ELECTRONIC VERSION PRIOR TO USE.

Benefits of the Attendance Support Program

- To assist employees to achieve and maintain regular and reliable attendance
- To provide support and guidance to assist employees who have high absenteeism
- To reduce absences from work which cause disruption to other team members
- To provide guidelines for a fair and consistent process while providing individual flexibility as needed
- To obtain clarification on any aspect of illness or injury that may affect the ability to perform all or part of the job duties
- To provide a framework for responding to excessive absenteeism
- To seek out accommodation measures to assist employees in managing their absenteeism up to and including SHN's obligations under the *Human Rights Code*

Interactions and consultations conducted as part of the ASP are non-disciplinary and will be done in a confidential manner.

Applicable Absences

This Program applies to Innocent Absenteeism which relates to absences that are typically outside the control of the employee, including due to legitimate personal illness. SHN recognizes that employees with a previous acceptable attendance record may exceed SHN's threshold due to innocent absenteeism.

This Program does not apply to culpable absences. Those absences may be disciplinary and will not be dealt with through the ASP.

Absences due to approved leaves such as vacation, jury duty, bereavement, a WSIB approved Loss of Earnings where benefits are paid, or any additional leave an employee is entitled to pursuant to the *Employment Standards Act* are not counted as absences in the ASP.

Where required by a SHN collective agreement, the following will be excluded when considering enrollment/progression in the ASP. Absences related to or arising out of:

- A medically-established serious chronic condition
- An on-going course of treatment
- A catastrophic event
- A medically necessary surgical intervention
- A situation where the employee is asymptomatic, but is required to be absent under SHN or public health authority protocol
- A situation where the employee is symptomatic and under a doctor's care from the commencement of symptoms for a confirmed infectious communicable disease that has been reported to the public health

Corporate and Administrative Manual

Category:	Human Resources	Policy Number:	SHN-ADMIN-HR-020
Subject:	Attendance Support Program	Date:	2018/06
Issued By:	Executive Vice President, People and Transformation	Revision Date (s):	2024/04
Approved By:	Senior Leadership Team	Page	Page 3 of 8
Rescinded Policies:	RVHS – Admin-OH-0020; TSH – 1.50.001		
Harmonized:	☐ Yes ☐ No		

NOTE: A PRINTED COPY OF THIS DOCUMENT MAY NOT REFLECT THE CURRENT, ELECTRONIC VERSION ON SHN INTRANET. ANY COPIES APPEARING IN PAPER FORM SHOULD ALWAYS BE CHECKED AGAINST THE ELECTRONIC VERSION PRIOR TO USE.

authority by the employee's treating practitioner

Absences due to "disabilities" within the meaning of the Ontario Human Rights Code, as interpreted and applied by the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal, will be excluded when considering enrollment/progression in the ASP.

While absences related to disabilities within the meaning of the Ontario Human Rights Code are excluded from the application of the ASP, attendance of those affected employees will nevertheless be tracked and monitored by WHS, and those employees may still be enrolled in or progress through the ASP for absences which are unrelated to their disability. Frustration of employment may still occur for absences related to disabilities under the Code, subject to the duty to accommodate to the point of undue hardship.

An employee who requires temporary or long-term accommodation as a result of a specific serious medical condition/illness at any time will have their medical case monitored and reviewed by WHS. If the medical condition is long-term in nature, a search for long-term alternate work will be undertaken as per SHN's Absence Management Program Policy.

Employees seeking to rely on any of the exclusions above related to a particular absence(s), shall advise and provide supporting medical documentation (SHN approved medical certificate) to the WHS department.

DEFINITIONS:

Absence: Any time an employee, who is scheduled or otherwise expected to be at work, is not at work.

Accommodation: An alteration to the employee's normal work assignment or duties and responsibilities which is provided in response to specific medical needs, limitations and/or restrictions relating to a disability. An employee, who has a disability that gives rise to specific medical needs, and/or medical restrictions or limitations, may require temporary or long-term accommodation in the workplace. Accommodation may include, but not be limited to, a temporary assignment or project until a long-term placement is found.

Culpable Absenteeism: Absences which are partly or totally within the employee's control. These are absences for which there is no reasonable justification or for which the employee has failed to follow the proper procedures, such as failure to advise of absences, lateness, abuse of leaves, or a failure to provide requested documentation to support absences. Culpable absenteeism will be managed as a disciplinary matter.

Corporate and Administrative Manual

Category:	Human Resources	Policy Number:	SHN-ADMIN-HR-020
Subject:	Attendance Support Program	Date:	2018/06
Issued By:	Executive Vice President, People and Transformation	Revision Date (s):	2024/04
Approved By:	Senior Leadership Team	Page	Page 4 of 8
Rescinded Policies:	RVHS – Admin-OH-0020; TSH – 1.50.001		
Harmonized:	☐ Yes ☐ No		

NOTE: A PRINTED COPY OF THIS DOCUMENT MAY NOT REFLECT THE CURRENT, ELECTRONIC VERSION ON SHN INTRANET. ANY COPIES APPEARING IN PAPER FORM SHOULD ALWAYS BE CHECKED AGAINST THE ELECTRONIC VERSION PRIOR TO USE.

Innocent Absenteeism (also known as Non-Culpable Absenteeism): Absence that is outside the control of the employee (e.g., legitimate personal illness). Innocent absenteeism, even when consistently excessive, is blameless and is dealt with in a non-disciplinary manner through this ASP. However, continued excessive innocent absenteeism could result in a frustration of the employment relationship.

Frustration of Employment: Occurs where circumstances have rendered it not possible for an employee's employment contract to continue. Each case will be reviewed on an individual basis before the SHN determines whether the employment relationship has been frustrated due to an employee's ongoing absenteeism.

PROCEDURE:

Attendance Awareness Levels: The ASP provides a process to address absenteeism that meets or exceeds an absence threshold of three (3) incidents and five (5) shifts in a six-month monitoring period. The ASP is based on a fiscal year. Attendance reports will be generated from April 1-September 30 and October 1-March 31.

There are five levels in the ASP. At each Level the following expectations apply:

- employees are expected to identify to their supervisor/manager or WHS any specific issue(s) that may be impacting their ability to attend work regularly;
- employees are expected to identify any absences that they believe should *not* be included in the Program, including reasons and supporting medical documentation;
- leaders/supervisors/managers are expected to exercise their discretion in assessing employees' individual circumstances as it relates to the application and administration of the Program.

The following are the levels in the Program:

Level 0 (L0) – Preliminary Attendance Review

The goal of Level 0 is to support both leaders and employees in their efforts to have proactive discussions about enhancement of regular attendance at work, in alignment with the primary goal of the ASP which is to support and encourage regular attendance at work. The manager will meet with their employee to provide a counselling conversation alerting the employee that their absenteeism has reached a level of concern and establishing the most appropriate mechanism to assist the employee in improving their attendance. They inform the employee that their attendance will be reviewed in the following 6 months and should their record of absenteeism exceed the threshold, they will proceed to the first phase of the formal Attendance Support Program (Level 1 – Enrolment). If an Employee does not meet ASP threshold in a 12-month monitoring period they will be removed from level 0.

Level 1 (L1) - Notification that absences meet or exceed SHN threshold-Enrollment-Counselling and Support

The goal of Level 1 is to provide an opportunity for the employee and leader to identify issues or barriers affecting regular attendance and to substantiate and/or confirm the employee's ability to attend work regularly. All possible internal and external resources are identified to assist the employee to attend work on a regular basis. A Level 1

Corporate and Administrative Manual

Category:	Human Resources	Policy Number:	SHN-ADMIN-HR-020
Subject:	Attendance Support Program	Date:	2018/06
Issued By:	Executive Vice President, People and Transformation	Revision Date (s):	2024/04
Approved By:	Senior Leadership Team	Page	Page 5 of 8
Rescinded Policies:	RVHS – Admin-OH-0020; TSH – 1.50.001		
Harmonized:	☐ Yes ☐ No		

NOTE: A PRINTED COPY OF THIS DOCUMENT MAY NOT REFLECT THE CURRENT, ELECTRONIC VERSION ON SHN INTRANET. ANY COPIES APPEARING IN PAPER FORM SHOULD ALWAYS BE CHECKED AGAINST THE ELECTRONIC VERSION PRIOR TO USE.

meeting will be set up between the employee and their immediate manager/supervisor to notify the employee that they have been enrolled in the ASP. A Level 1 attendance letter will be provided to the employee by their manager/supervisor.

Level 2 (L2) – Ongoing Concern-Counselling and Support

The goal of Level 2 is to provide an opportunity to further identify issues or barriers affecting regular attendance that have continued to or arisen since the Level 1 letter was issued, and to substantiate and/or confirm the employee's ability to attend work regularly. All possible internal and external resources are identified to assist the employee to attend work on a regular basis. A Level 2 meeting is set up between the employee and their immediate manager/supervisor. A Level 2 attendance letter will be provided to the employee by their manager/supervisor.

Level 3 (L3) – Ongoing Concern-Grave Concern

The goal of Level 3 is to address ongoing issues or barriers affecting regular attendance that have not improved under the previous Levels, and to substantiate and/or confirm the employee's ability to attend work regularly. A Level 3 meeting is set up with the employee, manager/supervisor, Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) team member, Human Resources (HR) and a union representative (as applicable). WHS is involved in the meeting at this level to manage the confidential medical information that is requested during the process. A Level 3 attendance letter will be provided to the employee by their manager/supervisor. The employee will be advised that they may be required to provide a hospital approved medical certificate for any future absence, where circumstances warrant.

Level 4 (L4) - Reassessment of employment relationship, potential reclassification to part time or termination

When excessive ASP-eligible absenteeism continues at this level, the employment relationship has been breached or seriously undermined. Options will be explored to review the employee's full-time / part-time status, or employment may be terminated on a non-disciplinary basis for frustration of the employment contract. A formal Level 4 meeting is set up with the employee, manager/supervisor, Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) team member, Human Resources (HR) and a union representative (as applicable). WHS is involved at this level to manage the confidential medical information that is requested during the process. If employee exits the program at Level 4 due to improved attendance and in the next 6-month period once again exceeds SHN's ASP threshold the employee would re-enter the program at L3 and would follow the L3 process. The employee will be advised that they may be required to provide a hospital approved medical certificate for any future absence, where circumstances warrant.

The thresholds and Levels are summarized below:

Corporate and Administrative Manual

Category:	Human Resources	Policy Number:	SHN-ADMIN-HR-020
Subject:	Attendance Support Program	Date:	2018/06
Issued By:	Executive Vice President, People and Transformation	Revision Date (s):	2024/04
Approved By:	Senior Leadership Team	Page	Page 6 of 8
Rescinded Policies:	RVHS – Admin-OH-0020; TSH – 1.50.001		
Harmonized:	☐ Yes ☐ No		

NOTE: A PRINTED COPY OF THIS DOCUMENT MAY NOT REFLECT THE CURRENT, ELECTRONIC VERSION ON SHN INTRANET. ANY COPIES APPEARING IN PAPER FORM SHOULD ALWAYS BE CHECKED AGAINST THE ELECTRONIC VERSION PRIOR TO USE.

Level	ASP Enrollment	Exiting the ASP
Level 0	If eligible employee absences in previous six (6) months meet or exceed SHN's threshold of three (3) incidents and five (5) scheduled shifts, Manager meets with employee to provide a counselling conversation. The employee is NOT enrolled in the ASP at this level.	
Level 1	Eligible employee absences in previous six (6) months meet or exceed SHN's threshold of three (3) incidents and five (5) scheduled shifts, employee is enrolled in the ASP	Employee does not meet ASP threshold in a 12-month monitoring period.
Level 2	Employee already at Level 1 meets or exceeds SHN's threshold of three (3) eligible incidents and five (5) scheduled shifts in the previous 6 months.	Employee does not meet ASP threshold in a 12-month monitoring period.
Level 3	Employee already at Level 2 meets or exceeds SHN's threshold of three (3) eligible incidents and five (5) scheduled shifts in the previous 6 months. OR Employee exits ASP from L4 and meets threshold of three (3) eligible incidents and five (5) scheduled shifts in the previous 6 months-employee re-enters ASP at L3	Employee does not meet ASP threshold in a 12-month monitoring period.
Level 4	Employee already at Level 3 meets or exceeds SHN's threshold of three (3) eligible incidents and five (5) scheduled shifts in the previous 6 months.	Employee does not meet ASP threshold in a 12-month monitoring period.

Attendance Support Review Committee

All employees scheduled to receive a Level 4 letter will have their attendance history reviewed by an Attendance Support Review Committee (ASRC). This committee will consist of the Director of WHS, the Director of Human Resources and the appropriate unit/departmental managers. The purpose of the ASRC is to ensure that any employee who receives a Level 4 letter will have their individual circumstances reviewed to determine if there are significant underlying factors that have contributed to the employee's poor attendance that have not already been considered.

Union Representation

Although attendance support is non-disciplinary, unionized employees may elect and arrange to have a union representative present at any discussions of their attendance. Where an employee is requesting union representation for L1 and L2 meetings, the employee must advise their manager in advance so that HR can also be in attendance. Notwithstanding, the Union will be notified by SHN in advance of all ASP meetings with employees at Level 3 and Level 4 and will receive copies of any letters confirming the content of these meetings. Unions will be given reasonable notice to attend meetings. These meetings will not be delayed or postponed in the event the union representative is unable to attend a scheduled meeting.

Corporate and Administrative Manual

Category:	Human Resources	Policy Number:	SHN-ADMIN-HR-020
Subject:	Attendance Support Program	Date:	2018/06
Issued By:	Executive Vice President, People and Transformation	Revision Date (s):	2024/04
Approved By:	Senior Leadership Team	Page	Page 7 of 8
Rescinded Policies:	RVHS – Admin-OH-0020; TSH – 1.50.001		
Harmonized:	☐ Yes ☐ No		

NOTE: A PRINTED COPY OF THIS DOCUMENT MAY NOT REFLECT THE CURRENT, ELECTRONIC VERSION ON SHN INTRANET. ANY COPIES APPEARING IN PAPER FORM SHOULD ALWAYS BE CHECKED AGAINST THE ELECTRONIC VERSION PRIOR TO USE.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Employee:

- Take whatever steps are necessary to attend work on a regular basis as scheduled
- Work safely by complying with Workplace Health & Safety policies and procedures which reflect applicable legislation
- Follow absence reporting process which includes informing manager and department when unable to attend work
- Provide medical documentation to support absence when it is required as outlined in the policy on the Absence Management Program Policy
- Provide supporting medical documentation (SHN approved medical certificate) to the WHS department for any absence sought to be excluded from the application of the ASP. Failure to do so will result in the absence being counted in the ASP
- Attend scheduled ASP meetings and quarterly Attendance Review meetings if required

Manager/Director:

- Accountable to communicate the policy to employees, emphasize the value of regular attendance and acknowledge good attendance
- Prioritize active absence management within their program/department
- Meet with employees as outlined in this policy, being supportive and providing available resources to support regular attendance
- Take into account individual circumstances when considering administration of the program
- Identify and address absenteeism trends or patterns in their program/department
- Recognize an employee's improvement in attendance
- Participate in the Attendance Support Review Committee, as required

Workplace Health & Safety (WHS):

- Provide support to employees in the ASP
- Provide support to leaders who have employees enrolled in the ASP including training on the ASP and timely provision of bi-annual data on employee attendance
- Determine applicable exemptions from the ASP based on outlined criteria
- Review medical documentation supplied by employees in the ASP
- Maintain a repository of information on internal and external resources to support attendance
- Review and refresh the ASP, and associated training, on a regular basis to reflect best practices and industry trends
- The Director of WHS will participate in the Attendance Support Review Committee

Corporate and Administrative Manual

Category:	Human Resources	Policy Number:	SHN-ADMIN-HR-020
Subject:	Attendance Support Program	Date:	2018/06
Issued By:	Executive Vice President, People and Transformation	Revision Date (s):	2024/04
Approved By:	Senior Leadership Team	Page	Page 8 of 8
Rescinded Policies:	RVHS – Admin-OH-0020; TSH – 1.50.001		
Harmonized:	☐ Yes ☐ No		

NOTE: A PRINTED COPY OF THIS DOCUMENT MAY NOT REFLECT THE CURRENT, ELECTRONIC VERSION ON SHN INTRANET. ANY COPIES APPEARING IN PAPER FORM SHOULD ALWAYS BE CHECKED AGAINST THE ELECTRONIC VERSION PRIOR TO USE.

Human Resources:

- Provide coaching, support and guidance to managers on the management of attendance and the impact of absenteeism
- Be present at Level 3 and 4 Attendance Support Meetings (and any other ASP meetings where there is union representation)
- The Director of HR will participate in the Attendance Support Review Committee

Union:

- Attend meetings to support employees at appropriate steps in the program. Union representation may be requested at any step of the program.

DOCUMENTATION:

WHS staff and Human Resources staff will document all confidential employee information in the electronic documentation system.

- Letter-Level 1 – Attendance Support Program (ASP) (Appendix A)
- Letter-Level 2 – Attendance Support Program (ASP) (Appendix B)
- Letter-Level 3 – Attendance Support Program (ASP) (Appendix C)
- Letter-Level 4 – Attendance Support Program (ASP) (Appendix D)
- Letter-Exit Letter – Attendance Support Program (ASP) (Appendix E)

REFERENCES:

- Occupational Health and Safety Act. Ontario.ca. (2018, November 19). Retrieved September 9, 2022, from <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o01/v26>
- *The Ontario Human Rights Code*. The Ontario Human Rights Code | Ontario Human Rights Commission. (n.d.). Retrieved September 9, 2022, from <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code>
- WSIB. (n.d.). Retrieved September 9, 2022, from <http://www.wsib.on.ca/>

REVIEWED BY:

Executive Vice President, People and Transformation (2023/08)

Human Resources (2023/08)

Workplace Health and Safety (2023/08)

Privacy, Risk Management (2023/08)

Policy Working Group (2023/08)

APPROVED BY:

Senior Leadership Team (2024/04)