

FMLA FAQs

Q. How do I know if I am eligible for FMLA?

A. If you have been employed with Pennridge for 12 months AND have worked at least 1250 hours in the 12-month period prior to applying for the leave, then yes, you are FMLA eligible.

Q. How much FMLA time am I entitled to?

A. You are entitled to up to 12 weeks of FMLA leave per year (or 26 weeks for to care for a member of the Armed Forces). Time taken in less than full-week increments will be proportionately calculated based on the amount of time taken off, as compared to the employee's normal work-week. For example, if you normally work 5 days per week, and you take one day off, it would count as 1/5 of a week of your FMLA entitlement. A holiday occurring within a week of FMLA as no effect – the week is still counted as a week of FMLA leave. However, for 10-month employees, during the Winter and Summer breaks, FMLA leave is not counted against your 12-week entitlement. Your entitlement is counted as a rolling twelve (12) month period measured backward from the last date you used FMLA.

Q. If I start a leave at the end of the school year- How many sick days are deducted before maternity leave starts? Do I have to use all my sick days?

A. You have to use all of your sick days from the time you go out until the doctor clears you post-partum or until you elect to participate in short/long term disability compensation. Once you are cleared by your health care professional you are no longer eligible to use sick days; nor are you eligible for disability compensation. **This is when unpaid leave begins.**

Q. If we are out of school when I start my leave, will I get my regular pay over the summer?

A. Please contact payroll to determine how long/whether you will continue to receive salary over the summer.

Q. Do I get a maternity leave if we are out of school?

A. We do not count the summer months as part of your FMLA.

Q. When does my leave start?

A. Your leave starts on the day your doctor states in the Certification of Health Care Provider form, or before that date as indicated by you on the application for leave. If you request time prior to your doctor initiating your leave, you will be required to use personal time (as you may not use sick time until you are under a doctor's care).

Q. What if my baby comes early? Or late?

A. If your baby comes early, your leave will begin on the first day you are out of work. If your baby comes after your due date, your leave starts on the date the board approved your leave to begin as stated in the doctor's paperwork.

Q. What portion of your pay do you get on maternity leave?

A. As long as you are using accruals (ie: sick time), you will get paid regular pay checks as if you were working. Once you are out of accruals and/or on unpaid leave, payroll will determine how much time you are owed and "pay you out" to contract at that time. Please contact payroll regarding their process for leaves.

Q. When does maternity leave end and FMLA begin?

A. They are one and the same. FMLA begins on the first day you are out and continues for 12 weeks. This time can be used all at once or intermittently over 12 months. Sick time begins the first day you are out and runs concurrently with the 12 weeks of FMLA as long as you are under a doctor's care. You may also choose to use your personal days before your sick time is used.

Q. Can you take any amount of FMLA?

A. FMLA rules stipulate a maximum of 12 weeks in a 12 month period. You can come back as soon as the doctor clears you. The exception to this is a maternity leave; professional staff must wait until the next marking period break to return to the classroom. In certain cases, and with supporting medical documentation, leave may be taken intermittently, or on a reduced schedule, if due to the serious health condition of either yourself, or a family

member. However, you are requested to make an effort to plan intermittent leave so as to mitigate disruption to the functions of the school/classroom/department in which you are employed.

Q. When do you have to submit a request for FMLA?

A. All leaves must be board approved. The CBA indicates a notification period of 60 days prior to the leave. This helps in the approval process, as well as finding a substitute for your position while you are out. As a 10 month employee, if your leave occurs after school is out for the year and you intend to come back at the beginning of the next school year you are not required to submit leave paperwork. Once sick time or unpaid leave starts being used, FMLA paperwork must be completed and submitted by the employee.

Q. Can your FMLA return date be changed?

A. Yes. Typically this involves a doctor stating you need to be under further care. Once you commit to a marking period return, you will be required to get your supervisor's approval and the Superintendent's approval for an extension or earlier return.

Q. Do you get paid during FMLA?

A. You get paid for any sick time you use. If you are out long enough you may be eligible for disability compensation. Please contact Madison Life for more information about your qualification for this benefit.

Q. How much does insurance cost on FMLA? Will HR notify me and send a bill?

A. As long as you are within the FMLA window, insurance will be reflective of your monthly premium share – which is what your payroll deductions are currently based on. Once FMLA runs out, you're responsible for 100% of the cost of coverage. Typically this is when families will switch to another insurance plan if one is available to them. You have the option of doing that and coming back to our plan when you return to work. As long as you maintain a paycheck with the district, we will take your deductions through payroll. Once you are no longer receiving a paycheck from the district, we will issue a home bill for the cost of your premiums. The CBA requires employees to pay these bills **three months in advance**. This School District cannot be responsible however, for the continuation of payment(s) for insurance(s) if reimbursement(s) are not made when due, or if insurance carriers refuse to reinstate coverage.

Q. When I return from leave will my health benefits become active again?

A. Full participation in all of the benefits of employment shall also be restored to the employee, once **all documentation necessary to re-establish benefits is completed and submitted by the employee** to Human Resources prior to their return. Benefits will be reinstated as of the first of the month following receipt of the re-enrollment documents.

Q. Do I get PSERS retirement service credit while on leave?

A. You will only earn retirement service credit while on district-paid sick or personal leave. Disability payments and unpaid time off will not earn you PSERS retirement service credit.

Q. Is tenure/longevity/step/Level II affected when you go on FMLA?

A. Professional employees who are absent from their positions on an approved leave of absence will earn credit for step placement purposes on the salary schedule only for those days during which they are on **paid leave** or FMLA status as follows:

- Less than 68 student days = no credit
- 68-112 student days = ½ year
- More than 112 student days = one (1) full year

Q. How is my leave effected by snow days and/or an extension of the school year?

A. Depending on the number of snow days and the district's need to shift the end/start of marking periods, your leave could be extended a day or so accordingly.

Q. How does my Short/Long Term Disability play into my leave?

A. Disability insurance covers you while you are still under a doctor's care **and are no longer receiving sick time pay**. You may contact Madison life directly for more information regarding your eligibility for this benefit.

Q. Am I still eligible for tuition reimbursements while I am on leave?

A. Only employees on active status (paid leave) continue their eligibility for tuition reimbursement. However, with prior approval of any course you may still use approved courses towards future column movement.

Q. Am I entitled to benefits while I'm out on leave?

A. Employees granted leave under the Family Medical Leave Act shall be allowed, for the duration of FMLA, to remain a member of the district group insurance plans in the same manner and under the same terms as if the employee had continued to work (i.e. employee pays contribution toward premium as stated in collective bargaining agreement). Employees on authorized leave of absence ***without pay***, shall not be entitled to any benefits granted active, full time employees (i.e. annual step increment, accumulation of paid leave and district paid health benefits) unless otherwise stipulated by FMLA. Employees granted an unpaid leave outside of the FMLA shall be allowed to remain a member of the district group insurance plans on condition that they prepay their monthly premium as it is home billed to them by Pennridge School District and stated in the collective bargaining agreement (i.e. employee pays 100% of premium, **three months in advance**).

Q. A colleague at my school told me she was allowed to use all her sick time, plus short-term disability, she didn't have to contribute towards her benefits premium, and she was allowed to return from leave in the middle of a marking period. Why is my situation different?

A. Well meaning colleagues may not understand all the nuances of FMLA and district policy. Every person's situation plays out differently, based on factors such as amount of sick time available, due date, how long the Mom works before deliver, C-section, and lots of other variables. In addition, the rules change over time. These FAQ's were created to help you understand how FMLA and district policies apply to YOU under the currently existing rules.

Q. Can I come in to work for staff inservice/during the summer if I am still on leave?

A. If you are out on leave, you are not allowed to come to work.

Q. Can I continue my part-time second job while using FMLA?

A. You cannot work at another job for pay while on extended unpaid sick leave from the district.

Please be reminded that it is the employee's responsibility to provide HR with updated information as it becomes available. Additionally, as soon as your physician has determined that you are no longer disabled, he or she will need to submit written verification of the same to the HR department. This information is necessary to allow you to return to employment with the District.

