

PERSONNEL

Personnel Leaves

Staff Attendance Expectations

It is fundamental that regular attendance is recognized as an important factor in employment with the District. In order to produce high achieving students, promote student and staff accountability, provide consistent academic and activity programs, and continue to be fiscally sound, the District must have trained staff who maintain regular attendance in order to perform their duties in their respective support areas.

It is understood that all staff members are expected to be at their assigned school or place of work during specified work hours unless excused by the supervisor. If an employee is absent, the following leave provisions will apply.

1. Sick Leave: Employees may use accrued sick leave for purposes outlined in the Family Care Act (RCW 49.12.270) and their respective bargaining agreements. In the case an employee has used all accrued sick leave, unpaid leave will not be granted unless the employee has also used all accrued vacation and personal leave. District policy requires that a physician's note accompany all sick leave absences over five (5) consecutive days. The district may require a physician's note in other situations, such as an employee who is on an attendance-improvement plan. Non-exempt employees who are not members of a bargaining agreement will qualify to earn sick leave in accordance with RCW 49.46.210 and WAC 296.128.
2. Emergency Leave: Unless otherwise stated in the respective bargaining agreements, employees may request use of accrued sick leave for emergency purposes, defined as an event or unforeseen combination of circumstances which calls for immediate action on the part of the employee, which cannot be attended to outside of the employee's regular work hours. Emergency leave must be approved by the employee's supervisor(s) at the time of the emergency.
3. Personal Leave: Employees who are allowed personal leave may use available leave during the year with prior approval from their supervisor, within the terms of the collective bargaining agreement.
4. Vacation Leave: Employees who are allowed vacation leave may use accrued leave during the year with prior approval from their supervisor, within the terms of the collective bargaining agreement. The approval and use of vacation leave during the school day, however, is strongly discouraged by employees whose work year consists of 202 days or less, except as noted under "1. Sick Leave" above.
5. Bereavement Leave: Employees who are allowed bereavement leave may use it during the year with prior approval from their supervisor, within the terms of the collective bargaining agreement. The number of days granted per occasion shall be between 1 and 5 days taking into consideration the relationship of the deceased, the travel time needed,

and the responsibility of the employee in the bereavement arrangements.

6. **Unpaid Holidays for Reason of Faith or Conscience.** Employees who are contracted for less than twelve (12) consecutive months may request two (2) unpaid holidays per calendar year for reasons of faith or conscience or an organized activity conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or religious organization unless the employee's absence poses an undue hardship on the employer or the employee is necessary to maintain public safety. The approval of unpaid leave will be made only in conjunction with the supervisor and the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources or the Classified Human Resources Manager, prior to the employee's absence. The employee's request for unpaid leave will be reviewed on a case-by-case determination based on the specific objective facts, circumstances and applicable Federal Requirements/laws regarding whether the absence would result in an undue hardship to the employer.
7. **Unpaid Leave:** With the exception of a leave for unpaid Holidays for Reason of Faith or Conscience, unpaid leave is not a recognized right of any employee group. The approval of unpaid leave will be made only in conjunction with the supervisor and the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources or the Classified Human Resources Manager, prior to the employee's absence. The employee's request for unpaid leave will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
8. **Leave of Absence:** Approval of an employee's request for a leave of absence will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, within the terms of the collective bargaining agreement.

The District expects the employee to use no more than the contractually-provided paid leaves, as accrued (unused) leave is the best security against the expense of extended illness or other unforeseen circumstances. Exceptions will be made for health conditions where there is a long-term or catastrophic situation, and/or leave as covered under FMLA policy #5321, upon presentation of verification from the treating physician. The District reserves the right to require independent medical verification of such a condition.

An employee whose absences exceed the district expectations, and/or has a pattern of tardiness and/or leaving work early, will be counseled to improve his/her attendance. Progressive discipline will take place if the attendance does not improve, which may lead to eventual termination.

As an incentive for good attendance, the district offers a remuneration program for unused sick leave in January of each year and at retirement, as per RCW 28A.400.210. This option varies according to the collective bargaining agreements.

Administrative Regulation No. 5320
Personnel Leaves - Continued

July 16, 2014
April 24, 2018
November 30, 2021