Use Leave Policies to Minimize Chronic Absenteeism at Work

Most of the time employees have legitimate reasons to miss work, be tardy, or leave early. Unfortunately, there are times a manager suspects an employee’s stated reason for an absence (or a recurring absence) is not true. For example, the employee is repeatedly “sick” on Mondays. The consequences of abuse go beyond the loss of productivity associated with a single absent worker. If one person is perceived to be abusing the system, that attitude may affect coworkers.

Use NDSU’s leave policies to assist in managing an employee with chronic absenteeism:

Policy 130 - Annual Leave
2. University operations govern annual leave periods. Consideration is given first to the convenience of the administration, departmental needs, then the employee’s departmental seniority and finally to the employee’s preference.
2.1 The employee must obtain authorization from his/her department head before taking annual leave.
2.2 The employee is responsible for furnishing his/her supervisor or department head with a completed "Notification of Employee Leave" card upon returning to work.

Policy 143 - Sick/Dependent Leave: Sick leave is a benefit granted by the University to eligible employees and is not a benefit considered to be earned by the employee such as annual leave. It is an insurance benefit allowing employees to build a reserve of days they can use for their extended illnesses. Abuse of this benefit may be grounds for disciplinary action or/and termination. Employees are responsible for informing their supervisor of their sickness prior to the start of their work schedule.
1.1 The employing department may require satisfactory medical verification as deemed necessary by the department head prior to the payment of sick leave.
1.2 The employee is responsible for furnishing their supervisor or department head with a completed "Notification of Employee Leave" card upon returning to work.

Department Leave Procedures should include:
- Annual leave – request process
- Sick leave - call-in procedure
- Timeline for submitting leave cards
- Be consistent with all employees

REMEMBER...
It’s about the work
The reasons for employee absences are numerous and your response needs to be appropriate to each situation. If you suspect an employee is abusing a leave policy, work with the Office of Human Resources/Payroll to address the issue.

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Responsibility Review Tips to Assist in Making them Positive and Motivational

The Responsibility Review can enhance your relationship with employees, improve performance for your organization, and enhance employee-manager communication significantly; a boon for customers and work relationships.

- **The spirit in which you approach this conversation will make a difference in whether it is effective.** If your intention is to genuinely help the employee improve, the conversation is easier and more effective.

- **Conversation is the key word that should define a performance management meeting.** You want an employee who is motivated and excited about his ability to continue to grow, develop, and contribute. Aim for meetings in which the employee talks more than half of the time.

- **The employee should never hear about positive performance or performance in need of improvement for the first time during the Responsibility Review meeting.** Purpose of the meeting is to make the content a re-emphasis of critical points from throughout the year.

- **The Responsibility Review is an employee development tool - The first step is goal setting.** It is imperative that the employee knows exactly what is expected of his/her performance and behavior. Without a written agreement and a shared picture of the employee’s goals, success for the employee is unlikely.

- **Avoid the horn and halo effect in which everything discussed in the meeting involves positive and negative recent events.** Recent events color your judgment of the employee’s performance. Instead, you are responsible to document positive occurrences such as completed projects, and negative occurrences such as a missed deadline, during the entire period of time that the performance review covers. (In some organizations, these are called critical incident reports.) Ask the employee to do the same so that together you develop a comprehensive look at the employee's performance during the time period that your discussion covers.

- **Solicit feedback from colleagues who have worked closely with the employee. Prepare for the discussion with the employee.** Never go into a performance management discussion without preparation. If needed, practice approaches with your Human Resources staff, a colleague, or your own manager. Jot notes with key points of feedback. Include bullet points that clearly illustrate the point you plan to make to the employee. The more you can identify patterns and give examples, the better the employee will understand and be able to act upon the feedback.

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Change in North Dakota Veteran’s Preference Law Affects Disabled Veterans Preference Search Process

Supervisors with hiring responsibilities at NDSU must be aware of ND Veteran’s Preference Law, N.D.C.C. § 37-19.1.

Previously, the law stated that in an agency with a ‘competitive personnel system’ such as NDSU’s, that a North Dakota resident disabled veteran who met the required qualifications for a position had absolute preference to be appointed to the position. Now, a North Dakota resident disabled veteran receives 10 points for their disabled veteran status out of a total possible 100 points on a screening sheet.

General Counsel Legal Watch: [http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/generalcounsel/LegalWatch/Veterans.pdf](http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/generalcounsel/LegalWatch/Veterans.pdf)

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Policy 143: Sick/Dependent Sick Leave Update

This policy was updated to allow 80 hours of an employee’s own sick leave to be used for dependent purposes. (Previously only 40 hours were allowed per calendar year.) It also allows an employee to apply to use an additional 10% of their own sick leave for dependent purposes after they have exhausted the 80 hours. An employee must request the additional 10% on a form available from the HR/Payroll Office.

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Policy 130: Annual Leave Update

NDSU Policy 130 Leave With Pay (NDUS Policy 20) has changed to be consistent with North Dakota state employee policy. The section that has changed is in Institutional Closures: Employees not scheduled to work during the closure because of a previous arrangement, including annual or sick leave, will not be charged leave for that closure.