Fitness for Duty

Purpose

Fargo Public Schools is committed to maintaining a safe and productive environment for employees, students, visitors, and property. This policy establishes criteria and procedures for identifying and addressing situations where an employee may no longer be able to perform the essential functions of their position safely and effectively.

Definitions

1. Fitness for duty: physical and mental health status that enables an employee to perform the essential functions of their position effectively while safeguarding the well-being of themselves, others and district property.

2. Physical/Mental evaluation: An examination performed by a district-designated health professional, including but not limited to a health history, physical and/or psychological examination and any medically indicated diagnostic studies. Costs are paid by the District.

3. Physical/Mental certification: Documentation from a licensed medical provider confirming an employee's ability to return to work following a medical absence, including any recommended restrictions or accommodations. For work-related absences, allowable costs are covered by Workforce Safety & Insurance (WSI). For non-work-related absences, costs are the responsibility of the employee and, if applicable, their health insurance provider.

Responsibilities

Employees are responsible for reporting to work fit for duty and for promptly notifying their supervisor if they are unable to do so. Supervisors are responsible for observing and addressing potential fitness for duty concerns. If a supervisor or employee observes behavior suggesting an individual may not be fit for duty, the matter should be immediately referred to the Human Capital Department.

Procedures

1. Return from Medical Absence
   - Employees returning from a medical absence may be required to provide medical certification verifying their ability to safely resume work, including any recommended restrictions or accommodations.
   - Human Capital**,** with the supervisor, will determine whether the employee can perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodations.
   - If the employee cannot perform the essential functions, proceed to Step 3.

2. Fitness Concern Identified
   - When an employee appears unfit for duty, self-reports being unfit, or is reported by others, the supervisor must immediately consult Human Capital**.**
   - Together, they will review the circumstances, which may include:

  - Fact-finding or investigation;
  - Referral for a mandatory physical or mental evaluation;
  - Review of essential job requirements;
  - Referral to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP); or
  - Other actions as deemed appropriate.
- Collaborative and Interactive Process**:** Human Capital, the supervisor, and the employee will work together to clarify concerns, outline expectations for evaluation, and determine next steps. All communication must remain documented, confidential, and focused on safety and resolution.

3. Post-Evaluation and Next Steps
   - Employees found unable to perform the essential functions of their position following evaluation will not return to that role.
   - The employee will meet with Human Capital to review available options, which may include:
     - Application for disability or long-term disability benefits;
     - Consideration for alternative openings; or
     - Separation from employment if no suitable alternatives exist.

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