COLLEGE POLICY

Policy No. & Title:	**P-113 Disconnecting from Work**
Policy Sponsor:	Vice President, People & Culture and Career Services
Reference Cmtee:	Policy & Procedure Committee
Effective:	2023-07-01
Next Review:	2026-10-31

Purpose

The College is committed to taking every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of the health and safety of employees, as required by the Employment Standards and Occupational Health and Safety Acts. This includes workplace hazards associated with an employee's mental health.

The College is also committed to providing a supportive workplace that promotes and supports stress-reduction and mental health, as well as a workplace free of violence, harassment, bullying, and discrimination, as outlined in our core policies. Additionally, the College is committed to ensuring that its employees can maintain an appropriate work-life balance and fulfill their family responsibilities.

As such, and as an organization of more than 25 employees, the College has the following policy in place regarding an employee's right to disconnect from work.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the College.

Definitions

College refers to any entity operating under parent company triOS Corporation, including triOS College Business Technology Healthcare Inc., Eastern College Inc., Centre for Distance Education, Lifecycle Systems Corporation, Eastern Online or triOS Online.

On-Call Work describes any arrangement where employees are on schedule to respond to workplace demands at any time during a set period but may be at home or somewhere nearby unless called to work. This type of work involves handling issues that can arise unexpectedly.

Working for Workers Act refers to Bill 27 – An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour and other matters which received Royal Assent on December 2, 2021 which is detailed under Working for Workers Act, 2021, S.O. 2021, c. 35 - Bill 27.

As defined in the Working for Workers Act, "**Disconnecting from Work**" means not engaging in work-related communications, including emails, telephone calls, video calls or the sending or reviewing of other messages, so as to be free from the performance of work. As the list of work-related communications is inclusive, and not exhaustive, other types of work-related communications could also fall under this definition. Disconnecting from work means having the ability to stop working and not feel obliged to respond to work issues outside of defined work hours. This space gives you time when you are not exposed to work stresses. Having uninterrupted personal time allows your body and mind to relax and recover.

For the purposes of this policy, "**remote work**" means working from a home or from another location rather than being required to go to the physical workplace of the College.

For the purposes of this policy, "**Mental Health**" refers to the employees' state of mental well-being where they can optimize their full capacity, maximize their abilities, work productively, cope with stresses, and successfully contribute to the goals of the College.

POLICY

Providing Copies of this Policy to Employees
The College will provide this written policy to all employees within 30 days of its effective date.

If any changes are made to this policy, employees will be provided with the updated policy within 30 days of any amendments.

In the case of newly hired employees, the College will provide a copy of this policy to them within 30 days of their date of hire.

Mental Health in the Workplace
The College wishes to encourage employees to come forward if they are experiencing any health issues, especially issues related to mental well-being. If an employee feels comfortable doing so, they should talk to their manager/management team and/or take steps to seek professional help.

Connection and Disconnection Expectations
<u>Email</u>
Employees are expected to follow the guidelines outlined in P-113p Disconnecting from Work regarding the use of the College's email systems. These guidelines also apply if an employee needs to use their personal email in the event of an emergency or an unforeseen circumstance.

Employees are expected to respond to emails during their designated working hours only. The College does not have an expectation that employees will respond to emails during their off-work time and employees will not be penalized in any way for responding to emails only during their working time.

Phone (Personal and Business)

Employees are expected to respond to phone calls or text messages during their designated working hours only. The College does not have an expectation that employees will respond to phone calls or text messages during their off-work time and employees will not be penalized in any way for responding to phone calls and text messages during their working time only.

If an employee is unable to reply within these guidelines, they are expected to speak with their supervisor to discuss their workload and set updated expectations.

If a vendor or colleague communicates with an employee on their personal cellular phone during their off-work hours, employees do not need to answer or reply until they are within their working hours the following business day.

Other Communication Channels

Employees may use various other means of communication for work such as MS Teams or Social Media or SMS platforms. Employees are only expected to respond to work-related messages on these platforms during their designated working hours. The College does not have an expectation that employees will respond to messages, comments, meeting invitations etc., during their off-work time and employees will not be penalized in any way for only replying to them during their working time.

Responsibilities

Employees are expected to:

- Follow the guidelines outlined within this policy, such as notifying management and using applicable technologies to notify internal and external parties when they are off duty
    - Otherwise, be working during the times set out in their employment contract, taking breaks as outlined in their employment contract and/or their Handbook
- Not pressure fellow employees for taking the down time afforded to them by law
- Speak to their leader/manager if they have any concerns about their mental health and their right to disconnect from work

Supervisors/managers are expected to:

- Respect an employee's off-duty time, including respected legislated hours of work and eating periods; vacation time; public holidays; and rules in the applicable provincial legislation that establish when work is "deemed" to be performed, and not expect that an employee will respond to a request on their off-duty hours
- Compensate employees for any work completed outside of their on-duty hours, as outlined by the hours of work legislation in the provinces Employment Standards laws or regulations.
- Provide support as needed to employees who come forward with concerns regarding their mental health and right to disconnect

Complaints
Employees who have concerns about their supervisor/manager respecting their time away from work should first speak with their supervisor/manager to resolve the issue. In the event the issue is not able to be resolved at this level, employees are directed to bring the issue forward to the Head of People & Culture.

Related Policies
P-141 Hours of Work
P-101 Health & Safety
P-203 Employment Accommodations
P-140 Employee Holidays

Supporting Documents/Forms
Working for Workers Act, 2021, S.O. 2021, c. 35 - Bill 27