

**SUBJECT: LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

In general, leaves of absence will be administered by the Superintendent. The Board reserves the right to grant leaves of absence for purposes or under conditions not contemplated or considered in this policy. Where a leave of absence is falsely requested or improperly used, the Board may take appropriate disciplinary action. The purpose or conditions of a leave of absence may not be altered except by written permission of the Superintendent.

**Leaves of Absence, Contractual, Et Al.**

- a) Employees who are members of a negotiating unit are entitled to leaves of absence in accordance with provisions of contracts in effect between the District and each bargaining unit.
- b) Employees who are not members of a negotiating unit are entitled to leaves of absence in accordance with their terms and conditions.
- c) Employees who are under contract to the District are entitled to leaves of absence in accordance with their individual contract.

**Unpaid Leaves of Absence Not Covered Above**

- a) Subject to limitations enumerated in this policy, unpaid leaves of absence may be granted as follows:
  - 1. At the expiration of a paid sick leave of absence, an unpaid leave may be granted for a period of time not to exceed one (1) year
- b) Unpaid leaves of absence cannot be used to extend vacation periods, recess periods, to take vacations, to engage in other occupations, or to provide additional personal leaves, except that the Superintendent has discretion, where circumstances warrant, to approve leaves of absence for those purposes.
- c) Unpaid leaves of absence will not be granted unless a substitute employee, satisfactory in the discretion of the Superintendent, can be secured.

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- d) Except where it interferes with an employee's legal or contractual rights, the timing of unpaid leaves of absence will be granted at the convenience of the District.

**Other Leaves of Absence**

Other leaves of absence include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) Emergency Service Volunteer Leave

Upon presentation of a written request from the American Red Cross and with the approval of the Superintendent, employees certified by the American Red Cross as disaster volunteers will be granted leave from work with pay for up to 20 days in any calendar year to participate in specialized disaster relief operations. This leave will be provided without loss of seniority, compensation, sick leave, vacation leave, or other overtime compensation to which the volunteer is otherwise entitled.

- b) Screenings for Cancer

Employees will be granted up to four hours of paid leave per year without charge against any other leave for any cancer screening. This leave is not cumulative and expires at the end of each year.

- c) Blood Donation

The District must either, at its option:

1. Grant up to three hours of unpaid leave in any 12-month period to an employee who seeks to donate blood off-premises. The leave may not exceed three hours unless agreed to by the Superintendent or designee; or
2. Allow its employees paid time to donate blood during work hours at least two times per year at a convenient time and place set by the Superintendent or designee, including allowing an employee to participate in a blood drive at the District. The employee cannot be required to use accumulated vacation, personal, sick, or other leave time.

The District will not retaliate against an employee for requesting or obtaining a leave of absence under this section. Additional leaves for the purpose of blood donation under any other provision of law will not be prevented.

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Employees seeking to undergo a medical procedure to donate bone marrow will be granted leaves to do so, the combined length of the leaves to be determined by the physician, but may not exceed 24 work hours unless agreed to by the Superintendent or designee. The District will require verification for the purpose and length of each leave requested by the employee for this purpose.

The District will not retaliate against an employee for requesting or obtaining a leave of absence under this section. Additional leaves for the purpose of bone marrow donation under any other provision of law will not be prevented.

**e) Nursing Mothers (Breastfeeding/Lactation)**

The District will provide reasonable unpaid break time or permit the use of paid break time or meal time each day to allow an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for up to three years following childbirth. The District will make reasonable efforts to provide a room or other location in close proximity to the work area where the employee can express milk in privacy. The District will not discriminate against an employee who chooses to express breast milk in the workplace.

Reasonable unpaid break time is generally no less than 20 minutes and no more than 30 minutes dependent upon the proximity of the designated location for expressing breast milk. In most situations, the District is required to provide unpaid break time at least once every three hours if requested by the employee. At the employee's option, the District will allow the employee to work before or after her normal shift to make up the amount of time used during the unpaid break time(s) so long as the additional time requested falls within the District's normal work hours.

The District will provide written notice to employees who are returning to work following the birth of a child of their right to take unpaid leave for the purpose of expressing breast milk. This notice may either be provided individually to affected employees or to all employees generally through publication of the notice in the employee handbook or posting of the notice in a central location.

Any employee wishing to avail herself of this benefit is required to give the District advance notice, preferably prior to her return to work, to allow the District an opportunity to establish a location and schedule leave time to accommodate employees as needed.

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## f) Witnesses or Victims of Crimes

The District will grant an unpaid leave of absence to an employee who is a victim of or a witness to a criminal offense, who is required or chooses to appear as a witness, consult with the district attorney, or exercise their rights as provided in the Criminal Procedure Law, the Family Court Act, and the Executive Law.

To use this leave, the employee must provide notice of the need for leave at any time prior to the actual day of leave. The District is permitted to ask the party who sought the attendance or testimony of the employee to provide verification of the employee's service. Employees will not be penalized or discharged for absences by reason of a required appearance as a witness in a criminal proceeding, or consultation with the district attorney, or exercising their rights as provided under the law.

## g) Victims of Domestic Violence

Unless the absence would cause an undue hardship to the District, the District will provide reasonable accommodations to employees who are victims of domestic violence who must be absent from work for a reasonable time in accordance with law.

An employee availing themselves of this leave must provide the District with reasonable advance notice, unless providing this notice is not feasible. An employee unable to provide reasonable advance notice must, within a reasonable time after the absence, provide a certification to the District when requested.

To the extent allowed by law, the District will maintain the confidentiality of any information related to an employee's status as a victim of domestic violence.

## h) Military Leave

The District will comply with state and federal laws regarding military leave and re-employment.

## i) Jury Duty

As provided by law, any employee who is summoned to serve as a juror and who notifies the District to that effect prior to their term of service will not be subject to discharge or penalty for jury service. The District will ensure that all absences for this purpose are granted in accordance with law and the terms of any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

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## j) Voting

Employees who are registered voters and have four consecutive hours either between the opening of the polls and the beginning of their working shift, or between the end of their working shift and the closing of the polls, are deemed to have sufficient time to vote and will not be eligible for paid leave to vote in any election.

Employees who are registered voters and do not have sufficient time outside of their working hours to vote in any election, may without loss of pay for up to two hours, take so much time off as will, when added to their voting time outside of their working hours, enable them to vote. The employee will be allowed time off for voting only at the beginning or the end of their working shift, as the District may designate, unless otherwise mutually agreed.

Employees requiring working time off to vote must notify the District not more than ten or less than two working days before the day of the election.

The District must post a notice informing employees of their right to leave in order to vote not less than ten working days before an election and until polls close on election day. This notice will be conspicuously posted in a place where it can be seen by employees as they come and go to their place of work.

29 USC § 207(r)

Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), 38 USC §§ 4301-4333

Civil Service Law §§ 71-73 and 159-b

Education Law §§ 1709(16), 2509(6), 2573(12), 3005, 3005-a and 3005-b

Election Law § 3-110

Executive Law § 296(22)

General Municipal Law §§ 92, 92-c, and 92-d

Judiciary Law §§ 519 and 521

Labor Law §§ 202-a, 202-i, 202-j, 202-l and 206-c

Military Law §§ 242 and 243

Penal Law § 215.14

Adoption Date 2/05/2025