PEARLAND INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
1928 N. Main Street
Pearland, TX
281-485-3203

Leave of Absence Frequently Asked Questions

1. What Medical leave options does Pearland ISD offer?
    a. Pearland ID offers Family Medical Leave (FMLA) and Temporary Disability Leave (TDL).

2. What is FMLA?
    a. The Family Medical Leave Act is an unpaid leave regulated by the U.S. Department of Labor. Employees are eligible to take FMLA if they have worked for their employer for at least 12 consecutive months and have worked 1,250 hours within the previous 12 months.
    b. If eligible, an employee may take up to 12 weeks (60 workdays) of leave for the following reasons:
        i. Birth, adoption, placement for foster care or care for the child (leave must taken within 12 months of the birth, adoption, or placement of child)
        ii. Care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent due to a serious health condition, including injury.
        iii. Employee's own serious health condition which causes inability to perform job functions.
        iv. Military Services
    c. For maternity leave, if both parents are Pearland ISD employees and are eligible for FMLA, the leave is limited to a combined total of 12 weeks.

3. What is TDL?
    a. Temporary Disability Leave is unpaid leave regulated by the State Board of Education. All active full-time employees needing leave because of their own serious health conditions are eligible for TDL. Leave needed for a family member with a serious health condition is not eligible for TDL. SBEC Certified employees are eligible to take up to 180 calendar days of TDL. Non-certified may take up to 60 calendar days.

4. What is Military Service FMLA?
    a. Eligible employees with a spouse, son, daughter or parent on active duty or call-to-active- duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies, including:
        i. Attending certain military events
        ii. Arranging for alternative childcare
        iii. Addressing certain financial and legal arrangements
        iv. Attending certain counseling sessions
        v. Attending post-deployment reintegration briefings

    FML also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. This includes a current member of the Armed Forces, National Guard or Reserves who has a serious injury/illness incurred in the line of duty that may render him/her medically unfit to perform his/her duties. The service member must undergo medical treatment, recuperation or therapy; be in outpatient status; or be on the temporary disability retired list. He/she must be the employee's spouse, child, parent or next of kin.

5. How do I apply for Leave?
    a. To apply for Leave, the employee must complete the electronic Leave Request Form. The Benefits Office will review the request and contact the employee with additional information.

6. How do I know what leave to apply for?
    a. Apply for:
        i. **FMLA only** – if leave is needed for a family member's serious health condition.
        ii. **TDL only** – if leave is needed for the employee's serious health condition but is not eligible for FMLA.
        iii. **FMLA & TDL** – if leave is needed for employee's serious health condition and is eligible for FMLA.

7. How do I know if I qualify for FMLA?
    a. An employee is eligible for FMLA if they have worked for Pearland ISD for at least 12-consecutive months AND have worked 1,250 hours within the previous 12 months.

8. How do I know my leave is approved?
    a. Once the Benefits Office receives completed documentation for the employee, Benefits will send a letter indicating the decision of your leave request. If approved, the letter will confirm how long the leave is approved for. This letter will be sent via the preferred method of correspondence indicated by the employee in the Leave Request Form.

9. Does Pearland ISD offer paid leave?
    a. FMLA and TDL are unpaid leaves of absence, however, an employee may continue receiving paychecks while on leave if they have enough state, local, vacation days, or comp. time available. Pearland ISD requires an employee to use all compensable time to run concurrently with their leave.

10. How do I know how much paid leave I have available?
    a. An employee can see available leave balances by checking their most recent pay stub on Employee Self-Service or contacting the Payroll Department at 281-485-3203 or via email.

11. Who do I contact if I have questions about my pay?
    a. For questions regarding pay, employees can visit Leave & Absences: Payroll FAQ or contact the Payroll department at 281-485-3203 or via email.

12. How are my benefits affected while I am on leave?
    a. Pearland ISD continues to pay its contribution for the time an eligible employee is on FMLA. Your own contribution toward your benefits will continue to be deducted from your paycheck if you are being paid. If you use all accumulated paid days, the Benefits Office will contact you to make arrangements to pay your portion of health insurance. Employees ineligible for FMLA will be responsible for paying the full amount of their insurance premium, including the district's contribution, when they are no longer receive a district paycheck.

13. How does my disability insurance affect my leave?
    a. Disability insurance is a supplemental benefit, not a leave, thus making them completely separate. If you need to file a claim for disability, you must notify the Benefits office. Contact the insurance carrier for details surrounding claim status.
    b. The claim packet contains three parts: Employee, Employer, and Physician Statements. You are responsible for the employee and physician's statements. Benefits will complete the Employer's portion of the claim once the employee physically stops working due to the disability. The disability Claim packet can be found Here.

14. Maternity: How can I add my newborn to my insurance coverage?
    a. TRS ActiveCare automatically provides coverage for a newborn child of a covered employee for the first 31 days of life. For the child to be covered after that time, you must complete and submit a TRS ActiveCare Enrollment and Change Form and a copy of the verification of birth document, to the Benefits Office within 31 days of birth. You do not need the social security number to enroll your newborn. For more information, visit the Family Status Change page.

15. Maternity: Can leave taken for pregnancy complications count against my 12 FMLA weeks for birth/care of my child?
    a. Yes, an eligible employee is entitled to 12 weeks of FMLA in a 12-month period. If the employee used some of that leave for another reason, including a difficult pregnancy, it may be counted as part of the 12-week FMLA entitlement.

16. Maternity: Can I take off work longer than the 12 weeks granted for maternity leave?
    a. No. Once the treating doctor releases the employee back to work, there is no additional time off- paid or unpaid- beyond the 12 weeks.

17. How do I return to work after my leave?
    The employee must present to the HRS Benefits Office an original release from the treating physician (on the facility letterhead) with the following required information:
    a. Effective date of release
    b. Detailed restriction status, including job limitations (if no restrictions, release must state "no restrictions") *
    c. *Bus Drivers only: the health care provider's note must state the bus driver is able to drive a bus.
    d. Doctor's signature
    e. NOTE: An employee must physically bring the original release to the Benefits Office. A faxed or emailed copy will not be accepted.

18. What if I cannot return to work after all leave is exhausted?
    a. The employee's position will be subject to termination. Once an employee is released to return to work, the employee is expected to return on the date the physician has indicated on the release. If the employee fails to return to work on that date, the district will accept it as job abandonment. If the physician cannot release the employee to return after all leave has been exhausted, please contact the Benefits Office at 281-485-3203.