



How To Discuss Absenteeism with Your Employee

1 - Clearly Communicate Attendance Policies and Absence Procedures

With the SJC Attendance Policy (5.06) clearly laid out in the Administrative Staff Employee Handbook, use that to help back you up as you talk with your employee about their excessive absenteeism.

Attendance and punctuality should always be listed as essential parts of each employee's job duties. Remind your team member of what was expected of them when they accepted this role.

2 - Show Employees You Care - Find Out Why They're Absent

It's easy to assume that every employee with attendance issues is either lazy or completely uninterested in their job. But there's probably something else going on deeper than that. You'll never know unless you ask. The underlying cause matters.

Whether your employees are absent or tardy due to transportation issues, health issues, personal circumstances, or burnout, it's essential to understand their barriers to success and find out why they are absent. Focusing on the symptoms of chronic absenteeism versus addressing the root cause can result in unnecessary turnover, additional costs, and wasted time on your part.

Listen and be empathetic but take the opportunity to reinforce the expectations and requirements of the job. Reiterate how vital excellent employee attendance really is to your operations. Ask what you can do to support them and help them show up on time, as scheduled.

Before talking with the employee, reach out to Human Resources. There are questions you should and should not ask employees in different workplace circumstances, and it's important to have HR looped in to avoid any potential bumps in the road.

3 - Address Attendance Issues In Real- Time

Don't wait to address attendance issues. Letting excessive absenteeism go on for months before you talk about it does a disservice to everyone involved.

4 - Apply the Rules Fairly to Everyone

Fair and consistent accountability is key to effectively enforcing the Attendance Policy, not to mention building respect from other employees on your team while inspiring integrity. When everything is laid out clearly, management is held accountable to follow through with the same kind of treatment for everyone.

5 - Have Documentation That Backs You Up

Be sure you have documentation to prove that the absent employee really did not report for work. The most reliable way to demonstrate patterns of policy violations is with absence tracking.

6 - Praise and Reward Good Attendance While Acknowledging Improvements

Neuroscience research has shown that employees respond better to rewards and recognition than threats and punishment. Instead of fearing the bad, or disciplinary action outcome, many employees are more inspired by positive reinforcement. That's why it's important to acknowledge when employees have improved their attendance.