

Purpose

Our employees' well-being is important to us. Therefore, we encourage and support our employees in protecting their mental health and their ability to balance personal obligations with work commitments and foster a culture of life-work balance. Pursuant to the Employment Standards Act, 2000 (ESA), all provincially regulated employers with 25 or more employees must put in place a "Disconnect from Work Policy". These requirements were added to the *Employment Standards Act, 2000 (ESA)* on December 2, 2021.

Scope

Based on the nature of EAFWR's services, regular hours of work vary across jobs. Further, on exceptional occasions, work outside of established working hours for any person may be required from time to time. Nonetheless, this policy applies to all EAFWR employees including but not limited to salaried staff, Direct Support People (DSPs), and students, and all working arrangements (in-person, remotely, or in a hybrid or flexible arrangement).

Statement

Employees are encouraged to review and follow the guidance set out in this policy to ensure that they are taking time to disconnect from work when they are off duty and it is appropriate to do so. Given that employees across the organization have differing hours of work it is not possible to ensure that all communications are only sent during employee's on-duty hours. All employees are expected to use their best judgement when determining whether to send a communication during a recipient's off hours. Similarly, all employees are expected to use their best judgement when determining whether to respond to a communication received during their off hours and also set reasonable expectations for response times.

Responsibilities

- Leadership: Review and approve updates.
- Human Resources: Ensure that the policy is compliant with Employment Standards Act and other provincial legislation. Communicate the written policy to all employees within 30 calendar days of the policy being prepared and/or the policy being changed. And provide a copy of the written policy to new employees within 30 calendar days of being hired.
- Managers/Supervisors: Aside from times that work may be required outside of an employee's working hours (e.g. with the employee's agreement, to deal with urgent matters that cannot wait until an employee's regular hours of work and/or managers during on-call rotations), managers are encouraged to set core hours and highly responsive times for communication (e.g. 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM) for their respective teams. Managers are also encouraged to manage different expectations depending on the time of day of the communication, the subject matter of the communication, who is contacting the employee (for example the families, supervisor, colleague).

- Employees: All employees (full-time, part-time, casual, on-call) shall conduct their assigned work within their established work hours, subject to ensuring that they meet their responsibilities and the needs of people supported by EAFWR are not neglected. Employees are encouraged to include working hours and/or approximate time for response in email signatures. E.g. emails received after 4:00 PM will be replied to within 24 hours of their receipt. Employees are expected to turn on out-of-office notifications and/or change their voicemail messages when they are not scheduled to work.

Definitions

The ESA defines “disconnecting from work” as “not engaging in work related communications, including emails, telephone calls, video calls or the sending or receiving of other messages, so as to be free from the performance of work.”

Questions

Any questions or concerns relating to this policy can be directed to the HR Manager or HR Generalist.

References

Bill 27, Working for Workers Act, 2021
Employment Standards Act, 2000 (ESA)
Bring your Own Device (BYOD) Policy
Code of Conduct Policy
Personnel Policy
HR Policy Review Process

Effective Date

JUNE/02/2022

Review Date

JAN/01/2023.

Notes: Beginning in 2023, and in the years that follow, employers that employ 25 or more employees on January 1 of any year must have a written policy on disconnecting from work in place before March 1 of that year. This policy may be updated or amended based on direction from the Government of Ontario.

Approval

Approved by: Leadership Team and Executive Director
Approved on: 05/26/2022