



TORRINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS STAFF ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Statement

At Torrington Public Schools, we are committed to the health and wellbeing of our employees and we value each employee for the work they do each day to meet the needs of our students and families.

In order to ensure the success of all of our students, employees are responsible for reporting to work on a consistent basis in order to fulfill the requirements of his or her job. All employees are expected to report to work on time every day they are scheduled to work and to maintain a satisfactory record of attendance. Punctuality and regular attendance are essential to ensure optimal productivity within our schools for the benefit of our students.-The interaction between the staff and students is the most influential factor affecting student academic success. It is critical that staff be available to provide continuous high-quality education/support. However, it is understood that there are times when it is necessary to be absent because of illness or personal obligations. In those cases, the employees must adhere to our absence reporting procedures.

The Torrington School District has established an Attendance system for all employees and the sole method for arranging substitute coverage. All employees are mandated to report absences to the system, whether or not substitute coverage is required. Timely reporting is essential.

PURPOSE

This policy establishes attendance guidelines and procedures, and describes the responsibility of all staff in maintaining an effective attendance program. The ability to best serve our students, faculty, staff and the overall Torrington community requires regular attendance. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for all employees which define acceptable attendance expectations. Each employee has the responsibility to maintain good attendance and is expected to use good judgment in managing absences from work. Regular and punctual attendance is essential to the best performance of employees and the District. Excessive or habitual absenteeism and tardiness affects costs, efficiency and competitiveness, and creates a heavy burden on fellow coworkers. The occasional need to be absent due to illness, medical appointments, etc., is understood, and for the large majority of employees, absenteeism is legitimate, occurs infrequently, and presents few problems. These guidelines are intended to address the majority of instances in which sick leave is typically used, but they do not preclude individual assessments on a case-by-case basis.

ATTENDANCE STANDARDS & PROCEDURES

Definitions:

Absence

An "absence" is defined as any unscheduled absence from work during scheduled working hours (including failing to report for scheduled or unscheduled overtime) or failure to remain at work as scheduled. The use of the term scheduled is significant to this definition because it automatically excludes vacation, personal leave or other forms of approved and scheduled time off.

An absence excludes any work-related injury, or a reoccurrence of such an injury, approved by the School district's Worker's Compensation Administrator.

Any sick time taken by a staff member on an approved family and medical leave, or an approved maternity leave, shall not be considered when imposing discipline pursuant to this policy.

Any time taken by a staff member to serve in the Military or to serve on a Jury as result of being summoned shall be recognized as a patriotic duty and shall not be considered when imposing discipline pursuant to this policy.

An unscheduled consecutive absence in excess of one day shall be considered as only one absence against the employee, regardless of its length (Example: An employee is absent for four consecutive workdays with the flu which is considered one absence for purposes of this policy).

Chronic Absenteeism for a staff member

Corrective counseling may be warranted when any staff member has:

- An administrator will have a conversation with any staff member who has absent patterns (i.e taking the same day) or that has four (4) absences within any two (2) month period (exclusive of CT Paid Sick Leave) about the importance of them being here as an integral participant in the learning process.
- An administrator will have a conversation with any staff member who has seven (7) absences within any Ten (10) month school calendar period (exclusive of CT Paid Sick Leave) and issue a **verbal warning** to the staff member. The administrator will have a conversation with the staff member about the importance of them being here as an integral member of the learning process and issue a verbal warning. The administrator will also discuss with the employee contributing problems and possible corrective measures. The administrator should also advise the employee that an additional absence could result in a written warning.
- An administrator will have a conversation with any staff member who has nine (9) absences within any Ten (10) month school calendar period (exclusive of CT Paid Sick Leave) and issue a **written reprimand** to the staff member. The administrator may consult with the Office of Human Resources, prior to issuing the written warning. In determining whether to issue a written warning, the administrator will consider the number of absences, any pattern of absences, the employee's past record and any other extenuating circumstances.
- More stringent discipline may be imposed, in conjunction with the Office of Human

Resources, if a staff member has reached ten (10) absences within any 10 month school calendar period. Any discipline imposed pursuant to this policy is subject to the just cause standard described within each bargaining unit's respective contracts.

Physician's Documentation

Documentation for an illness is required per the employee's respective bargaining unit's contract language. In the event that a specific bargaining unit's contract does not specify, then any absence for five (5) school days, or for three (3) days or more in a holiday or vacation week will need to be validated by a doctor's certificate.

A doctor's statement(s) and any other medical records for a staff member shall be maintained in the staff member's medical file. The information in this file shall be maintained as confidential unless disclosure is necessary for the health and/or safety of other personnel (such as issues of dangerous contagious disease) or for purposes of disciplinary or any other action taken pursuant to this policy.

Policy Application

This policy does not supersede the terms of any collective bargaining agreement. The objectives of this policy are in general, to communicate the attendance expectations of the District and to establish guidelines for the effective and fair administration of sick leave usage. Please realize that unpredictable attendance, habitual tardiness, and absenteeism are particularly detrimental to planning, organizational efficiency and employee morale. They are considerations when evaluating performance and are cause for corrective action up to and including dismissal.

Connecticut Paid Sick Leave

In accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §§ 31-57r, Connecticut Paid Sick Leave, the first (40) hours of accrued time that are taken shall not count towards the chronic absence criteria set forth in this policy within a single benefit year.

Please contact the HR Department with any questions.

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes: Conn. Gen. Stat. § 31-57r

Chapter 568 of the Connecticut General Statutes, Connecticut Workers Compensation Act

United States Code: Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, 29 U.S.C. Section 2601 et seq., as amended

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