

STAFF PERSONNEL

Family and Medical Leave

Unpaid family and medical leave will be granted up to 12 weeks per year to assist employees in balancing family and work life. For purposes of this policy, year is defined as a fiscal year. Requests for family and medical leave shall be made to the superintendent.

Employees may be allowed to substitute paid leave for unpaid family and medical leave by meeting the requirements set out in the family and medical leave administrative rules. Employees eligible for family and medical leave must comply with the family and medical leave administrative rules prior to starting family and medical leave. It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to develop administrative rules to implement this policy.

The requirements stated in the Master Contract between employees in that certified collective bargaining unit and the board regarding family and medical leave of such employees shall be followed.

Legal Reference: Whitney v. Rural Ind. School. District, 232 Iowa 61, 4
N.W. 2d 394 (1942)
26 U.S.C. § 2601 *et seq.* (Supp. 1993)
29 C.F.R. Pt. 825 (1993).
Iowa code §§ 20; 85.33, .34, .38(3); 216; 279.40 (1993).
1980 Op. Att'y. Gen. 605.
1972 Op. Att'y. Gen. 177, 353.
1952 Op. Att'y. Gen. 91.

Cross Reference: Licensed Employee Family Illness Leave
Licensed Employee Extended Illness Leave
Licensed Employee Unpaid Leave

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Family and Medical Leave Regulation

A. School district notice.

1. The school district will post the notice in Exhibit A-E1 regarding family and medical leave.
2. Information on the Family and Medical Leave Act and the board policy on family and medical leave, including leave provisions and employee obligations will be provided annually.
3. When an employee requests family and medical leave, the school district will provide the employee with information listing the employee's obligations and requirements. Such information will include:
 - a. a statement clarifying whether the leave qualifies as family and medical leave and will, therefore, be credited to the employee's annual 12-week entitlement;
 - b. a reminder that employees requesting family and medical leave for their serious health condition or for that of an immediate family member must furnish medical certification of the serious health condition and the consequences for failing to do so;
 - c. an explanation of the employee's right to substitute paid leave for family and medical leave including a description of when the school district requires substitution of paid leave and the conditions related to the substitution; and
 - d. a statement notifying employees that they must pay and must make arrangements for paying any premium or other payments to maintain health or other benefits.

B. Eligible employees.

Employees are eligible for family and medical leave if three criteria are met.

1. The school district has more than 50 employees on the payroll at the time leave is requested;
2. The employee has worked for the school district for at least twelve months or 52 weeks (the months and weeks need not be consecutive); and
3. The employee has worked at least 1,250 hours within the previous year. Full-time professional employees who are exempt from the wage and hour law may be presumed to have worked the minimum hour requirement.

If the employee requesting leave is unable to meet the above criteria, then the employee is not eligible for family and medical leave.

C. Employee requesting leave -- two types of leave.

1. Foreseeable family and medical leave.

- a. Definition - leave is foreseeable for the birth or placement of an adopted or foster child with the employee or for planned medical treatment.
- b. Employee must give at least thirty days notice for foreseeable leave. Failure to give the notice may result in the leave beginning thirty days after notice was received.
- c. Employees must consult with the school district prior to scheduling planned medical treatment leave to minimize disruption to the school district. The scheduling is subject to the approval of the health care provider.

2. Unforeseeable family and medical leave.

- a. Definition - leave is unforeseeable in such situations as emergency medical treatment or premature birth.
- b. Employee must give notice as soon as possible but no later than two work days after learning that leave will be necessary.
- c. A spouse or family member may give the notice if the employee is unable to personally give notice.

D. Eligible family and medical leave determination.

1. Four purposes.

- a. The birth of a son or daughter of the employee and in order to care for that son or daughter prior to the first anniversary of the child's birth.
- b. The placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care and in order to care for that son or daughter prior to the first anniversary of the child's placement.
- c. To care for the spouse, son, daughter or parent of the employee if the spouse, son, daughter or parent has a serious health condition; or
- d. Employee's serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of the employee's position.

2. Medical certification.
 - a. When required:
 - (1) Employees shall be required to present medical certification of the employee's serious health condition and inability to perform the essential functions of the job.
 - (2) Employees shall be required to present medical certification of the family member's serious health condition and that it is medically necessary for the employee to take leave to care for the family member.
 - b. Employee's medical certification responsibilities:
 - (1) The employee must obtain the certification from health care provider who is treating the individual with the serious health condition.
 - (2) The school district may require the employee to obtain a second certification by a health care provider chosen by and paid for by the school district if the school district has reason to doubt the validity of the certification an employee submits. The second health care provider cannot, however, be employed by the school district on a regular basis.
 - (3) If the second health care provider disagrees with the first health care provider, then the school district may require a third health care provider to certify the serious health condition. This health care provider must be mutually agreed upon by the employee and the school district and paid for by the school district. This certification or lack of certification is binding upon both the employee and the school district.
 - c. Medical certification will be required fifteen days after family and medical leave begins unless it is impracticable to do so. The school district may request recertification every thirty days. Recertification must be submitted within fifteen days of the school district's request.

Family and medical leave requested for the serious health condition of the employee or to care for a family member with a serious health condition which is not supported by medical certification shall be denied until such certification is provided.

1. Employees are entitled to twelve weeks unpaid family and medical leave per year.
2. Year is defined as:
Fiscal year (*see definition*)
3. If insufficient leave is available, the school district may:
 - a. Deny the leave if entitlement is exhausted
 - b. Award leave available

F. Type of Leave Requested.

1. Continuous - employee will not report to work for set number of days or weeks.
2. Intermittent - employee requests family and medical leave for separate periods of time.
 - a. Intermittent leave is available for:
 - (1) Birth, adoption or foster care placement of child only with the school district's agreement.
 - (2) Serious health condition of the employee, spouse, parent, or child when medically necessary without the school district's agreement.
 - b. In the case of foreseeable intermittent leave, the employee must schedule the leave to minimize disruption to the school district operation.
 - c. During the period of foreseeable intermittent leave, the school district may move the employee to an alternative position with equivalent pay and benefits.
3. Reduced work schedule - employee requests a reduction in the employee's regular work schedule.
 - a. Reduced work schedule family and medical leave is available for:
 - (1) Birth, adoption or foster care placement and subject to the school district's agreement.

(2) Serious health condition of the employee, spouse, parent, or child when medically necessary without the school district's agreement.

b. In the case of foreseeable reduced work schedule leave, the employee must schedule the leave to minimize disruption to the school district operation.

c. During the period of foreseeable reduced work schedule leave, the school district may move the employee to an alternative position with equivalent pay and benefits.

G. Special Rules for Instructional Employees.

1. Definition - an instructional employee is one whose principal function is to teach and instruct students in a class, a small group or an individual setting. This includes, but is not limited to, teachers, coaches, driver's education instructors and special education assistants.

2. Instructional employees who request foreseeable medically necessary intermittent or reduced work schedule family and medical leave greater than twenty percent of the work days in the leave period may be required to:

a. Take leave for the entire period or periods of the planned medical treatment; or

b. Move to an available alternative position, with equivalent pay and benefits, but not necessarily equivalent duties, for which the employee is qualified.

3. Instructional employees who request continuous family and medical leave near the end of a semester may be required to extend the family and medical leave through the end of the semester. The number of weeks remaining before the end of a semester do not include scheduled school breaks, such as summer, winter or spring break.

a. If an instructional employee begins family and medical leave for any purpose more than five weeks before the end of a semester, the school district may require that the leave be continued until the end of the semester if the leave will last at least three weeks and the employee would return to work during the last three weeks of the semester if the leave was not continued.

b. If the employee begins family and medical leave for a purpose other than the employee's own serious health condition during the last five weeks of

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a semester, the school district may require that the leave be continued until the end of the semester if the leave will last more than two weeks

and the employee would return to work during the last two weeks of the semester.

- c. If the employee begins family and medical leave for a purpose other than the employee's own serious health condition during the last three weeks of the semester and the leave will last more than five working days, the school district may require the employee to continue taking leave until the end of the semester.
 4. The entire period of leave taken under the special rules is credited as family and medical leave. The school district will continue to fulfill the school district's family and medical leave responsibilities and obligations, including the obligation to continue the employee's health insurance and other benefits, if an instructional employee's family and medical leave entitlement ends before the involuntary leave period expires.
- H. Employee responsibilities while on family and medical leave.
1. Employee must continue to pay health care benefit contributions or other benefit contributions regularly paid by the employee unless employee elects not to continue the benefits.
 2. The employee contribution payments will be deducted from any money owed to the employee or the employee shall reimburse the school district at a time set by the superintendent.
 3. An employee who fails to make the health care contribution payments within fifteen days after they are due will be notified that their coverage may be cancelled if payment is not received within an additional 15 days.
 4. An employee may be asked to re-certify the medical necessity of family and medical leave for the serious medical condition of an employee or family member once every thirty days and return the certification within fifteen days of the request.
 5. The employee must notify the school district of the employee's intent to return to work at least once each month during their leave and at least two weeks prior to the conclusion of the family and medical leave.
 6. If an employee intends not to return to work, the employee must immediately notify the school district, in writing, of the employee's intent not to return. The school district will cease benefits upon receipt of this notification.
- I. Use of paid leave for family and medical leave.

An employee shall substitute unpaid family and medical leave with any paid leave available to the employee under board policy, individual contracts or the collective

bargaining agreement. Paid leave includes, but is not limited to, sick leave, family illness leave, vacation, personal leave, bereavement leave and professional leave.

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Family and Medical Leave Definitions

Common law marriage - according to Iowa law, common law marriages exist when there is a present intent by the two parties to be married, continuous cohabitation, and a public declaration that the parties are husband and wife. There is no time factor that needs to be met in order for there to be a common law marriage.

Continuing treatment by a health care provider - one or more of the following:

- The employee or family member in question is treated two or more times for the injury or illness by a health care provider. Normally this would require visits to the health care provider or to a nurse or physician's assistant under direct supervision of the health care provider.
- The employee or family member is treated for the injury or illness two or more times by a provider of health care services (e.g., physical therapist) under orders of, or on referral by, a health care provider, or is treated for the injury or illness by a health care provider on at least one occasion which results in a regimen of continuing treatment under the supervision of the health care provider -- for example, a course of medication or therapy -- to resolve the health condition.
- The employee or family member is under the continuing supervision of, but not necessarily being actively treated by, a health care provider due to a serious long-term or chronic condition or disability which cannot be cured. Examples include persons with Alzheimer's, persons who have suffered a severe stroke, or persons in the terminal stages of a disease who may not be receiving active medical treatment.

Eligible Employee - the district has more than 50 employees on the payroll at the time leave is requested. The employee has worked for the district for at least twelve months and has worked at least 1250 hours within the previous year.

Essential Functions of the Job - those functions which are fundamental to the performance of the job. It does not include marginal functions.

Employment benefits - all benefits provided or made available to employees by an employer, including group life insurance, health insurance, disability insurance, sick leave, annual leave, educational benefits, and pensions, regardless of whether such benefits are provided by a practice or written policy of an employer or through an "employee benefit plan."

Family Member - individuals who meet the definition of son, daughter, spouse or parent.

Fiscal Year - A year running from July 1 to June 30 the following year.

Group health plan - any plan of, or contributed to by, an employer (including a self-insured plan) to provide health care (directly or otherwise) to the employer's employees, former employees, or the families of such employees or former employees.

Family and Medical Leave Definitions

Health care provider-

- A doctor of medicine or osteopathy who is authorized to practice medicine or surgery by the state in which the doctor practices; or
- Podiatrists, dentists, clinical psychologists, optometrists, and chiropractors (limited to treatment consisting of manual manipulation of the spine to correct a subluxation as demonstrated by X-ray to exist) authorized to practice in the state and performing within the scope of their practice as defined under state law; and
- Nurse practitioners and nurse-midwives who are authorized to practice under state law and who are performing within the scope of their practice as defined under state law; and
- Christian Science practitioners listed with the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, Massachusetts.

In loco parentis - individuals who had or have day-to-day responsibilities for the care and financial support of a child not their biological child or who had the responsibility for an employee when the employee was a child.

Incapable of self-care - that the individual requires active assistance or supervision to provide daily self-care in several of the "activities of daily living" or "ADLs." Activities of daily living include adaptive activities such as caring appropriately for one's grooming and hygiene, bathing, dressing, eating, cooking, cleaning, shopping, taking public transportation, paying bills, maintaining a residence, using telephone and directories, using a post office, etc.

Instructional employee - an employee employed principally in an instructional capacity by an educational agency or school whose principal function is to teach and instruct students in a class, a small group, or an individual setting, and includes athletic coaches, driving instructors, and special education assistants such as signers for the hearing impaired. The term does not include teacher assistants or aides who do not have as their principal function actual teaching or instructing, nor auxiliary personnel such as counselors, psychologists, curriculum specialists, cafeteria workers, maintenance workers, bus drivers, or other primarily noninstructional employees.

Intermittent leave - leave taken separate periods of time due to a single illness or injury, rather than for one continuous period of time, and may include leave or periods from an hour or more to several weeks.

Medically Necessary - certification for medical necessity is the same as certification for serious health condition.

"Needed to Care For" - the medical certification that an employee is "needed to care for" a family member encompasses both physical and psychological care. For example, where, because of a serious health condition, the family member is unable to care for his or her own basic medical, hygienic or nutritional needs or safety or is unable to transport himself or herself

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to medical treatment. It also includes situations where the employee may be needed to fill in for others who are caring for the family member or to make arrangements for changes in care.

Family and Medical Leave Definitions

Parent - a biological parent or an individual who stands in loco parentis to a child or stood in loco parentis to an employee when the employee was a child. Parent does not include parent-in-law.

Physical or mental disability - a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual.

Reduced leave schedule - a leave schedule that reduces the usual number of hours per workweek, or hours per workday, of an employee.

Serious health condition - an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves:

- Any period of incapacity or treatment in connection with or consequent to inpatient care (i.e., an overnight stay) in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility;
- Any period of incapacity requiring absence from work, school, or other regular daily activities, of more than three calendar days, that also involves continuing treatment by (or under the supervision of) a health care provider; or
- Continuing treatment by (or under the supervision of) a health care provider for a chronic or long-term health condition that is incurable or so serious that, if not treated, would likely result in a period of incapacity of more than three calendar days; and for prenatal care.
- Voluntary or cosmetic treatments (such as most treatments for orthodontia or acne) which are not medically necessary are not "serious health conditions," unless inpatient hospital care is required. Restorative dental surgery after an accident, or removal of cancerous growths are serious health conditions provided all the other conditions of this regulation are met. Treatments for allergies or stress, or for substance abuse, are serious health conditions if all the conditions of the regulation are met. Prenatal care is included as a serious health condition. Routine preventive physical examinations are excluded.

Son or daughter - a biological child, adopted child, foster child, stepchild, legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis. The child must be under age 18 or, if over 18, incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability.

Spouse - a husband or wife recognized by Iowa law including common law marriages.

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