

Parental Leave — Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

General Information

What's Parental Leave?

Parental Leave is paid time off you can use to bond with your new child.

Can I take Parental Leave?

You can take Parental Leave as long as:

- You're the biological or adoptive mom or dad of a new child.
- You're that child's primary or secondary caregiver.
- Your leave starts within 12 months of your child's birth or placement with you through adoption.
- You haven't used all of the Parental Leave available to you in a 12-month period.
- You've worked at ISD for at least 12 months in a row and you've worked for ISD at least 1,250 hours in the 12 months before you take Parental Leave.

If you work under a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), talk to your local Human Resources Associate to find out if you're eligible.

Who's considered a child for Parental Leave?

- For Parental Leave, an eligible child is: Your newborn child.
- A child under 18 years old who's placed with you through adoption.
- An adopted child who's at least 18 years old and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability.

Documents/Forms

What documents/forms do I need?

An Employee Leave Verification form to begin the leave

- For Pregnancy:
 - A Doctor's note with anticipated delivery date
 - A Doctor's note from your six week checkup stating when you are physically able to return to work to end or to extend the leave

- For Adoption:
 - Official adoption documentation

Where do I send these form?

Documents and forms should be submitted to Human Resources, at the attention of Sena Camarata, Director of Human Resources.

When should the forms be sent in?

When possible, at least 3 months prior to your delivery date.

What should be included on the forms?

Your anticipated delivery/adoption date as well as the anticipated dates of your leave. We can be flexible to meet your needs and the needs of the baby (early or late arrival). Please call Sena Camarata when reasonably possible to inform her of your delivery/adoption date, so the appropriate leave can begin.

Also indicate when you anticipate returning and if you are interested in options that would continue your leave for additional time including for the rest of the year (family leave and/or child care leave).

Leave Options

Maternity Leave

What paid leave am I entitled to?

You are entitled to use your sick leave (disability leave) as well as your personal leave.

How much disability leave may I use?

It depends on how much leave you have accumulated. The standard is 6 calendar weeks of maternity leave commencing with the birth of the baby and depending upon when your doctor says you are physically able to return to work. Six calendar weeks often equates to 30 work days of leave, depending on holidays and school breaks.

Can I ever use more than 30 days of sick leave?

If you are not approved to go back to work after 6 calendar weeks or if your baby is ill, you can access more sick leave related to disability.

Can I use sick leave prior to my delivery?

If your doctor's note states that you are "disabled" then you may begin taking sick leave before you deliver.

Can I use personal leave?

Yes. You may use personal leave before or after delivery. Personal leave will be applied to your absence prior to the use of any unpaid leave.

Additional Leave

What additional leave might I be entitled to?

FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act), if eligible, and Child Care Leave.

What is Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)?

FMLA is a job-protected leave for qualifying family and medical reasons. Please contact Human Resources or refer to your negotiated collective bargaining agreement regarding eligibility requirements.

For eligible employees, FMLA can be used to care for and/or to bond with a newborn or adopted child within the first twelve months of the child's birth. FMLA for parental bonding will be paid if you have sick leave and/or personal leave available. It may also be taken as unpaid leave if no paid leave is available.

During FMLA the District continues to pay the employer portion of the employee's monthly insurance premiums. The employee continues to be responsible for the employee portion of the monthly medical insurance premium.

What is Child Care Leave?

Child Care Leave is an option for you after FMLA is exhausted or in lieu of FMLA. It is an unpaid leave and does not provide insurance benefits.

How long does Child Care Leave last?

Certificated staff can take up to two years of child care leave.

Can I take both Family and Medical Leave and Child Care Leave?

Yes. In order to access both leaves, you need to first take family leave then take child care leave.

Pay

What if I don't have enough sick leave to cover my maternity leave?

Certificated staff members who start the year with less than 30 days in their disability leave bank are able to receive their daily rate less the cost of the substitute for a portion of the maternity leave. The portion you may use is determined by subtracting the number of disability leave days you began the year with from 30. For example, if you began the year with 84 hours (12 days at 1.0 FTE), you would be eligible to receive your daily rate less the cost of a sub for up to 18 days (30-12). If you used some of your beginning 12 days before your maternity leave, you will not have enough disability leave to cover the entire six weeks.

Are holidays/breaks counted as part of my six weeks of Maternity Leave?

Yes. Maternity leave is determined by calendar weeks.

Are holidays/breaks counted as part of my 12 weeks of Family and Medical Leave?

No. FMLA is determined by work weeks.

What happens to my contract pay if I don't return during the school year?

Your base contract will be pro-rated to reflect any fully unpaid days during your maternity, family leave or child care leave. For certificated staff, your TRI contract will also be pro-rated. Paid Per Diem days, Web Presence, and co-curricular contracts may also be affected. There is typically a balance remaining to be paid to you after all paid leave has been used. At that time, Human Resources will discuss payout options with you.

Will maternity/family/child care leave affect my future salary placement?

All paid leave generates experience credit for certificated staff. All unpaid leave does not generate experience credit. Depending on what your total experience is, unpaid leave may result in you staying at the same experience step for the next year.

Return to Work

Do I have to return to work after 6 weeks?

No. You have the option of Family and Medical Leave (if eligible) and/or Child Care Leave.

Can I extend my leave?

Child care leave can be extended to a maximum of 2 years for certificated staff.

How do I let the district know I intend to return to work?

You may need to provide a doctor's note stating you are physically able to return. Contact Human Resources regarding your return date.

Certificated staff members who are on a year's leave of absence need to notify the district by February 1st of the school year prior to your return.

Do I get my same job back?

If you are on maternity/disability leave and family leave only, and do not go on child care leave, you will be returned to the position you left.

Certificated staff on child care leave of less than two (2) years will be returned to the position held at the time of the leave, subject to the assignment and transfer language. If on two full years of child care leave staff will be assigned a position for which are qualified.

Medical Coverage

When do benefits from Family and Medical Leave end?

Your benefit coverage provided by FMLA will end the month after your family leave runs out. For example, if your family leave ends in January, you would have medical, dental and vision benefits through February. If your work calendar is the same as the school calendar and your family leave extends through the last day of school in June, you would have insurance coverage through September 30, since July and August are months you do not work.

Can I take Paid Parental Leave again for the birth or adoption of another child later?

Yes, Paid Parental Leave can be used following subsequent births or adoptions.

If an employee has multiple births (twins, triplets, etc.), is a staff member eligible for more than three weeks of Paid Parental Leave, or if both parents work at Duke can they both take Paid Parental Leave?

No. The Parental Leave benefit provides up to three weeks paid leave per birth event or adoption event, regardless of multiple births (twins, triplets, etc.) or adopting more than one child. Only the person identified as the primary caregiver is eligible for the benefit. However, staff members may take advantage of the benefit again later for a different birth or adoption.

Does the policy apply to foster children?

No. The benefit only covers birth or adoption.

If both parents work at the Issaquah School District, can one sign up as the primary caregiver for purposes of FMLA and then let the other parent sign up as the primary caregiver after 12 weeks to receive the benefit, too?

No, if both parents work for the Issaquah School District, then only one parent can be designated as a primary caregiver per birth or adoption.

Additional Resources

For additional information, you may wish to refer to the applicable sections of your negotiated agreement.

Please feel free to contact Human Resources if you have questions specific to your situation.

HR Contact: Sena Camarata
camaratas@issaquah.wednet.edu
425-837-7033