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LIMESTONE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
ACCOMMODATION &  
DISABILITY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Limestone District School Board is committed to ensuring employees work in an accessible, safe and healthy environment.

The Board's commitment to *Accessibility & Disability Management* as well as early and safe *Return to Work* initiatives is a partnership between employees, supervisors, health care providers and unions/federations. The Board is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities have the same opportunity to access employment opportunities and services as do all employees and prospective employees. The *Accommodation & Disability Management Program* is designed to meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities, in a timely manner, in the provision of services related to employment.

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM**

- 1.1 The *Accommodation & Disability Management Program* supports prospective employees as well as current employees of the Limestone District School Board. Whether interviewing for a future job opportunity, upon hiring or returning to work after an illness/injury that has resulted in a disability, the Board is committed to providing appropriate accommodations.
- 1.2 To facilitate accessibility during the hiring process, job applicants with disabilities are made aware that, upon request, accommodations are provided. Accommodations include access to materials and processes used for selection purposes.
- 1.3 All new employees of the Board will be made aware of procedures relating to accommodating employees with disabilities.
- 1.4 Where an employee becomes disabled at a later point in the employment relationship, the Board will facilitate an employee's transition back into the workplace after a period of illness/injury and/or will assist an employee with an identified disability to maintain regular attendance and continue meaningful employment through workplace accommodation. The goal at this point is to keep employees at work or return employees to their job as early as possible after a period of absence, providing accommodation, where medically appropriate, to facilitate a safe and effective transition.
- 1.5 When a disability has been identified, the Board will make every effort to modify both the work and/or the workplace to accommodate the needs of the disabled employee, based on medically supported limitations and/or restrictions, provided that it does not cause undue hardship to the Board.

### **2.0 TYPES OF DISABILITY**

- 2.1 Temporary Disability is one that impacts on the employee's ability to perform the essential duties of the job for a specified, limited period of time. An example would include a caretaker who breaks a leg and may require accommodation for a six to eight week period, such as being assigned to light duties. Once the leg has healed, the employee would gradually return to regular duties.

- 2.2 Permanent Partial Disability is one that may prevent the employee from performing all aspects of the job. In this case, the job and/or workplace may require modification in order to accommodate the employee's disability.
- 2.3 An employee who becomes permanently disabled from an illness or injury, such that they are unable to return to their former position, will, where possible, be provided with suitable work based on their physical, mental and vocational capabilities. Where an employee is unable to work due to a disability, he/she will be encouraged to apply for Long Term Disability Benefits.
- 2.4 In the case of temporary or permanent disability, the employee is responsible for providing their supervisor and/or Human Resources with objective medical documentation, including clearly articulated medical limitations and restrictions.
- 2.5 The Board will promote the retraining of injured employees where feasible and as circumstances warrant.
- 2.6 Employees who have a permanent disability may be given preference for suitable job postings, subject to mutual agreement by the employer and the relevant union(s). Employees may be accommodated on the basis of availability of positions, ability to perform the essential duties of the job and terms and conditions as outlined by the relevant collective agreement, individual contract and/or relevant legislation.

### **3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 3.1 Supervisory Officers, Managers and Supervisors have the responsibility of informing employees of the Board's commitment to accommodating employees, including the process for seeking accommodation.
- 3.2 It is the responsibility of the employee to advise management that an existing disability impacts on his/her ability to perform the job, including providing the requisite documentation, in order that the Board may implement supports to assist the employee.
- 3.2 When an employee is absent from work for a period of time due to an illness or injury, it is the responsibility of both the employee and supervisor to maintain ongoing communication with respect to the employee's progress, anticipated return to work and any form of accommodation that may be required to successfully resume their duties.

### **Human Resources**

- 3.3 Once an employee has identified a disability or received approval from their doctor to return to work, Human Resources and the employee's supervisor, will:
  - Meet with the employee to discuss an accommodation / return to work plan;
  - Assess the employee's work capabilities in conjunction with medically supported limitations and/or restrictions provided by the appropriate treating medical practitioner(s);
  - Coordinate the employee's return to work / disability management process, including

gathering additional requisite medical documentation from the attending physician, assigning suitable work, involving the appropriate union, at the employee's discretion;

- Advise the appropriate union(s) of an employee's participation in a Return to Work and/or Accommodation Plan;
- Inform the employee's Supervisor of the work restrictions/limitations and develop the Return to Work / Accommodation Plan, obtaining the attending physician's signature of approval, where appropriate;
- Schedule a follow-up meeting to ensure that the employee has successfully transitioned back into the workplace;

3.4 For employees who are returning to work upon the termination of Workplace Safety & Insurance Benefits or Long Term Disability Benefits, Human Resources and the appropriate Supervisor will:

- Coordinate the development of a Return to Work Plan with the employee, his/her Supervisor, the appropriate treating medical practitioner(s), the employee's union representative, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, LTD Insurance Carrier, as appropriate
- Distribute a copy of the Return to Work Plan to the above parties and the employee;
- Maintain regular contact with the employee for the duration of the Return to Work Program, scheduling regular follow-up meetings to assess the employee's progress; Program as required.

## **Employees**

3.5 During the Accommodation / Return to Work process, it is the responsibility of the employee to:

- Follow the attending medical practitioner's prescribed rehabilitation and/or treatment regime in order to facilitate a timely return to work;
- Actively participate in the development of a Return to Work / Accommodation Plan;
- Provide Human Resources with the requisite medical documentation necessary to develop a Return to Work / Accommodation Plan; and
- Maintain regular contact with his/her Supervisor and/or Human Resources, to provide updates on his/her medical condition, prognosis, and accommodation requirements.

3.6 Employees may choose to have a union representative involved throughout the return to work process.

## **4.0 THE INDIVIDUALIZED ACCOMMODATION / RETURN TO WORK PLAN**

4.1 Every Accommodation / Return to Work Plan is individualized and specific to the employee's medical condition. In addition to the employee and his/her treating physician(s), the process may also include the appropriate Federation/Union, the Long Term Disability Insurance Carrier, or the Workplace Safety & Insurance Benefits

Coordinator, pending the circumstances surrounding the employee's absence and subsequent return to work.

- 4.2 An employee who requires an accommodation must advise his/her supervisor accordingly, who in turn will consult with Human Resources.
- 4.2 Prior to developing an Accommodation or Return to Work Plan, the employee may be provided with the Request for Medical Information Form to be completed by the employee's treating physician and signed by the employee.
- 4.3 An Accommodation or Return to Work Plan may include, but is not restricted to, some or all of the following:
  - Accessible formats and communication supports;
  - Graduated / reduced hours of work;
  - Modification of duties/assignment;
  - Modifications to the workplace;
  - Removal of physical barriers; and
  - Reassignment to another position at the same or lower level, if the employee has the necessary skills and abilities to perform the essential duties of that position.
- 4.4 During the Accommodation / Return to Work process, the employee's progress will be reviewed by the Supervisor and Human Resources, in consultation with the appropriate treating medical practitioner(s) as necessary. Adjustments to the plan will be made as necessary in an effort to support the employee's successful reintegration into the workplace.
- 4.5 The employee may be required to participate in a Functional Abilities Evaluation and/or Independent Medical Evaluation, conducted by a third party, to determine limitations and/or restrictions and to assist in the development of an Individualized Return to Work / Accommodation Plan.
- 4.6 The Accommodation / Return to Work Plan will include the following information, in an accessible format based on the employee's needs:
  - Employee's name and position;
  - Medical limitations/restrictions;
  - Specific physical requirements;
  - Work schedule, including hours of work and any form of graduated return;
  - Essential job duties/tasks/assignments, including a graduated resumption of duties;
  - Any additional supports and/or resources requested/provided;
  - Date for follow up meeting; and,
  - Signatures of employee, Human Resources, Supervisor, appropriate treating medical

practitioner(s), and appropriate union representative, as appropriate.

### **Workplace Emergency Response Information**

- 4.7 Employees requiring accommodation shall have an individualized workplace emergency response plan, where required, to ensure their personal safety in the event of a workplace emergency.
- 4.8 Where an employee who has an individualized workplace emergency response plan requires assistance, such information shall be communicated to the person providing assistance, upon consent of the employee.
- 4.9 Individualized workplace emergency response plans will be reviewed when:
  - a. The employee moves to a different location within the Board;
  - b. The employee's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed; and,
  - c. The Board reviews its general emergency response procedures.

### **Follow Up and Review of Accommodation**

- 4.10 Regular follow up meetings will occur during the Accommodation / Return to Work process to ensure that the employee's needs are being met and to make any necessary changes to the plan based on changes to the employee's medical limitations and/or restrictions.
- 4.11 Employees will continue to participate in the program until they have reached Maximum Medical Recovery and are working at full capacity within any medical limitations or restrictions, including those that may be permanent in nature. Absences thereafter may result in the employee entering the Attendance Support Program.
- 4.12 All documentation will be maintained by Human Resources, filed in a secure location separate from the personnel file and will not be further released without the employee's written permission. Such information is collected for the sole purpose of assisting the employee to successfully return to work.
- 4.13 Accommodation plans will be reviewed annually or as otherwise determined necessary.

### **5.0 ACCESSIBILITY & ACCOMMODATION CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1 The Board will take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities as well as individual accommodation plans when administering the performance appraisal process or engaging in other performance management initiatives, understanding that accommodation does not diminish or negate performance management initiatives.
- 5.2 Similarly, accessibility and accommodation requirements shall be taken into account for employees who are pursuing career development and/or advancement opportunities as well as during the redeployment process.

**6.0 DENIAL OF ACCOMMODATION**

- 6.1 Where a request for accommodation is denied, the employee shall be advised in writing by Human Resources, including the reason for the denial.