**POLICY STATEMENT**

Ongwanada employees are valued for their contributions, dedication and excellence in achieving the mission and vision of the organization. Ongwanada promotes staff wellness, and recognizes that regular attendance at work by all staff is essential in providing the highest quality care and service to clients.

All employees are responsible for maintaining their good health and ensuring their regular and prompt attendance at work. Regular attendance is an expectation of employment and is an essential duty of every employee. Where an employee's absences have met the institutional threshold of absence, it has an impact on departmental operations and client care.

The Ongwanada Attendance Awareness program is subject to specific provisions of any applicable collective agreement.

1. **PURPOSE OF THIS PROGRAM:**

1.1 To promote regular attendance at work by setting standards for the use of sick leave for all staff.

1.2 To monitor individual use of sick leave

1.3 To assist in improving attendance

1. **PROMOTION OF WELLNESS**

Ongwanada is committed to staff wellness. A full time Occupational Health (OH) resource who can assist staff in achieving and maintaining their highest level of health and well being and maintain regular attendance at work is available.

When an employee is unable to maintain regular attendance at work, an Ongwanada Occupational Health professional (nurse or physician) is available to assist in managing health issues. This service is intended to enhance but not replace services provided by an employee's primary care or specialist physician and is only carried out with the employee's knowledge and consent.

1. **DEFINITIONS**

**Non-culpable (innocent) absenteeism** is an absence caused by genuine illness or injury

All other instances of absenteeism that do not fall within the definition of non-culpable absenteeism are deemed **culpable absenteeism** and will be met with discipline in accordance with the discipline policy and applicable collective agreement

**Attendance Awareness** is a program consisting of a series of progressive steps intended to manage non-culpable absence and assist the employee in their return to work.

1. **SCOPE AND ROLES WITHIN THE ATTENDNCE AWARENESS PROGRAM**

The Attendance Awareness program is designed to manage non-culpable illness/injury absenteeism. The program is a series of progressive steps. Detailed responsibilities of each party are outlined below.

Employees will be enrolled in the Attendance Awareness program if they meet the Ongwanada absence threshold of 4 separate new sick incidents or a total of 80 hours of sick time in a rolling 12-month period.

The Attendance Awareness Program will not deal with:

* Approved leaves of absence
* Statutory holidays and approved vacation
* Pregnancy, parental, bereavement, compassionate, jury, education, union leave or WSIB
* Culpable absenteeism

In certain situations, exemptions to enrolling or progressing through the Attendance Awareness Program may be granted. Such exemptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will be determined jointly by Occupational Health, Human Resources, and the employee’s immediate supervisor/manager/chief officer. For the sake of clarity, absences which may be exempted could include, but are not limited to, absences from work which have been verified by a medical note and directly result from a chronic medical condition which has been verified by a duly qualified medical practitioner and has been submitted to Occupational Health.

Regular attendance at work is the responsibility of the employee. Employee attendance is recorded and monitored. The responsibilities of each of the parties with respect to attendance at work is outlined below.

**4.1 The Role of the Employer**

4.1.1 The employer (Ongwanada) is responsible for providing a safe and healthy work environment and complying with applicable legislation and collective agreements.

4.1.2 The employer has an obligation under Section 40 of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to inquire about the reason for the employee's absence to determine whether or not it is work related.

4.1.3 The employer has an obligation under the Human Rights Code to inquire about a "disability" as defined in order to accommodate the worker in the workplace and to provide appropriate interventions that may assist in improving an employee's

attendance record.

**4.2 The Role of the Employee**

4.2.1 It is every employee’s responsibility to fulfil the duties of their job. Regular attendance at work is an essential duty of any job as required for continual employment at Ongwanada by virtue of the employment contract

4.2.2 Each employee must make every effort to attend his or her regularly scheduled shift on a regular basis

4.2.3 Employees have an obligation to contact their supervisor/after-hours supervisor or designate for any absences. Employees not required to work shifts will follow the absence/return to work notification process established for their department. Employees who work shift and/or where replacement staff is required will follow the procedure below:

4.2.3.1 The employee shall call:

i) the appropriate supervisor; or

ii) the after- hours supervisor, if after hours

4.2.3.2 The employee shall call the appropriate supervisor/Facility Co-ordinator a minimum of 10 hours prior to commencement of their next scheduled shift or more advance notice if possible, to indicate an intended return to

work.

4.2.3.3 Where an employee returns to work without notifying their supervisor/after-hours supervisor, and a replacement has been arranged, the returning employee will be sent home. Vacation credits may be used, as per the collective agreement.

4.2.4. Employees are required to notify Occupational Health upon their return to work if:

4.2.4.1 they have experienced a febrile illness (as defined by the Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee – PIDAC)

4.2.4.2 they have experienced an infection that includes gastric and/or respiratory symptoms.

4.2.4.3 they have been absent from work for 5 or more days.

4.2.5 Employees must provide satisfactory medical documentation to support their absences and/or return to work, to Occupational Health, as requested. For the purpose of the mandatory medical documentation required of employees at Step 3 or 4 of this Program, the medical note must state, at a minimum, that the absences from work are due to medical reasons.

4.2.6 Employees may be required to participate in return to work assessments for any illness-related absence where requested by Occupational Health.

4.2.7 Employees are expected to attend health care practitioner appointments and to adhere to recommended treatment in order to qualify for and maintain Short Term Disability benefits.

4.2.8 Employees must make every reasonable effort to attend to medical and personal appointments outside of their working hours.

**4.3 The Role of the Employees Immediate Supervisor**

The authority and accountability for managing an employee's attendance rests primarily with the employees immediate supervisor. The immediate supervisor will identify issues, initiate appropriate action and follow-up on case progress.

4.3.1 In conjunction with Human Resources (HR), the immediate supervisor enrols employees in the Attendance Awareness Program once the employee has met the threshold level of absenteeism as defined below:

4.3.1.1 4 separate new sick incidents or a total of 80 hours of sick time in a

rolling 12-month period

4.3.2 The immediate supervisor will participate in the return to work/modified work committee meeting as required.

4.3.3 The immediate supervisor is responsible for accurate coding of absences.

**4.4 The Role of Occupational Health**

Employees and supervisors rely on OH to provide clinical advice to employees which will ensure a safe and timely return to work.

4.4.1 OH ensures the confidentiality of all health information.

4.4.2 OH will notify the appropriate supervisor and HR of receipt of an Attending Physician Statement (APS) and whether there is sufficient objective medical evidence to substantiate the employee’s absence. OH will consult with the treating practitioner where clarification is required and consent is received from the employee to do so

4.4.3 OH will inform the employee of their need for additional medical information or assessment.

4.4.4 Upon consultation with the immediate supervisor, OH may request that the employee provide an APS, completed by their physician, to OH. The information on this report is meant to determine the employee's ability to return to full or modified work following an illness, to determine the ability of the employee to attend work and/or to fulfil the essential duties of the job. The cost for this report will be reimbursed to staff to a pre-determined limit.

4.4.5 In consultation with the immediate supervisor and HR, OH may recommend the referral of an employee for an independent medical assessment. The cost for an independent medical assessment will be paid by Ongwanada.

4.4.6 As required by various benefit plan provisions, OH provides relevant medical information as requested, ensuring that communication does not contravene confidentiality regulations

**4.5 The Role of Human Resources**

Human Resources ensures compliance with the provisions of collective agreements, Ongwanada policies and benefit plans and provides advice and consultation to employees, supervisors and OH in related matters.

4.5.1 Working with Occupational Health, HR may communicate with WSIB and/or rehabilitation consultants as appropriate.

4.5.2 In conjunction with the Supervisor, HR monitors attendance of all staff.

4.5.3 HR initiates progressive counselling of employees who have reached absenteeism "threshold level" by informing supervisors of their employees who have met the Ongwanada threshold.

4.5.4 HR provides support and assistance to employees and supervisors on disability issues relating to human rights, labour relations issues and benefit plan provisions

4.5.5 HR coordinates the application process for Employment Insurance, SSQ and/or Disability Pension (HOOPP) benefits

4.5.6 HR monitors coding of absences and modified work hours.

1. **RECOGNITION OF IMPROVED ATTENDANCE**

Employees who have shown improvements in their work attendance will be recognized according to Ongwanada's Staff Recognition Policy.

1. **ALGORITHMS RELATED TO POLICY**

[Employee Sick Notification Process](../../FORMS/Employee%20Sick%20time%20notification%20flowchart%202016.pdf)

[Attendance Monitoring Algorithm](../../FORMS/Attendance%20Monitoring%20Algorithm%202016.pdf)

[Step 1 Attendance Algorithm](../../FORMS/Step%201%20Attendance%20Counselling.pdf)

[Step 2 Attendance Algorithm](../../FORMS/Step%202%20algorithm_attendance%202016.pdf)

[Step 3 Attendance Algorithm](../../FORMS/Step%203%20algorithm_attendance%202016.pdf)

[Step 4 Attendance Algorithm](../../FORMS/Step%204%20algorithm_attendance%202016.pdf)

1. **LEAD PERSON**:

Chief Human Resources & Information Officer