

Personnel – Certified/Non-Certified

Industrial Accidents/Illnesses

Return-To-Work Program

Responsibility

The term “loss exposure,” as applied to the workplace, is defined as the potential for accidents which result in illness or injury. Every employee of Hamden Public Schools has a responsibility to minimize loss exposure as a factor in the workplace by participating in quality improvement programs and strictly observing safety and standard operating policies and procedures.

Policies

Employees of Hamden Public Schools who are, or could be, on leave of absence from their duties as a result of a work-related illness or injury may be eligible for the Return-to-Work Program upon written certification of a medical care provider. The medical care provider must certify that the employee may return to work with restrictions on physical requirements of the job in question, and that those restrictions are not expected to last for more than 180 days.

A restriction identifies a physical condition, which prevents an employee from performing the full scope of his/her job duties as outlined in their job description. There are two types of restrictions: temporary and permanent. Temporary restrictions are defined as those limitations placed on an injured employee by a physician which are of a relatively short duration (i.e., the employee is expected to fully recover and to return to normal working conditions).

Permanent restrictions are defined as those limitations placed on an employee by a physician which are expected to be long term (more than 180 days) or from which recovery is not expected. Those employees who fall in this category are not eligible for participation in the Return-to-Work Program. They may elect to seek alternative employment, or file for a “reasonable accommodation” under the Americans With Disabilities Act.

When an employee is approved for participation in the Return-to-Work Program, primary consideration will be given to job placement within the employee’s department and normal job duties. A secondary consideration will be alternative placement into another department or another assignment, which is within the same bargaining unit. A critical consideration is to place the injured employee in a position to perform productive work that is both useful to Hamden Public Schools and achievable within the limits of the restriction placed on the employee.

Alternative placement will not be used to avoid the filling of vacancies within the department in question.

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Return-To-Work Program (continued)

An employee participating in the Return-to-Work Program is subject to all rules, regulations, contractual memoranda of understanding, standards, policies and procedures of Hamden Public Schools.

Each situation will stand on its own merits. An Employee Return-to-Work Form, completed by a physician, noting an employee's restrictions, will be evaluated by Human Resources (HR) personnel in order to determine whether or not an employee is able to return to his/her assigned position. Human Resources will then forward their recommendation with appropriate documentation to the injured employee's department head for final determination.

If an employee is approved for the Return-to-Work Program, he/she shall be provided tasks, which fall within the physical restrictions, identified by the treating physician. In no case will an employee authorized to participate in the Return-to Work Program be placed in an area that will pose a health or safety risk to Hamden Public Schools, other staff or themselves. An employee shall not be returned to work to any job that is punitive in nature.