Policy GCCAAA Voluntary Sick Leave Bank for Long-Term Illness or Accident

Issued 9/25

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for an employee sick leave bank in the district.

A Sick Leave Bank has been established by Orangeburg County School District for all employees who work a minimum of 30 hours per week and earn sick leave. The purpose of the District sick leave bank is to provide the opportunity for paid leave for eligible employees when they are experiencing a catastrophic illness, injury, non-elective surgery, or incapacitation but do not activate long-term disability insurance provisions.

The bank will be administered by a Sick Leave Bank Board which will be comprised of one Director of Personnel, one nurse, two classified employees, two teachers, one school-based administrator, and one non-voting administrative assistant. The members of the Sick Leave Bank Board shall be selected annually by the Superintendent and/or his/her designee.

The term of service shall be July 1 through June 30 of each year. Should replacement of a member be required prior to the end of a term, the Superintendent and/or their designee shall select an appropriate replacement. At least 5 members of the Sick Leave Bank Board must be present in order for the Board to review applications. All members of the Sick Leave Bank Board must participate in the Sick Leave Bank.

The Sick Leave Bank Board will receive requests for use of days from the Sick Leave Bank and will decide on these requests and upon appeals arising from their decisions according to the regulations contained in this document, as well as state, local, and federal law.

I. Definitions

A. This plan will provide the opportunity for extended sick leave to a member-employee for catastrophic illness, injury, non-elective surgery, or incapacitation so severe to oneself that an employee is unable to attend work due to a verifiable medical condition.

1. Catastrophic is defined as severe and debilitating, as determined by the Sick Leave Bank Board.
2. Intermittent catastrophic illness is defined as a catastrophic illness that may be an "on-going" illness to the employee or his/her immediate family member that would require the member to use sick leave at intermittent times due to the type of illness or accident. The employee/member may be able to return to work for a period of time with illness and again take sick leave due to special therapy or treatment. In an intermittent catastrophic illness, the Sick Leave Bank procedures are not dependent upon the employee/member being out of work for at least 20 consecutive workdays. However, an accumulation of 20 absences would be required before making a request for days from the Sick Leave Bank.

II. Eligibility

A. All employees who work a minimum of 30 hours per week and earn sick leave with Orangeburg County School District including new employees. Participation is voluntary; however, the Bank will not operate with less than 30% participation of the total number of employees within the district.

B. To become a member, an employee must complete a membership application and contribute one day of sick leave during the open enrollment period.

III. Procedures and Regulations for Membership

A. For the 2025-2026 school year open enrollment shall occur from October 1 through October 31. The eligibility period for the 2025-2026 school year shall run from November 1 through June 30. Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year and for each subsequent year, the open enrollment period shall be from June 1 through June 30, and the eligibility period shall run from July 1 through June 30.

B. New employees shall be eligible to enroll within 30 days of the date of hire.

C. Employees who initially choose not to participate in the Bank may enroll at a subsequent open enrollment period.

D. Sick Leave Bank members must contribute one day of sick leave at the initial enrollment period. If an employee submits an application but does not have one day of sick leave available to contribute on day that the eligibility period begins, that employee shall be denied membership in the Sick Leave Bank for that year.

E. All contributions to the Bank remain the property of the Bank and under no circumstances can a member withdraw his/her accumulated days from the Bank. If the Bank were ever to be dissolved, the days will become the property Orangeburg County School District.

F. A member may cancel his/her membership during the open enrollment period by written notification to the Sick Leave Bank Board.

G. Should the number of leave days within the Sick Leave Bank reach or become lower than 25% of the number of members an open enrollment period will be declared for new members.

IV. Regulations for Use of the Bank

A. In order to be approved to receive days from the Sick Leave Bank, an employee must meet the following criteria:

1. The employee must be a current member of the Bank.
2. The employee must have been out of work for at least 20 consecutive workdays as a result of catastrophic illness or accident to him/herself. Or, in the case of intermittent catastrophic illness, the employee must have been out of work for 20 cumulative days.

3. The employee must have exhausted all advanced and/or accumulated sick days, vacation days, and/or compensation days.
4. The employee, if eligible, must apply for leave under the Family Medical Leave Act ('FMLA') either prior to or concurrently with an application for leave from the Sick Leave Bank.

B. An employee who meets eligibility criteria as described in this document may apply to draw upon the Sick Leave Bank by completing an "Application for Use of Sick Leave Bank" form. This application must be accompanied by a "Physician's Confirmation" form confirming the nature and expected duration of the disabling condition. Employees requesting additional days must reapply in a timely manner. An additional form from the physician must be completed each 30 calendar days.

C. Application must be submitted to the Human Resources Department designee who will schedule meetings of the Sick Leave Bank Board.

D. All members applying for additional days from the Sick Leave Bank will be notified in writing of the decision of the Sick Leave Bank Board.

1. All applications for leave using the Sick Leave Bank shall be presented to the Sick Leave Bank Board anonymously. The non-voting administrative assistant shall remove all identifying information from the applications prior to presentation to the Sick Leave Bank Board.
2. All decisions of the Sick Leave Bank Board are made based on a majority vote and the position of individual members of the Sick Leave Bank Board shall not be disclosed.
3. Sick leave requests may, upon request of the applicant and at the discretion of the Sick Leave Bank Board, be approved dating back to the date in which the Human Resources Department designee received the application assuming all other requirements are met at that time.
4. All rejected applicants shall be notified in writing. Members may appeal a rejected decision only once by reapplying and submitting additional documentation on the "Physician's Confirmation" form. If Members resubmit the application without additional documentation, the application will be denied.
5. All appeals will be responded to in writing.
6. Decisions will be made by a majority vote of the Sick Leave Bank Board. The Board's decision will be final, with no further appeals to the District.
7. No appeals or grievances regarding decisions made by the Sick Leave Bank Board will be entertained by the District administration or the Orangeburg County School District Board of Trustees. Final decisions are made by the Sick Leave Bank Board.

E. The maximum number of days which may be drawn from the Bank for any catastrophic event is 90 days per term of the Sick Leave Bank.

F. Sick leave days from the Sick Leave Bank will not be granted until after the twentieth day of illness. There will be no reimbursement for the first 20 days of illness.

G. Members utilizing sick leave days from the Bank whose illness is expected to last for more than 90 days should apply for state disability benefits on or before the exhaustion of the Sick Leave Bank withdrawals that they are granted.

H. Should a member of the Sick Leave Bank be approved for any type of disability benefits during the time he/she is receiving sick leave days from the Sick Leave Bank, he/she must notify the Sick Leave Bank in writing within three business days of his/her notification of approval for disability. Termination from the Sick Leave Bank will begin immediately upon receipt of that notice.

I. In the 2025-2026 school year, the Sick Leave Bank operates from November 1 through June 30; therefore, sick leave bank days will be granted up to June 30, 2026. Should a member of the Sick Leave Bank request days beyond June 30, he/she must reapply and provide the documentation necessary for the Board to vote on whether to grant additional days. Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, the Sick Leave Bank will operate concurrently with the fiscal year, July 1-June 30. Sick leave bank days will be granted up to June 30 of each year. Should a member of the Sick Leave Bank request days beyond June 30, he/she must reapply and provide the necessary documentation for the Board to vote on whether to grant additional days.

J. Members shall only be approved for disbursement of days from the Sick Leave Bank for those days in which they were previously contracted (or under a Letter of Agreement) to be employed. Members will not be approved for disbursement of days from the Sick Leave Bank for any days in which the Member was not previously anticipated to work.

K. Members who have been approved for worker's compensation due to a job-related injury will not be eligible to receive Sick Leave Bank days.

L. Sick leave days from the Sick Leave Bank will not be granted for illness or hospitalization related to a normal pregnancy, except in cases of extreme complications of pregnancy, as documented by a physician and approved by the Sick Leave Bank Board.

M. Forms to be used by the employees for membership application, application for additional sick leave days from the bank and physician's confirmation are available from the Human Resources Department or on the Human Resources Department Page of the District Website.