FAQ: 2026 Personal Leave and Sick Leave Policy Updates

Key Terms:

- Certified Employee - A Certified employee is an individual who possesses a professional teaching certificate and is in a position requiring such certificate.
- Classified Employee - A Classified employee is an individual whose employment does not require a professional teaching certificate. Classified employees include educational assistants, bookkeepers, secretaries, custodians/maintenance employees, food service workers, and some administrative positions whose job does not require a teaching certificate.
- Unless otherwise noted, all answers apply to both Certified and Classified employees.
- Sick Leave – Paid leave designated for health related or bereavement needs of the employee or family member as defined in MCS Board Policy 5.302 HERE
- Personal Leave – Paid leave available for use by the employee for any reason with supervisor approval as defined in MCS Board Policy 5.303 HERE
- Leave Year – July 1st to June 30th each year.

"At-a-Glance" Summary of Changes

Topic	Previous Policy	New Policy
Certified Personal Leave	2 days	4 days
Classified Personal Leave	1 day	3 days
Personal Leave Carryover	None	Up to 3 days
Excess Personal Leave	Converted to sick leave	Amount over 3 days converts to sick leave
Sick Leave Earned (10-month)	10 days	8 days
Sick Leave Earned (11-month)	11 days	9 days
Sick Leave Earned (12-month)	12 days	10 days
Total Annual Leave Available	Same overall amount	Same overall amount

Personal Leave Accrual and Rollover Chart

Ending Balance	Convert to Sick	Carryover	New Year Accrual Classified | Certified	New Year Beginning Balance Classified | Certified
0	0	0	3 | 4	3 | 4
1	0	1	3 | 4	4 | 5
2	0	2	3 | 4	5 | 6
3	0	3	3 | 4	6 | 7
4	1	3	3 | 4	6 | 7
5	2	3	3 | 4	6 | 7
6	3	3	3 | 4	6 | 7
7	4	3	3 | 4	6 | 7

Key Changes:

- Certified employees now receive 4 personal leave days each year (previously 2).
- Classified employees now receive 3 personal leave days each year (previously 1).
- Employees may carry over up to 3 unused personal leave days from one leave year to the next.
- Any personal leave balance above three days automatically converts to sick leave.

How many personal leave days do I receive?

Certified Employees

- Receive 4 personal leave days per school year.

Classified Employees

- Receive 3 personal leave days per school year.

How is this different from the previous policy?

Previously:

- Certified employees received 2 personal leave days annually.
- Classified employees received 1 personal leave day annually.
- The new policy increases personal leave while reducing annual sick leave by the same amount, keeping the total number of paid leave days unchanged.

Can I carry over unused personal leave?

Yes. Employees may carry over up to 3 personal leave days from one year to the next. Previously, all unused personal leave automatically converted to sick leave at the end of each leave year.

If I already have unused personal leave from last year, how will the new carryover rule affect me?

Any unused personal leave you had at the end of the 2025–26 school year was carried over as personal leave into the 2026–27 school year. Those days are now available for use under the district's new personal leave policy.

What happens if I have more than 3 unused personal leave days at the end of the year?

Any personal leave balance above 3 days will automatically be converted to sick leave at the end of the school year.

Example:

If you end the year with 5 unused personal leave days:

- 3 days will remain as personal leave.
- 2 days will be converted to sick leave.

What happens to unused personal leave if I leave employment with Maryville City Schools?

Employees who separate from employment before completing their full assignment or contract will have their annual personal leave prorated based on the percentage of the assignment completed. Any personal leave used in excess of the prorated amount earned may be deducted from the employee's final paycheck, as permitted by law. Any unused personal leave remaining will be converted to sick leave.

What happens to unused sick leave if I leave employment?

Classified Employees - All unused sick leave accumulated by Classified personnel remains banked with MCS and may be reinstated for use if the employee returns to district employment under a new assignment. Exception: In the case of retirement* under TCRS in which it is paid out at $35.00 per day or transferred to TCRS for retirement credit at the request of the employee. (*Retirement for part-time Classified personnel (not eligible under TCRS) is defined as age 60 with 5 years of service with MCS or 30 years of service with MCS)

Certified Employees - Unused sick leave accumulated by Certified personnel may be transferred to another Tennessee school system upon the employee's request or transferred to TCRS for retirement credit upon retirement.

Do I still need approval to take personal leave?
Yes. Yes. Personal leave must be approved in advance by your immediate supervisor and requested according to district procedures.

How much advance notice is required?

- At least one day's notice is required whenever possible.
- Requests for more than two consecutive personal leave days should be submitted at least two weeks in advance.

Are there times when additional approval is required for personal leave?
Yes. Approval from the Director of Schools is required when personal leave is requested:

- During established student examination periods;
- Immediately before or after a holiday or vacation period;
- During the first week or last two weeks of the school year;
- On scheduled professional development or in-service days;
- On scheduled parent-teacher conference days; or
- When more than 10% of teachers in a school request personal leave on the same day.

How many sick leave days do I earn?
Certified and Classified Employees:

- 10-month contract (188-220 day): 8 days per year
- 11-month contract (235 days): 9 days per year
- 12-month contract (260 days): 10 days per year

How is this different from the previous policy?
Previously, employees earned one sick leave day for each month of their contract or assignment length (10, 11 or 12 days).

Why am I earning fewer sick days?
The total number of paid leave days has not changed. The revised policy shifts two days from sick leave to personal leave, giving employees greater flexibility while maintaining the same total amount of paid leave.

When is my sick leave accrued?
Sick leave is earned monthly and credited according to your contract length. Employees receive one (1) day of sick leave each month during the designated accrual period (September through April, May, or June, depending on assignment length). This allows employees to earn the full annual allotment over the course of the work year while continuing to accumulate any unused sick leave from previous years.

Can I use sick leave before I have accrued it?
Yes. This policy does **not** change the district's current practice regarding sick leave usage. Employees may continue to use sick leave in advance of monthly accrual, up to the total number of sick leave days they are expected to earn during their contract or assignment year. For example, a 10-month employee may use up to 8 sick leave days at any point during the school year, even if those days have not yet been fully accrued, provided they remain employed for their entire contract or assignment. If employment ends before all advanced sick leave has been accrued, any unearned sick leave used will be deducted from the employee's final paycheck, as permitted by law.

Do sick leave days still accumulate?
Yes. Unused sick leave continues to accumulate without limit for active employees. (Exception: Retired part-time employees' sick leave is not cumulative and any unused leave is lost at the end of the leave year).

Can I still transfer sick leave from another Tennessee school district?
Yes. Certified employees may transfer accumulated sick leave from another Tennessee school system when proper certification is provided by the previous district.

Has anything changed regarding doctor's notes?
No. Any employee claiming sick leave may be required to file a certificate from a physician stating the nature of the illness and the length of time the employee was unable to work. A physician's note is required for an absence of five (consecutive) or more days.

Where can I find more information?

- Employees can review Board Policies 5.302 (Sick Leave) and 5.303 (Personal and Professional Leave) on the district website HERE
- Employees can find information and answers to general questions in the MCS Employee Handbook HERE
- Employees can contact the Human Resources Department at 865-982-7121