

**Employee's Leave of Absence**

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The Board of Education recognizes that there are justifiable situations that require an employee to be absent from his or her job with the Madison Public Schools. Contracts between the Board of Education and employees' recognized bargaining units address employees' absences for the following specific categories, as applicable to the individual contracts: *personal days, funeral days, vacation days, holidays, religious days, professional days, association days, sick days, pregnancy leave / childrearing leave, jury duty, and sabbatical leave.*

For the aforementioned categories of employees' absences, contract language provides conditions of approval for processing an employee's absence. However, for general or special leaves of absence, conditions for approval need to be comprehensively delineated to provide employees an understanding of the conditions under which a request for a leave of absence will be approved by the administration, the Superintendent, and / or the Board of Education.

Therefore, this policy shall serve two purposes: (1) to communicate such understanding to employees and (2) to provide guidelines for administrators, the Superintendent and / or the Board of Education, as appropriate, in the decision making / approval process, which requires them to make a determination as to whether or not to approve a request for a general or special leave of absence.

**Guidelines for Approval of Leave of Absence:**

For an employee to receive approval for a request for a leave of absence (paid or unpaid), the following process shall be followed:

1. The employee shall submit a written request (approved district form) for a leave of absence to his / her administrator at least 30 days in advance of the scheduled leave, except in cases of emergency or personal crisis.
2. The employee's written request shall clearly and completely meet the following conditions of approval, as determined through the approval process:

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- The leave is necessary because the activity cannot be scheduled on a non-school or non-work day.
  - The leave is necessary because the residual impact on the employee or his / her family, if participation is denied, could contribute to personal hardship.
  - The leave is necessary because the employee will be “at-risk” or incur potential personal liability if denied approval to participate.
3. The employee’s administrator shall review the written request for leave of absence and determine that the following assurances will be met if the leave of absence is granted the employee:
- The employee’s attendance record / history, excluding absences for medical reasons, is acceptable and does not indicate a pattern of abuse.
  - Consistent and adequate coverage of the employee’s classroom or workstation can be guaranteed during the employee’s absence.
  - The degree of disruption to the education of the students, services to students and staff, and / or the operation of the school / district is minimal and manageable during the leave of absence.

These guidelines for approval of an employee’s request for a leave of absence shall apply in all cases, excepting requests for medical leaves and requests for professional development days, which shall align with existing Board policy and current contract language. An employee requesting an exception to the guidelines in this policy must submit a letter to the Superintendent requesting a special exception to the guidelines, along with his or her rationale for the exception. A copy of the letter must be forwarded concurrently to the employee’s administrator. The Superintendent will refer requests requiring special exceptions to the Board of Education for review and action.

The Superintendent shall develop specific regulations, as necessary, to implement this policy.

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