ATTENDANCE SUPPORT SERVICES

TEAMS PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The Total Employee Attendance Management and Support (TEAMS) Programme is a comprehensive and integrated approach to positively influence the factors that drive attendance: ability to attend work and attendance motivation. It reflects initiatives that address unscheduled absences of any cause. The approach is flexible and adaptable to the unique features of each school board.

A fully implemented TEAMS Programme typically requires some important organizational and behavioural changes including a review of the school board's organizational health and wellness. SBCI's attendance support programme encompasses many components of a healthy workplace, including disability management, attendance management and wellness programmes. These programmes are developed in accordance with legislative requirements, best practices and our experiences with other school boards.

Disability Management Programme:

Disability management has been defined as the materials, the people and the resources to prevent, if possible, disability as a result of non-occupational (not work related) illness or injury; encourage rehabilitation and early and safe return to work (RTW); and reduce the impact of disability both on the employee and the employer.

The primary components of a disability management programme include:

1. Policies and procedures that articulate the employer's commitment to assist employees in returning to work, and/or remain at work after illness/injury from a non-occupational absence.
2. Processes with respect to:
   - Early intervention
   - Case management
   - Return to work facilitation
3. Outcome measurement.

Attendance Management Programme:

Attendance management has been defined as the materials, people and the resources to support employees who are struggling to maintain regular attendance at work. Attendance management is a non-disciplinary, supportive programme designed to collaboratively support an employee's obligation to maintain reliable, regular attendance at work. The goal is a working environment that motivates employees to attend work regularly.

Attendance management programmes include:

1. Policy and procedures that through a supportive approach:
   - Articulate attendance expectations
   - Outline processes with respect to:
     - Reporting absences
     - Medical documentation requirements
     - Defining and managing absenteeism
2. Benefit plan design and administration
3. Attendance tracking and data analysis mechanism
4. Outcome measurement

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

The process for implementing an attendance support programme, facilitated by SBCI, includes the following four steps:

1. **Planning and Strategy**
2. **Programme Design and Development**
3. **Implementation Strategy**
4. **Evaluation and Monitoring**

1. <u>Planning and Strategy</u>

- Creation of the development team to involve them in planning the programme and defining the terms of involvement.
- Identifying the key contact persons for the project.
- Defining the vision, objectives and goals of the attendance support programme – mandate and scope of the programme.
- Developing the blueprint for the attendance support programme.
- Identifying the building blocks (e.g. disability management, attendance management, wellness, etc.) and the overall healthy workplace strategy.
- Determine in which order the programmes should be developed - enables the board to articulate what it wishes to accomplish and how it intends to do so.
- Review of absence codes and defining sick leave.
- Reviewing system requirements to produce valid and timely absence reports.
- Budget/resources.
- Training board personnel on best practices, and an overview of relevant legislation.

2. <u>Programme Design and Development</u>

Once the school board selected and sequenced the building blocks required to provide a comprehensive attendance support strategy then programmes, such as disability management, attendance management and wellness, can be developed. SBCI will facilitate the process of:

- Developing supportive policies and procedures that are congruent with the vision, objectives and goals of the overall healthy workplace strategy.
- Identifying in detail, the roles of the various stakeholders, including the union, and the establishment of a stakeholder committee.
- Stakeholder committee overview of the attendance support programme
- Collaboration with the stakeholder committee on the policy and procedural documents.
- Developing the necessary administrative supports, including a disability management guide.
- Mapping of the ideal processes.
- Training of board personnel on the recommended disability management and long term disability (LTD) processes, including providing tools and resources to assist with the day to day management of cases.
- Development of a communication strategy.

3. Implementation Strategy

The Implementation Strategy outlines the following short and long term administrative requirements associated with the delivery of the programme:

- Identifying administrative requirements:
  - o Attendance support software – tracking and monitoring absence data
  - o Reports, forms, form letters, medical certificates
  - o Personnel needs both short-term (transitional) and long-term

- Providing training to supervisors:
  - o Identify the instructional goals and strategies
  - o Identify the skills required by principals, managers and supervisors
  - o Develop materials needed in training
  - o Deliver the training – who, when, size of groups
  - o Evaluation of training sessions

- Communication of the programme:
  - o Articulate the key messages
  - o Develop specific communication techniques and materials

4. Evaluation and Monitoring

SBCI recommends that both quantitative and qualitative evaluations be conducted after programmes are implemented. Quantitative evaluations can be further broken down into process evaluation and impact evaluation, i.e. are the processes being followed and what is the impact that they are producing? Qualitative evaluations provide information from the perspective of the users of the programme.

The programme implementation service flows into an on-going attendance support advice and service.

ON-GOING ATTENDANCE SUPPORT PROGRAMME ADVICE AND GUIDANCE SERVICE:

Programme Advice & Assistance

- Periodic audit of the attendance support programme.
- SBCI will provide an annual report showing performance in key areas – WSIB, prevention (Health & Safety) and attendance support – both quantitative and qualitative with advice and recommendations for improvement.
- Ongoing programme enhancement.
- Benchmark statistics to compare with other boards.
- Ongoing training and in-service sessions for management, employees, etc.
- Act as a resource on committees related to disability management, attendance support and/or wellness.
- Provide expertise related to individual and organizational health initiatives.
- Access to independent medical/legal review

DISABILITY MANAGEMENT

Disability Management Programme Oversight:

- Periodic audit of disability management programme.
- Ongoing programme enhancement.
- Review monthly reports from Human Resources (HR) attendance system or Parklane regarding sick leave.
- Assist in identifying all sick leave absences greater than 10 days duration.
- Available to HR contact for a monthly case review to identify complex cases.
- Ongoing programme advice, case management oversight and assistance with complex cases.

Disability Management Cases:

SBCI will work in collaboration with the HR contact responsible for the programme to:

- Monitor HR attendance system or Parklane Module for absences that exceed 10 days.
- Assist with ongoing day to day operations of the disability management programme, including case referral process, to ensure consistency and that best practices are followed.
- Assist with writing letters to physician's for clarification regarding restrictions or accommodations.
- Assist in identify opportunities for early return to work when the board is able to safely accommodate the employee in the workplace.
- Refer complex cases when assistance is required.
- Assist in the return to work process.
- Refer to labour relations to determine next steps, if employee reaches maximum medical recovery and has not been able to achieve fulltime hours.
- Review permanent restrictions annually.

Complex Case Management

- Following are examples of complex cases:

  o The employee's impairment does not match their documented disability.
  o The employee or supervisor has identified that workplace issues are complicating the return to work, good attendance or performance.
  o An employee receiving LTD has been identified as ready to return to work in some capacity but suitable employment has not been found.
  o The disability includes a mental health issue.

- SBCI will assist in the identification and management of complex cases.

ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT

Attendance Management Programme Oversight:

- Receive copy of attendance reports and comment, if appropriate.
- Ongoing assistance with Parklane Attendance Module.

Attendance Management Cases:

SBCI will work in collaboration with the HR contact responsible for the programme to:

- Conduct periodic case reviews.
- Review reports from which problematic absenteeism can be consistently identified, managed and resolved.
- Provide advice and assistance to manage case load and to progress cases as quickly as possible.
- Assist (remotely) with employees, physicians, unions and board to develop remain at work or return to work or accommodation plans.
- Review medical information to provide an understanding of restrictions/limitations and to remove barriers to RTW for any non-occupational illness or injury in cases where the school board requires assistance with medical information.
- As required, contact medical practitioner(s) to clarify medical information.
- Assist in fostering a collaborative and supportive environment (board, supervisor, employee, employee representative, employee's physician) to facilitate early and safe return to work.
- Identify transitional RTW opportunities.
- Advise on RTW issues.
- Liaise with IT staff or external IT consultants on attendance management module/reports/etc.