

# Wayne County Board of Education

## Early Return to Work Program

### ***POLICY***

The *Wayne County Board of Education* is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for our employees.

The School Board believes that it is in the best interest of both the school system and its employees who have suffered workplace injuries or illnesses to return to the work environment as soon as possible. Further, the Board recognizes the need for a program to effectively manage workers' compensation costs throughout the system, while conserving its most valuable resources - the skills, knowledge and experience of its employees. To that end, the Board supports the establishment of a comprehensive early return-to-work program

If an employee has a work related injury, the *Wayne County Board of Education* will accommodate all reasonable restrictions and return the injured employee to modified or alternative work as soon after an injury as possible. This will be done by temporarily modifying the employee's job or providing the employee with an alternative position. The use of an additional substitute employee may also be necessary during this light duty period to assist with duties at the school. The use of this substitute employee is at the board's discretion. The employee's medical condition along with any limitations or restrictions given by the attending physician will be considered as a priority when identifying the modified/alternative position. **Employees are not eligible for overtime while they are assigned modified/alternative positions.**

***If an employee is not able to return to their usual and customary full duties within 60 calendar days, they will be placed back on temporary total disability until they can provide a full duty release from a qualified physician.***

***Note:*** Any employee released to return to transitional, light duty or full duty and refuses to return to work, may have their benefits terminated by Workers' Compensation.

### ***PURPOSE***

This program is intended to provide our employees with an opportunity to continue as valuable members of our team while recovering from a work related injury. We want to minimize any adverse effects of an on-the-job injury to any of our employees and return the injured employee to their original job. This program is intended to benefit an injured employee by promoting a speedy recovery while keeping their work patterns and income consistent. The company shares in the benefits by keeping our employees on the job while utilizing their knowledge and experience, thus contributing to the overall productivity of our school system.

### ***SCOPE***

This program applies to ***all*** employees of the *Wayne County School System*.

## ***DEFINITIONS***

Work Related Injury- Is defined as an injury to the employee that occurs while he/she is engaged in the performance of his/her employment duties.

Modified Positions- Is defined as a person's normal work responsibilities that have been changed or "modified" to meet restrictions that have been assigned by the treating physician. All modified positions are considered "transitional positions" and are designed to help the injured employee return to their usual and customary duties as soon as possible.

Alternative Positions- Is defined as work responsibilities that are *not* the normal responsibilities assigned to an employee, yet are responsibilities that are within their job classification and meets the restrictions that have been assigned by the treating physician. All alternative positions are considered "transitional positions" and are designed to help the injured employee return to their usual and customary duties as soon as possible.

## ***RESPONSIBILITIES***

### ***Wayne County Board of Education***

- All injuries and the duration of related transitional work duties will be handled by the Wayne County Schools Safety Director and the employee's supervisor
- The Safety Director will act as a liaison between the Wayne County Board of Education, the injured worker, the attending physician, and the workers' compensation insurance carrier.
- Wayne County Schools Safety Director will ensure that all paperwork and forms have been properly handled and submitted to the appropriate parties.
- Wayne County Schools Safety Director will monitor the modified or alternative work and gather any additional information that may be needed to properly handle the return to work activities.

### ***All Managers and Supervisors***

- In the event of an injury, the manager or supervisor will make sure that the injured employee receives first aid, or if necessary, proper medical treatment.
- If possible, the manager or supervisor will accompany the employee to the treating physician or medical facility.
- The attending physician shall be notified on the first visit that the Wayne County Board of Education has a return to work program and that modified or alternative work will be provided.
- The manager or supervisor will work closely with the Wayne County Schools Safety Director to coordinate the early return to work efforts and will be responsible for introducing the employee back into the work place in the modified or alternative position.

## ***Employees***

- If an injury occurs on the job, the employee is required to report the injury to their manager or supervisor immediately. (see- **ON-THE-JOB INJURY OR ILLNESS REPORTING POLICY/PROCEDURES**)
- If medical treatment beyond first aid is required an employer representative will accompany the employee to the medical clinic or treating physician (**If possible**). The employee's physical restrictions and limitations will be discussed amongst the treating physician, the injured employee, the supervisor and the Safety Director to facilitate return-to-work.
- If able, employees are expected to return to the worksite the very *SAME* day to report the physician's findings and to discuss modified or alternative work.
- If medical treatment occurs in the evening or after working hours, then the employee should report the physician's findings on the next work day. This will enable all parties to be kept abreast of the employee's condition.
- Once an employee has returned to work, it is their responsibility to work within the physical limitations that the physician has specified.
- The employee shall only perform duties assigned to them and shall immediately notify their manager or supervisor of any difficulty in performing those duties.
- The employee must notify their manager or supervisor in advance of any medical appointments. Leave will be allowed for medical appointments associated with an on-the-job injury.
- The employee shall keep their manager or supervisor informed of the recovery process and their ability to perform modified or alternative work. Managers or supervisors will keep the safety director informed of the entire return to work progress.

## ***Everyone***

- If anyone involved in this process has questions or concerns, please talk to your manager, supervisor or safety director.