

A POLICY STATEMENT OF
THE HANCOCK COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
New Cumberland, West Virginia 26047

PROFESSIONAL and SERVICE STAFF LEAVES AND ABSENCES

The Hancock County Board of Education believes that responsible use of sick leave is important in the effective and efficient operation of Hancock County Schools. When employees are absent, this impacts our efforts to provide high quality instruction. We recognize illness is unavoidable and that there may be times when employees are unable to attend work; however, the county expects employees to use the personal leave benefit with discretion.

The school calendar, as adopted by the Hancock County Board of Education, establishes the school recess periods and holidays for all employees. The Board of Education expects that employees will schedule personal vacations and trips to coincide with the adopted school calendar, so as not to interfere with their assigned obligations.

Personal Leave/Sick Leave/Leave with Cause

Authorized by WV Code §18A-4-10, at the beginning of each employment term, the Hancock County Board of Education will provide any full-time employee, one and one-half (1 1/2) days of personal leave for each month of regular employment or fraction thereof in the employment term. Regular half-time employees shall be entitled annually to at least three-quarters of one day of paid leave for each month or fraction thereof in the employee's employment term. Unused leave shall be accumulated without limitation and is transferable within the state. A change in job assignment during the school year shall in no way affect the employee's rights or benefits with respect to paid leave.

Absences

The employee is responsible for calling the Substitute Employee Management System "SmartFind Express - TSSI" to report an absence, an absence reason, and record any special instructions. The employee is responsible for recording and maintaining the job number assigned by the system for the remainder of the school year. Failure of an employee to report an absence in the TSSI system is subject to disciplinary action.

A Hancock County Absent Report Form is to be completed **IMMEDIATELY** upon returning to the job.

Abuse of Paid Leave

Employees who make excessive use of leave or who demonstrate a suspicious pattern of using leave shall be subject to investigation. An employee who is found to have improperly exercised paid leave shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of his/her employment contract(s).

Physician's Written Verification of Illness

Whenever any employee uses paid leave for cause for more than (3) three consecutive working days or for (10) ten working days total within any single school year on account of injury sustained in an accident or sickness, the employee, upon his/her return to work, **MAY** be required to submit written verification from his/her attending physician setting forth ALL of the following: 1) nature of the illness or injury, 2) the date on which the illness or injury began, 3) the date on which the employee was examined by the physician in connection with the illness or injury, and 4) a statement that the employee is able to return to work without restrictions.

A physician's certificate may also be required in the following circumstances: absent both Friday and Monday, absent both days before and after a holiday, when taken in conjunction with a Personal Leave (PL) day, or in the judgment of the immediate supervisor, or sick leave is being used in excess or abused.

The written verification of the “nature of the illness or injury” may be expressed in the following general terms by the physician and need not provide details about the patient’s symptoms: common cold, flu, chronic condition or disease, broken bone, sprain-strain-whiplash-soft tissue injury, wound, or other (specify).

Physician, for the purposes of this policy, means a professional licensed to practice medicine as a doctor, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner.

Statements from physicians or others merely stating that “the patient was seen today” or similar statements that do not verify the employee’s illness or injury as required by this section do NOT comply with this paragraph and shall NOT be honored. Submission of such statements shall be treated as non-compliant with this policy.

Paid Leave for Cause: Sick Leave, Bereavement Leave & Other Approved Leave

As explained further herein, a regular full-time employee who is absent from assigned duties due to: 1) Illness/sickness, 2) an injury sustained in an accident, 3) death in the employee’s immediate family, 4) life-threatening illness of the employee’s spouse, parents, or child, 5) the birth or adoption of his/her child, or 6) other cause authorized or approved by the Board, shall be paid the full salary from his/her regular budgeted salary appropriation during the period which the employee is absent for these reasons, the same amount not to exceed the total amount of leave to which the employee is legally entitled.

Illness-Personal and Injury sustained in an accident - refers to an employee being unable to perform his or her job duties because of illness or injury resulting from sickness or an accident. A physician’s certificate shall be required for more than (3) consecutive absences.

Illness-Family - An employee may use a maximum of three (3) days of paid leave to care for members of his/her immediate family who are suffering illness from an accident or sickness. A certificate from the attending physician shall be required after (3) consecutive days or a total of (5) five days per year.

Funeral-Immediate Family - An employee may use a maximum of five (5) days of paid leave (per occurrence) for death in the employee’s immediate family.

Employee’s immediate family for the purposes of this policy shall mean the death/illness of an employee’s relative with whom the employee was living in the same household at the time of the relative’s death, and/or the employee’s father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, husband, wife, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandmother, grandfather, grandfather-in-law, grandmother-in-law, grandson, grand-daughter, stepmother, stepfather, stepchildren, cousin, niece, nephew, aunt, uncle, foster parents, foster children, half-brother, half-sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, daughter-in-law and son-in-law.

Arrangements/Hospital/Nursing Care - Absence up to two (2) days (per occurrence) to make arrangements for the hospitalization or nursing care for a member of his/her immediate family.

Application may be addressed in writing to the Superintendent for an extension due to catastrophic illness or other unforeseen circumstances of an immediate family member.

Personal Business - Paid Leave Without Regard to Cause

Each employee is permitted to use no more than three days of personal leave annually without regard to the cause for the absences. Paid leave without cause may not be used on consecutive work days unless authorized or approved by the employee’s principal or immediate supervisor and Superintendent or designee, as appropriate. The employee shall give notice of his/her intent to exercise a day of leave without cause to the principal or immediate supervisor, as appropriate, at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the same, except that in the case of sudden and unexpected circumstances, notice shall be given as soon as reasonably practicable.

A principal or immediate supervisor may deny an employee's use of a day of paid leave without regard to cause if, at the time notice is given by the employee, either fifteen percent of the employees or three employees, whichever is greater, under the supervision of the principal or immediate supervisor, have previously given notice of their intention to use a day of paid leave without cause on that same day, and the same has already been approved by the principal or immediate supervisor.

Employees must confirm the approval of their principal or immediate supervisor prior to entering that day into "Smart Find Express," Employee Management System.

Any employee taking leave in violation of the above stated reasons for granting personal leave shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Paid Leave Days on Partial Work Days

Accumulated paid leave days (with or without cause) may only be utilized in full or half-day increments.

Paid Leave Records and Request for Information about Paid Leave

Records of accumulated paid leave days will be kept by the payroll department. Requests for an accounting of one's own accumulated paid leave days must be made in writing to the Superintendent/designee.

Forced Repayment of Leave Benefit

Where an employee has exercised paid leave in a manner inconsistent with this policy, or fails to verify the reasons for use of paid leave for cause, the Board may make necessary salary adjustments in the next pay after the employee has returned to duty or in the final pay if the non-conforming exercise of paid leave should occur during the last month of an Employee's employment.

National Board Certification

The Hancock County Board of Education recognizes that the rigorous standards for certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) helps to promote the quality of teaching and learning. In order to encourage classroom teachers to achieve National Board Certification, an annual salary supplement will be paid to teachers holding and maintaining said certification. The amount of the annual bonus will be established by the County Board of Education in accordance with applicable State statute. (WV Code 18A-4-2a) In addition, Hancock County will provide up to/not more than three (3) days of release to be used by candidates to pursue NBPTS certification. NBPTS is valid for 10 years.

Candidates in their eighth (8) or ninth (9) years pursuing renewal of NBPTS will be allocated two (2) days to obtain this certification. Those teachers wishing to use release days must notify their principal and Superintendent/designee, complete a Hancock County Schools Absence Report Form and charge to leave of absence and supply the reason as NBPTS certification.

Date Adopted: 5/14/12
Date Amended: 12/10/12; 8/25/14; 1/23/17; 2/13/17
Date Reviewed:

The above Policy Statement is an integral part of the Official Policy Manual of this Board of Education as of the date shown adopted.