



Frequently Asked Questions | Return to School

As schools in the Province are now re-opening, we understand that employees may be experiencing some challenges and may have questions as they balance family and work obligations.

All employees are encouraged to discuss their personal circumstances, working environment, concerns and fears with their managers as they balance these obligations.

We are committed to making every effort to be reasonable, to provide flexibility and to accommodate employees while complying with the Government of Manitoba guidelines, relevant health authority policies and guidelines, and existing collective agreements.

The following FAQ is intended to provide some answers and clarification to support employees during this time subject to prevailing collective agreement language if applicable. Should you have any additional questions, please contact your manager or occupational health services or designate where directed.

Adherence to public health guidelines (e.g. staying home when sick and practicing physical distancing) and strict hand hygiene remain our best defense against the spread of this virus.

Note: any new or updated questions added since the previous revision of this document will be marked in blue.

Q: What if I cannot work my full regular hours as scheduled because I need to drop off or pick up my child(ren)?

Employees are expected to make every reasonable effort to come to work as scheduled and/or required. If you have childcare obligations, such as school drop off and pick up, which impact your ability to work as scheduled, you should speak with your manager about your individual circumstances and request an accommodation based on your family status. Complete the [Accommodation Request Form](#) and return it to your manager immediately. Please remember, employees are expected to make reasonable efforts to explore, coordinate and secure alternate childcare arrangements prior to requesting an accommodation and are required to outline these efforts on the *Accommodation Request Form*. Each accommodation request will be considered on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Q: What if I am working from home and I need to drop off or pick up my child(ren)?

Employees who are working from home are expected to make every reasonable effort to continue to work as scheduled and/or required. An employee that is working from home and requires an accommodation on account of childcare obligations, such as school drop off and pick up, is required to follow the same process outlined above.

Q: What if I miss work to stay home with my child as my child has had a Covid-19 exposure and is required to self-isolate?

If your child is exposed to COVID-19 and is required to self-isolate, please contact Occupational Health Services or designate immediately to inform them of your circumstances and obtain further direction regarding your ability to attend the workplace.

If your child has been exposed to COVID-19 and is required to self-isolate in accordance with School Division and/or Public Health directives, you will be granted time off work to care for your child if necessary. Please contact your supervisor as soon as possible to discuss your need for time off and your circumstances. During your absence, you will be permitted to access any family income protection credits you have available to supplement your income. In the event that you exhaust your family income protection or you do not have income protection credits available to you, you may utilize any other banked entitlements during this period (including vacation, overtime or statutory banks) to compensate you during your absence. If banked entitlements have been exhausted and you continue to require time off from work to care for your child, you will be placed on an unpaid leave of absence until such time as your child has been cleared to return to school/daycare and you have been cleared to return to work by Occupational Health.

It is imperative that employees in these circumstances ensure they are following all Public Health and Occupational Health guidelines and directives.

Q: *What if my child is not sick but required to be at home and I am unable to secure alternate child care arrangements?*

If you need to stay home for reasons related to childcare, such as an inability to find daycare, or a school or daycare closure, you may request a family status accommodation or you may be entitled to a leave of absence.

In the event you are seeking an accommodation, you are required to complete the [Accommodation Request Form](#) and follow the process set out at question 1. To the extent that your circumstances prevent you from working entirely for an extended period of time, you may be entitled to an unpaid leave of absence pursuant to the *Employment Standards Code*. During this leave, you may use your vacation, overtime or statutory banks to supplement lost income. Please note, the use of sick time is not available for the purpose of staying home for childcare reasons. Once those banks have been exhausted, you would be placed on an unpaid leave of absence.

Please visit this link to read more about Federal assistance which may be available to families affected by COVID-19.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html#individual>.

Q: *Am I able to attend work if a member of my household has been exposed to and/or tested for COVID-19?*

If your member of your household (child, spouse, etc.) is exposed to COVID-19 and is required to self-isolate or is awaiting test results, please contact Occupational Health Services or designate immediately to inform them of your circumstances and obtain further direction regarding your ability to attend the workplace.

Q: *What if I have a sick child or children?*

There is no change to the process if your child(ren) is sick and you are required to stay home. You are entitled to be paid family sick/ income protection time according to your collective agreement or employer policies. If income protection is not available, you may use your vacation, overtime or statutory banks. If you do not have banked time available, any time away will be unpaid.

Q: *What if my unpaid leave of absence lasts longer than 14 days?*

If your unpaid leave of absence continues for longer than 14 days, you may choose to pre-pay your existing benefits to ensure continued coverage during your leave of absence. If this is the case, please contact your human resources department, HR Shared Services Service Desk or your Employer Benefits Coordinator to discuss. You can also contact your benefits provider (HEB, Blue Cross, etc.) using the following links:

- Manitoba Blue Cross <https://www.mb.bluecross.ca>
- HEB Manitoba <https://hebmanitoba.ca>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

1. Federal Financial Support for Families:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-finance/economic-response-plan.html#individual>
2. Shared Health COVID 19 – Employee Resources/Updates
<https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/providers/human-resources>
3. Restoring Safe Schools – Manitoba Government
https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/covid_response_k-12_schools.pdf
<https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/index.html>
<https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/restoring/rss-guidelines-september.html>