



RECOMMENDED USE

Summary guidance on HISD's employee leave options to support consistent understanding and application of leave benefits, eligibility requirements, and responsibilities for all employees. Full details regarding each leave type and applicable use restrictions can be found in the District's online [DEC policy series](#) (Legal, Local, and Regulations).

LEAVE USE “GUARDRAILS”

- The District prohibits the use of unpaid leave (“docked days”) by employees who have exhausted all state and local personal leave, except as expressly permitted by Board policy or when the absence is covered under an HR-approved, protected leave of absence (i.e. Family Medical Leave (FML), Temporary Disability Leave (TDL), etc.). A “docked day” is defined as an unpaid workday resulting from the employee's lack of sufficient personal leave time to cover an absence. Employees who take unpaid leave days that are not covered by an HR-approved leave of absence will be subject to involuntary reassignment and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- Regardless of the amount of personal leave days an employee begins the school year or employment with, the maximum number of absences allowed for any employee in a school year is 15 days. Employees who have not yet accrued 15 personal leave days are limited to the number of personal leave days available to them at the start of the school year or point of hire/transfer, whichever is applicable. Once all paid personal leave days are exhausted, and the employee takes any unpaid leave days, the employee will be subject to involuntary reassignment and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- The following protected/“hold harmless” absence types do not count against the 15-day maximum rule (see details on the following pages): Vacation Days, Off-Campus Duty (OFCM), District Closure, Court Appearances (Jury Duty and Subpoenas), Compensatory Time, Bereavement/Funeral Leave, Religious Holiday, Assault Leave, Family Medical Leave (FML), Temporary Disability Leave (TDL), Military Leave, and Leave as an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accommodation.
- HR tracks and shares weekly high absenteeism reports with immediate managers/ supervisors. HR will be responsible for initiating the involuntary separation process by scheduling File Reviews with Legal and/or ERDRs.

ABSENCE REPORTING FOR NON-EXEMPT STAFF (See 2026–2027 HISD Employee Handbook)

- Non-exempt employees are required to accurately report all absences in as small as 15-minute increments.

ABSENCE REPORTING FOR EXEMPT STAFF (See 2026–2027 HISD Employee Handbook)

- Exempt, Non-Teaching Staff: If an employee is absent for less than half of their scheduled workday, no leave is required. If an employee is absent for half of their scheduled workday or more, but less than a full day, a half day of leave must be recorded. A full day of leave must be recorded for a full-day absence.
 - Exception: Absences must be recorded, in all increments, for approved intermittent time off through Family Medical Leave (FML) or an approved ADA accommodation. Both intermittent FML and ADA accommodations must be approved in writing by HR's Leave Administration Department.

- Teacher/Teacher Apprentice: If a teacher is absent for more than one hour but less than half of their scheduled workday, a half day of leave must be recorded. A substitute should be secured to cover the absence as needed. If the teacher returns within one hour, no leave is required, and the substitute may be reassigned as a floater to support instruction or supervision.

If a teacher is absent for more than half of their scheduled workday but fewer than five hours, a half day of leave must be recorded. If a teacher is absent more than five hours in a workday, a full day of leave must be recorded. A full-day substitute should be secured in advance.

- Exception: Absences must be recorded, in all increments, for approved intermittent time off through Family Medical Leave (FML) or an approved ADA accommodation. Both intermittent FML and ADA accommodations must be approved in writing by HR's Leave Administration Department.

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TYPE	REASON / MAXIMUM DAYS	HOW TO APPLY
STATE LEAVE 	- HISD required to allocate per Texas Education Code - Five (5) days per year of paid leave, with no limit on accumulation - Discretionary or non-discretionary use allowed, but need advanced notice for discretionary use - Discretionary use not allowed on blackout days for campus-based staff - Will be used concurrent with an HISD-approved extended leave of absence (e.g. FML, TDL, etc.) - No pay out upon separation, but transfers between districts - If 50-day balance at retirement, may buy a year of service (refer to TRS)	- For discretionary use, advanced notice and approval required - Enter in system after notifying Principal/Manager
LOCAL LEAVE 	- HISD chooses to grant 5, 6, or 7 paid days annually commensurate with 10, 11, or 12-month duty calendars, with no limit on accumulation - Discretionary or non-discretionary use allowed, but need advanced notice and approval for discretionary use - Discretionary use not allowed on blackout days for campus-based staff - Will be used concurrent with an HISD-approved extended leave of absence (e.g. FML, TDL, etc.) - No pay out upon separation and does not transfer between districts	- For discretionary use, advanced notice and approval required - Enter in system after notifying Principal/Manager
VACATION DAYS 	- HISD chooses to allocate paid vacation leave for 12-month employees either through employment contract or in accordance with tenure - In addition to annual paid holidays on duty calendars, including Fall Break, Winter Break, & Spring Break - Maximum 50-day carryover each school year - Discretionary or non-discretionary use allowed, but need advanced notice and approval for discretionary use - Discretionary use not allowed on blackout days for campus-based staff - Will be used concurrent with an HISD-approved extended leave of absence (e.g. FML, TDL, etc.) - Up to 50 earned and unused vacation days are paid out upon separation	- For discretionary use, advanced notice and approval required - Enter in system after coordinating with Principal/Manager
ASSAULT LEAVE 	- Any employee who is physically injured during the performance of the employee's regular duties, as a result of what he or she believes is an assault (an intentional, knowing, or reckless action causing bodily injury to another person), may request a leave of absence to recover from the physical injuries resulting from the alleged assault. - This paid leave of absence can only be for the duration of recovery from the physical injury and cannot extend beyond two (2) years from the date of the assault - Such leave shall be taken with no loss of pay and does not use any of the employee's personal leave time	Approval required by the Assault Leave Committee

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TYPE	REASON / MAXIMUM DAYS	HOW TO APPLY
BEREAVEMENT 	- Up to three (3) days of paid leave as needed per occurrence upon the death of a spouse, child, parent, current parent-in-law, sibling, grandparent, grandchild or any other person residing in the employee's home at the time of death. - For eligible employees, such leave shall be taken with no loss of pay or other paid leave.	- Approval required by the Principal/Manager - Enter in system after coordinating with Principal/Manager
COMP TIME 	Non-exempt Staff - Regular and hourly status non-exempt employees are eligible to earn compensatory time at rate of straight time up to 40 hours, and then time and a half for time worked over 40 hours. - Compensatory time should be used in the same pay period as earned or within a reasonable period or converted to overtime pay as defined by law. - Compensatory time must be used within six (6) months of being earned or paid out as overtime. Regular Status Exempt Staff - Regular status exempt employees are eligible to earn and accumulate up to five (5) compensatory days up to a maximum of 40 hours each year for work significantly beyond the scope of the employee's normal duties. The administration of compensatory time is at the discretion of the department manager. Compensatory time must be used by the end of the school year in which it was earned. Unused compensatory time may not be carried over to successive school years. - In emergencies of the district, the superintendent of schools may grant up to three (3) additional days of compensatory time each year to designated groups for work significantly beyond the scope of an employee's normal duties. These three (3) days are in addition to the up to five (5) compensatory days referenced above. - By the nature of their positions, exempt employees are often required to work beyond a "typical" forty- hour workweek. Compensatory time is not intended to be used to compensate for each incremental hour worked beyond forty hours per week; rather, compensatory time is intended for use in recognizing work beyond the normal scope of duties required by the position.	- Approval required by the Principal/Manager - Enter in system after coordinating with Principal/Manager
COURT APPEARANCES (JURY DUTY & SUBPOENAS) 	- Absences due to compliance with a valid subpoena or for jury duty shall be fully compensated by the District and shall not be deducted from the employee's pay or personal leave balance. - Absences for court appearances related to an employee's personal business shall be deducted from the employee's accrued leave or, at the employee's option, be taken as leave without pay.	- Enter in system after coordinating with Principal/Manager - Employees must provide appropriate documentation of attendance (e.g., court-issued verification) upon return to work
DISTRICT CLOSURE 	Paid time off due to an unforeseen District closure	- Approval required by Payroll Department - Time-entry must be completed by Payroll Department

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TYPE	REASON / MAXIMUM DAYS	HOW TO APPLY
FMLA - MEDICAL 	■ Unpaid up to 12 weeks for time verified by a health care provider ■ Personal leave time (e.g. state personal leave, local personal leave, etc.), if available, must be used concurrent with an approved FML ● Exception: Classroom teachers may elect not to use paid personal leave time concurrently with FML for the pregnancy, birth, or adoption of a child. Employees must notify Leave Administration and their time recorder within 30 days of FML start. ■ For self or family members with a serious health condition ■ “Serious health condition” defined by FMLA (illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either inpatient care or continuing treatment by a health care provider) ■ “Family member” defined by FMLA (i.e., parent, child, or spouse/partner via marriage) ■ Includes pregnancy-related medical needs such as prenatal appointments, bed rest, etc.	■ Approval required by the Leave Administration Department
FMLA - ADOPTION 	■ Unpaid up to 12 weeks for adoption ■ Personal leave time (e.g. state personal leave, local personal leave, etc.), if available, must be used concurrent with an approved FML ● Exception: Classroom teachers may elect not to use paid personal leave time concurrently with FML for the pregnancy, birth, or adoption of a child. Employees must notify Leave Administration and their time recorder within 30 days of FML start. ■ Includes preparation for adoption, including legal appointments, travel, etc. ■ Available during 12-month period beginning on the date of the adoption of the child ■ Must be taken as one continuous leave	■ Approval required by the Leave Administration Department
FMLA - FOSTER CARE 	■ Unpaid up to 12 weeks for foster care placement ■ Personal leave time (e.g. state personal leave, local personal leave, etc.), if available, must be used concurrent with an approved FML ■ Includes preparation for foster care, including legal appointments, travel, etc. ■ Available during the 12-month period beginning on the date of the placement of the child ■ Must be taken as one continuous leave	■ Approval required by the Leave Administration Department
FMLA - NEWBORN BONDING 	■ Unpaid up to 12 weeks ■ Personal leave time (e.g. state personal leave, local personal leave, etc.), if available, must be used concurrent with an approved FML ■ Available for all biological, adoptive, or foster care parents regardless of gender & sexual orientation (i.e., mothers, fathers, same-sex partners who are married, including via common law marriage) ■ Available during the 12-month period beginning on the date of the child's birth ■ Must be taken as one continuous leave	■ Approval required by the Leave Administration Department
FMLA - MILITARY 	■ Up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for a qualifying exigency resulting from a family member's call to active military duty ■ Up to 26 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a covered service member or veteran with a serious service-related illness or injury ■ Personal leave time (e.g. state personal leave, local personal leave, etc.), if available, must be used concurrent with an approved FML	■ Approval required by the Leave Administration Department

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TYPE	REASON / MAXIMUM DAYS	HOW TO APPLY
LEAVE AS AN ADA ACCOMMODATION 	■ Employees who qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) may receive additional time off if deemed a reasonable accommodation in compliance with the ADA ■ Personal leave time (e.g. state personal leave, local personal leave, etc.), if available, must be used concurrent with an approved accommodation for leave	■ Approval required by the Leave Administration Department
MILITARY LEAVE 	■ Qualifying employees receive up to 15 paid military leave days ■ An employee with available personal leave time is entitled to use their personal leave for compensation during a term of active military service	■ Approval required by the Leave Administration Department
OFF CAMPUS DUTY (OFCM) 	■ Attendance at required or elective school-related workshops, seminars, conferences and in-service trainings during the school day is referred to as off-campus duty	■ Approval required by the Principal/Manager ■ Time-entry must be completed by Time Recorder
RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY 	■ Employees may be absent to observe religious holidays, unless it imposes an undue hardship ■ Personal leave time (e.g. state personal leave, local personal leave, etc.), if available, must be used concurrent with an approved absence due to religious holiday	■ Approval required by the Principal/Manager ■ If undue hardship, defer to Leave Administration Department
SUPPLEMENTAL SICK LEAVE BANK (SSLB) 	■ May only apply if donated one half-day of local personal leave during current plan year ■ Claimants must be on an HR-approved leave of absence ■ Must meet definition of "catastrophic" in policy & IRS rule ■ Up to 30 days of paid leave for time verified by health care provider ■ Must have exhausted all available personal leave banks ■ Will be used concurrent with an HISD-approved extended leave of absence (e.g. FML, TDL, etc.)	■ Approval required by the Leave Administration Department
TEMPORARY DISABILITY (TDL) 	■ Only available to employees whose position requires educator certification by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) or by the District ■ Up to 180 (continuous) calendar days of unpaid leave due to an employee's own mental or physical disability of a temporary nature ■ Personal leave time (e.g. state personal leave, local personal leave, etc.), if available, must be used concurrent with an approved TDL	■ Approval required by the Leave Administration Department
WORKERS' COMP 	■ Workers' compensation is not a form of leave ■ An absence due to a work-related injury or illness, upon eligibility and application approval, shall be designated as FMLA leave, temporary disability leave, and/or assault leave, as applicable	■ Approval required by the Worker's Compensation Department