

FAMILY CARE LEAVE

This policy governs employee leave under 26 M.R.S.A. § 636, “An Act to Care for Families,” referred to in this policy as the “Family Care Act.” Leave under this policy is referred to as “Family Care Leave.”

The School Committee recognizes that under Maine’s “Family Care Act,” if an employer provides paid leave under the terms of a collective bargaining agreement or employment policy, the employer must allow an employee to use the paid leave for the care of an immediate family member who is ill.

In law and for the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- A. “Employer” means a public or private employer with 25 or more employees.
- B. “Immediate family member” means an employee’s child, spouse or parent.
- C. “Paid leave” means time away from work by an employee for which the employee receives compensation. Paid leave is limited to sick time, vacation time, compensatory time, and leave that is provided as an aggregate amount for use at the discretion of the employee for any of these purposes. Paid leave does not include paid short-term or long-term disability, catastrophic leave, or similar types of benefits.

Employees may take up to six weeks of paid leave as Family Care Leave per 12-month period or the amount provided by an applicable collective bargaining agreement, whichever is greater.

The 12-month period used to determine employee eligibility for FMLA for the purposes described above shall be the rolling 12-month period measured backward from the date the employee first uses family medical leave.

An employee is not entitled to use paid leave until that leave has been earned.

Any employee electing to take Family Care Leave must apply such leave against available paid sick leave and if paid sick leave is exhausted, against personal leave until all paid leave available has been exhausted, except as otherwise provided in applicable collective bargaining agreements.]

Notice/verification of illness for Family Care Leave shall be the same as that required for the employee’s own illness. The employee must specify that leave is being taken pursuant to the Family Care Act.

Application of Family Medical Leave Requirements

For purposes of applying family medical leave requirements (i.e., FMLA), the school unit shall treat leave under the Family Care Act in the same manner as the employer treats leave for an employee illness. Therefore, Family Care leave and FMLA leave shall run concurrently.

Legal Reference: 26 M.R.S.A. § 636

Adopted: December 1, 2014

Revised: October 7, 2019; May 1, 2023

Cross Reference: GBN - Family and Medical Leave