

**LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

**Purpose:**

To provide personnel with time off to attend to personal needs in the event extenuating circumstances deem it necessary to be away from work for an extended period of time.

**Scope:**

This policy applies to all personnel of the district.

**Policy:**

It is the policy of the district to provide leaves of absence to personnel needing extended or temporary time away from work when possible to do so without disruption to district operations.

**Guidelines:**

- A. The leaves of absence covered under this policy would include Personal Leave or Medical Leave for personnel who do not meet the eligibility requirements of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), or for events that do not qualify under the FMLA.
- B. If the employee has accrued leave, the leave may be paid or partially paid. Upon exhaustion of any paid leave benefits, the leave will be unpaid.
- C. Medical leave may be granted to personnel for a period of up to six months. The employee will be required to provide the district with certification from the attending medical provider attesting to the necessity of the leave and the anticipated duration.
- D. The employee or volunteer member may be required to provide periodic updates from the attending medical provider concerning the status of the leave.
- E. All benefits that operate on an accrual basis will continue to accrue only during the first thirty days of Medical Leave or for thirty days of Medical Leave within the calendar year.
- F. After the first thirty days of Medical Leave (or thirty days within a calendar year), group health and dental benefits may be continued; however, the employee or volunteer member will be required to pay the entire premium.
- G. An employee or volunteer member returning from a Medical Leave of Absence must provide a release to return to work from their attending medical provider. In addition, the employee may be required to obtain a release to return to work from the district's physician.

- H. Personnel Leave may be granted for a period of up to one year to full or part time personnel who have completed at least six months of service. Personal Leave requests will be granted on an individual case basis, and may be granted if the district's business operations are not severely disrupted.
- I. Benefits continuation during a Personal Leave falls under the same guideline as for Medical Leave, as described in Guidelines (E) and (F) above.
- J. Reinstatement from Medical or Personal Leave cannot be guaranteed. The district endeavors to place personnel in either the former position or a position comparable in status, pay, and benefits, subject to budgetary restrictions, the district's need to fill vacancies, and the ability of the district to find qualified temporary replacements.
- K. The employee must prove that their certifications, skills, and physical ability to perform critical functions are still satisfactory for the position to return to work.

**Procedure:**

- A. Personnel requesting a leave of absence for medical or personal reasons (not covered by the FMLA) must submit a written request as far in advance as possible. A minimum of thirty days in advance is required for non-emergency, foreseeable events. The request for the leave should include the starting date of the requested leave, a reasonable explanation of the circumstances surrounding the leave, and the probable date of return.
- B. If the request is for Medical Leave, certification by the attending medical provider must be submitted with the request.
- C. If a leave is necessitated by an emergency, and prior written request is not possible, the employee or a member of their immediate family must notify the district as soon as is practical, and the employee must follow up with a written request within a reasonable period of time, as determined by the Chief.