

Employee FAQ - Absence Scenarios – Reopening 2020/2021 (updated September 25, 2020)

If concerns are raised that are not covered in this FAQ or in the Re-opening Guide, please contact Human Resources for assistance.

Category	Type	FAQ Employee Scenario	FAQ Employee Response
1	Leaves of Absence	I may not be able to return to work when schools/offices open. What are my options?	<p>The Employment Standards Act and the DDSB’s collective agreements offer options, if a leave of absence is contemplated. Depending upon the circumstances, any of the following might apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ESA: Critical Illness Leave - ESA: Family Medical Leave - ESA: Infectious Disease Emergency Leave - ESA/Collective Agreement: Quarantine Leave - ESA/Collective Agreement: Sick Leave - ESA/Collective Agreement: Unpaid Leave <p>For any of these leaves you must qualify according to the criteria established by the Employment Standards Act or DDSB policies or collective agreements. Assessment of your circumstances would be undertaken by the Ministry of Labour, Training & Skills Development and/or Human Resources and further assistance may be sought from your Human Resources Associate or your union representative.</p>
2	Immune Compromised: Unable to Work	I have been told that I am immunocompromised or may have other health issues that place me at greater risk for COVID-19? What can I do?	<p>DDSB wants to ensure that staff and students are safe as they return to school in September. To that end, we have established Safety Protocols for cleaning, physical distancing and in all cases indicated by Public Health, provision of personal protective equipment (PPE). In many cases, PPE will provide the required protection for those who are immunocompromised or otherwise at risk. We encourage staff to consult with their</p>

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		<p>I am at an 'at risk' age (>70 as confirmed by Ontario Public Health), and could be at risk if I contact COVID-19? What do I do?</p>	<p>physician to determine what's best for them. Please speak to your Administrator/Manager or Human Resources who can provide you with more information.</p> <p>If PPE is not an option for you, you may be eligible for an unpaid job-protected Leave of Absence and government benefits (if applicable).</p> <p>Alternatively, if you have documented health issues you can provide medical evidence of health status, if you require workplace accommodation. Please work with your Ability Case Manager in Human Resources as soon as possible to obtain the required documentation for your physician to complete so that we can assess the possibility of work accommodation for you during this time.</p>
3	Age-Related Self-Isolation	<p>I am at an age where my doctors have told me that I am in a higher risk group for COVID-19? What can I do?</p>	<p>DDSB wants to ensure that staff and students are safe as they return to school in September. To that end, we have established Safety Protocols for cleaning, physical distancing and in all cases indicated by Public Health, provision of personal protective equipment (PPE). In many cases, PPE will provide the required protection for those who are at higher risk.</p> <p>The Ontario COVID-19 Self-Assessment tool indicates that people over 70 years of age may be at greater risk if they contract COVID-19. Individuals in this category should consult with their physician to determine the best course of action in their particular circumstance. If you determine that you cannot return to work, please follow guidance in section 1 (Leaves of Absence), or 2 (Immune Compromised: Accommodation Request) as soon as possible before the start of the school year.</p>

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4	Other – unable to work	<p>I am anxious about COVID-19, or unable to return to work while the pandemic is ongoing for personal reasons.</p>	<p>This is a very difficult time for many and it is important that you pursue avenues to ensure your questions are answered and that you obtain the information you need to be comfortable.</p> <p>DDSB wants to ensure that staff and students are safe as they return to school. To that end, we have established Safety Protocols for cleaning, physical distancing and in all cases indicated by Public Health, provision of personal protective equipment (PPE). In many cases, PPE will provide the required protection for those who are at higher risk.</p> <p>If your concern relates to a current health condition, please see #1 and #2 above.</p> <p>The Employment Standards Act and the DDSB’s collective agreements offer options if a leave of absence is contemplated. Depending upon the circumstances, any of the following might apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ESA: Critical Illness Leave - ESA: Family Medical Leave - ESA: Infectious Disease Emergency Leave - ESA/Collective Agreement: Quarantine Leave - ESA/Collective Agreement: Sick Leave - ESA/Collective Agreement: Unpaid Leave or any of these leaves you must qualify according to the criteria established by the Ministry of Labour, Training & Skills Development and/or the DDSB policies and collective agreements. Assessment of

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			your circumstances will be done by the Ministry and/or Human Resources and further assistance may be sought from Human Resources or your union representative.

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5	Self-Isolation	I was exposed to a person with suspected COVID-19 and I may or may not have symptoms. I have been told by Public Health to self isolate. What do I do?	<p>If you have not already done so, please contact Durham Region Public Health for instructions.</p> <p>Durham Region Public Health will inform you of next steps concerning testing, ability to work, self-isolation and you must advise your Administrator/Manager regarding your status. If the Durham Region Public Health has advised that you must self isolate, you must not physically report for work during the isolation period. Please speak to your manager regarding work-at-home options during the isolation period.</p> <p>If the Durham Region Public Health department declares an ‘outbreak’ in one of our buildings and staff are ordered to self-isolate, staff will continue to work at home whenever possible. Please speak to your manager/administrator for information.</p> <p>You are required to stay home until cleared by Ability Management or Public Health. shortterm.absence@ddsb.ca to return to work. If applicable, you may be offered an accommodation to work from home.</p>
5a	Voluntary COVID testing: no symptoms	I am concerned or curious regarding my health status: no symptoms, no known exposure, no Public Health/medical direction received, and I am choosing to obtain a voluntary COVID-19 test.	<p>If you are being tested on a voluntary basis (No symptoms, no known exposure, no direction from Public Health), while waiting for your test result, you are not required to self-isolate from others while waiting for your test result and you may report to work.</p> <p>If your test is negative: Continue to work, and always physically distance, wear a mask when physical distancing is not possible and wash your hands often.</p>

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			<i>If your test is positive</i> , report to Durham Public Health and do not physically return to work.

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6	Sick: suspected COVID-19	I have COVID-19 related symptoms and I cannot report to work? What do I do?	<p>The DDSB wants to ensure that the health and safety of staff and students is maintained, therefore, you may not report back to work until you have received clearance, regardless of the length of your leave, even if you feel well. Please continue to report your sick absence daily to your Administrator/Manager as you normally would.</p> <p>Take the Ontario Self Assessment, if not completed already, which will instruct you on your next steps for COVID-19 testing or other. Alternatively, please contact Durham Region Public Health or your physician for instructions.</p> <p>If you are instructed to take a COVID-19 test, the following will occur:</p> <p>As you have symptoms, you will remain off work on sick leave until <u>after a negative test result</u> is reported and you are <u>Symptom-Free for at least 24 hours</u>. You must contact Ability Management shortterm.absence@ddsb.ca who will answer any questions you might have and advise regarding next steps. Ability Management and/or Public Health will notify your Administrator/Manager when you are clear to return to work.</p> <p>If you have a positive test with or without symptoms, you must <u>not</u> report for work and you must contact Durham Regional Public Health immediately.</p> <p>You will be coded as “Sick” for payroll purposes as you have had a positive COVID test and/or symptoms. All absences from work will require the same sick leave process as any other illness. Medical documentation is required after 3, 4 or 5 days (per policy/Collective Agreement). Lab results will not be accepted.</p>

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7	Sick: Non-COVID-19 related illness	<p>I'm sick, but my symptoms aren't COVID-19 related. Can I come to work?</p> <p>Or, I have another illness/health condition (like allergies) that has some of the same symptoms as COVID-19. What should I do?</p>	<p>The DDSB wants to ensure that the health and safety of staff and students is maintained, therefore, if you are sick please <u>do not</u> return to work until your health improves.</p> <p>However, if you experience allergy symptoms or other illness/health condition that may mirror some of the symptoms of COVID-19, please ask your physician to identify the baseline symptoms you experience and submit to Ability Management at shortterm.absence@ddsb.ca (use the DDSB medical forms Employee Self Serve). Ability Management will send notification to you and your Administrator/Manager to confirm medical accommodation or clearance to be at work.</p> <p>Based on this information, the DDSB will rely on your successful completion of the DDSB daily self-assessment to allow you to continue working.</p> <p>If your symptoms deviate from your regular baseline symptoms, please stay home and take the Ontario Self Assessment, or speak with your physician who may instruct you to take a COVID-19 test or provide other direction.</p> <p>All absences from work will require the same sick leave process as any other illness. Medical documentation is required after 3, 4 or 5 days (per policy/Collective Agreement). Lab results will not be accepted.</p>

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8	Employee becomes ill at work or reports to work with COVID-19 symptoms	<p>I have symptoms of COVID-19 but I have a negative test result. What should I do?</p> <p>Or, I came to work this morning, passed the self assessment but now I feel ill. What should I do?</p>	<p>The DDSB wants to ensure the health and safety of its employees, therefore, if you have symptoms of COVID-19, regardless of test result, you will be asked to stay at home, or return home.</p> <p>Take the Ontario Self Assessment, if not completed already, which will instruct you on your next steps for COVID-19 testing or other. Alternatively, please contact Durham Region Public Health or your physician for instructions.</p> <p>As you have symptoms, you will remain off work on sick leave until <u>after a negative test result</u> is reported and you are <u>Symptom-Free for at least 24 hours</u>. You must contact Ability Management shortterm.absence@ddsb.ca who will answer any questions you might have and advise regarding next steps. Ability Management or Public Health will notify your Administrator/Manager when you are clear to return to work.</p> <p>If you have tested positive for COVID-19, please advise your Administrator/Manager.</p> <p><u>If you become ill at work</u>, you must isolate and then go home as soon as possible. Please report your illness to your Administrator/Manager. Even though you believe you can return to work or your symptoms are mild, you must stay off work until you have clearance to return.</p> <p>As you have symptoms, you will remain off work on sick leave until <u>after a negative test result</u> is reported and you are <u>Symptom-Free for at least 24 hours</u>. You must contact Ability Management shortterm.absence@ddsb.ca who will answer any questions you</p>

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			<p>might have and advise regarding next steps. Ability Management will notify your Administrator/Manager when you are clear to return to work.</p> <p>All absences from work will require the same sick leave process as any other illness. Medical documentation is required after 3, 4 or 5 days (per policy/Collective Agreement). Lab results will not be accepted.</p>
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9	Request To Work at Home	I cannot work in person at a DDSB worksite/school, however I can still work from home? What do I do?	<p>The School Board has returned to a new normal and our staff will return to in-class or in-office work arrangements, the specific nature of which will be communicated by your Administrator/Manager. Our employees are critical to the effective and successful operation of our schools and offices. Therefore, unless there are circumstances requiring an alternative form of work arrangement (as outlined in #1, 2 or 3 above), we are very hopeful that we will see you back at work.</p> <p>If you are not comfortable returning to work and the other scenarios above don't apply, you may consider taking an unpaid leave of absence for a period of time as noted in #1 above.</p> <p>Please speak to your Administrator/Manager or union representative to discuss your options.</p>
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10	Non-Essential Travel	I've just returned from a vacation out of the country. Can I return to work?	<p>The DDSB hopes that you will not choose to vacation outside Canada. However, if you do choose to travel out of the country within this critical period, you will need to self-isolate for 2 weeks in accordance with Public Health requirements. You will be placed on a leave without pay during this period, unless work-at-home arrangements can be made. Please speak to your manager/administrator.</p>

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