

## **Additional Information About Your Leave of Absence**

Please note that not all the information provided here will be applicable to you and your type of approved leave. The type of leave that you have been approved for is listed in the subject line of your approval letter. Each section designates which leave the information pertains to.

### **Adoption Leave**

*Applicable to:*

*FMLA – Maternity/Paternity/Adoption*

*General Leave – Maternity/Paternity/Adoption*

- The adoption certificate needs to be sent to [HRLeaveofAbsence@hcpss.org](mailto:HRLeaveofAbsence@hcpss.org) within 48 hours of the event taking place. Please provide the date you were first out of work.
  - If applicable, your Leave Specialist will send a revised letter updating your leave start and end dates

### **Bereavement Leave**

*Applicable to:*

*FMLA – Family Member Illness*

*FMLA Intermittent – Family Member Illness*

*General Leave – Family Member Illness*

- FMLA and General Leaves do not extend from Family Illness to Bereavement Leave if the family member, for which the leave was taken, passes away
- If this occurs while you are on leave, please contact your Leave Specialist to discuss your options

### **Change of Approved Leave of Absence Dates**

*Applicable to all FMLA Leaves and General Leaves*

- You are required to notify your Leave Specialist as soon as possible if the dates of your approved Leave of Absence change for any reason

### **Child Rearing Leave**

*Applicable to General Leave – Child Rearing*

- Child Rearing leave will be counted as a full year even if only a partial year is taken
  - Contact your Leave Specialist if you have any questions about the time used/available
- You are required to keep your certification valid while on Child Rearing Leave
  - Contact your [Certification Specialist](#) with any questions

### **Eleven Month Employees**

*Applicable to all FMLA Leaves and General Leaves*

- Eleven-month employees are required to work additional days per fiscal school year. This is accomplished by collaborating with their supervisor to create an “Approved Work calendar.”
- When applying for a Leave of Absence a copy of the Approved Work calendar signed by the supervisor must be submitted. This is to ensure that the allotted FMLA days are calculated correctly (if applicable) and the additional workdays are paid by payroll.

### **Family Crisis Leave Exchange**

*Applicable to:*

*FMLA – Family Member Illness*

*General Leave – Family Member Illness*

- Please note that Family Crisis Leave Exchange is only available to employees in HCEA and HCEA-ESP bargaining units
- Please review the information provided in the applicable Master Agreement for more information on this leave

### **Extension of Approved Leave of Absence Dates**

*Applicable to all FMLA Leaves and General Leaves*

- If you need to extend your leave of absence for any reason, please use Guardian Extension link found [here](#)
  - You have 7 days from the request date to provide updated documentation so that a determination can be made

### **FAQS**

*Applicable to all FMLA Leaves and General Leaves*

- FAQs about Leave of Absences be found [here](#)

### **FMLA**

*Applicable to all FMLA Leaves*

- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal law and information about can be found [here](#)
- You are entitled to use up to 60 work days of FMLA within a 12-month period
  - FMLA Calculation – your Leave Specialist will use the approved HCPSS school calendar and will only count the workdays scheduled during your leave of absence to calculate the 60 day allotment. Please note that half days are counted as a full day for FMLA Calculation purposes. If you have any questions on how the allotment was calculated, please contact your Leave Specialist.

### **HCPSS Active Directory (Log in, Email, etc.)**

*Applicable to all FMLA Leaves and General Leaves*

- While on leave, it is your responsibility to keep your HCPSS Active Directory information current. To do this, please log in at least once every 60 days to keep your accounts active.
- Important HCPSS information and communications, including updated medical benefits information, will only be sent to your HCPSS email address, so it is important to keep your email active and check it occasionally.

### **HCPSS Provided Technology Equipment (computers, phones, etc.)**

*Applicable to all General Leaves in which the position was declared a vacancy*

- If you were provided HCPSS technology (computers, phones, and any other HCPSS devices), you must return them prior to going on leave.
  - School based staff should return the equipment to the Media Specialist/Technology Teacher.
  - Non-school based staff should return the equipment to their immediate supervisor.
  - If you need alternate arrangements, please email [ITAM@hcpss.org](mailto:ITAM@hcpss.org).

### **HCPSS Years of Service (YOS)**

#### *Applicable to all General Leaves*

- Time spent on a General Leave of Absence does not count towards HCPSS Years of Service (YOS), therefore the leave of absence may impact when you become eligible for HCPSS Retiree Benefits
- Your YOS with HCPSS may not be the same as your Eligibility Service with the MSRA
- Your HCPSS YOS is calculated at the time your Intent to Retire is submitted
- You can contact MSRA at 410-625-5555 for your MSRA Eligibility Service date

#### **Intermittent FMLA Leave**

##### *Applicable to all Intermittent FMLA leaves*

- Your intermittent FMLA time-off requests submitted in Workday will be reviewed by your Leave Specialist.
  - If the request(s) exceeds the amount of time approved in the leave letter, you may be requested to obtain updated medical documentation to support the request.
  - If the request(s) is for longer than 3 consecutive workdays, the intermittent leave request may need to be changed to a continuous leave of absence. If this is the case, your Leave Specialist will reach out to discuss your options.

#### **Maryland State Retirement Agency (MSRA)**

##### *Applicable to:*

*FMLA – Maternity/Paternity/Adoption*

*FMLA – Military*

*FMLA – Personal Illness*

*General Leave – Maternity/Paternity/Adoption*

*General Leave – Military*

*General Leave – Personal Illness*

*General Leave – Study*

- A member of MSRA may be entitled to receive eligibility and creditable service for certain periods of employer approved leave of absence from employment, if the leave of absence meets the criteria for a “qualifying leave of absence” per COMAR regulations
  - Types of qualifying leaves (with a maximum time of 2 years) are:
    - Personal Illness
    - Birth or legal adoption of a child
    - Government sponsored and/or subsidized employment (i.e. Military Leave)
    - Study
  - At least part of the leave of absence needs to be unpaid, meaning that you are not receiving a paycheck and not contributing to your MSRA account
- Form 46 is to be completed and sent back to your Leave and Retirement Specialist prior to going on a leave of absence to preserve your right to obtain credit for the period of your leave
- A link to Form 46 can be found [here](#)
- Questions about this information can be directed to MSRA at 410-625-5555

#### **Master Agreements**

##### *Applicable to all FMLA Leaves and General Leaves*

- Please familiarize yourself with the Leave of Absence information provided in the Master Agreements, which can be found [here](#)

## **Maternity/Paternity Leave**

*Applicable to:*

*FMLA – Maternity/Paternity/Adoption*

*General Leave – Maternity/Paternity/Adoption*

- If you end up working past your approved leave start date (because the baby is not born and you are still working), you will need to inform your Leave Specialist via email immediately so that your paycheck is accurate
- The certificate of birth needs to be sent to [HRLeaveofAbsence@hcpss.org](mailto:HRLeaveofAbsence@hcpss.org) within 48 hours of the event taking place. Please provide the date you were first out of work.
  - You can obtain the certificate of birth from the hospital. Please note, this is NOT a birth certificate, which can take a few weeks to receive.
  - If applicable, your Leave Specialist will send a revised letter updating your leave start and end dates

## **Returning from a Leave of Absence**

*Applicable to all FMLA Leaves (Not Intermittent FMLA Leaves) and General Leaves*

- Whether or not your position has been declared a vacancy will be listed on your leave letter. Your position being declared a vacancy means that your position becomes open, and your supervisor has the ability to hire for your position and location.
  - If your position has not been declared a vacancy, then you are expected to return to work on the first duty day after the Anticipated Leave End Date
  - If your position has been declared a vacancy, information on the process is below
    - If your leave end date is between March 1<sup>st</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup>, it is your responsibility to notify the Department of Human Resources of your anticipated return to work date in writing by March 1<sup>st</sup>
    - If your leave end date is not between March 1<sup>st</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup>, there is no requirement to notify the Department of Human Resources of your anticipated return to work date in writing, but it is preferred so we can prepare for your return
    - When a position has been identified, you will receive official communication from the Executive Director of Human Resources informing you of your placement and date to return to work
    - The actual effective date of your placement is contingent on the number of available vacancies in an employee's respective job classification / content / certification area at the time of the request
      - This means that you may not be placed in the same location but will be placed in an equivalent position
      - If the position you held prior to your leave of absence is still available, you will be returned to that position
- Your supervisor is responsible for notifying the Leave Specialist, in writing, that you have returned to work on your first day back. Please remind your supervisor to follow through with this requirement via email and copy you. Failure to do so may result in payroll delays.
- If you fail to return to work or fail to notify us of your intent to extend your leave, it will be construed as a lack of interest in continued employment. This could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. As a result, you will be required to reimburse HCPSS for any medical and health premiums paid during your leave.

## **Sick Leave Bank**

*Applicable to:*

*FMLA Intermittent – Personal Illness*

*FMLA – Maternity/Paternity/Adoption*

*FMLA – Personal Illness*

*General Leave – Maternity/Paternity/Adoption*

*General Leave – Personal Illness*

- Sick Leave Bank is a benefit provided in each Master Agreement and you may be eligible to use it during your leave of absence
- To find out if you are a current member of Sick Leave Bank, follow these steps in Workday:
  - Click on Overview on the left side of the screen
  - Under the Additional Data tab on the top of the screen, scroll down to Sick Bank
  - The Date Joined and Sick Bank Member information will be provided here
- HCEA and HCEA-ESP Sick Leave Bank Information can be accessed [here](#)
- Sick Leave Bank Administrator contact information for all bargaining units can be found [here](#)

### **Snow Days/Unplanned HCPSS Closure**

*Applicable to all FMLA Leaves (Not Intermittent FMLA)*

- If there is a snow day/unplanned HCPSS closure, it might affect the end date of your leave due to the number of working days being changed while you are on leave
- If a closure occurs while you are on leave, please notify your Leave Specialist two (2) weeks before the end of your leave to review/update your leave end date

### **Study Leave**

*Applicable to General Leave – Study*

- Per the Master Agreements, Study Leave “Shall be planned to commence and terminate at the beginning of the fall semester”
  - If you would like to end your Study Leave prior to the beginning of the fall semester, there is no guarantee a placement will be available to you during the school year

### **Tenure**

*Applicable to all FMLA Leaves and General Leaves*

- As an educator who has not yet achieved tenure, your leave of absence will affect your estimated tenure date. Your estimated tenure date will be delayed equivalent to the number of workdays that you were on leave.
- Upon returning from your leave of absence, your estimated tenure date will be updated in Workday. (This process will be different for an educator on a conditional certificate/license as the tenure date is also dependent upon when the educator transitions to a professional license.)

### **Workday – Approver of Tasks**

- If you are a Workday approver, you will need to delegate your inbox tasks. Please view this page to learn more about delegating tasks:  
[https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/32861/discussion\\_topics/171014](https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/32861/discussion_topics/171014)

### **Working an Additional HCPSS Job While on Leave**

*Applicable to all FMLA Leaves (Not Intermittent FMLA) and General Leaves*

- *Family Member Illness, Maternity/Paternity/Adoption, Personal Illness (FMLA and General Leaves)*

- Employees on this type of leave of absence are **not** permitted to work temporary positions for HCPSS, including but not limited to:
  - Substitute
  - Home and Hospital
  - Lunch/Recess Monitor
  - Coach
  - Tutor
- *General Leave – Child Rearing and General Leave – Study:*
  - Note: this does not pertain to AFCSME members. AFCSME members should contact your Leave Specialist to discuss your situation before applying to a temporary HCPSS position
  - Per the Negotiated Agreement: “Nothing contained herein shall prevent an employee on leave without pay from being a substitute or doing other temporary work for the Howard County School System while on such leave. While on leave, the employee is still under contract with the Board, therefore they cannot accept other similar employment.
- *Military Leaves (FMLA and General Leaves)*
  - Please contact your Leave Specialist to discuss your situation before applying to a temporary HCPSS position

### **Working in Your Current Role While on Leave**

*Applicable to:*

*All FMLA Leaves*

*General Leave – Maternity/Paternity/Adoption*

*General Leave – Personal Illness*

*General Leave – Family Illness*

- You are not to work while you are on a leave of absence. This includes, but is not limited to: reaching out to parents, grading papers, attending meetings, creating lesson plans, attending school events as an employee, etc.
- Your Supervisor should not ask you to do any work while you are on a leave of absence.

**If you have any questions about the above information or have additional questions that were not answered above, please contact your Leave Specialist.**