

Board Policy GARH: Employee Leaves and Absences

Status: DRAFT

Original Adopted Date: 06/10/2013 | **Last Revised Date:** 07/12/2021 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 03/10/2025

I. Paid Parental Leave (effective July 1, 2024)

- A. Employees are eligible for the terms of this section of policy if either (i) they are defined as full-time and benefits-eligible, and have had at least six months of continuous employment or (ii) if an hourly employee, have worked at least 700 hours over the six-month period immediately preceding the requested leave date. "Full-time, benefits-eligible" is defined as working at least 50 percent for certified staff members, and at least 60 percent for classified staff members.
- B. 240 hours of paid parental leave is available over a 12-month period due to the birth of a child, adoption of a child, or receiving a foster child. The leave is available only once per eligible employee per year. The leave may be taken as needed and in increments less than eight hours. Unused leave is forfeited after the 12-month period.
- C. Paid Parental Leave shall run concurrently with Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave.
- D. Henry County Schools shall not interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of or the attempt to exercise these provisions by any eligible employee unless the use of the leave is likely to unduly disrupt operations. HCS may not discriminate against or retaliate against an employee taking this leave but may take adverse action against an eligible employee who submits a false document or otherwise provides false information in an attempt to obtain the leave.

II. Other Leave

The remainder of this policy shall apply to all full-time, benefits-eligible employees of the Henry County Board of Education. "Full-time, benefits-eligible" is defined as working at least 50 percent for certified staff members, and at least 60 percent for classified staff members. All employees are required to follow the appropriate work calendar established by the Board of Education for their positions, and may take leave only in accordance with this policy or other leave policies enacted by the Board of Education.

A. ACCRUAL OF SICK LEAVE AND ABSENCE FOR MEDICAL AND RELATED REASONS

In accordance with Georgia law, employees will be entitled to annual sick leave with pay to be accrued at the rate of one and one quarter days for each completed month of employment. All employees' unused sick leave shall be accumulated from one fiscal year to the next. Sick leave will be calculated on a pro-rated basis for those benefits-eligible employees whose daily work schedule is less than an eight-hour day.

B. USE OF SICK LEAVE

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 the purpose of absences for medical and related reasons, members of the immediate family are defined as spouse, children, grandchildren, father, mother, brother, sister, grandparents, in-law equivalents of the above, other relatives living in the household, or any dependents as shown in the employee's 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. In the event that sick leave is used to care for a member of the immediate family, the Superintendent shall have the right to require a physician's certificate stating that the employee is needed to care for the sick family member. If the Superintendent disagrees with a physician's statement of disability or ability, the Superintendent may appoint a physician of the same medical specialization as the employee's physician for the purpose of receiving independent medical judgment.

School personnel shall not be charged sick leave for the first seven work days of absence due to an injury caused by a physical assault while the individual was engaged in the performance of his/her duties.

C. TRANSFER OF ACCUMULATED SICK LEAVE

Certificated personnel and bus drivers may bring up to forty-five (45) unused sick and personal leave days accumulated from another approved Georgia school district. Any accumulated unused sick leave credited to personnel shall be forfeited if such personnel withdraw from service for a period of twelve (12) or more consecutive months, unless the withdrawal from service is for educational leave to seek a higher level or different field of certification, and provided that the withdrawal from service for this purpose is for no longer than 24 consecutive months. Any personnel who forfeit such accumulated sick and personal leave as required under this subsection shall be entitled to regain such accumulated leave after such personnel have returned to service for a period of two consecutive years.

D. PERSONAL LEAVE

Three days of any accumulated sick leave may be utilized during each school year for personal reasons provided prior approval of the absence is given by the Superintendent or his or her authorized representative, and provided the presence of the employee requesting absence is not essential for effective school operation. Employees are not required to disclose the purpose for which such absence is sought. Absences caused by unplanned or extenuating circumstances such as car trouble or severely inclement weather shall be counted as personal leave.

Personal leave may not be taken on the following days unless approved by the appropriate supervisor:

1. Pre-Planning, Post-Planning;
2. Professional Development Days; Teacher Workdays;
3. The workday before or the workday after a holiday;
4. The last two weeks of the school year;
5. During standardized testing; and
6. Critical days that are determined by the Superintendent or their designee.

E. JURY AND WITNESS LEAVE

There shall be no loss of an employee's job-related pay or employment benefits because of absence on the part of the employee for the purpose of attending a judicial proceeding in response to jury duty. Other lawfully issued court orders, processes, or subpoenas must be in response to school-related matters. Any pay received for jury duty shall be retained by the employee. The employee shall provide a copy of the summons, court order, process, or subpoena to their supervisor.

F. MILITARY LEAVE

Full-time employees of the Henry County School System shall be entitled to take a military leave for "ordered military duty," with full employment and reinstatement rights as provided by law. 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 18 days in any one federal fiscal year. In the event the Governor declares an emergency and orders an employee to active duty as a member of the Georgia National Guard, such employee shall be paid regular salary while performing such duty for a period not to exceed 30 days in any one federal fiscal year. A request for military leave must be submitted to the employee's supervisor and Human Resources, along with a copy of the official military orders.

G. BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Up to three (3) days of bereavement leave may be used for absence due to death in the employee's immediate family. "Immediate family" is defined above, but for purposes of this type of leave only, it includes "grandchild." The employee must use this leave within seven (7) days of the death. Bereavement leave will not be deducted from the employee's accumulated sick leave. If bereavement is in excess of provided bereavement leave, sick leave may be utilized.

H. SICK LEAVE BANK

Please see Policy GARHA.

I. ANNUAL LEAVE

Most 244-day employees earn vacation at a rate of ten (10) days per year, accrued on a monthly basis. Vacation must be pre-approved through a supervisor. Employees may accrue a maximum of twenty (20) vacation days. Any days over twenty will be forfeited on July 1 of each year. When an employee separates employment with the Henry County School System, a maximum of 20 vacation days will be paid out.
