

Board Policy GARH: Employee Leaves and Absences

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 04/16/2012 | **Last Revised Date:** 06/12/2023 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 06/12/2023

This policy shall apply to all benefits-eligible employees of the Board of Education ("the Board"). All employees are required to follow the appropriate work calendar established for their positions and may take leave from work only in accordance with this policy or other leave policies enacted by the Board.

Unless otherwise provided by the Board, principals and other supervisors are not authorized to rearrange the work calendars of employees. Deductions in pay will be made for absences not covered by this policy.

ACCUAL OF SICK LEAVE AND ABSENCE FOR MEDICAL AND RELATED REASONS

Eligibility – Employees who are full-time status are eligible to earn sick leave in accordance with this policy. Permanent substitutes and part-time employees are not eligible.

Rate of Accrual – Employees will accrue sick leave at a rate of 1 1/4 days per month. 10-month employees shall earn 12 1/2 days per year, 11-month employees shall earn 13 3/4 days per year, and 12-month employees will earn 15 days per year. New employees must work twenty days during the month in order to earn sick leave for that month. All employees may accumulate unused sick leave from one fiscal year to the next up to a maximum of 60 days, although the Teacher Retirement System of Georgia allows participating employees to accumulate an unlimited number of unused sick leave days for credit toward retirement.

Absences – An Employee may use accrued sick leave for the following:

- Personal illness or injury

- Personal medical or dental care

- Exposure to a contagious disease by which the health of others may be endangered by employee's attendance

- Illness, injury, medical or dental care in the employee's immediate family. For purposes of this rule, immediate family means the employee's spouse, child, parent, brother and sister, in-law equivalents of the same, grandparents, grandchildren or any other person who resides in the employee's household and is recognized by law as a dependent of the employee, or dependent as shown in the employee's most recent tax return.

- Death in the employee's family. (Sick leave days may be granted if more than the three days allowed in the Bereavement Leave section are needed, OR if a family member does not fall within the definition of "immediate" family.)

Sick Leave Donations between Employed Spouses – An employee may donate up to ten (10) days of sick leave to his/her spouse who is also an employee of the school district for purposes of maternity leave, illness, or illness or death of a family member.

Bereavement Leave – Bereavement leave may be utilized for absence due to death in the employee's immediate family. An employee shall be allowed three days leave for absence due to a family death. Such leave shall not be deducted from the employee's accumulated sick leave. If additional days are needed, the requesting employee's principal or supervisor may grant the use of sick leave days. The additional days will be deducted from the individual's accumulated leave. Moreover, when an employee is absent due to the death of any family member other than as defined, sick leave may be utilized.

Jury and Witness Leave - Each employee shall be allowed leave with pay for the purposes of serving as a juror in any court or when attending a judicial proceeding in response to a subpoena or other court order or process that requires the employee's attendance at the judicial proceeding in a work-related matter. Jury and/or witness leave shall not be deducted from an individual's accumulated personal, professional or sick leave. No employee utilizing jury or witness leave shall be required to pay the cost of employing a substitute to serve during his or her absence for such leave. Employees who serve on juries or who have been subpoenaed to attend a judicial proceeding in a work-related matter may keep any jury/witness pay they receive.

Military Leave - All employees are entitled to paid leave not to exceed eighteen days in any one federal fiscal year for the purpose of complying with ordered military duty with the armed forces of the United States or State of Georgia, including duty as a voluntary member of the National Guard or any reserve component of the United States or State of Georgia. In the event the Governor declares

an emergency that results in an employee being ordered to military duty as a member of the National Guard, the employee is entitled to leave not exceeding thirty days in any one federal fiscal year. Employees who have military commitments shall inform the Superintendent or designee annually, provide a copy of the official military orders, and cooperate to the extent possible in scheduling such leave so as to minimize the disruption in those employees' duties and the mission of the Board of Education.

Personal Leave – A maximum of three days of sick leave may be taken annually for personal reasons (from July 1 – June 30). These days will be deducted from the employee's accumulated sick leave. A leave form must be filed and approved by the Superintendent or designee 3 days prior to leave. Unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent or designee, personal and professional leave will not be granted during pre-planning, post-planning, in-service days or on the day before or day after holidays. In addition, personal leave will not be granted during the first week of the student school year or during the last week of the student school year, unless the Superintendent or designee, in his or her discretion, determines that such leave should be granted. The Superintendent or designee may refuse to allow an employee to take personal or professional leave if qualified substitutes are not available. Employees are not required to disclose the purpose for which such absence is sought but may be required to state whether the absence is for "personal" or "professional" reasons.

Professional Leave – Professional leave taken at the request of the school district or when required in conjunction with the district's routine professional development or training activities will not be charged against the employee's sick leave.

Vacation Leave – Twelve-month employees are eligible for two weeks per year vacation leave. New 12-month employees earn .833 days of vacation per month of employment for the first year. Vacation days that are unused at the year-end (June 30) will be forfeited. Vacation days, just like personal days, must be approved by the employee's supervisor at least 3 days prior to taking them.

Observance of Religious Holidays – Employees may use personal leave for the observance of recognized religious holidays. If an employee desires to take leave for the observance of recognized religious holidays in excess of the days allowed for personal leave, the employee may take unpaid leave for such purposes, as long as such leave is not excessive and does not interfere with fulfilling the obligations of his or her job.

Paid Parental Leave – The Board of Education shall make paid parental leave equally available to all eligible employees of the Board of Education under the following terms:

1. An employee of the Board of Education shall be eligible for paid parental leave for qualifying life events upon satisfying the following criteria:

- a. The employee is classified as full-time by the District and is eligible to participate in the TRS (Teacher Retirement System) or the PSERS (Public School Employees Retirement System); and
- b. The employee has six continuous months of employment with the Board, regardless of whether he or she is eligible for paid or unpaid leave under federal law. An employee paid on an hourly basis must have worked a minimum of 700 hours over the six-month period immediately preceding the requested paid parental leave date.

2. A qualifying life event means:

- a. The birth of a child of an eligible employee;
- b. The placement of a minor child for adoption with an eligible employee; or
- c. The placement of a minor child for foster care with an eligible employee.

3. The maximum amount of paid parental leave that may be taken by an eligible employee during a rolling 12-month period is 120 hours, regardless of the number of qualifying life events that occur during such period.

- a. The rolling 12-month period shall be measured backward from the date an eligible employee first uses parental leave.
- b. Parental leave may be taken as needed and may be taken in increments of less than eight hours. The smallest increment of parental leave that may be taken is 2 hours.
- c. Any unused paid parental leave that remains 12 months after the qualifying event shall not carry over for future use.
- d. Unused paid parental leave shall have no cash value at any time of the eligible employee's separation from employment with the Board of Education.

4. Paid parental leave under state law shall run concurrently with any leave provided under federal law.

Family and Medical Leave Act – (See board Policy GBRIG) To the extent that any provision in this policy conflicts with or is superseded by the Family and Medical Leave Act (“FMLA”), the regulations promulgated thereunder, or any other federal or state law, the provision of the FMLA, its regulations or other law, as the case may be, shall control.
