



Educator Absence Policy

I. PURPOSE

The Superintendent, either directly or through their Central Office designee (hereafter “Administration” unless otherwise indicated) is responsible for authorizing educator absences in accordance with this Policy, and the applicable laws referenced herein. This authorization from the Administration is a core educational responsibility essential to carrying out the BPS mission of providing each student with a highly qualified and effective educator for the entirety of each school year; this responsibility, in turn, requires that the Administration be able to plan for and minimize interruptions in the delivery of those educational services. All educators are expected to be regular in attendance as consistent instruction from highly effective staff is in the best educational interest of students. Additionally, educator absenteeism requires the absent educator to be paid as well as a substitute, which redirects resources from the core mission of the District: educating children. This Policy shall be applied in conjunction with the Family and Medical Leave Policy (“FMLA Policy”) and the Reasonable Accommodation Policy (“Accommodation Policy”).

II. Authorized Absences

Educators who are absent from work must receive such authorization prior to, contemporaneously with, or shortly after the absence commences. The following types of absences are authorized:

Short-Term Absence: Educators who experience a short-term illness (requiring absence of 3 consecutive calendar days or fewer) that renders them unable to carry out their work responsibilities or educators who have a family member with a short-term illness that requires the care or supervision of the educator shall notify the appropriate Administration personnel and/or building administrator of the need to be absent and to record that absence in the district’s attendance tracking system as much in advance as possible so that appropriate coverage may be arranged. The educator shall only use this absence (also known as a “sick day”) for its designated purpose and will make every effort to share in the responsibility of caring for a family member with other members of the family.



FMLA/RIPFMLA Leave: An educator who is absent due to their own “serious health condition,” (as described in the FMLA Policy and defined under the law) may be eligible for a job protected leave of 12 and or 13 weeks under the Family and Medical Leave Act and/or the Rhode Island Parental and Family Medical Leave Act. Educators should refer to the FMLA Policy for details about the eligibility and grounds for such leave, health benefits during such leave, and related matters. The Administration is responsible for reviewing requests for FMLA/RIPFMLA Leave and authorizing or denying such leave in accordance with law. A leave under the FMLA/RIPFMLA is unpaid, although the educator granted such leave shall discharge accrued sick or personal time, and thereafter, may seek monies by making an application to the Major Illness Bank, as set forth in the collective bargaining agreement.

Leave of Absence as Accommodation: An educator who is not eligible for or is denied FMLA/RIPFMLA Leave may be eligible for a leave of absence as a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) and related state law. The Administration is responsible for reviewing requests for such leave and granting or denying those requests in accordance with the ADA. The duration of the leave is case-specific and can vary from a few days to a longer period but will often be of shorter duration than that permitted under the FMLA/RIPFMLA. A leave of absence as an accommodation is not the same as leave authorized under the FMLA/RIPFMLA. The Administration and educator shall confer and review documentation and information from the educator’s health care provider so that the Administration can assess whether the leave is reasonable and for the purpose of enabling the educator to return to work to carry out the essential job functions, and if so, whether granting such leave would nonetheless place an undue burden on the BPS. A leave of absence as an accommodation is unpaid, although the educator granted such leave shall discharge accrued sick or personal time, and thereafter, may seek monies by making application to the Major Illness Bank, as set forth in the collective bargaining agreement.

Other Leave: An educator may request and the Administration may grant other types of leave as permitted and described and subject to the terms set forth under the provisions set forth in the collective bargaining agreement (e.g., bereavement leave, jury or witness leave, educational leave, personal or professional visitation leave). All educators recognize the importance of every school day. Therefore, with regard to personal leave, educators may only utilize these days for personal business that they cannot conduct at any other time. In addition,



in applying for personal leave immediately preceding or immediately following a holiday or school vacation period, the educator must state in writing the nature of the personal business to be conducted on that day, and must obtain prior approval from the Superintendent to take such personal leave. The Superintendent may limit the number of personal days connected to holidays to two or more consecutive days to maintain the effective operation of the school.

III. Educator Responsibilities

An educator absent from the BPS for any reason is expected to provide adequate, appropriate, current written lesson plans and other pertinent materials relating to schedule, curriculum and instruction planned for the day or whatever period of leave to the principal or their designee, which shall be made available to the substitute educator. In addition, an educator shall cooperate in providing information requested by the Administration is assessing the request, so that the Administration can make timely decisions regarding the authorization of such leave. Overuse or misuse of absence days, failure to notify a building administrator of absence in a timely manner or to follow the automated absence recording procedure, failure to provide medical documentation when requested, or failure to provide lesson plans during an absence may result in disciplinary action.

IV. Administration Responsibilities

The Administration shall:

1. Maintain appropriately detailed, accurate, and up-to-date absence records regarding all staff;
2. Periodically analyze the frequency of use and reasons for use by educators of absences and leaves of absence;
3. Ensure that all educators timely provide the necessary information for the Administration to assess requests for all types of leave; and
4. Implement disciplinary procedures when necessary.

All building administrators, as directed by the Administration, shall take the following actions in managing absenteeism within the BPS:

1. Ensure that appropriate coverage is provided during an educator's absence(s);
2. Be a point of contact for the educator's advance notification of the request to be absent from the workplace and if a short-term absence, ensure that the automated absence reporting system is functional and monitored;
3. Identify any patterns or trends regarding an educator's absences and report the same to the Administration;



4. After consultation with the Administration, discuss the attendance record reflecting excessive or patterned absences with the educator; and
5. Limit the number of educators out on professional development to ensure the successful management of the school.

Barrington Public Schools School Committee

First Reading: 8/19/2020

Second Reading: 9/3/2020

Adoption: 9/3/2020