What to Expect When You're Expecting... at CMCSS

A guide with helpful insights and answers to questions for navigating CMCSS policies regarding Maternity Leave.

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The Defining Difference

Congratulations!
As if being pregnant isn't enough of a whirlwind! For working parents, there are even more plans to make. CMCSS wants to help you prepare for this exciting experience with the least amount of stress possible. Here are some helpful insights and answers to questions for navigating CMCSS policies regarding Maternity Leave.

Commonly Asked Questions

Do we have maternity leave?

Yes, CMCSS does have maternity leave benefits (see policy HUM-A031). Maternity leave is granted to employees in accordance with the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the Tennessee Maternity Leave Act (TMLA). The CMCSS Maternity Leave policy provides for unpaid leave unless an employee has accrued sick, vacation, personal or comp leave. If you have accumulated sick leave, you are required to use it during the period of your physical disability, or the baby's physical disability (determined by a physician's statement confirming your inability to work). You may use up to 6 weeks (30 work days) of sick leave for vaginal birth, and up to 8 weeks (40 work days) of sick leave for caesareans. Leave beyond this will be without pay unless you have personal leave, vacation or comp leave.

What is FMLA (Family Medical Leave Act)?

FMLA provides for up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a 12-month period for certain medical and family reasons. The birth or adoption of a child or placement of a foster child qualifies under FMLA. While on FMLA you are required to use your sick leave during the portion of leave that you or your baby may be disabled. Once you can no longer use your sick leave you are required to use any other paid leave that you have accrued. For more details on the FMLA policy please see HUM-A016. Your maternity leave and FMLA leave will run concurrently.

Does adoption of a child fall under the Maternity/FMLA act?

Yes, the adoption of a child constitutes a valid reason for requesting a leave under the procedures of the Maternity Leave Policy. In accordance with Tennessee Code Annotated, thirty (30) days of accumulated sick leave may be used for the adoption of a child. If both adoptive parents are employed with CMCSS, only one (1) parent is entitled to use sick leave for adoption. Verification for an adoption agency or other entity handling the adoption is required at the time of the leave request.

How do I apply for Maternity/FMLA leave?

Contact your Principal/Supervisor and they will provide you with the required leave forms (HUM-F015 & HUM F016). Once you have completed the forms and obtained a physicians certification you will submit the forms to your supervisor for approval and signature. These forms are then forwarded to the Human Resources for final approval and processing.

How much notice must I provide?

In order to take FMLA leave, you must provide notice to your immediate supervisor and the Chief Human Resources Officer at least 30 days in advance. The 30 day requirement may be waived if the leave is due to an emergency.

Can I choose NOT to use accrued leave while on maternity/FMLA leave?

No. Per our FMLA policy, employees are required to use all accrued sick leave through the period of disability. If applicable, personal, vacation and comp leave will also be applied.

If I have 6 months of sick leave accrued can I use it all during my Maternity/FMLA leave?

Sick leave can only be used while you or the child are disabled, therefore if you elect to remain off work after a normal delivery for 6 months and your baby is healthy you will only be allowed to use 30 sick leave days and whatever personal, vacation or comp days you have accrued. The remaining leave will be without pay.

What if I have a C-Section?

Simply provide documentation that you had a C-Section, and you will be allowed up to 8 weeks (40 work days) of paid sick leave while on Maternity/FMLA leave.

What happens if I need to extend my maternity leave?

You must fill out the Extension for Leave of Absence/FMLA form (HUM-F031) and submit with a letter explaining your request for leave. This will be reviewed by your supervisor and Human Resources.

What happens if my dates change?

You must contact your supervisor and Human Resources to inform them of the changes. A physician's statement must be provided documenting the changes.

What if my doctor requires me to go on bed rest, can I use more than 30 sick leave days?

Yes, if you have been placed on bed rest per doctor's orders, you may start your Maternity/FMLA leave early. You will use accrued sick leave during this time.

What happens if I want to come back early from my maternity leave?

You must contact Human Resources and request permission to return early. If granted permission, you must also contact the substitute department and your supervisor to inform them of your early return.

Do I have the option to keep CMCSS insurance for myself, husband, and baby while I am on leave of absence?

While on Maternity/FMLA leave your health care benefits will continue as if you are actively employed up to a maximum of 12 weeks/3 months. The Board of Education will continue to contribute to the premium. As long as you receive a paycheck, your benefit deductions will continue as normal. If you do not return to work at the end of the 12-week FMLA period and you have exhausted all paid leave, you may continue health care coverage, but you are required to cover the full cost of premiums. Anytime a payroll is missed, please contact the Benefits office to arrange for the payment of missed benefit deductions at 931-920-7929/7810.

How do I ensure that my new baby is added to the Blue Cross Blue Shield Medical plan with CMCSS?

Simply contact the Benefits Office and request an "Add Dependent/Change Request" form within 1 week of delivery. Then, return the completed form to the Benefits Office for processing. Note: You will not have the baby's social security number yet, but that is OK. You will need to call the Benefits Office with the social security number when you receive it.

Both my husband and I are CMCSS employees. What are we eligible for?

A husband and wife who are eligible for FMLA leave are limited to a combined total of 12 weeks of leave if the leave is taken for the birth and care of the newborn child. Sick leave is to be used when an employee is sick or for the care of a family member who is sick. Please see policy (HUM-A031).

My leave will be during Winter Break. Will I get paid for these two weeks?

You have to work or be on paid leave the working day prior to a holiday in order to be paid for a holiday. You will be paid for vacation days which are earned according to how many days you will work for the year.

Since I will be on Maternity/FMLA leave during days out of the calendar (i.e. MLK day and President's day) will I get paid for those days or will my sick days have to cover them?

MLK Day and Presidents Day are days out of the calendar which means these are not paid days regardless of status. Therefore, no sick, vacation, or personal days will be applied.

Do I still earn sick leave and vacation while on Maternity/FMLA leave?

Sick leave and vacation will accrue if you are on paid leave. If you are on unpaid leave, no accruals will occur. Sick leave and vacation accrual will resume the first full pay period after you return from leave.

What effect does my leave of absence have on my required in-service hours?

If you take a paid leave of absence, you must complete the required hours, based on your assignment; however, if you go on an unpaid leave of absence, you may be required to complete fewer hours. Please contact Pat Donahue at 931-553-1120 or Connie Lighthiser at 931-553-1123 for more information.

Will my Maternity/FMLA leave affect my years of service or retirement?

Leave with pay does not affect retirement or years of service. Time spent out on leave <u>without</u> pay is not counted for retirement purposes or as years of service in placing you on the salary schedule.

How does my Maternity/FMLA affect my ability to become tenured?

A teacher must work 27 months in 5 consecutive years to be eligible for tenure. Any time taken without pay while on maternity leave will not count towards the required 27 months.

If you have questions regarding your Maternity/FMLA please contact:

Michael Tharpe
michael.tharpe@cmcss.net
931-920-7966

If you have questions regarding your Insurance Benefits the following Benefits Staff Members are available to assist you:

Amy Wigington
amy.wigington@cmcss.net
920-7810

Donna McIntosh
donna.mcintosh@cmcss.net
920-7929

If you have questions regarding your payroll while out on Maternity/FMLA please contact the Payroll Department at 920-7857, 920-7856 or 920-7853