

1 Title

This policy will be referred to as the “Workplace Health and Wellness Policy”.

2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to encourage, support and offer health related programs that will assist employees in achieving ownership for their physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing, resulting in improving the overall health and wellbeing for all employees. A healthy workplace leads to improved satisfaction and morale, which contributes to a more effective workplace.

3 Interpretation

- 3.1 **Physical Environment** refers to health, comfort, and safety factors of a workplace such as noise levels, toxic substances, air quality, light levels, equipment, and design of workspace.
- 3.2 **Health Practices** refers to individual lifestyle practices that affect health such as physical activity, eating habits, sleeping habits, as well as smoking, alcohol, and drug/substance use.
- 3.3 **Social Environment** refers to psychosocial factors of a workplace that affect health and employee stress levels. The Mental Health Commission of Canada outlines 13 factors which address psychological health and safety in the workplace; they include organizational culture, psychological & social supports, clear leadership & expectations, civility & respect, psychological demands, growth & development, recognition & reward, involvement and influence, workload management, engagement, balance, psychological protection and protection of physical safety. For more information you can visit <https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/13-factors-addressing-mental-health-workplace#:~:text=The%2013%20factors%20of%20psychological%20health%20and%20safety,12%20Psychological%20Protection%2013%20Protection%20of%20Physical%20Safety> .
- 3.4 **Personal Resources** refers to how individuals cope with stress the sense of control they have over their work and health and the perception there is support available during times of illness, distress, or unhappiness.
- 3.5 **Memberships & Classes** refers to memberships and entry fees for gyms, aquatic centres, specific sport provincial organizations, organized sports groups, class(es) and fees.
- 3.6 **Equipment** refers to physical activity equipment such as home gym equipment, outdoor activities (bikes, kayaks, walking poles), personal fitness devices (ie. Fitbits, smart watches), supportive equipment for mobility and health aids.
- 3.7 **Athletic Apparel and Footwear** refers to clothing and footwear to support physical activity.
- 3.8 **Holistic Health Supports** refers to therapies that support wellness including massage and natural medicine consultations.
- 3.9 **Employee** refers to full time, temporary and term employees.
 - 3.9.1 **Full Time Employee** refers to an individual who has been appointed to a permanent position, works every working day and works at least 35 hours per week.
 - 3.9.2 **Temporary Employee** refers to an individual who is filling a special position for a specified period, usually less than one year and who works every working day and at least 35 hours per week.

- 3.9.3 **Term Employee** refers to an individual who is filling a special position for a specified period and who works every working day and at least 35 hours per week.

4 Policy Objectives

The objectives of this program are:

- 4.1 To improve the understanding of workplace issues that impact the health and wellbeing of municipal employees.
- 4.2 To provide a work environment that will support employee health and wellbeing.
- 4.3 To build the knowledge, skills, and ability of employees to take control over their wellbeing by helping individuals become actively involved in improving their personal health.

5 Policy Guidelines

- 5.1 The policy applies to all full-time, temporary and term employees and elected / acclaimed officials at the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's.
- 5.2 The Municipality recognizes that the ability to achieve its objectives are dependent upon the wellbeing of all employees.
- 5.3 The Municipality acknowledges that the key elements of a healthy workplace includes the physical environment, health practices, social environment, and personal resources. It is also recognized that these broad-based factors are interdependent and must be considered as parts of a holistic approach to a healthy workplace and employee wellbeing.
- 5.4 To facilitate this policy the Municipality will:
 - 5.4.1 Provide a physically & psychologically safe and healthy work environment.
 - 5.4.2 Administer program funds and provide support for a healthy workplace.
 - 5.4.3 Facilitate an employee's efforts to make improvements in their health practices.
 - 5.4.4 Support the Active Living Coordinator in organizing wellness education sessions relating to mental, physical, and emotional wellness.
 - 5.4.5 Improve employee access to healthy snack options in the workplace by providing healthy food options during events, meetings, etc.
 - 5.4.6 Ensure access to the family assistant program through Blue Cross (where applicable).
 - 5.4.7 Encourage friendly fitness and wellness competitions; and
 - 5.4.8 Support the Active Living Coordinator in developing physical resources for employees to help them cope with the social and professional aspects of their lives.
- 5.5 Full time Municipal employees will be eligible to receive a financial incentive of up to \$100.00 per fiscal year. This monetary incentive can be used towards a membership, equipment, or program intended to improve an employee's well-being; however, the maximum reimbursement is \$100.00. All original receipts must be presented for reimbursement, and all reimbursements are to be approved by the CAO by filling out a "**Workplace Health and Wellness Reimbursement Claim Form**" (*Appendix A*). Prior to items being presented for reimbursement they must have been submitted to Blue Cross.
- 5.6 Eligible expenses include but are not limited to:
 - i. Fitness equipment

- ii. Structured exercise classes;
 - iii. Healthy eating programs;
 - iv. Tobacco cessation programs;
 - v. Team or individual sport registration.
- 5.7 All full-time employees will be granted an additional 15 minute break, specifically to incorporate a walk during the workday in addition to the 2 -15 minute breaks and a 30 minute lunch. This break can be added to the regular lunch period or taken at another time during the day. This break cannot be taken within the first or last half hour of a work shift. The onus is on the employee to make any necessary arrangements with supervisors or colleagues to ensure that the break does not interfere with the workload or services provided.
- 5.8 Employee's may access the St. Mary's Fitness Centre free of charge during regular operating hours.
- 5.9 Participation in the program is voluntary.

6 Roles and Responsibilities

The following outlines the roles and responsibilities of staff regarding the Workplace Health and Wellness Policy.

- 6.1 The Active Living coordinator:
- 6.1.1 Assessing employee wellness needs by actively seeking input from employees and work partners;
 - 6.1.2 Developing and implementing wellness initiatives to address the needs of employees;
 - 6.1.3 Providing information that employees can use to decide on participation in health promotion programming.
- 6.2 Management Responsibilities:
- 6.2.1 Keep employees up to date on healthy workplace activities and programs;
 - 6.2.2 Support and encourage employee involvement in the wellness program as a component of employee involvement in professional development;
 - 6.2.3 Offer training to employees who want to become involved in the program for development reasons;
 - 6.2.4 Contribute ideas, opinions, and expertise to the work of the Active Living Coordinator; and
 - 6.2.5 Participate in the program, activities, and resources provided through the wellness program.
- 6.3 Human Resources (HR) Responsibilities:
- 6.3.1 Administer the workplace wellness budget, once created; and
 - 6.3.2 Review and revise Municipal policies which may impact an employees' health to ensure that they support and are consistent with the Workplace Health and Wellness Policy.

7 Benefits for the Employee

A healthy lifestyle impacts many facets of the day-to- day work environment. Workplace wellness programs translate into fewer injuries, less human error, and a more harmonious office environment.



They also demonstrate that the Municipality is concerned about employee general health and wellbeing. A wellness program will also help reduce stress which can affect personal relationships and physical and mental health. Taking advantage of the programs offered will not only help employees accomplish more during work hours but will give them more energy and patience for home and personal life as well.

8 Benefits for the Employer

Statistics show that a healthy workplace increases employee morale, improves the ability to attract and retain key people, while having more alert and productive employees. Other benefits include improved health and general wellness of staff, resulting in a reduction in the number of sick days. In effect, a wellness program will help employees contribute toward happier, healthier, and more productive workspaces and environments.

9 Communication, Training, and Implementation

A healthy workplace policy requires department wide participation. Employee participation may include developing, implementing, and reviewing health actions and policies, involvement in planning lifestyle health promotion programs at work, identifying problems, devising solutions, and implementing and evaluating these solutions.

- 9.1 Employees are encouraged to participate but are in no way forced to do so.
- 9.2 On a yearly basis, the municipal employees will be surveyed to determine which wellness initiatives are important to them. These results will be compiled and analyzed by the Active Living Coordinator to develop sessions and initiatives for the coming year.
- 9.3 Workplace wellness initiatives will be communicated through email or by formal memo.

10 Evaluation

The workplace wellness policy will be evaluated through use of data and trends indicating outcomes. A policy review will be conducted on an annual basis to determine if employee workplace wellness needs are being met.

11 References

The reference materials used in the drafting of this model policy included the *Municipality of the District of Argyle Workplace Wellness Policy*, *Town of Antigonish Workplace Health and Wellness Policy*, *The Town of Mulgrave Employee Wellness Policy*, and *AMANS Model Policy Manual*.

M. Fraser
Municipal Clerk

November 3, 2021
Date



Appendix A

Workplace Health and Wellness Reimbursement Claim

Name: _____

Date: _____

Department: _____

Type of Claim: (Please check all appropriate categories that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Outside Recreational Facility Membership
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stress Reduction
<input type="checkbox"/>	Addiction
<input type="checkbox"/>	Weight Management
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nutrition
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Please Specify Below)

Details of Claim:

Cost Incurred:

Description	Total

In any and all circumstances claims are not to exceed \$100.00 per fiscal year (April 1st-March 31st)

Signature of Employee: _____ Date: _____

Signature of CAO: _____ Date: _____