Hayfield Community Schools

UPDATED – 11/20/26



Minnesota Paid Leave (MNPL) Handbook & FAQ

January 1, 2026

Minnesota Paid Leave (MNPL)

Employee Handbook – Minnesota Paid Leave

Effective date of Minnesota Paid Leave Program: January 1, 2026

Hayfield School District will be switching to the state-administered Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) plan starting January 1, 2027. You'll apply through the state portal at paidleave.mn.gov.

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1) MNPL at a glance

- What it is: Paid time off with job protection for qualifying family and medical reasons.
- How much time: Up to 12 weeks of Family Leave and up to 12 weeks of Medical Leave each benefit year, capped at 20 weeks combined.
- How you're paid: Partial wage replacement while on approved leave, up to a statewide cap.
- Who's covered: Most employees working primarily in Minnesota who meet a small earnings threshold ($4000.00).
- When it starts: Benefits for leaves beginning on or after January 1, 2026.
- A benefit year is a 12-month period measured forward from an employee's first day of leave taken.

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2) Qualifying reasons for leave

MNPL covers both Family Leave and Medical Leave:

Family Leave (examples)

- Bonding with a new child (birth, adoption, foster placement) within 12 months
- Caring for a family member with a serious health condition
- Military exigency leave related to active duty of a family member
- Leave to address certain safety matters (domestic violence, stalking, or sexual assault)

Medical Leave (examples)

- Your own serious health condition
- Pregnancy and medical recovery related to pregnancy/childbirth

If your situation isn't listed here but you believe it may qualify, contact Minnesota Paid Leave/Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

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3) Who's eligible

You're generally eligible if you:

- Work at least 50% of your time in Minnesota (including remote work performed in MN)
- Have earned at least 5.3% of the Minnesota average annual wage in the prior year ($4000.00)
- Meet any plan-specific requirements

Job protection: If you've been employed here 90 calendar days or more before your leave starts, you're entitled to be restored to your same or an equivalent position after leave.

Health benefits: While on MNPL, we continue our employer share of health and other group insurance contributions just as if you were working. **You remain responsible for your employee share.**

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4) How much time you can take

- Up to 12 weeks of Family Leave and up to 12 weeks of Medical Leave in a benefit year.
- The combined total in a benefit year is capped at 20 weeks.
- Intermittent leave (taking leave in smaller blocks) is allowed. By law, employers don't have to permit more than 480 hours of intermittent leave per 12-month period. If you reach that limit but still have remaining MNPL entitlement, the remainder may be taken in continuous blocks.
- There is no waiting week for payments once your claim is approved.

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5) How your pay is calculated while on leave

- MNPL replaces a percentage of your average weekly wage up to the state's maximum weekly benefit (adjusted annually).
- Lower-wage employees receive a higher percentage of their regular pay, subject to the cap.

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6) Supplementing pay

- Employees are not permitted to use accrued paid leave (such as sick leave, vacation, or personal leave) to supplement or "top off" the paid leave benefit. This is a Hayfield district decision. Employees will receive wage replacement directly from Minnesota Paid Leave, based on the statutory formula, which provides a percentage of regular wages up to the program maximum. During periods when employees receive Minnesota Paid Leave benefits, no additional pay from District-provided leave balances may be used to increase earnings. Accrued leave balances will remain available for use after the Paid Leave period ends.
- Accrual of Vacation and Sick Leave During Paid Leave: In accordance with MNPL, benefits paid directly by the State are not considered wages paid by the employer. Accordingly, employees will not accrue vacation, sick leave, or personal leave, for any hours or days during which they are receiving MNPL benefits.

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7) Benefit contributions during leave for certified staff or staff on an annual contract

- Unless the employee revokes coverage while on MNPL, Hayfield Community Schools will continue to provide group health insurance coverage for an employee on MNPL under the same conditions as the coverage was provided before the employee took leave.

- When employees on an annual contract are approved for leave under the Minnesota Paid Leave Program, they will receive wage replacement directly from the state of Minnesota. As a result, employees will not receive their original contract pay from the District during the period they are receiving Paid Leave benefits. The District Office (HR) will calculate a contract adjustment based on the anticipated MNPL the employee has applied for. This leave for contract purposes will be considered days without pay from the District as the employee will be receiving the wage replacement directly from Minnesota Paid Leave.

- Because no payroll is processed through the District during this time, normal payroll deductions (such as insurance premiums, retirement contributions, flexible spending accounts, union dues, or other elected deductions) will not occur automatically.

- Employees are responsible for making arrangements in advance with the District Office (HR) to ensure continued coverage of any benefits that require employee contributions during their leave period. Payment arrangements must be made before the leave begins whenever possible to avoid interruption of benefits.

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8) Benefit contributions during leave for noncertified staff

- Unless the employee revokes coverage while on MNPL, Hayfield Community Schools will continue to provide group health insurance coverage for an employee on MNPL under the same conditions as the coverage was provided before the employee took leave.

- When employees are approved for leave under the Minnesota Paid Leave Program, they will receive wage replacement directly from Minnesota Paid Leave. As a result, employees will not receive regular pay from the District during the period they are receiving Paid Leave benefits.

- Because no payroll is processed through the District during this time, normal payroll deductions (such as insurance premiums, retirement contributions, flexible spending accounts, union dues, or other elected deductions) will not occur automatically.

- Employees are responsible for making arrangements in advance with the District Office (HR) to ensure continued coverage of any benefits that require employee contributions during their leave period. Payment arrangements must be made before the leave begins whenever possible to avoid interruption of benefits.

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9) Intermittent leave increments

- Intermittent leave through the Minnesota Paid Leave program may be taken in increments as small as one day. Employees must schedule intermittent leave in a manner that does not unduly disrupt District operations, subject to reasonable notice requirements.

- Employees may apply for intermittent leave in most cases, provided the leave is reasonable and appropriate to the needs of the individual requiring care.

    - Eligibility: In addition to the other eligibility requirements under the MN Paid Leave law, employees seeking intermittent leave must have at least eight hours of accumulated leave (unless more than 30 days have lapsed since taking the initial leave).

    - Notice: In situations where employees seek MNPL on an intermittent basis, employees must make a reasonable effort to provide written notice to the Human Resources Department of the need for intermittent leave before applying for MNPL benefits.

- As part of the notice, employees must provide Hayfield Community Schools with the following:

    - Proposed intermittent leave schedule; and

    - A completed certification from a health care provider identifying the leave as necessary and a reasonable estimate of the frequency and duration and treatment schedule for the leave.

    - Increments of Leave & Maximum Number of Hours: Consistent with other forms of leave provided by Hayfield Community Schools**,** employees may take intermittent leave in increments of **one day**. If eligible for intermittent leave, Hayfield Community Schools allows a maximum of 480 hours of intermittent leave in any 12-month period. After reaching the maximum amount of allowed intermittent leave, employees may request continuous MNPL provided the continuous leave does not exceed the maximum amount of MNPL allowed by law.

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10) How MNPL interacts with other leave laws and benefits

- **FMLA:** If your reason qualifies for both MNPL and FMLA, the two typically run at the same time (concurrently). That means the same weeks may count against both entitlements.

- **Earned Sick & Safe Time (ESST):** MNPL is separate from Minnesota ESST. ESST may cover shorter-term needs; MNPL covers longer durations with wage replacement administered by Minnesota Paid Leave.

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11) Contributions & deductions

- Under Minnesota law, the employee share of MNPL costs cannot exceed the state plan's maximum employee contribution. Currently, the state cap is .88%, split evenly between employee and the district.

- If any payroll deductions are needed for your employee share, they will be shown on your paystub.

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12) How to apply

You will apply through the state portal at **paidleave.mn.gov**.

Employees are required by law to begin their Paid Leave application through their employer before filing with the State.

Start early: You can, begin your claim up to 60 days before your anticipated leave date. If the leave is foreseeable, we ask that you provide at least 30 days notice prior to taking leave. If the leave is not foreseeable you will still be able to take leave under MNPL and we ask that you provide as much notice as possible.

Failure to provide required notice may result in a delay of benefit approval or pay.

The District will provide employees with all necessary forms and information for completing the application process.

Steps:

1. Notify the District Office (HR) and Supervisor by completing Leave of Absence Request form **(if taking more than six (6) consecutive days)** under District Forms. This will notify the District Office (HR) and the Supervisor of your intentions including dates, type (Family vs. Medical), and whether intermittent or continuous.

   Open a claim via **paidleave.mn.gov**. Questions? Call 1-651-556-7777 or 844-556-0444 (toll free) or email at paidleave@state.mn.us

   Employer Name: Ind School Dist 203 – Hayfield Community Schools
   Mailing Address: 9 Sixth AVE SE, Hayfield MN 55940
   Employer Identification Number (FEIN): 41-6008716

2. Provide documentation:

   - Medical certification for your own serious health condition or to care for a family member
   - Proof of birth/adoption/foster placement for bonding
   - Documentation for military exigency or safety leave

3. Await the state's determination. Keep the District Office (HR) informed about any changes.
4. Follow the District's normal procedures for any absences (Frontline (Kelly Education), ESS, etc.)

Claim Submission and Completion: It is the employee's responsibility to initiate a claim and to provide all necessary supporting information and documents in a timely manner as required. If the employee fails to initiate a claim and/or provide all requested information within the required timelines, the claim may be denied or closed.

Determination of Claim Approval or Denial: Hayfield Community Schools does not make the determination of whether or not an employee's claim is approved or denied. Hayfield Community Schools will provide information to Minnesota Paid Leave, as requested; however, Hayfield Community Schools does not determine the outcome of the claim.

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13) Your rights & protections (highlights)

- No retaliation. You cannot be disciplined, demoted, or fired for requesting or taking MNPL.

- Reinstatement: Upon return from covered MNPL, you will be reinstated to your previous position or to an equivalent position, with the same status, pay, employment benefits, length-of-service credit, and seniority credit as of the date of leave as long as you have worked for Hayfield Community Schools for a minimum of 90 calendar days. Upon return to work, if it becomes evident that the employee is unable to perform the key essential functions of their position (with or without reasonable accommodation), Hayfield Community Schools may engage in an interactive process, consistent with the American with Disability Act (ADA) and/or Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA) and other applicable workplace policies, including workplace safety protocols, to determine appropriate next steps.

- Continuation of benefits (we pay our employer share of group insurance while you're on MNPL; you keep paying your portion).

- Appeals & help. If you disagree with a claim decision, contact the District Office and the state Paid Leave Contact Center.

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14) Frequently asked questions

Q: Do I apply on the state website?
A: Yes. paidleave.mn.gov

Q: Can I take MNPL intermittently (e.g., for a medical appointment)?
A: Yes. By law, employers are not required to allow more than 480 hours of intermittent MNPL per 12 months. Past 480 hours, remaining entitlement may be taken in continuous blocks.

Q: Will MNPL and FMLA stack?
A: If the reason qualifies for both, we generally run them together (concurrently).

Q: Is there a waiting week before benefits start?
A: No. Once approved, MNPL payments start from the first payable week of your leave.

Q: How much will I receive?
A: A percentage of your average weekly wage up to the state maximum weekly benefit (updated annually).

Q: Can I supplement MNPL pay with my accrued personal time/sick time?
A: No.

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15) Contact & resources

- District Office: Lila Rehnelt
- Minnesota Paid Leave (general info): paidleave.mn.gov (public information site)
- State Contact Center: 651-556-7777 or 844-556-0444 (8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. CT)
