1. **POLICY**

Ongwanada encourages and supports the health and wellbeing of its employees.

The ability of employees to disconnect from work is important for an individual’s wellbeing, and helps employees achieve a healthy and sustainable work-life balance.

**2.0 BACKGROUND AND DEFINITIONS**

The Ontario Employment Standards Act, 2000 (ESA), has been updated to allow employees to disconnect from work, whether they are working remotely, in the workplace, flexibly or are mobile. For clarity, “employee” under this policy means only those employees of Ongwanada who are considered employees under the ESA.

Disconnecting from work means the ability to not engage in work-related communications, including emails, telephone calls, video calls or the sending and reviewing of other messages outside of regularly scheduled work hours, in order to support employees in balancing their work and personal lives.

1. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY**
   1. Employer Obligations

Ongwanada will ensure that all employees, regardless of their place of work, are:

* + 1. informed of their normal working hours and of the circumstances in which they are expected to engage in work-related communications outside their normal working hours;
    2. able to take applicable meal, rest periods and hours free from work as required by law, contract and/or applicable collective agreement language; and
    3. able to take vacation or other leave entitlements as required by law, contract and/or applicable collective agreement language.
  1. Employee Obligations

Ongwanada expects all employees to comply with the following in the course of their work. Employees must:

* + 1. cooperate fully with any mechanism utilized by Ongwanada to record working time or update their working status (e.g. out-of-office messages), including when working remotely, flexibly or when mobile;
    2. be mindful of colleagues’ working hours
    3. ensure that they take ownership of their work and meet Operational needs;
    4. Comply with Ongwanada’s overtime policy, including the requirement to obtain prior approval before performing overtime work.

1. **ABILITY TO DISCONNECT FROM WORK**
   1. An employee’s ability to disconnect from work depends on Ongwanada’s operational needs and the duties and obligations of the employee’s position, subject to an employee’s employment contract, applicable collective agreement and/or their minimum statutory entitlements under the ESA.
   2. Nothing in the policy precludes Ongwanada and employees of Ongwanada from contacting colleagues outside of what may be considered normal working hours or standard business hours, subject to any rights or entitlements the receiving colleague or employee may have under their employment contract, applicable collective agreement and/or their minimum statutory entitlements under the ESA
   3. For scheduling purposes, employees may receive notifications or calls regarding available shifts, which may come outside of an employee’s regular scheduled hours of work and at their discretion to respond for the purposes of working and for call-ins.
   4. In the ordinary course of business, there will be situations when it is necessary to contact employees outside of their normal working hours, including but not limited to:
      1. Checking availability for scheduling;
      2. To fill in on short notice for a colleague who has called in sick or is unavailable for work;
      3. To get confirmation regarding medication administration outside of work hours;
      4. In an emergency situation
      5. Where employees voluntarily wish to communicate with one another for work-related purposes outside of their normal working hours.
   5. Admin-on-Call (AOC) Managers are available during the designated on-call hours for purposes of this policy. In some situations, AOC are required to deal with crises, emergencies or staff call-ins will be required to answer emails, calls or texts after regular scheduled working hours.
2. **REPORTING CONCERNS**
   1. All employees are expected and required to report any concerns or issues they may have which they feel is impacting their ability to disconnect-from-work.
   2. Employees are encouraged to report such concerns or issues to their immediate supervisor. If that is not appropriate or the matter cannot be resolved by doing so, employees should direct their concerns or issues to Human Resources
3. **POSTING, NOTICE AND RETENTION**
   1. Ongwanada shall provide a copy of this policy to each employee of the organization within 30 calendar days of implementation. Should any changes be made to this policy after its implementation, Ongwanada shall provide each employee a copy of the revised policy within 30 days of the changes being made.
   2. Ongwanada shall provide a copy of this policy to all new employees upon onboarding and within 30 calendar days of the employee commencing employment with Ongwanada.
   3. Ongwanada shall retain a copy of this and any revised version of this policy for three years after it ceases to be in effect.

1. **LEAD PERSON**

Manager, Human Resources