

Personnel

SUBJECT: LEAVES OF ABSENCE

In general, leaves of absence will be administered by the District Superintendent. The Board reserves the right to grant leaves of absence for purposes or under conditions not contemplated or considered in the policy statement. Where a leave of absence is falsely requested or improperly used, the Board may undertake appropriate disciplinary action. The purpose or conditions of a leave of absence may not be altered except by permission of the District Superintendent, as expressed in writing.

Leaves of Absence, Contractual, Et Al.

- a) Employees who are members of a negotiating unit:

Authorization is granted to approve requests for leaves of absence submitted in accordance with provisions of contracts in effect between the BOCES and each bargaining unit.

- b) Employees who are not members of a negotiating unit:

Authorization is granted to approve requests for leaves of absence submitted by these employees where the requests are consistent with provisions of contracts in effect between the BOCES and the bargaining unit most compatible with the employment status of the employee.

- c) Employees who are under contract to the BOCES:

Authorization is granted to implement provisions for leaves of absence contained in each contract.

Leaves of Absence, Unpaid, Not Covered Above

- a) Subject to limitations enumerated in this policy statement, authorization is granted for the following unpaid leaves of absence:

1. For a period of time not to exceed one school year for approved graduate study, this leave to include any required internship experience.
2. At the expiration of a paid sick leave of absence, this leave may be extended for a period of time not longer than the end of the school year after the school year in which the paid leave of absence began.

- b) Unpaid leaves of absence cannot be used to extend vacation periods, to take vacations, to engage in other occupations, or to provide additional personal leaves, except that the District Superintendent will have discretion, where circumstances warrant, to approve leaves of absence for those purposes.

- c) Unpaid leaves of absence will not be granted unless the services of a substitute employee, satisfactory in the discretion of the District Superintendent, can be secured.

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- d) Except where it interferes with an employee's legal or contractual rights, the timing of unpaid leaves of absence will be granted at the convenience of the BOCES.

Other Leaves of Absence

Other leaves of absence include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) Emergency Service Volunteer Leave

Upon presentation of a written request from the American Red Cross and with the approval of the District Superintendent, employees certified by the American Red Cross as disaster volunteers will be granted leave from work with pay for up to 20 days in any calendar year to participate in specialized disaster relief operations. This leave will be provided without loss of seniority, compensation, sick leave, vacation leave, or other overtime compensation to which the volunteer is otherwise entitled.

- b) Screenings for Cancer

Employees will be granted up to four hours of paid leave on an annual basis to undertake a screening for cancer. This leave will be excused leave and will not be charged against any other leave to which the employee is entitled.

- c) Blood Donation

The BOCES must either, at its option:

1. Grant three hours of unpaid leave of absence in any 12-month period to an employee who seeks to donate blood off-premises. The leave may not exceed three hours unless agreed to by the District Superintendent or designee; or
2. Allow its employees without use of accumulated leave time to donate blood during work hours at least two times per year at a convenient time and place set by the District Superintendent or designee, including allowing an employee to participate in a blood drive at the BOCES.

Leave taken by employees at a BOCES-designated donation alternative (such as a BOCES-sponsored blood drive at the workplace) must be paid leave that is provided without requiring the employee to use accumulated vacation, personal, sick, or other leave time.

The BOCES will not retaliate against an employee for requesting or obtaining a leave of absence under this section. Additional leaves for the purpose of blood donation under any other provision of law will not be prevented.

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d) Bone Marrow Donation

Employees seeking to undergo a medical procedure to donate bone marrow will be granted leaves to do so, the combined length of the leaves to be determined by the physician, but may not exceed 24 work hours unless agreed to by the District Superintendent or designee. The BOCES will require verification for the purpose and length of each leave requested by the employee for this purpose.

The BOCES will not retaliate against an employee for requesting or obtaining a leave of absence under this section. Additional leaves for the purpose of bone marrow donation under any other provision of law will not be prevented.

e) Nursing Mothers (Breastfeeding/Lactation)

The BOCES will provide reasonable unpaid break time or permit the use of paid break time or meal time to allow an employee to express breast milk for their nursing child each time the employee has reasonable need to express breast milk for up to three years following childbirth.

Upon employee request, the BOCES will designate a room or other location to be used by the employee to express breast milk which will be in close proximity to the work area, well lit, shielded from view, and free from workplace or public intrusion. The location will, at a minimum, contain a chair, a working surface, nearby access to clean running water, and an electrical outlet. The location will not be a restroom or toilet stall. The BOCES will provide access to refrigeration for the purposes of storing expressed milk.

If the sole purpose of the location is not dedicated for use by employees to express breast milk, the location will be made available to employees when needed and will not be used for any other purpose while in use. The BOCES will provide notice to all employees as soon as practicable when the location has been designated for use by employees to express breast milk.

At the employee's option, the BOCES will allow the employee to work before or after their normal shift to make up the amount of time used during the unpaid break time(s) so long as the additional time requested falls within the BOCES' normal work hours.

The BOCES will provide a written notification regarding the rights of nursing employees to express breast milk in the workplace to each employee upon hire, annually thereafter, and to employees returning to work following the birth of a child. This notice will be based on a written policy developed by the Commissioner of Labor and will at a minimum:

1. Inform employees of their rights pursuant to law;

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2. Specify how a request may be submitted to the BOCES for a room or other location for use by an employee to express breast milk;
3. Require the BOCES to respond to requests within a reasonable time frame that is not to exceed five business days.

The BOCES will not discriminate or retaliate against an employee who chooses to express breast milk in the workplace.

f) Witnesses or Victims of Crimes

The BOCES will grant an unpaid leave of absence to an employee, who is a victim of or a witness to a criminal offense, that is required or chooses to appear as a witness, consult with the district attorney, or exercise their rights as provided in the Criminal Procedure Law, the Family Court Act, and the Executive Law.

To use this leave, the employee must provide notice of the need for leave at any time prior to the actual day of leave. The BOCES is permitted to ask the party who sought the attendance or testimony of the employee to provide verification of the employee's service. Employees will not be penalized or discharged for absences by reason of a required appearance as a witness in a criminal proceeding, or consultation with the district attorney, or exercising their rights as provided under the law.

g) Victims of Domestic Violence

Unless the absence would cause an undue hardship to the BOCES, the BOCES will provide reasonable accommodations to employees who are victims of domestic violence who must be absent from work for a reasonable time in accordance with law.

An employee availing themselves of this leave must provide the BOCES with reasonable advance notice, unless providing this notice is not feasible. An employee unable to provide reasonable advance notice must, within a reasonable time after the absence, provide a certification to the BOCES when requested.

To the extent allowed by law, the BOCES will maintain the confidentiality of any information related to an employee's status as a victim of domestic violence.

h) Military Leave

The BOCES will comply with state and federal laws regarding military leave and re-employment.

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i) Jury Duty

As provided by law, any employee who is summoned to serve as a juror and who notifies the BOCES to that effect prior to their term of service will not, on account of absence by reason of jury service, be subject to discharge or penalty. The BOCES will ensure that all absences for this purpose are granted in accordance with law and the terms of any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

j) Voting

Employees who are registered voters and have four consecutive hours either between the opening of the polls and the beginning of their working shift, or between the end of their working shift and the closing of the polls, will be deemed to have sufficient time to vote and will therefore not be eligible for paid leave to vote in any election.

Employees who are registered voters, and do not have sufficient time outside of their working hours to vote in any election, may without loss of pay for up to two hours, take so much time off as will, when added to their voting time outside of their working hours, enable them to vote. The employee will be allowed time off for voting only at the beginning or the end of their working shift, as the BOCES may designate, unless otherwise mutually agreed.

Employees requiring working time off to vote must notify the BOCES not more than ten or less than two working days before the day of the election.

The BOCES must post a notice informing employees of their right to leave in order to vote not less than ten working days before an election and until polls close on election day. This notice will be conspicuously posted in a place where it can be seen by employees as they come and go to their place of work.

29 USC Section 218d

Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), 38 USC Sections 4301-4333

Civil Service Law Sections 71-73 and 159-b

Education Law Sections 1709(16), 2509(6), 2573(12), 3005, 3005-a and 3005-b

Election Law Section 3-110

Executive Law Section 296(22)

General Municipal Law Sections 92, 92-c, and 92-d

Judiciary Law Sections 519 and 521

Labor Law Sections 202-a, 202-i, 202-j, 202-l, and 206-c

Military Law Sections 242 and 243

Penal Law Section 215.14

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