# PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

*Code* **GCCAC/GDCC** *Issued* 11/2026

The following definitions will apply to Paid Parental Leave:

*Child* means a newborn biological child or a foster child in state custody and under the age of 18, or a child initially legally placed for adoption and under the age of 18. No child can have more than two parents eligible for paid parental leave.

*Eligible Staff Member* means any person employed by the district who occupies a position eligible to earn annual leave.

*Paid Parental Leave (PPL)* means six weeks of paid leave at 100 percent of the eligible staff member's base pay or four weeks of paid leave at 100 percent of the eligible staff member's base pay. Leave for eligible part-time staff members must be on a prorated basis corresponding to the percentage of hours they are normally scheduled to work. PPL is based on a staff member's average workday and cannot be donated.

*Parent/Co-Parent* means the person listed as a legal parent in applicable required documentation (birth certificate, adoption order, etc.) or the foster parent of a child.

*Qualifying Event* means the birth or stillbirth of a newborn biological child, a co-parent's birth or stillbirth of a newborn child, or fostering a child in state custody.

**Eligibility Requirements**

To be eligible for PPL, a staff member must occupy a leave earning position. There is no service requirement to be eligible for PPL. Staff members occupying a leave earning position are immediately eligible for PPL. Eligibility determinations are made as of the date of the qualifying event and are not retroactively applied.

*Birth*

An eligible staff member who gives birth or has a stillbirth is entitled to receive six weeks of PPL. An eligible staff member who did not give birth but is a parent or coparent is entitled to receive four weeks of PPL. The six or four weeks of PPL must be taken consecutively. Once PPL commences, the staff member must continue leave until the leave is exhausted or the staff member chooses to return to work.

If both parents are eligible staff members, PPL may be taken concurrently, consecutively, or at different times. The district may, in its discretion, deny concurrent paid parental leave if the simultaneous absence of both staff members will disrupt or result in an undue hardship on the educational mission or operations of the district.

An eligible staff member will receive no more than one occurrence of six or four weeks of PPL for any twelve-month period, even if more than one qualifying event occurs.

*Foster care*

An eligible staff member who fosters a child is entitled to receive four weeks of PPL for any twelve-month period, even if more than one qualifying event occurs. PPL may be taken consecutively or, upon request and approval, in nonconsecutive one-week periods until the leave is exhausted.

*Adoption*

An eligible staff member primarily responsible for furnishing the care and nurture of a child initially placed for legal adoption and under the age of 18 is entitled to six weeks of PPL. An eligible staff member who is not primarily responsible for furnishing the care and nurture of a child initially placed for legal adoption is entitled to four weeks of PPL. The six or four weeks of PPL must be taken consecutively. Once PPL commences, the staff member must continue leave until the leave is exhausted or the staff member chooses to return to work.

An eligible staff member will receive no more than one occurrence of six or four weeks of PPL for any twelve-month period, even if more than one qualifying event occurs.

If both parents are eligible staff members, PPL may be taken concurrently, consecutively, or at different times. The district may, in its discretion, deny concurrent paid parental leave if the simultaneous absence of both staff members will disrupt or result in an undue hardship on the educational mission or operations of the district.

Eligible staff members are not entitled to and may not use PPL before the occurrence of a qualifying event. Other available leave benefits (e.g., sick leave, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave, PTO, or unpaid leave) must be used if that staff member requires leave before the occurrence of a qualifying event, such as for medical reasons related to pregnancy but prior to the birth of a child or legal obligations related to adoption or foster care placement.

If PPL is not used by the eligible school district staff member before the end of the 12-month period after the qualifying event, such leave expires and does not accumulate for subsequent use. PPL may not be donated. Any leave remaining at the end of the 12-month period or at separation of employment is forfeited.

**Paid Parental Leave and FMLA or Other Unpaid Leave**

PPL must run concurrently with leave taken pursuant to FMLA and any other unpaid leave to which the eligible staff member may be entitled as a result of the qualifying event. Eligible staff members do NOT have to exhaust all other forms of leave before being eligible to take PPL. However, staff members shall be eligible for paid parental leave even if they have exhausted all other leave or if the staff member is not eligible for FMLA leave at the time of the qualifying event. If the employee becomes eligible for FMLA leave while on PPL, the staff member must use the FMLA leave, which will then run concurrent with the PPL.

**Parental Leave Payment and Other Leave Accrual**

PPL is paid at 100 percent of the eligible staff member's base pay. Therefore, PPL does not include any additional pay, such as overtime, supplements, bonuses, longevity pay, temporary salary adjustments, shift differential pay, on call pay, call back pay, special assignment pay, or market or geographic differential pay. All additional pay which the staff member would receive during non-PPL paid leave (i.e., annual leave) should be ended for the period of PPL.

The hours of PPL are calculated based on the staff member's average workday. PPL for eligible part-time staff members is calculated on a prorated basis corresponding to the percentage of hours the part-time staff member is normally scheduled to work. Leave granted under this policy is with pay and is not annual or sick leave and therefore does not deduct from the eligible staff member's accrued leave balance. Eligible staff members shall accrue annual and sick leave at the normal rate and receive holiday pay while on PPL, if applicable.

School district holidays and vacations on the district calendar will not be counted against PPL. The use of PPL by an eligible staff member will not prevent the staff member from earning a STEP

increase the following year. PPL is considered paid leave and will count toward the eligible staff member's years of service.

**Requesting Paid Parental Leave**

Eligible staff members requesting paid parental leave must submit a request to the Director of Personnel or his or her designee. Requests should be submitted not less than 30 days prior to the qualifying event. If 30 days' notice is not possible, the staff member is required to submit the request as soon as practicable, along with a reasonable explanation as to why earlier notice was not possible.

In order to receive PPL, eligible staff members must also submit satisfactory documentation of the qualifying event to the Director of Personnel or his/her designee as soon as practicable but not later than 30 days after the qualifying event occurs. The documentation must include the date of the qualifying event and verify that the eligible staff member is a legal parent or co-parent of the child. The staff member may provide any of the following forms of documentation based on the applicable qualifying event:

- For the birth of a child, a valid birth certificate, physician's statement, custody order, or certified DNA results.
- For the foster placement of a child, a court order or lawful foster care placement agreement.
- For the adoption placement of a child, a court order or lawful adoption agreement.
- Any other valid and lawful certification, order, agreement, or other form of documentation confirming the qualifying event that is satisfactory to the district.

The district will endeavor to notify the staff member of his/her eligibility status within five business days after receiving the request and all required documentation. If the qualifying event occurs prior to the district's eligibility determination, the staff member may commence paid parental leave following the qualifying event and, pending receipt of all required documentation and the district's determination.

If the staff member fails to provide all required documentation within 30 days of the qualifying event, or if the district at any time determines the staff member is not eligible for paid parental leave for any reason, the district may, in its sole discretion, terminate the paid parental leave and require the staff member to substitute all other available paid leave for the days the staff member has been absent from work. If the staff member's other paid leave is insufficient to cover the days the staff member has been absent from work, the staff member will be placed on unpaid leave for the days not covered by paid leave.

The requests and documentation for paid parental leave are separate from, and in addition to, the documentation required for FMLA leave and other paid or unpaid leaves of absence. Any staff member who knowingly and intentionally submits false information or makes any misrepresentation concerning paid parental leave shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Cf. GCC, GCC -R, GDC, GDC -R

Adopted ^11/26

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Legal References:

A. United States Code of Laws, as amended:

1. Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C.A. Section 12101, *et seq*.
2. Family and Medical Leave Act, 29 U.S.C.A. Section 2601, *et seq*.
3. Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, 38 U.S.C.A. Section 4301, *et seq*.

B. S.C. Code of Laws, 1976 as amended:
   1. Section 8-11-150, *et seq*. – Requires granting Paid Parental Leave for eligible staff members, birth of child or placement of foster child.
      staff members