



# Parental & Adoption Leave Frequently Asked Questions



# Congratulations!

On behalf of Jefferson City School District (JC Schools), we congratulate you on the upcoming addition to your family! Our Benefits department will provide you with the support necessary to make preparing for your parental leave a smooth and stress-free process.

## General Information

### *What's the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)?*

FMLA is a federal law that lets eligible employees take up to 12 weeks of job-protected unpaid leave each year for the birth, first-year care, adoption or foster care of a child.

### *Do I qualify for FMLA leave?*

Employees qualify for FMLA leave if they have worked for JC Schools for at least 12 months and a minimum of 1,250 hours within the past 12 months.

### *Can I take FMLA?*

You can take FMLA leave as long as:

- ⇒ You're the biological or adoptive mom or dad of a new child.
- ⇒ Your leave is within the first 12 months of your child's birth or placement with you through adoption.
- ⇒ You haven't used all of the FMLA available to you in a 12-month period.
- ⇒ You've worked at JC Schools for at least 12 months.
- ⇒ You've worked for JC Schools at least 1,250 hours in the 12 months before you take FMLA leave.

### *How much notice must I give before taking FMLA leave?*

When the need for leave is foreseeable, you must give at least 30 days notice. If 30 days notice is not possible, you are required to provide notice "as soon as practicable."



# Requesting Leave

## Step 1:

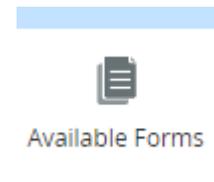
Let your supervisor know that you're taking leave at least 30 days in advance. If you are able to notify them sooner, this will allow you both to plan for your time away.

## Step 2:

Complete the FMLA Leave Request process in PowerSchool Records.

Login to Records: <https://jcps.tedk12.com/Records>

- ⇒ Go to the Available Forms on the menu bar on the left side
- ⇒ Complete the FMLA Leave Request form
- ⇒ Submit the form once completed and it will then route to the Benefits department for review and approval.



The Benefits department will review the form submitted to determine your FMLA eligibility. The eligibility portion of the form will be completed by the Benefits department and then sent back to you with the determination.

## Step 3:

The Benefits department will email you the appropriate medical certification paperwork to be completed by your physician. This paperwork needs to be submitted back to the Benefits department at least 30 days prior to your leave of absence.



## Step 4:

Once the completed paperwork is received by the Benefits department, it will be reviewed and a final FMLA eligibility determination form will be issued to you through PowerSchool Records.

## Step 5:

A parental leave checklist will be issued to you through PowerSchool Records. This checklist includes:

- ⇒ A qualified event notification form to be completed once you give birth
- ⇒ A return to work authorization form
- ⇒ Information on how to purchase service for unpaid sick leave time

## Length & Timing

### *How long can I be off for parental leave?*

Determining how long you'd like to take for parental leave can be an exciting, yet difficult decision to make. FMLA eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave. Employees who are ineligible for FMLA leave may take up to 12 weeks of unprotected leave. Under both circumstances, employees are required to use accrued sick leave, personal leave or vacation. Once paid leave is exhausted, the remaining leave will be unpaid leave.

### *I am pregnant and I am concerned about missing time from work for appointments or any complications that may arise during my pregnancy. Can I use the FMLA to protect those appointments and absences related to the pregnancy?*

Yes. FMLA covers all prenatal visits and complications, prior to the birth of the child.

### *Can fathers as well as mothers use FMLA leave after the birth of a child?*

Yes. A mother can use 12 weeks of FMLA leave for the birth of a child, for prenatal care and incapacity related to pregnancy, and for her own serious health condition following the birth of a child. A father can use FMLA leave for the birth of a child and to care for his spouse who is incapacitated (due to pregnancy or childbirth).



### *If both parents work for JC Schools, is there FMLA leave affected?*

Parents who work for the same district are entitled to FMLA leave, but the amount of time they get depends on their marital status. If the parents are married, they get a combined 12 weeks of protected leave in connection with the birth, adoption or foster placement. A woman's leave for her own pregnancy does not count towards this combined 12 weeks, nor does a husband's leave to care for his pregnant wife. If the parents are not married, they each get 12 weeks of FMLA leave. However, unlike married couples, they are not entitled to FMLA leave to care for each other when one has a serious medical condition.

### *How do I submit my absences so my leave balances are correct?*

If you are in a certified position, your leave is tracked through Frontline. You, or the school secretary, will need to enter your leave or contact Penmac to schedule your absences. You can enter your parental leave absence as soon as you'd like – the sooner the better as this provides Penmac adequate time to secure a long-term substitute. If you have arranged your own long-term substitute, you will need to indicate this to the Penmac representative when you contact them to ensure that the substitute you've secured is assigned to your absence and also is an active employee with Penmac. You can contact the Penmac at 573-641-8490. If you are in a position that does not require a substitute, you will still need to enter or call your absence in so that your leave balance is properly updated with the Benefits / Payroll department.

If you are in a position that is hourly and utilize Kronos, you will want to touch base with April McNail (573-636-1021) in advance of your absence so she can help ensure your leave is properly applied and coded in Kronos.

Completing the birth notification form through PowerSchool Records is also an important piece in ensuring that we have the correct absence dates when calculating your leave.

# Your pay while on leave

## *Is my FMLA leave paid?*

FMLA allows you the right to unpaid leave. However, Jefferson City School District's policy is that eligible paid leave will be substituted for FMLA until exhausted or the FMLA leave ends whichever comes first. Substituting paid leave for unpaid FMLA leave means that the two types of leave run concurrently.

## *Are holidays counted against my FMLA leave?*

No. Holidays and breaks, such as Thanksgiving, Christmas and Spring break, do not count against your 12-week entitlement.

## *I'm out of paid leave. Now what?*

For FMLA qualifying conditions, when all paid leave is exhausted, an employee moves to unpaid leave. Unpaid leave is commonly referred to as a dock.

## *How does unpaid leave affect my check?*

Unpaid leave results in a dock in salary. When absences that are FMLA qualifying serious health conditions and extend five (5) or more consecutive days the district allows the salary dock to be spread over the remaining paychecks for the current school year for *contracted staff*.

For non-contracted staff, the unpaid days will carry over as a dock and will be processed accordingly. This could result in no paycheck being issued for the dock period. Should leave result in you not receiving a paycheck, you will be responsible to make your monthly benefit premium contribution payment by the 20th of the month.



### ***Parental Leave Salary Dock Example—Contracted Staff Only***

A **teacher** gives birth January 1. The teacher takes eight (8) weeks of maternity leave. The teacher has four (4) weeks of a combination of accrued sick leave and personal leave. This leaves a remaining four (4) weeks of unpaid leave.

The teacher's annual salary is \$37,900. The teacher has four (4) weeks of accumulated leave. There is no change in salary for these weeks. The teacher then wants to take an additional four (4) weeks of unpaid leave. There will be a change in salary due to a salary dock since the employee does not have any leave available to cover the absences.

To determine the total amount of the salary dock, Human Resources will determine the daily rate and then the number of days to dock. In this case, the teacher works 182 days per year. The annual salary (\$37,900) divided by the total number of days worked (182) determines the daily rate which is \$208.24.

The daily rate is then multiplied by the total number of days that the employee is absent in unpaid status. In this example, the teacher has four (4) weeks of unpaid leave, which is 20 days. The total amount of the salary dock is \$4,164.80.

The teacher's first payment for the school year is in September. Since the employee's leave began in January, and January payroll has not yet been complete, the employee has eight (8) checks left to be paid for the current school year (January – August). The salary dock of \$4,164.80 would be deducted from the remaining eight (8) checks. In this example, the teacher would have their monthly salary docked by \$520.60.

# Benefits

## *What happens to my healthcare coverage and other benefits while on parental leave?*

While on parental leave, your benefits will continue as if you were working. Insurance plan premiums will continue to be deducted out of paychecks. Should your leave result in no paycheck being issued, you will need to make arrangements with the Benefits department to pay your required premiums no later than the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.

## *How do I enroll my baby in insurance?*

If you wish to enroll your baby in district insurance, you must complete a Qualifying Life Event through Bswift ([www.jcschools.bswift.com](http://www.jcschools.bswift.com)). You have 31 days to complete the Qualifying Life Event if you wish to add your baby to your insurance. If you miss this window, you will have to wait to make any changes/additions to your insurance until open enrollment. To view medical plan premiums and details, visit the Human Resources benefits page at [www.jcschools.us/page/139](http://www.jcschools.us/page/139).

## *What is Short Term Disability?*

Short-term disability replaces part of your income if you can't work for a short time due to a covered disability. The voluntary short-term disability plan does not provide benefits if you have a pre-existing condition. If you submit a claim within 12 months of your insurance taking effect the plan will not pay any benefit for any pre-existing condition. A pre-existing condition includes anything you have sought treatment for in the 6 months prior to your insurance becoming effective. Treatment can include consultation, advice, care, services or a prescription for drugs or medicine.

If you are enrolled for the short-term disability plan and your short-term disability claim has been approved, you will receive payment from this plan once you've exhausted all of your paid leave. When you are in unpaid leave status, this plan will cover 60% of your total weekly earnings, up to \$1,500 per week. Benefits begin 8 days after you are unable to work due to pregnancy and benefits may be paid for up to 13 weeks, as long as you are still unable to work due to a covered disability.

Contact the Benefits department at 573-632-3441 with any questions or to work through submitting a claim.

## *My doctor's office charges me to complete the FMLA paperwork. Can I use my Health Savings Account (HSA) for this?*

Yes, maternity leave paperwork is considered a medical expense and is HSA eligible.

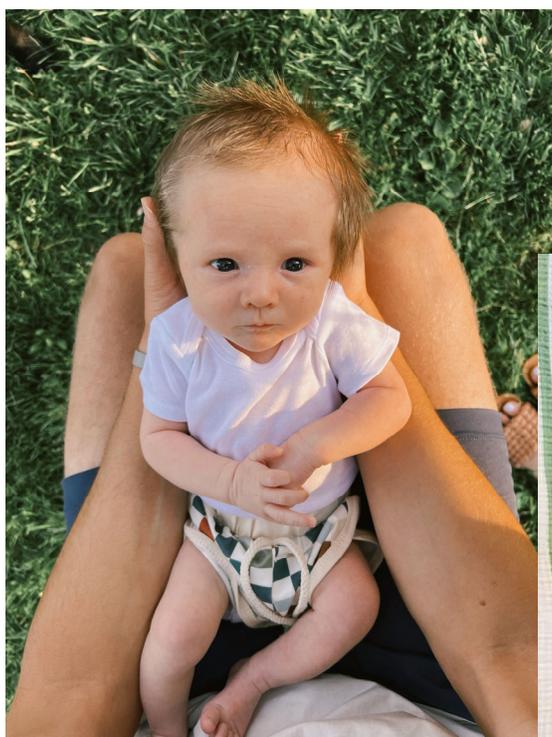


*I've heard I can receive a free breast pump if I'm covered under the district's insurance – is this correct?*

You heard right! If you are enrolled in one of the district's medical plans, you are eligible to receive a free breast pump when utilizing a UMR covered provider

You must login or register with UMR. Then, follow the steps below.

- ⇒ Once logged in, click on "Find a Provider" under myMenu.
- ⇒ Under the Provider Network section, click on the National Vendors Directory box (right under Additional Resources).
- ⇒ You will then be taken to a document that outlines different vendors approved to provide services to UMR members.
- ⇒ To view covered UMR breast pump providers, scroll down to the DME-Breast pump purchase section. You will see a list of eligible providers through your insurance plan that you may contact to purchase your breast pump, free of charge.



# Returning to Work

## *What do I need to provide before returning to work?*

A completed Return to Work Authorization must be completed. The authorization form can be found in PowerSchool Records. This authorization verifies that you are healthy enough to return to your job. The authorization form will need to be completed by your physician. Once complete, the form must be submitted to the Benefits department.

## *What about nursing when I return to work?*

The district recognizes that many women choose to breastfeed their children for a variety of reasons and will attempt to accommodate women who are breastfeeding or who need to express breast milk while on district property as long as such actions do not disrupt the education environment. The district will provide reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child each time the employee has a need to express. To the extent possible, such break times shall run concurrently with the break times already provided to the employee. Employees are encouraged to notify their supervisors in advance of their intent to make use of the [Nursing Mothers \(EBBC\) policy](#). The supervisor shall work with the employee to address arrangements and scheduling to ensure that the employee's duties are covered during the break time and to minimize disruptions to the school day.

Providing breaks to classroom teachers and other employees who directly supervise and educate students throughout the day is particularly challenging since students cannot be left unsupervised, and student learning cannot be disrupted. The district expects these employees to be particularly flexible and, whenever possible, to use planning periods, lunch breaks, routine breaks in their class schedule or other free time to meet their expressing needs. In accordance with law, the district will provide a location, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public to express breast milk.

## *How do I purchase service for unpaid sick leave time?*

Unpaid time off work for parental leave can impact your service credit in the Public School and Education Employee Retirement System of Missouri (PSRS, PSRS-S, or PEERS). In order to accrue one (1) year of service credit in the Retirement System, you must earn at least 95% of your expected salary for the year. Any unpaid days, including days for which you receive short-term disability payments, will be deducted from your annual salary and, therefore, reduce the percent of salary earned for the year.

Employees who do not earn 95% of their salary for the year have the opportunity to buy-back service credit that was not earned due to unpaid parental leave. The buy-back is calculated based on the total number of approved unpaid sick leave days for the year and the applicable contribution rate for PSRS, PSRS-S, or PEERS. Employees have two (2) school years following the year of the parental leave to buy-back up to 100% of their un-earned service credit.

If you're interested in purchasing service credit for unpaid parental leave, complete the Purchase Service for Unpaid Sick Leave form in PowerSchool Records. This form can be found in the Available Forms section.



## Resources

### Benefits Department

Webpage: [www.jcschools.us/domain/53](http://www.jcschools.us/domain/53) or contact us with any questions at 573-632-3441

### *UMR – Medical Plans*

[www.umar.com](http://www.umar.com) or 800.826.9781

If you're enrolled in district insurance, you have access to your plan's maternity care and a free breast pump.

### *Sun Life Financial – Voluntary Plans Short-term Disability*

[www.sunlife.com/account](http://www.sunlife.com/account) or 877.932.7287

You can check on the status of a submitted short-term disability claim.

### *Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)*

Get tips for a healthy work-life balance by utilizing either of the EAP providers below:

**Capital Region Physicians Center for Mental Wellness** [www.crmc.org](http://www.crmc.org) 573.632.5560

**Sun Life Financial - ComPsych** [www.guidanceresources.com](http://www.guidanceresources.com)

Click on Register

JC Schools Web ID: EAPBusiness or contact 877.595.5281





**The children featured in this guide are JC Schools' own. Let's say welcome to Adam, Addisyn, Allen & Judd, Brooks, Charlie, Cohen & Westley, Dean & Carter, Elaine, Eleanor, Ellis, Emmersyn Murray, Grayson, Henley, Klint, Lee, Marie, Royce, Ryleigh Mae, Tripp, Tyne, Walker and Zackary Ryan**