

# **STAR FAMILY HEALTH TEAM** **POLICY MANUAL DECEMBER 2006**

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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 may be absent from work for up to three (3) days with pay provided the employee was scheduled to work in those three days. 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, 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 Business Manager.

## **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.

## **3. Compassionate Leave**

The federal government has introduced a new employment insurance benefit called the "Compassionate Care Benefit". Employees who qualify for Federal Employment Insurance, (EI) may apply for "Compassionate Leave" for up to 6 weeks. This Leave is to assist individuals who need to be absent from work to provide care or support to a gravely ill family member with a significant risk of death within 26 weeks.

Please note that the 2 week qualifying period will be unpaid by the STAR FHT. Employees are asked to provide a written note from an attending physician outlining an approximate amount of time they expect to be away from work. Further details for the Federal Compassionate Care benefit can be found on the following Govn't. of Canada website [http://www.hrhc-drhc.gc.ca/ae-ei/pubs/compassionate\\_care.shtml](http://www.hrhc-drhc.gc.ca/ae-ei/pubs/compassionate_care.shtml).

## **4. Harassment**

All Star FHT employees have a responsibility to create and maintain a positive working environment free from harassment. Harassment of any kind is prohibited whether or not actionable under the law. If the employee is presented

with a situation involving harassment, the employee is encouraged to approach the Business Manager or any STAR FHT Board member to assist in remedying the situation.

Harassment is defined as engaging in vexatious (distressing, annoying, troublesome) comments or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. Vexatious workplace harassment involves unwelcome or offensive comments, actions, gestures or contact based on or related to factors such as race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or disability.

Harassment is any type of behaviour which disregards the dignity, psychological or physical integrity and respect of other human beings. Some examples may include:

- verbal abuse or threats;
- violent behaviour
- unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendo or taunting about a person's body, race, colour, attire, marital status, sexual orientation, ethnic or religious origin;
- actions that create an embarrassing, threatening or hostile work environment
- distribution by mail, fax, EMAIL, telephone or other electronic means of material which potentially could be offensive to anyone;
- the distribution of chain letters;
- displaying pornographic, racist or other offensive or derogatory pictures, including electronic images on computer systems;
- practical jokes which cause awkwardness or embarrassment;
- threats to a person's job security or opportunities or not cooperating or working with someone because of their race, colour, ethnic origin, disability, gender, religion or other similar grounds.

## **5. Hours of Work**

The medical clinic's main hours of work are from 8:30 am to 8:00 pm Monday to Thursday; to 5:30 pm on Fridays; and Saturday mornings. It is expected that all employees will be available to work when scheduled during these main hours of work.

### **Rest Breaks**

A 10 minute paid break is allowed during every 4 hour shift. You cannot combine two 10 minute breaks into one break. Employees are required to assist each other with coverage during breaks.

## **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. You are not allowed to work through an eating period to make up for extra time. 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. People requiring more time for lunch should make arrangements with their supervisor.

## **Time Sheets**

All employees are required to enter their worked hours daily on the weekly time sheet or schedule. It is the responsibility of the employee to fill out the time sheet and get signature approval from their supervisor.

## **Scheduling**

It is the responsibility of the employee to find someone to cover for them if they are unable to work on their regular scheduled time period. If you cannot find someone, please contact the Staff Administrator.

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

The staff must never communicate or reply via email with the patients of the clinic. Please comply with the following rules:

- **The internet and emails are for STAR FHT business, it is not for personal use.**
- 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.

## **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.

### **8. Overtime**

All STAR FHT hourly employees will be paid for overtime pay after having worked greater than 44 hours in a work week. Overtime pay is calculated at 1½ times the employee's regular rate of pay. Overtime (working beyond an employee's regular scheduled shift) must be agreed upon in advance between the employee and the appropriate individual supervisor.

If an employee chooses, he/she can be compensated for overtime hours by taking 1½ hours of paid time as time off for each hour of overtime worked. This must be agreed upon yearly in advance and in writing between the employee and the STAR FHT and must be taken within a reasonable period of time from when the overtime has been worked.

### **9. Performance Evaluation Reviews**

The Business Manager 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)**

Personal Days is defined as paid personal time off required by employees resulting from a minor illness to care for themselves or a family member, doctor and dentists appointments, special family matters, weather, education, religious holidays, etc.

All employees are entitled to **4** paid days off per calendar year. 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 and to record the days taken in the Log Book kept with the Staff Administrator. Days should be taken as whole days, not half or part days and be clearly marked on the time sheet as a Personal Day taken if you wish to be paid.

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. After 3 months, new employees are eligible for up to 1 paid day for every 3 full months of employment to the end of the calendar year.

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.

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

An employee can request personal leave without pay for personal illness, injury, weather, medical emergency, or related death up to a maximum of 10 days/calendar year. It is the responsibility of the employee to record the days of Emergency Leave days taken in the Log Book with the Staff Administrator.

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) months' 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. Privacy**

Like the physicians, employees are bound by law and ethics to safeguard patient privacy and confidential personal information. This includes:

- Collecting only the information that may be necessary for patient care;
- Keeping accurate and up to date records;
- Safeguarding the medical records in your possession;
- Sharing information with other health-care providers and organizations on a "need to know" basis where required for health care;
- Disclosing information to third parties only with the patient's express consent, or when necessary for legal reasons; and
- Retaining/destroying records in accordance with the law.

Doctors and staff should maintain their vigilance with regard to patient confidentiality. Patients do have the right to examine their medical records. **Staff will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement.**

### **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 (e.g., Employee Training and Continuing Education)**

#### **Employee Training**

In order to remain current and up to date with certain skills, at the request of the STAR FHT Business Manager, employees while attending a training course or conference will have the costs directly associated with travel, tuition, food and accommodations paid for by the STAR FHT.

#### **Continuing Education**

At some point during their career, employees may wish to further their education. In these situations, the STAR FHT will reimburse all employees 50% of the fees associated with the cost of a course/program including books and tuition. In

order to qualify for financial assistance, all courses must be directly related to the role the employee performs at the STAR FHT and will assist the employee in performing their role. Employees must submit in writing to the Business Manager, a formal request for support. If approved, the employee will qualify for financial assistance.

A request for educational support must include the following:

- The name and content of the course or program.
- How the course or program will be of benefit to the STAR FHT and the employee as it relates to their role.
- The cost of the course or program (including books and tuition)
- The length of the course or program

In order to be reimbursed for courses/programs costs, employees are required to submit receipts accompanied by evidence of a passing grade (i.e. grade report) to the Business Manager. The employee will then be reimbursed for 50% of the costs. This is considered to be a taxable benefit.

### **16. Professional Memberships**

The STAR FHT will reimburse employees for their RNAO and RPNAO fees only.

### **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. Safety**

The STAR FHT is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for employees. The goal of the STAR FHT is to eliminate practices and conditions in the workplace that could result in workplace accidents and injuries, illness, security loss or property damage. It is also the responsibility of each STAR FHT employee to take proper precautions in the workplace in order to protect their personal health and safety and that of co-workers.

The STAR FHT has a Joint Health & Safety Committee represented by the Business Manager, Staff Administrator and a staff member. The purpose of the committee is to support and promote a safe working environment at work.

## **19. Statutory Holidays**

All STAR FHT employees will be paid for the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- Civic Holiday
- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day
- December 26 (Boxing Day)

The Business Manager/Staff Administrator 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.

Should an employee be asked to work on a statutory holiday and she/he agrees to do so, the employee will be paid at 1 ½ times their regular hourly rate of pay. 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 Business Manager will designate another day immediately preceding or following the Saturday or Sunday as the statutory holiday (i.e. Friday or Monday).

## **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. However, under severe climatic conditions (severe ice/snow storms), it may at times be impossible for some employees to fulfill their responsibilities without exposing themselves to undue hazards. Under these circumstances, when an employee is unable to report to work their regular shift, the employee can choose to take this time off as Personal Leave without pay or as a Personal Day with pay.

A person not able to make it to work because of weather should phone the Staff Administrator or secondly the Nurse Manager who will call people to find someone to cover for the absent person.

## **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. Travel Expenses**

Reimbursement for use of personal vehicles when traveling on STAR FHT business outside of Tavistock shall be at the rate of \$0.34 per kilometer. The car allowance and all additional travel expenses for toll, taxi, accommodation or meals must be approved by the Business Manager and submitted on a Travel Expense Claim form with attached original receipts (no photocopies).

When using personal vehicles for travel on behalf of the STAR FHT, all employees must retain at least \$1,000,000 liability coverage on their standard automobile. The inclusion of any other coverage on the vehicle is at the discretion of the employee.

## **23. Vacation**

All employees are entitled to vacation time and vacation pay. Vacation pay is calculated as a percentage of gross pay and vacation time is calculated in days per year.

Vacation pay will be calculated and paid on each regular pay day. It is the responsibility of the employee to manage their holiday pay.

The vacation year is from January 1 to December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. As such, employees are asked to submit in writing to the Staff Administrator, their requests by June 1 for summer/fall vacation and by December 1 for winter/spring vacations. In the event of conflict, vacations will be allocated first based on seniority. After the cut-off date, vacations will be approved on a first-come first-serve basis. Recognizing that all requests may not be accommodated and vacation conflicts may occur, it is up to employees to try and work with each other to resolve these situations and advise the Staff Administrator of the

resolution so that the work schedule can be completed. The Staff Administrator will periodically publish planned vacation time for staff to facilitate this process. It will then become the responsibility of each employee to manage their vacation appropriately and record the time taken of in the Log Book.

As a reminder, when requesting vacation time, it is expected that the Nursing staff will try to work with the appropriate Doctors to ensure that their vacation time and days coincide with the Doctors' vacation schedules.

Following is the vacation eligibility for all hourly paid staff:

Years of Service	Vacation Time In Days	Vacation Wages (% of Gross Pay)*
1 - <5 years	10 days	4%
5 - <15 years	15 days	6%
15+ years	20 days	8%

## **24. Workers' Compensation**

Employees unable to work as a result of a job related injury may be eligible to receive compensation directly from the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) administered by the Provincial Government of Canada.

In the event of a workplace injury, please contact the Staff Administrator.