

Policy Title: Right to Disconnect

Category:	<input type="checkbox"/> Institutional - Board <input type="checkbox"/> Academic - Administrative <input type="checkbox"/> Institutional - Administrative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment - Administrative		
Approved by:	<input type="checkbox"/> Board <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> President		
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Policy Sponsor:	Vice President, Administration and Finance	Date last reviewed:	November 24, 2022
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1. POLICY

1. Employees have the right to disconnect from their job and any work-related tasks or communication outside of working hours without fear of reprisal.
2. Employees are encouraged to set clear boundaries between work and their personal lives.
3. Employees must be respectful of others' right to disconnect.

2. PURPOSE

To support employee wellness, minimize excessive sources of stress, and ensure that employees have the right and are empowered to disconnect outside their regularly scheduled hours of work.

3. SCOPE

All Employees, however there may be exceptions as it relates to:

- Teaching faculty who are required to respond to student inquiries (e.g. assignments) and other academic requirements
- Union employees' hours of work which are governed by the Collective Agreement and Workload contracts
- Hourly employees who are required to work according to the terms and conditions of their established employment contract

- Specified roles within the organization that would be required to work unscheduled hours due to maintenance, employee absences or unforeseen circumstances, such as an emergency
- Time sensitive communication

4. INFORMATION AND COMPLIANCE PLANS (not a comprehensive list)

- Employment Standards Act
- Working for Workers Act (Bill 27)

5. RELATED POLICIES (not a comprehensive list)

- Attendance – Employees
- Code of Conduct
- Right to Disconnect Page 2 of 5
- Collective Agreement between CMCC and CUPE Local 4773
- Discipline - Employees
- Email
- Employment Classifications
- Health & Safety
- Hours of Work
- Leaves
- Sick Leave and Salary Continuance Benefits
- Working from Home

6. DEFINITIONS

CMCC understands that due to work-related pressures, the current landscape of work, or work environment or location, employees may feel obligated or choose to continue to perform their job duties outside their normal working hours. Work-related pressure and the inability to disconnect from the job can lead to stress and deterioration of mental health and overall well-being.

The right to disconnect means that employees:

- Should strive to establish work/life balance as such pertains to continuity of program delivery and patient care
- Can and should stop performing their job duties and work-related tasks when they are not expected to work
- Are not required to complete work outside of regular working hours

- Should take and use all of their scheduled breaks and time off entitlements for non-work-related activities

Regular scheduled hours are an established set of recurring shifts that an employee works each week.

Work is an activity for which compensation is paid to an employee by an employer in return for providing the agreed upon services to the employer. Training and travelling for work during the workday are also considered work as are attending employer approved seminars and conferences. Employees are not considered to be working during authorized breaks, when engaging in private matters or while commuting to or from work.

A work emergency is a serious, unexpected and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action (examples: last minute workload coverage, inclement weather, medical attention or other institutional risks).

Overtime hours may arise from hours worked outside an employee's standard schedule.

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-----**END OF POLICY**-----

7. PROCEDURES

1. Productivity

CMCC understands that employees may want or need to work outside their normal hours to meet a time-sensitive deadline, to attend to an urgent matter, or due to unforeseen circumstances. However, employees should not regularly work outside their scheduled hours to complete or catch up on work. Working additional hours does not always equate to higher productivity.

- a. Employees can maximize their productivity during their workday by using time management tactics, such as:
 - i. Blocking off periods in their schedule and calendar to complete specific tasks or address communication.
 - ii. Working with their manager to organize work in order of priority or importance.
 - iii. Breaking down projects and tasks into manageable chunks.
 - iv. Trying to have at least one dedicated workday per week without meetings (where possible).

- v. Minimizing interruptions by setting their online status to “busy” or “do not disturb”.
- vi. Setting goals to work continuously for a specified period before taking a break or responding to communication.
- b. Employees who cannot manage their workload during their regularly scheduled hours should meet with their direct manager to evaluate the current workload, priorities, due dates, as well as time management strategies.
- c. Managers will work with employees to come up with a solution to ensure:
 - i. The current workload does not result in the employee working excess hours or contribute to additional stress and burnout.
 - ii. Normal job duties can be completed during working hours.
 - iii. Employees can remain productive and meet CMCC goals and objectives.

2. Communication

- a. Management is diligent in ensuring that they are not sending communication that requires an immediate response from employees who have a regular day off or a scheduled vacation. It is important for employees to understand that they are not expected to respond to institutional communication when not at work, with the exception of unforeseen circumstances, such as maintenance, the need to address employee absences, or in the case of an emergency.
- b. Employees must respect others and avoid direct communication like sending e-mails, messages (through their phone or other communication and direct messaging apps), or calling other employees during an employee’s time off, such as vacation time.
- c. When it is necessary to send communication to a group of employees, or forward important information to an employee who is not working, a response should not be expected from any individual until they return to work. If the matter is urgent or an emergency and requires an immediate response, employees must reach out to their manager.
- d. It is acceptable for employees to set communication boundaries, examples of which may include:
 - i. Setting clear expectations for e-mail response time.
 - ii. Logging off for the day or setting their online status to “away,” “out of office,” “do not disturb,” or “offline” when they are not scheduled to be working.
 - iii. Scheduling any breaks or time off in their calendar.

- iv. Avoiding using work e-mail for unrelated communication, such as newsletters, coupons, or personal correspondence.
- e. Employees who find it necessary to compose non-time sensitive messages or communication outside regular working hours should use a scheduling tool to send email at a specified time during work hours, such as the start of the next workday so others do not feel obligated to respond outside of the times they are at work.
- f. Employees are encouraged to use a tag line in their email signatures advising others that they acknowledge that their communication may have been sent during a time that the receiver is not working.

Example: Please note that my working day may not be your working day. Please do not feel obliged to reply to this email outside of your normal working hours.

3. Breaks and Time Off

- a. Employees should take any scheduled or institution-provided breaks during their work day to ensure they have time away from their work and refrain from responding or sending communication. Breaks are provided in accordance with employment standards and are intended to provide eligible employees with time to recharge, and enable them to resume their regular work productively.
- b. Eligible employees are encouraged to use their approved vacation time in full every year for rest, relaxation, and personal pursuits.
- c. Managers will work with employees to delegate job-specific duties that must be completed while the employee is on vacation to maintain effective and efficient workflow and productivity.
- d. Employees should not be reluctant to take approved vacation due to workload.

4. Overtime

CMCC allows only specified employee groups to work overtime. Overtime may be requested or scheduled in certain situations to ensure work is completed; however, employees should not work overtime unless directed and authorized by their manager.

5. Mental Health Support

CMCC recognizes that the workplace plays a significant role in managing and supporting mental health, and understands that deterioration of mental health and wellness can be triggered by excess pressures at work or at home and result in lowered work performance and harm to one's physical and mental condition.

- a. CMCC supports mental health strategies by:
- i. Addressing internal factors that may contribute to burnout.
 - ii. Regularly assessing workload, productivity, and expectations.
 - iii. Promoting work–life balance.
 - iv. Helping employees recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health issues.
 - v. Having an open-door policy for communication and ensuring employees are comfortable talking to their manager about mental health concerns.
 - vi. Conducting risk assessments to identify workplace factors that worsen or improve mental health.
 - vii. Treating mental health with the same level of importance as physical health and safety.
 - viii. Providing employees with the assistance and access to resources they need to support their mental health (such as EAP programs, medically approved accommodations, etc).

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8. ATTACHMENTS

None.