

# **STAR FAMILY HEALTH TEAM**

## **POLICY MANUAL JULY 2015**

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This Policy Manual is intended to provide guidance and assistance to all employees of the STAR Family Health Team (STAR FHT) while performing the day-to-day responsibilities in their specific roles. In addition, this manual will attempt to provide a consistent approach when dealing with a variety of topics. The Ontario Ministry of Labour enforces employment standards under the Employment Standards Act 2000, which sets out the minimum standards that employers and employees must follow. For more info, please refer to [www.gov.on.ca/lab/english/es/](http://www.gov.on.ca/lab/english/es/) or phone 1 800 531 5551.

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## **1. Bereavement Leave**

In the event of a death in an employee's immediate family, an employee, with at least three (3) months of continuous service, may be absent from work for up to three (3) consecutive days with pay provided the employee was scheduled to work in those three days. Bereavement leave must be taken between the day of the death and 3 calendar days following the funeral.

An immediate family member refers to a parent, spouse, child, brother, sister, ward, grandparent, step-parent, step-child and common-law spouse, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law or daughter-in-law. For the purposes of bereavement leave, spouse will include a partner of the same sex. An immediate family member includes an immediate family member of a common law spouse or a partner of the same sex.

Should an employee require additional time away from work it can be taken as a Periodic Leave or Emergency Leave. More time than this will be only at the discretion of the STAR FHT Executive Director.

## **2. Benefit Plan**

All employees are eligible for Group Benefits if they meet all the policy qualifications. Generally there is a required number of 25 scheduled work hours per week and a 3 month waiting period. Please refer to the Benefit Booklet for more information on who qualifies.

Please note any dispute regarding entitlement to benefits under any of our Benefits Program is a dispute exclusively between the employee and the insurance carrier.

Benefit continuation will terminate for any employee who is absent from work for more than one year, for any reason.

## **3. Family Medical Leave**

All employees are entitled to unpaid, job-protected leave of up to eight (8) weeks in a 26-week period.

Family medical leave may be taken to provide care or support to certain family members and people who consider the employee to be like a family member in respect of whom a qualified health practitioner has issued a certificate indicating that he or she has a serious medical condition with a significant risk of death occurring within a period of 26 weeks. The medical condition and risk of death must be confirmed in a certificate issued by a qualified health practitioner.

Under the federal [Employment Insurance Act](#), six weeks of employment insurance benefits (called "[compassionate care benefits](#)") may be paid to EI eligible employees who have to be away from work temporarily to provide care to a family member who has a serious medical condition with a significant risk of death within 26 weeks and who requires care or support from one or more family members. For information about EI contact Service Canada's Employment Insurance Automated Telephone Information Service at 1-800-206-7218.

#### **4. Workplace Violence Prevention and Harassment Policy**

Please see Workplace Violence Prevention and Harassment Policy Number D-7.

#### **5. Hours of Work**

The medical clinics' main hours of work range from 8:30-9:00am to 4:00 to 5:00 pm Monday to Friday. It is expected that all employees will be available to work when scheduled during these main hours of work.

#### **Rest Breaks**

A 15 minute paid break is allowed during every 4 hour shift.

#### **Lunch Breaks**

A 30 minute unpaid eating break is allowed after a 4 hour shift. An employee must not work for more than 5 consecutive hours without taking a 30-minute eating period. Employees should notify reception employees (front desk) when they will be taking their lunch break if they do not wish to be disturbed or if they will be leaving the building.

#### **6. Internet and Email Use**

Please see "Safeguards for Patient Information Policy".  
Please comply with the following rules:

- **The Internet and emails are for STAR FHT business; it is not for personal use.**
- The use of the Communication Systems (including internet, email, telephone and any other communication system) and the transmissions

sent or received may be monitored or examined by authorized personnel to ensure Star FHT'S legitimate business interest in the proper utilization of its property and the compliance with its policy. Star FHT reserves the right to access and disclose the contents of the communications/transmissions as is required by law or by legal obligations to third parties. By using the Communication System, employees consent to have such use monitored by authorized personnel. The existence of passwords or message delete functions does not restrict or eliminate Star FHT's ability or right to access communications.

- Information on Internet activity may be collected and periodically reviewed with the focus on possible misuse, unauthorized access and growth trends for capacity planning.
- Never give out your work email address to persons other than those who you know and that we work with. This will prevent the proliferation of unwanted emails or spam.
- Always be sure you are on the appropriate web site before using your password and ID, if in doubt, cancel and resubmit. Passwords are stolen by fake or imitation web sites that pop up and ask for your user ID or password.
- Periodically go through your email records and delete old and unwanted mail. All of these emails are stored in the server memory.

#### On Line Social Community Pages, Personal Websites and Weblog

STAR FHT recognizes the importance of the Internet to inform our patient population of the services that STAR FHT offers and about health care in general. We also recognize the importance of our employees joining in and helping this conversation and direction through blogging and interaction in social media. So, STAR FHT has decided not to prevent employees from posting information about the Organization in social media.

However, employees must be aware of their responsibilities to the Organization and to our patients when using social media.

As such, these guidelines will help you make appropriate decisions about your work-related blogging and the contents of your blogs, personal Web sites, postings on wikis and other interactive sites, postings on video or picture sharing sites, or in the comments you make online on blogs, elsewhere on the public Internet, and in responding to comments from posters either publicly or via email

1. Blog posts should not disclose any information about our patients, either directly or indirectly. Disclosing facts while withholding names is not permitted as the patient's identity may still be revealed. Breach of this policy can lead to discipline up to and including termination.

2. Blog posts should not disclose any information that is confidential or proprietary to the organization or to any third party that conducts business with the organization, such as suppliers or other medical organizations.
3. You should neither claim nor imply that you are speaking on the organization's behalf. If you comment on any aspect of the organization's business you must clearly identify yourself as an employee in the blog posting and include a disclaimer. The disclaimer should be something like "the views expressed on this post are mine and do not necessarily reflect the views of the STAR FHT.
4. Blog posts should not include organization logos or trademarks.
5. STAR FHT reserves the right to request the certain subjects are avoided, withdraw certain posts and remove inappropriate comments.
6. If you are developing a site or writing a blog that will mention STAR FHT, as a courtesy to the organization, please let your manager know that you are writing them. Your manager may choose to visit from time to time to understand your point of view.
7. Do not air grievances or complaints on the blog, there are internal processes that deal with this.
8. Speak respectfully about the organization and our current and potential employees. Do not engage in name calling or behavior that will reflect negatively on STAR FHT's reputation. Note that failure to abide by this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
9. Honor the privacy rights of our current employees by seeking their permission before writing about or displaying internal organization happenings that might be considered to be a breach of their privacy and confidentiality.
10. Recognize that you are legally liable for anything you write or present online. Employees can be disciplined (including termination) by the organization for commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or that can create a hostile work environment. You can also be sued by organization employees who view your commentary, content, or images as defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous or creating a hostile work environment.
11. Media contacts about our organization should be referred to the Executive Director.

## **7. Jury/Witness Duty**

From time to time, employees may be summoned and legally required to provide service as a juror or witness before the courts. In such circumstances, the STAR FHT agrees to pay employees the difference between their earnings as a juror or witness less expenses and the earnings they would normally have realized had their working schedule at the STAR FHT not been interrupted. This payment will continue for one (1) week from the time they begin jury/witness duty. In the event that jury or witness duty extends for a period longer than one (1) week, the employee will be required to take time off without pay.

Employees are required to provide the STAR FHT with enough notice (i.e. one to two weeks depending on when the employee is summoned and when their duty is to begin) prior to the start of their duty so that the work schedule of other STAR FHT employees can be altered to cover the employee's time away from work.

STAR FHT also acknowledges that employees may be subpoenaed for witness duty. If an employee has been subpoenaed or otherwise requested to testify as a witness on behalf of STAR FHT, the employee will be paid for the entire period of witness duty. Otherwise, the time off will be unpaid.

Employees are expected to report for work whenever the court schedule permits.

## **8. Overtime**

The STAR FHT recognizes that all team members are accountable for their hours worked and can manage their own time in a responsible manner. This is subject to the requirement that all hours of work in excess of a team member's regularly scheduled daily hours ("excess hours") must be pre-approved by management in writing. If in an exceptional circumstance, an employee has to work excess hours and cannot obtain written pre-approval, he or she must provide the Executive Director with written notification within 24 hours of working the excess hours (e-mail is acceptable if the Executive Director acknowledges receipt) setting out the date, time and number of excess hours worked, the reason the employee could not obtain written pre-approval and the special circumstances that required the employee to work the excess hours.

Any hours worked between an employee's regular weekly hours of work and 44 hours per week will be reimbursed with time off in lieu of payment at straight time. Overtime hours after 44 hours per week will not be permitted but if it does occur, such overtime hours will be dealt with in accordance with the minimum requirements of the Ontario Employment Standards Act.

## **9. Performance Evaluation Reviews**

The Executive Director will carry out a performance review for each employee of STAR FHT at least once per annum, typically in advance of the compensation review. The pay compensation review will be carried out annually.

## **10. Personal Days (e.g., periodic leave or paid personal time off)**

All salaried employees are entitled to personal days off each calendar year as stated in their contract.

Personal days are to be used when an employee must be away from work for personal reasons, such as, a specific incident (foreseen or unforeseen) requiring the presence of the employee (ie. doctor and dentist appointments, special family matters, weather etc.), the illness of a spouse or dependent, legal affairs, religious holidays, etc.

Personal days may not be used as vacation, nor as an extension of vacation or any other leave provided for by any STAR FHT policy.

In the case of a predictable event requiring a personal day, the employee must advise the immediate supervisor at least two (2) days ahead of time.

Personal Days cannot be carried over into the new calendar year. It is the responsibility of the employee to make arrangements for someone else to cover their regular scheduled time.

New employees are only eligible for paid Personal Days after 3 months of employment. Any time off in the first 3 months of employment will be unpaid.

If an illness extends beyond 7 calendar days, the employee will automatically go onto the short term disability program provided the employee qualifies for STD benefits; otherwise, any additional time off required will be unpaid. Please refer to the Short Term Disability program for further details.

In the event that a team member is unable to arrive at work on time or at all, he/she must notify the Executive Director or designate by telephone or email no later than 8:30am. In addition, if the clinician has scheduled appointments with patients/clients, the team member must call the appropriate clinic to inform them of the absence so that appointments may be rescheduled.

### **Procedure**

The following information is communicated:

- if reporting a late arrival, the expected time of arrival; or the expected date of return to work
- information as to what appointments or assignments are scheduled for the dates and times affected; and
- any other information necessary to ensure patient needs are met and STAR FHT operations continue.

If there is a change in the expected date of return, the team member notifies the Executive Director or designate as soon as possible and no later than 8:30am of the date of expected return.

### **11. Personal Leave Without Pay**

An employee can request personal leave without pay for reasons such as personal illness, injury, weather, medical emergency, or related death.

STAR FHT reserves the right to request medical documentation to verify leaves related to illness.

When possible, the employee must inform the STAR FHT Staff Administrator that he or she will be taking a personal leave of absence and arrange for someone to cover their regular scheduled shift.

### **12. Pregnancy/Family Leave**

#### **Pregnancy Leave**

As required under the Employment Standards Act, expectant mothers are eligible for up to 17 consecutive weeks of unpaid pregnancy leave provided they have been employed with the STAR FHT for 13 weeks before the expected due date.

#### **Parental Leave**

As required under The Employment Standards Act, if a new parent has been employed with the STAR FHT for at least 13 weeks, he or she is entitled to unpaid parental leave of:

- 35 consecutive weeks (if the employee also took pregnancy leave) or
- 37 consecutive weeks (if the employee did not take pregnancy leave).

In general, a mother's parental leave must begin when her pregnancy leave ends. Otherwise, the parental leave must begin within 52 weeks of the date the child was born or first came into the parent's care.

Employees are asked to provide the STAR FHT with 1 (one) month's written notice of their date of leave outlining how many weeks of leave they will be



taking. Should they wish to return sooner than originally agreed upon, they must provide the STAR FHT with 1 (one) months' written notice of the change in the date of return. All benefits will continue during the employee's leave.

### **13. Confidentiality:**

You acknowledge that you will acquire information about certain matters, which are confidential to the FHT and to its patients. This confidential information may include, but is not limited to information on patients, employees, contractors, students and others or business/financial information in a variety of forms (e.g., written, electronic, oral, overheard or observed). All confidential information remains the property of the FHT. You acknowledge that such information could be used to the detriment of the FHT and therefore you shall not disclose such information in any manner, directly or indirectly, to any person without the prior written consent of the organization.

You acknowledge that as an employee, you are bound to follow and respect the FHT's privacy rules and that you may obtain clarification of those rules from the Executive Director. The FHT is subject to the *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004*. Therefore, with regard to personal health information (**PHI**) about patients/clients of the FHT, you specifically agree to the following:

1. You will not collect, use or disclose PHI except as may be permitted or required by your employment relationship with the FHT.
2. You will keep any PHI you have access to in strict confidence.
3. You will only access PHI on a need-to-know basis – that is, as required to perform your employment duties.
4. You will not remove any recorded PHI from the FHT's premises, without management approval.
5. You will use appropriate safeguards to prevent unauthorized use or disclosure of PHI.
6. You will immediately report to the Executive Director any suspected loss or theft or unauthorized use or disclosure of PHI of which you become aware.
7. You understand that this commitment to privacy and the protection of PHI continues indefinitely and extends beyond the term of your employment with the FHT.

You understand that if you violate this agreement, you may be subject to adverse action up to and including termination of your employment and that you subject to other penalties.

#### **14. Probationary Period**

All new employees are subject to three months' probation upon hire, during which time the performance of the new employee will be evaluated. Should the performance be deemed satisfactory at the completion of the probationary period, he/she will be advised as to whether their employment will be extended to a permanent position. At any time during the probationary period, the STAR FHT can terminate their employment without notice or cause.

Upon successful completion of the probationary period, the employee will be credited with seniority equal to the probationary period served.

#### **15. Professional Development**

Employees are expected to bring to the job a certain level of expertise, and it is the employee's responsibility to maintain this level.

In cases where the STAR Family Health Team has requested employees to attend courses, seminars, conferences and/or workshops, the employee will do so on work time and the STAR Family Health Team will be responsible for the cost involved. Registration fees and travel expenses incurred by the employee in these circumstances will be paid by the STAR Family Health Team and will not be considered under an employee's allowances. In order to be reimbursed for the course costs, employees are required to submit the original receipts to the Executive Director. Credit card slips with no detail alone will not be considered adequate for reimbursement.

When an employee suggests that he/she should attend a course (within the province) and the STAR Family Health Team agrees that it would be beneficial to the team, we will contribute 100% of the cost up to the employee allowance. Approval prior to course registration must be obtained from the Executive Director.

#### **16. Professional Memberships**

Health professionals covered under the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA) must maintain a current certificate of registration in order to be allowed to

practice. Each of the health professionals under the ACT has a protected title and only those registered may use the profession's title.

At the time of hire, the employee must provide his/her original registration certificate to the Director/ who will verify the registration number verbally with the appropriate College. This number will be maintained in his/her file.

Each year, employees must provide proof of their current registration, which is renewed on an annual basis. Failure to provide proof by the appropriate date will be subject to consequences as outlined in the Regulated Health Professions Act.

Employees must notify employer if license is restricted in any way.

### **17. Religious Holidays**

Employees requiring time off for religious holidays other than those legislated as Statutory/Public holidays, are required to take this time off as unpaid leave or use a Periodic Leave day.

### **18. Health and Safety**

STAR Family Health Team recognizes that the maintenance of a safe and healthy environment is a cornerstone to providing our services to our clients/patients. As such, at a minimum STAR Family Health Team will meet all legislated standards, rules and regulations as set out in the Ontario OHSA, and all other related regulations and standards. It is the policy of STAR Family Health Team to implement and maintain safe work practices to safeguard all employees [visitors, volunteers, and students], and provide the best care to our clients/patients.

All employees, contractors/subcontractors and contract workers have a responsibility to observe all rules and procedures of STAR Family Health Team as well as all applicable legislated standards and guidelines.

### **19. Statutory Holidays**

All STAR FHT employees are entitled to the following statutory holidays subject to the provisions below:

- New Year's Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday

- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- Civic Holiday
- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day
- December 26 (Boxing Day)

An employee's public holiday pay for a given public holiday shall be equal to the total amount of regular wages earned and vacation pay payable to the employee in the four work weeks before the work week in which the public holiday occurred, divided by 20.

The Executive Director will post within the first month of the new year, notice of the exact calendar dates in which the clinic will observe the stat holidays, in order to allow all staff to effectively plan their time off.

Employees must work all of their regularly scheduled shift/hours before and after the statutory holiday in order to be paid for the statutory holiday otherwise, the statutory holiday will be unpaid.

Should a statutory holiday fall on a weekend (Saturday or Sunday), the Executive Director will designate another day immediately preceding or following the Saturday or Sunday as the statutory holiday (i.e. Friday or Monday).

If an employee agrees to work on a holiday, the employee will be paid his/her regular rate of pay for work performed on the holiday and receive another day off that would normally be a working day for the employee. The substituted day must be mutually agreed upon and shall be a day that is no later than three months after the holiday and not later than December 31<sup>st</sup> of the current fiscal year.

## **20. Time Off for Snow Storms/Inclement Weather**

All STAR FHT employees are expected to report to work on their normal working day regardless of weather. In the event that road conditions, or weather conditions create a situation where the employee deems it unsafe to report to work for their regularly scheduled shift, the employee should use their own judgment. In this event, the employee will be expected to contact their immediate supervisor and clinic manager to inform them of their absence due to weather conditions. The employee can choose to take this time off as

- Personal leave without pay or
- A personal day with pay

- Lieu time or vacation
- Work from home if work is available

A person not able to make it to work because of weather should phone the clinical manager and/or Executive Director.

Under no circumstances are employees to drive on closed roadways in order to come to work. If any of the clinics are closed, an email will go out to all staff between 8:00-8:30am.

In the event that any clinic is closed, employees are paid for all time not worked.

### **21. Time Off To Vote (Federal, Provincial and Municipal Elections)**

As legislated by Elections Ontario and Elections Canada, every eligible voter is entitled to have 3 consecutive hours in which to vote on an Election Day. In general, most employees should have enough time to vote. However, should an employee be scheduled to work a shift which does not allow them enough time to vote, the employee should request an appropriate amount of time off convenient to the STAR FHT and the employee during the day in which to vote. This time off will be without loss of pay as defined by Federal or Provincial legislation.

### **22. Mileage**

If an employee is required by the STAR Family Health Team to use his or her own transportation for the FHT business, the employee must submit the mileage to FHT Management. Reimbursement will be computed at the current approved rate.

### **23. Vacation**

All employees are entitled to vacation time. Vacation time is calculated in days per year. Vacation time must be requested in writing for all team members and approved by the Executive Director.

The vacation year is from January 1 to December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. In the event of conflict, vacations will be allocated first based on seniority.

As a reminder, when requesting vacation time, it is expected that the allied health members get approval from the appropriate clinics/team to ensure that their vacation time and days do not conflict.

Vacation accrual begins on the first day of work and it is accrued each pay period based on the standard hours of work. Actual vacation days taken cannot exceed vacation days accrued by that date. Team members cannot elect to receive pay in lieu of vacation time. Vacation time must be used by the end of the calendar year and not carried forward into the next calendar year.

## **24. Dispute Resolution**

Conflicts arising with IHP, staff and physicians will be raised to the Executive Director. If there is a conflict with the Executive Director, another physician within the FHT may be contacted.

The Executive Director/or physician will decide the procedure for addressing the grievance based on the severity of the grievance. Documentation of the grievance will be placed in the personnel file.

Severe grievances will require a meeting with the remaining objective physicians in the team. This group will form the Conflict Resolution Team. It is preferred that this meeting be done in person. This team will appoint a "Lead Mediator" to be the spokesperson for the Team.

If the grievance affects a majority of the management team, physician/s may need to be sought from the STAR Family Health Team to form an odd number for the Conflict Resolution Team.

If the dispute requires legal counsel, the representative at MOH will be contacted for guidance.

Documentation will be kept of the mediation process in resolving the grievance. Sharing of this information will be at the discretion of the Conflict Resolution Team.

## **25. Progressive Discipline Policy**

At the STAR Family Health Team (the "FHT"), we strive to treat all employees fairly, justly and equally.

Sometimes mistakes and problems occur, and when they do, we will act immediately to resolve them.

The FHT has adopted a policy of Progressive Discipline to provide employees with an opportunity to correct performance or behavioral issues that may arise. We have established a set of reasonable guidelines for Progressive Discipline. These guidelines have been put in place to promote an effective, healthy and productive workplace.

### **Progressive Discipline Process**

There are generally 5 steps to the Progressive Discipline process.

- Step 1     Counselling
- Step 2     Verbal Warning
- Step 3     Written Warning
- Step 4     Final Warning/Suspension (generally 1-3 days without pay)
- Step 5     Termination/Dismissal

Please note that where appropriate, any step in the foregoing progressive disciplinary process may be skipped in favour of another step. The FHT also reserves the right to repeat a step if the FHT is of the opinion this will assist in correcting the performance or behavioural issue.

The procedure is as follows:

#### **Counselling**

Counselling sessions are used to bring a problem to the attention of the employee before it becomes so serious that it has to become part of a formal warning and placed in the employee's file.

The purpose is to alleviate any misunderstandings and clarify the direction for necessary and successful correction. Most issues are resolved at this stage.

If there has been some but not sufficient progress, the counselling step can be repeated to allow the employee further opportunity to correct the problem.

This is considered an informal step in Progressive Discipline. A brief statement confirming the subject matter discussed and the agreed upon course of action to correct the problem may be noted in a short memo to the employee and placed in his or her file.

#### **Verbal Warning**

This warning will be issued if counselling has been unsuccessful in correcting the problematic behavior or performance issue or if the first instance of unsatisfactory behavior or performance is deemed sufficiently serious by the FHT. A disciplinary letter will be completed and added to the employee's personnel file.

#### **Written Warning**

This warning serves to firmly call the employee's attention to continued unsatisfactory behavior or performance. A disciplinary letter/form will be completed and added to the employee's personnel file. The report will include the cause for warning, the employee's explanation, the recommended corrective action, and a statement concerning the nature of the anticipated disciplinary actions.

#### **Final Warning/Suspension (without pay)**

The final warning/suspension serves to put the employee on notice that his or her unsatisfactory behavior or performance is not acceptable and that failure to immediately correct the problem may be cause for more serious disciplinary action, including termination of employment for cause. A disciplinary letter explaining the serious nature of the issue, the duration of the unpaid suspension and the corrective action necessary for improvement accompanies the final warning. A copy of the final warning letter will be added to the employee's personnel file.

#### **Termination of Employment for Cause**

Reflects the employee's continued failure to correct unsatisfactory behavior or performance despite prior corrective actions; or reflects a serious infraction of the standards of employee conduct that warrants termination of employment for cause.

### **26. Staff Recruitment**

The STAR Family Health Team is committed to equality in employment and a fair and equitable process for the hiring and promotion of staff.

It is the goal of the STAR FHT to develop and maintain a staff complement, which has the qualifications and abilities required to carry out the goals and objectives of the organization. The principles of merit and potential are key criteria for hiring and promotion. The STAR FHT is committed to enable staff members to realize their potential for positive and creative contributions to the organization regardless of their "race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, age marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex or sexual orientation".