

**Board Policy GARH: Employee Leaves and Absences**

**Status:** DRAFT

**Original Adopted Date:** 07/21/2011 | **Last Revised Date:** 07/15/2021 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 06/10/2024

This policy shall apply to all employees of the Carroll County Board of Education. Deductions in pay will be made for absences not covered by this policy. Any incentives for perfect attendance will be addressed in the employee handbook.

**ACCRUAL OF SICK LEAVE AND ABSENCE FOR MEDICAL AND RELATED REASONS**

Benefits-eligible employees of Carroll County Schools shall be entitled to annual sick leave with pay to be accrued at the rate of one and one-fourth (1 1/4) days for each completed month. All employees' unused sick leave shall be accumulated from one fiscal year to the next up to a maximum of ninety (90) unused sick leave days, although the Teacher Retirement System of Georgia allows participating employees to accumulate an unlimited number of unused sick leave days for credit towards retirement. All certified employees may transfer ninety (90) unused sick leave days from another system. Accumulated sick leave may be transferred to another Georgia school system within the limits set by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-850.

The leave provided for under this policy is available only for personal illness, injury or exposure to contagious diseases, or for absences necessitated by illness or death in the employee's immediate family. For purpose of absences for medical and related reasons, members of the immediate family are defined as spouse, children, father, mother, brother, sister, grandparents, grandchildren, in-law equivalents of the above, other relatives living in the household, or any individual listed on the employee's most recent tax return.

For any absence in which sick leave is used, the superintendent shall have the right to require a physician's certificate stating that the employee is ill and is unable to perform his or her duties. However, if the local school Board disagrees with the doctor's statement of disability or ability, it may appoint a physician for the purpose of receiving independent medical judgment.

It will be the responsibility of the employee to fill out a report for the days absent for sick leave.

Employees may be required, at the discretion of the supervisor, to provide a written doctor's excuse for any absence after five (5) sick days have been used.

An employee may donate up to ten (10) accumulated sick leave days to his or her spouse given the spouse is also an employee for purposes of maternity leave, illness, or death of a family member.

Carroll County School System does not pay for unused sick leave when an employee leaves the system. Carroll County Schools follows guidelines from TRS and/or other retirement entities regarding sick leave procedures.

**PERSONAL LEAVE**

Three (3) days of an employee's accumulated sick leave may be utilized during each school year for personal reasons provided prior approval from the Superintendent or authorized supervisor is obtained. The principal or supervisor shall withhold approval of personal leave when the absence of the employee would jeopardize the effectiveness of the school operation. Any personal leave taken by an employee beyond that accumulated will result in the loss of pay for those days. Personal leave will not be granted during pre-planning, post-planning, in-service days or on the day before or day after holidays, unless the principal in his or her discretion recommends that such leave should be granted. Employees are not required to disclose the purpose for which such absence is sought.

**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 of Georgia) 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~~ 240 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 .5 of a work day.
- 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.

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

## **PROFESSIONAL LEAVE**

The Superintendent of Schools may authorize professional leave for attendance of personnel at state, regional, and national meetings without pay deduction and with expenses paid by the district according to established allowances. The number of absences for professional leave is a judgment value on the part of the Superintendent of Schools and is subject to budget limitations for employing substitutes and reimbursement for travel, meals and lodging.

## **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 provided that such leave is not excessive and does not interfere with fulfilling the obligations of his or her job.

## **JURY AND WITNESS LEAVE**

Each person employed by the Carroll County School System shall be allowed leave with pay for the purpose of serving as a juror in any court or when attending a judicial proceeding in response to a subpoenaed to testify in a case arising out of the employee's duties. Any employee who serves as juror or witness shall not have the jury or witness leave deducted from sick, personal or professional leave. Employees who serve on juries or who are subpoenaed to testify in a case arising out of their duties shall be allowed to keep any jury/witness pay they receive.

Employees who are subpoenaed to appear in court for reasons that are not job related may use any unused personal leave or be docked for such absence.

## **MILITARY LEAVE**

Employees of the Board of Education are entitled to take leave for the purpose of complying with ordered military duty with full employment and reinstatement rights as provided by law. The term "ordered military duty" shall mean any military duty performed in the service of the armed forces of the United States or State of Georgia, including but not limited to, attendance at any service school or schools conducted by the armed forces of the United States by an employee as a voluntary member of any force of the organized militia or any reserve component of the United States or State of Georgia pursuant to orders issued by the competent state or federal authority, without the consent of the employee.

An employee shall be paid regular salary for a period or periods of absence while engaged in the performance of ordered military duty and while going to and returning from such duty, not to exceed a total of eighteen (18) days in any one federal fiscal year.

In the event the Governor of Georgia declares an emergency that results in an employee being ordered to military duty, the employee is entitled to leave not exceeding thirty (30) days in any one federal fiscal year. Employees who have military commitments shall inform the Superintendent or designee annually and shall 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.

A request for military leave (paid or unpaid) must be submitted to the employee's supervisor and the appropriate personnel administrator with a copy of the official military orders.

#### **CONSTRUCTION WITH THE FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE ACT**

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, control.

#### **ANNUAL LEAVE**

Annual leave is granted only to 12-month, annual (240-day) employees. Unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent or the Board, annual leave shall be accumulated based on the number of verified continuous, consecutive years of service with the system, as follows:

0-5 Years	12 days; 96 hours
6-10 Years	15 days; 120 hours
11+ Years	18 days; 144 hours

Carroll County Schools leave accumulation service shall be credited on a fiscal year basis using the salary credit formula. If an employee breaks service with the system and is re-employed, leave accumulation reverts to zero (0) years of service. Regular part-time (at least fifty percent) employees in 12-month positions accrue annual leave in proportion to the percent of time worked. Employees are encouraged to use all earned vacation leave each year. Individuals may carry over up to but not more than twenty-five (25) unused days of annual leave from a prior fiscal year into the next fiscal year.

An employee will be paid for accrued, unused annual leave only if the employee leaves employment in good standing. Annual leave will be paid at the current rate of pay. If the employee is terminated, no payment for unused annual leave will be made.

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