

Attendance

Monitoring Performance

The District School Board of Pasco is committed to providing students with an educational environment that promotes increased student achievement. It is also committed to providing an environment that enhances the safety and well being of everyone involved in the school community.

A key to meeting these commitments is linked directly to professional behavior and level of performance of all employees. Effective principals and supervisors must monitor employee performance and recognize when it is marginal or unsatisfactory and take corrective action.

The principal or supervisor has a responsibility to take action when it is necessary and that the action is appropriate to the situation. If possible, this action should focus on professional growth and improved performance while providing assistance in the form of guidance, support, supervision, and other resources.

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to all employees to assist them with issues that may or may not be work related. It may be particularly helpful when non-work factors are having a negative effect on job performance. Don't pry or be judgmental, but don't hesitate to discuss the program with the employee and encourage them to use the services if they may be helpful.

Attendance is an area in which it is often difficult to determine the level of performance because of the many factors which must be considered. It cannot always be measured by the number of hours or days an employee is absent. An absence of twenty (20) consecutive days by an employee has a much different impact than twenty (20) days of sporadic unscheduled absences. Employees with different lengths of annual work calendars earn different amounts of leave time. Employees in vacation earning positions earn vacation leave time based on length of service. Absences which are part of an American with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation or absences which are classified as leave under provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) cannot be used to justify a negative employment action. Injury-in-Line-of-Duty, Workers Compensation, Judicial Leave, Military Leave, etc. are not indicative of poor performance. Plus, you would like to think that all absences are for legitimate reasons.

What is satisfactory attendance?

In very general terms, if an employee's absences during a school year do not exceed the combined amount of sick and vacation time earned by the employee during an annual period, the overall attendance is satisfactory. The following statement is used to

generally describe satisfactory attendance for those employees evaluated using the Noninstructional Personnel Assessment form, MIS Form #321:

Attendance: Satisfactory performance is characterized by being at work a sufficient number of days to accomplish the essential tasks of the position without having to distribute tasks to other employees or to delay those essential tasks. Satisfactory performance is generally characterized by not exceeding during an annual period the combined number of sick and vacation days earned by an employee during that period. While unexpected illnesses or other circumstances which may entail prolonged absences are understandable, frequent absences and/or questionable absences which may result in hardship to other employees or which result in the delay of essential tasks can result in documentation of unsatisfactory performance.

Identifying an attendance problem.

Maintaining an accurate record of each employee's attendance and reviewing it on a regular basis is a good method of identifying questionable attendance before it becomes a problem. This early identification of a potential problem allows timely intervention which might avoid a more serious problem later.

Attached is a **record of attendance calendar** to be used to document individual employee attendance. Use of this form will allow quick review of attendance and early detection of problems. It will not only show numbers and types of absences, it will also show patterns of absences that may cause concern. This visual representation of an employee's record of attendance will make it easy to share this information with the employee.

Using the absence codes listed at the top of the form makes it easy to record the different types of absences. If the absence is for less than a full day, there is room in each cell to list the number of hours absent. Always verify the accuracy of an attendance record before discussing concerns with an employee that might lead to disciplinary action. Contact the Leaves Section of the Human Resources Department if you need assistance doing this.

What would indicate a "Performance Problem" in the area of attendance?

A principal or supervisor should suspect there is a performance problem in the area of attendance when an employee has used all available paid leave and absences continue, or if an employee is incurring absences at a rate that will far exceed the amount of paid leave the employee will earn in the annual period. Absences of a suspicious nature may also be addressed. Periods of extended absence for expressed documented reasons are not generally an indication of poor performance.

How to Address the Problem

A “**Performance Problem**” is a concern that should be addressed through the district evaluation process by providing a description of the problem along with suggestions and assistance for improvement. These problems should normally be dealt with using a form of “**Corrective Progressive Discipline.**”

“**Corrective Progressive Discipline**” simply defined is beginning with the least severe and proceeding to the most severe action and most frequently appears in the form of a sequential list of actions or events. The philosophical basis is that when a problem exists or occurs, the corrective action should proceed through the course of events or actions, beginning with the least severe. This premise is encouraged to the extent that this process would be the fair way (“due process”) to address a problem.

Action taken in this process usually falls into two distinct categories: “**Informal Action**” or “**Formal Action.**”

Informal Action: That which occurs and is only shared between the principal or supervisor and the employee. It normally occurs in the form of a conference, written conference summary, or informal written notice or warning. When a written document is utilized, the employee’s signature is not required but it is always good to have, and only the employee and the principal retain a copy. The document does not go into the employee’s “official personnel file.”

Formal Action: Always appears in the form of a written document. The document requires the signature of the employee or a witness and a copy of the document is placed in the employee’s “official personnel file” which is located at the district office.

When a performance problem in the area of attendance is identified, the following course of action is recommended:

Corrective Progressive Discipline Model

Informal Action

1. Conference or Verbal Warning - Conference Summary

The principal or supervisor would have an informal conference with the employee with a view toward assisting the employee to improve his/her attendance. A conference summary would be completed after the conference. This form would not be placed in the employee’s “official personnel file.”

2. Written Warning - Informal letter or informal NEAT letter
("Notice Explanation Assistance Time")

If poor attendance continues, an informal written warning or informal NEAT letter may be given notifying the employee of administrative concern. This document would **not** be placed in the employee's "official personnel file."

Formal Action

3. Written Warning - Formal NEAT letter or formal letter of reprimand.

If poor attendance continues, a formal NEAT letter or formal letter of reprimand may be given. This document would be signed by the employee or a witness and a copy would go into the employee's "official personnel file."

4. Summative Evaluation - Use of District Assessment Instrument and NEAT letter.

If poor attendance continues, an unsatisfactory evaluation may be given. A formal NEAT letter must be issued in conjunction with an unsatisfactory evaluation. The assessment instrument and the NEAT letter must be signed by the employee or a witness. A copy of each of these documents would be placed in the employee's "official personnel file."

When using "Corrective Progressive Discipline," any step of the procedure may be repeated at any time if circumstances warrant.

Be certain to keep a log of interventions or actions used with an employee. An "Action Log" is printed on the back of the record of attendance form.

Contact the Department of Employee Relations as soon as you have identified an employee with an attendance problem. You will be assisted with developing a strategy for addressing the problem.

Discuss the **EAP** with the employee when appropriate.

Remember that any employee required to attend a meeting called by the principal or supervisor for the purpose of a reprimand or other action which may lead to disciplinary action has the right to representation. Review the appropriate sections of the SRP and Instructional Master Contracts before beginning this process.