

DARLINGTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Leave Bank Guidelines

Addition/Amendment to Policy GCC/GDC

Purpose: To establish guidelines and procedures for an employee leave bank. The bank is to be utilized during an employee's prolonged, continuous absence from work due to a catastrophic illness or accident involving themselves or an immediate family member once all accrued medical, personal, and vacation leave has been exhausted.

Definition: For the purpose of this policy, "catastrophic" refers to a debilitating medical condition(s), severely complicated disability, severe accident, family medical emergency, or other hardship situations documented by an appropriate licensed medical physician that are likely to require an employee's absence from duty for a prolonged period of time and results in a substantial loss of income to the employee because of the exhaustion of all paid leave (medical, personal, and vacation, if applicable).

Eligibility: All full time employees are eligible to participate. Employees must contribute one leave day to the bank annually for each school year they choose to participate. Only bank members who contribute leave days will be permitted to use days from the bank for a qualifying, catastrophic personal illness, or due to an eligible family member's illness. No more than 30 days per school year will be awarded to any individual from the leave bank. Eligible immediate family members are defined in Policy GCC/GDC.

Enrollment: An employee may become a member within 30 days of their hire date or during the enrollment period. The application for membership will be available on the District website. Once an employee becomes a member of the leave bank, re-enrollment annually will be automatic and the one day for membership will be deducted unless a cancellation form has been submitted. This prevents the member from having to remember to join each year.

Additional / Optional Contributions to the Leave Bank

Employees contributing leave to the bank may not designate it for a specific employee. The leave donated for membership and any additional contributions will go directly into the bank to be used for eligible, approved requests, as determined by a District-level committee or designee. Employees contributing additional leave to the bank beyond the one day per school year for membership purposes, must keep a remaining minimum balance of 15 medical leave days after their additional contribution.

NOTE: An employee that does not have a minimum balance of 15 days may still contribute one day during the designated enrollment periods each school year to be a member and will be eligible to request leave from the bank for a qualifying absence. Until an employee has earned 15 days of accrued medical leave, they may only contribute one day for membership purposes each year. They may not contribute additional, optional leave to the bank until they have accrued the minimum balance of leave.

Requests for days from Leave Bank

An employee may request leave from the bank by completing an application, which will be reviewed by a district-level committee and will consult with the supervisor. The employee must meet all of the following requirements:

1. Be a contributing member of the leave bank;
2. Show appropriate documentation of the catastrophic illness to include the anticipated period of incapacity and a description of the illness verified by a licensed, medical physician/ healthcare provider;
3. Be absent from work for a minimum of 15 work days and have exhausted all available leave, which includes medical, personal, and vacation leave, as applicable;
4. In general, must not be receiving other forms of paid benefits such as, but not limited to, short or long term disability, disability retirement, or workers compensation;

Once an employee returns to work, any unused leave granted will be returned back to the leave bank. An employee will not be granted leave from the bank for any absences over 90 consecutive work days.

Leave balances at the end of the fiscal year over the maximum number of days allowed per district policy (85 medical leave days and 5 personal leave days) will be transferred into the leave bank. If the employee has leave days put into the bank due to this reason, one of those days will count toward membership enrollment for the next school year. The rest of the balance of days goes into the bank.

Ending Membership:

If an employee no longer wishes to be a member of the leave bank, they must make the change during the next leave bank enrollment period by completing a leave bank cancellation form. The employee will no longer be eligible to use leave from the bank or contribute days. Contributed days will not be reimbursed to the employee. Re-enrollment will not be allowed until the next enrollment period.