

Frequently Asked Questions

Arranging for a Substitute

This is ultimately the responsibility of the building principal/designee. You may work with the building principal/designee to find a substitute who is mutually agreeable. If the position needs to be posted it should be noted on the Disability Leave Form by checking the appropriate box. Please follow the protocol that is established in your building or work group.

Meetings, Professional Development, grading, lesson plans, etc.

While you are on sick leave, you are not to attend meetings, release days, professional development events, etc. Your physician needs to release you before you can attend district events. You are not responsible for developing lesson plans or grading while on leave. However, staff member on disability leave should be prepared, on occasion, to field a telephone call for the purpose of clarifying an issue involving a student.

Short-Term Disability (STD) – How it Works

STD provides a benefit equal to 70% of your basic daily gross wage based on a full calendar year. There is a 29 calendar day waiting period. On the 30th calendar day, your STD benefit begins, subject to carrier approval. Benefits are paid based on calendar days, and are calculated based on the number of days your attending physician has indicated you are disabled and unable to work. The maximum benefit period is 9 calendar weeks and is subject to carrier approval. An Employee Benefit Booklet for Group Short Term Disability Insurance is available by logging on to fhdschools.smartben.net. Please refer to Attachment D, step 2, for instructions on how to access SmartBen.

FHSD will not pay you for the days you qualify for STD benefits. The checks from Lincoln Financial Group (the District's STD insurer) will be mailed to your home. Checks from Lincoln Financial Group will not follow our pay schedule. When you receive checks will depend upon your particular situation.

Once you become eligible for STD, your pay from FHSD will be adjusted accordingly. If you are a contracted employee, you will be paid for the number of paid contracted days prior to STD. In addition, your FHSD contract will be recalculated by the number of unpaid days upon your return to work. You will be returned to the FHSD payroll when you return to work according to the payroll pay periods. Again your payroll amount will be different than the beginning of the year. That information will be emailed and/or mailed to you.

Attachment B

Sick Leave Bank

If you are a permanent employee who is eligible to receive District-provided paid sick leave and have joined the sick leave bank, you may apply for bank days by completing the application in your packet. You will probably not be able to predict how many days you will need, so you may leave that blank and we will figure it for you. The application is then given to Lisa Kendall for processing. You will receive an email from Lisa verifying your eligibility to use sick leave bank days. There may be times when the application comes or is approved after the payroll deadline and you may have dock days. Once the application is approved, those dock days will be reimbursed on the next payroll.

When does my disability begin?

Your disability will begin on the date that the doctor identifies on the FMLA form that he or she fills out. It is critical that the doctor puts the correct date on this form, as this is the date that many of the calculations regarding your disability leave will be based on.

FMLA leave vs. Short-Term Disability – What is the Difference?

The Family Medical Leave Act allows eligible employees with proper verification from a physician to take time from work for up to twelve work weeks for your own illness/surgery or maternity leave or your spouse's, children's or parent(s)' illness. However, there are certain requirements for eligibility and if you do qualify, the District is more generous and allows 16 weeks of FMLA leave. FMLA allows an eligible employee to return to his/her job or an equivalent position with the same pay and benefits. While FMLA does not assure paid time off, you will be able to use your sick days, vacation and/or non-contract days and your insurance subsidy will continue during this time. You may receive a letter from the Benefits Office if you owe money towards your insurance or it will be collected upon your return to work.

Short-term disability is not a part of the FMLA leave, however, they can run concurrently. Short-term disability is a FHSD benefit that assures your pay for up to nine calendar weeks after your 29th day out. (See below for medical leave of absence due to maternity.)

How Does a Medical Leave of Absence Work in the Case of Maternity?

Maternity leave is either six- or eight-week disability time depending on the type of delivery. A regular vaginal delivery is six weeks; a cesarean section is eight weeks. If your baby is born during a break, the six or eight week count begins on the day of birth.

If your baby is born late in the school year before the sixteen work weeks are used, FMLA time may be taken the following school year for up to sixteen weeks.

How Much Disability Leave Am I Entitled To and When Is It Paid or Unpaid?

The first twenty-nine calendar days are paid by your available sick days and/or bank days or vacation as illness days. Those twenty-nine days include weekends which are not paid (but would not count against your sick day use). Your physician will determine your time needed. You are paid as long as you have sick and/or bank days or vacation as illness days.

Short Term Disability (STD) begins on the 30th calendar day, subject to carrier approval, and will last for a period of time based on your particular circumstances. After that time, whether or not you are paid will depend upon whether you have personal sick days, sick leave bank days, or vacation days remaining, or whether you have voluntarily elected to purchase Long Term Disability insurance.

Short-term disability benefits will be paid throughout the calendar year, regardless of the FHSD pay calendar.

Most Common Maternity Leaves

While some women decide to take the six- or eight-week disability time, others will add on additional weeks. With FMLA, employees can take up to 16 weeks of leave. In addition, after FMLA is exhausted, Board policy allows maximum leave that could be granted for new child or extended family care purposes for the remainder of the then-current school year in which this leave begins.

Please note: The mother shall receive pay for available sick/vacation days and employment benefits for the period of her own disability following the birth in accordance with the District's applicable sick leave policies and regulations. The employee shall provide the Human Resources office with a physician's certification specifying the first and last day of her own period of disability. Should the mother continue leave to care/bond with child after her own disability, only vacation/dock time can be used.

An employee who has been granted new child or extended family care leave under Regulation 4322GE shall continue to receive the District insurance subsidy until they have exhausted all available paid time and coverage as defined in Policy/Regulation 4540 GE. After that time the employee may elect to continue insurance benefits at their own expense for the duration of the leave.

What Happens With my Insurance Contributions and District Insurance Subsidy While on Leave?

During an employee's FMLA covered absence, the District will continue to provide the insurance subsidy for eligible employees who have selected insurance benefits. While on unpaid FMLA, you may receive a letter from the Benefits Office if you owe money towards your insurance or it will be collected upon your return.

The Retirement System requires that the employer-paid portion of insurance premiums must be reported as part of compensation for all PSRS and PEERS members during all unpaid periods of employment. This will impact employees on an unpaid leave of absence who continue to be eligible for the District insurance contribution.

When employees on an unpaid leave of absence return to FHSD pay, retirement contributions on the employer-paid portion of insurance premiums will be withheld from the employees' first FHSD paycheck.

Does a Disability Leave Have an Impact on My Retirement?

Eligible unpaid sick leave may affect your service credit for the school year. You can check with PSRS or PEERS offices. If you wish to buy back time, you will need to contact the Benefits Office after the school year is complete. Eligible unpaid sick leave must be purchased no later than two years after the absence occurred.

Does a Disability Leave Have an Impact on Extra Duty?

Your extra duty pay may be reduced, depending on the timing of your disability leave and the duties connected with your extra duty contract. Lisa Kendall will be able to answer questions about your particular circumstances.

Who Do I Call If I Have Questions?

- Lisa Kendall for questions regarding paperwork, pay, and Short-Term Disability pay **(636-851-4042)**
- Mary Opich for questions regarding remittance of insurance premiums **(636-851-4033)**
- Erin Poggi for questions regarding retirement **(636-851-4058)**
- Employees will be provided with their STD case manager's direct phone number and email address. The claims office number for Lincoln Financial Group is (800) 320-7585.