

# Frequently Asked Questions



## Leaves and Absences

Paid sick leave is a benefit offered to employees of Gainesville City Schools. It is income protection in case of illness because employees are not paid if they exhaust their sick leave.

Additionally, it is a valuable benefit that professional employees eligible for the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) can accrue and use toward early retirement or use in the calculation of retirement benefits. Employees must accrue a minimum of 60 sick leave days in order to use toward retirement.

**Q: How many sick days do employees get each year?**

**A:** Sick days are earned at the rate of 1.25 per month for each completed month of service. Three of the days earned may be used for personal leave. Leave must be earned before taken. No frontage of leave is allowed. Any unearned leave taken will result in leave without pay.

**Q: How many personal days do employees get each year?**

**A:** Employees may use three sick leave days for personal reasons, provided they are approved, in advance, by the principal or supervisor. Personal leave must be completed via Employee Self Service and approved by the Superintendent or his or her designee five (5) working days prior to requested leave.

Unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent or his or her designee, personal leave will not be granted during pre-planning, post-planning, staff development days or on the day before or day after holidays. Employees are not required to disclose the purpose for which such absence is sought.

**Q: Does unused personal leave carry over to the next school year?**

A: Not as personal days, but they do carry over as sick leave days.

**Q: Where are sick and personal leave forms located?**

A: All employees must log into GCSS Employee Self Service at <https://gcssk12.munisselfservice.com/default> to complete sick, personal, or annual leave requests.

**Q: How do I find out how many sick leave days I have?**

A: Log into GCSS Employee Self Service at <https://gcssk12.munisselfservice.com/default>. Sick leave days are also printed on your paycheck stub.

**Q: May I donate sick leave days to someone who doesn't have any?**

A: An employee may donate up to ten sick leave days to his or her spouse, if such spouse is also an employee, for purposes of maternity leave, illness, illness of a family member, or death of a family member.

**Q: How do I join the sick leave bank?**

A: The annual open enrollment period is between October 1 and October 31. Any employee entitled to sick leave in the system may become a member. You must sign up on the Employee Self Service webpage during the annual sick leave bank open enrollment period.

**Q: Can I get days from the sick leave bank for days I have the flu, stomach virus, strep, etc. or if my child does?**

A: Employees who are members of the sick bank may apply for days from the sick bank provided they meet all guidelines and regulations of the sick leave bank policy. Typically, absences for illnesses that would be considered basic would not qualify.

**Q: Who earns vacation days?**

A: All full time 12 month employees earn vacation days at the rate of 1.25 days per completed month of service. Leave must be earned before taken. No frontage of leave is allowed. Any unearned leave taken will result in leave without pay.

**Q: Can vacation days carry over to the following year?**

A: A full time 12-month employee may carry over a maximum of ten (10) unused vacation days from one fiscal year to the next, but his or her total accrued vacation may not exceed twenty five (25) days.

**Q: Can I be paid for unused vacation days?**

A: In the event of retirement, resignation, or termination of employment, the individual shall be paid in a lump sum for any earned but unused days of annual leave, up to a maximum of fifteen (15) days.

**Q: Can I be paid for unused sick leave?**

A: No, GCSS does not pay for unused sick leave.

Any unused sick or personal leave accumulated shall be credited to such personnel and shall be transferred when there is a change in the employment of such personnel from one local board of education to another or from a local board of education to an unclassified position in the Department of Education.

Any accumulated unused sick or personal leave credited to personnel shall be forfeited if such personnel withdraw from service for a period of 12 or more consecutive months, unless the withdrawal from service is for educational leave to seek a higher level or different field of certification and provided that the withdrawal from service for this purpose is for no longer than 24 consecutive months.

**Q: What is Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)?**

A: Employees of the Board who have been employed by the Board for at least 12 months and who have worked at least 1250 hours during the 12 month period immediately preceding the commencement of the leave are eligible to take unpaid leave under the FMLA.

**AMOUNT AND TYPE OF LEAVE TAKEN**

An eligible employee may request leave for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Birth of a son or daughter and to care for the newborn child;
2. Adoption or foster placement with the employee of a son or daughter and to care for the newly placed child;
3. To care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter or parent, if that person has a serious health condition;
4. Serious health condition of the employee that prevents the employee from performing his/her job functions;
5. Any qualifying exigency arising from the fact that the employee's family member (the covered service member) is on covered active duty. Qualifying exigencies are defined as short-notice deployment (seven or less calendar days); military events and related activities; childcare and school activities; financial and legal arrangements; counseling; rest and recuperation (up to fifteen calendar days per instance); parental care; post-

- deployment activities; additional activities where the employer and employee agree that the leave is an exigency and agree to both timing and duration of the leave; and
6. Military caregiver leave to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness if the employee is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of the service member.

In the event of the birth, adoption or foster placement of a son or daughter, all leave must be completed within twelve months after the birth, adoption or foster placement.

Except as provided below, **an employee may take up to a total of 12 weeks leave during any twelve-month period.** A "rolling year" shall be used to determine the twelve-month period during which the leave entitlement may occur. That is, each time an employee takes FMLA leave, the remaining leave entitlement would be any balance of the number of weeks that has not been used during the immediately preceding 12 months. See 29 C.F.R. § 825.200(b)(4).

If both spouses work for the District and both are eligible for FMLA leave, they are authorized to take only a combined total of 12 weeks leave during any one 12 month period to care for a newborn or adopted child, a child placed with the employee for foster care, or a parent with a serious health condition. Both spouses are authorized to take leave for twelve (12) weeks to care for a spouse or child with a serious health condition.

#### INTERMITTENT OR REDUCED LEAVE

An employee may take leave on an intermittent or reduced leave schedule where it is medically necessary due to the serious health condition of a covered family member, the employee, or the serious injury or illness of a covered service member, or when necessary because of a qualifying exigency. The District will require a certification, in the form designated by the District, to document the necessity of such intermittent leave or reduced schedule leave.