



Maternity Leave 101

Congratulations! You are pregnant! How do you navigate your pregnancy and job at the same time? Your union is here to help!

1. Taking a leave

The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) allows you up to 12 weeks of unpaid time off if you are a qualifying employee (have been employed at least 1 year and worked at least 1250 hours in the last 12 months), maintains your benefits eligibility while on FMLA leave, and ensures your access to your job when you return.

2. Sick Leave

You can apply your unused sick leave towards your maternity leave. You will find your total hours of sick leave available on your MPS salary statement. Divide that number by 7.5 to get your number of days that will be covered. Note: sick leave days carried over from the prior year have been earned. However, the 10 days credited at the beginning of the current year have not all been earned yet, so subtract 1 day for each month remaining in the current school year from your total.



3. Requesting a Leave of Absence (LOA)

Under the teacher's contract, a LOA is defined as an absence of 11 or more consecutive days, which then needs to be documented. Documentation needed by the District includes the following items:

- The district LOA Request form (1 page)
- Department of Labor Form (4 page)
- Doctor's note indicating your expected due date at least 30 days in advance

Teachers are encouraged to make arrangements at least 45 days prior to the beginning date of the leave, including a planned date of return to duty whenever possible (Article 11.5.1). Contact MPS Leaves Coordinator (currently Lynsey Sahli, Lynsey.sahli@mpls.k12.mn.us) to clarify any questions, and to get your leave request formally approved, including any changes in the duration of the leave.

4. Long Call Reserve Teacher The district will take care of this! You may help your building, or make a recommendation about your LCRT, but the final decision rests with MPS.

5. **Insurance Changes**

Having a baby counts as a 'qualifying life event' for insurance purposes that opens up a 30 day special enrollment period after the date of birth allowing you to change your health insurance enrollment. Provide the District a copy of the birth certificate as part of the enrollment process. Whether going from single to family coverage, or considering going under a spouse's plan or MNSure, the MPS Benefits Department can provide options and costs available through the District to get your child health coverage.



7. **Sick Leave Pool Benefits (in case of complications)**

If you experience complications, contact MPS Benefits right away to inquire about making a Sick Leave Pool claim. While *typical* maternity leaves would **not** be covered, claims may be approved if complications arise under certain conditions (contact Benefits if you have specific situations or conditions that may come into play). Staff under the teacher's contract can apply for Pool membership at hiring or during the first 30 days of the school year in any subsequent year. There is also a teacher to teacher donation program. Contact Benefits if you have further questions about these benefit programs or wish to apply for Pool membership.

8. **Right to Pump Law**

When you return to school from maternity leave, you may still want to pump. You have the right to have time and privacy to pump while at work as follows:

MS 181.939 (a) An employer must provide reasonable unpaid break time each day to an employee who needs to express breast milk for her infant child. The break time must, if possible, run concurrently with any break time already provided to the employee. An employer is not required to provide break time under this section if to do so would unduly disrupt the operations of the employer. (b) The employer must make reasonable efforts to provide a room or other location, in close proximity to the work area, other than a bathroom or a toilet stall, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public and that includes access to an electrical outlet, where the employee can express her milk in privacy. The employer would be held harmless if reasonable effort has been made.

Make sure to contact your administrator to make arrangements.

9. **Student Contact Days Needed for Probationary Teachers**

Probationary teachers must work 120 student contact days to be able to count their year towards tenure. Professional development days and grading days do NOT count towards the 120. Please note that if you don't make the 120 days due to an FMLA leave, then you can return the following year and make the 120 days and be tenured if there are three consecutive years immediately before and after the year that was interrupted. Teachers who take a leave more than one year in a row can still take advantage of this rule.

10. **Step increment**

In order for your year to count towards a step increment, you must be on the District payroll for one (1) full semester or 110 work/duty days during a school year. Professional development & grading days are included.

****This provided information is provided as a general guide only and current as of August 2020. Please make sure to contact MPS for appropriate documents and to get updated information.****