

EMPLOYEE LEAVE

The **North Carolina Public Schools Benefits and Employment Policy Manual** governs the use of employee leave in LEAs and several provisions below apply to school reopening in the fall. In some specific cases, the federal [Families First Coronavirus Response Act \(FFCRA\)](#) may supersede the state policy manual.

Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) - For employees who meet the requirements for accessing the FFCRA leave, this federal leave can preserve an employee's accrued leave balance (state) should the employee be required to leave work due to COVID-19. FFCRA leave allows for up to two-thirds pay for employees who request leave for COVID-19 related child-care closures. This leave may be supplemented with an employee's accrued sick leave as appropriate.

Sick Leave (Section 4.1) - Employees or their immediate family members, who are experiencing an illness (COVID-19 or other) may use sick leave during the time of illness. Anxiety-related to working during a pandemic **does not** qualify as an acceptable use of sick leave except where accompanied by documentation by a medical professional. Employees who have potentially been exposed to COVID-19 and are asymptomatic may use sick leave.

Annual Vacation Leave (Section 3.1.3) - Employees who qualify for sick leave, but do not have sufficient sick leave to cover the term of the illness, may elect to use annual vacation leave during an approved illness.

Extended Sick Leave (Section 4.2) - Eligible employees who are out for an approved illness who do not have sufficient sick leave/annual leave to cover the term of the illness, may request extended sick leave upon the approval of the LEA. Employees do not need to exhaust unused required annual leave days when determining eligibility for extended sick leave. LEA's are required to apply the required substitute deduction (\$50) for employees using extended sick leave.

Voluntary Shared Leave (Section 4.3) - an employee may qualify for (and use) voluntary shared leave if the employee's request is approved by the superintendent (or comparable head of the LEA) for COVID-19 related absences. All other requirements for use of this leave (as outlined in Section 4.3) must be followed by the LEA.

FMLA (Section 8.2) - While FMLA is not a form of leave, an LEA has the right to designate an employee's absence due to a COVID-19-related absence as an FMLA-qualifying event.

Contagious Disease (Section 9.4.1) - Employees who are under orders of the director of a county health department to leave the work environment, the local superintendent shall: a) reassign the employee to a safe work environment (remote work if applicable), or b) place the employee on leave with pay for the period of time as indicated by the director of the health department. The leave provisions under Section 9.4.1 can only be initiated by the director of the health department, not the LEA.

How to apply for [Families First Coronavirus Response Act \(FFCRA\)](#)

- Employees can access FFCRA information on the Henderson County Public School's website by selecting STAFF in the menu bar and clicking on Human Resources.
- Employees should select [Emergency Leave Information for Employees COVID-19](#) and follow the instructions listed online.