



SHORT-TERM MATERNITY LEAVE

The stork is coming ~ congratulations are in order! Maternity Short-Term Leave can be a bit confusing, so the Benefits Office is pleased to provide the following information which should cover many of the questions and/or concerns you might have:

How do I apply for maternity leave? In order to begin the maternity leave process, you should contact the Benefits Office to receive initial information regarding your upcoming leave. The Benefits Office will send you the appropriate required paperwork. Please be advised that your maternity leave cannot be approved until all paperwork is received by the Benefits Office. This paperwork may be faxed to 770-514-3871.

How are the dates of my short-term maternity leave determined?

Your short-term maternity leave is based initially on the estimated due date of your baby; this date is subject to change once the actual birth date is determined. You will be expected to work until the day the baby is born unless you have a Disability Certification Form (GCCAC-1 or GCC-2) from your physician, providing a medical diagnosis supporting your need to start your short-term maternity leave prior to your due date.

How is the length of my short-term maternity leave determined?

The length of your leave is known as "the disability period". The disability period is based on the type of delivery that you experience. In most cases, you are allowed 6 weeks of disability leave for a normal delivery and 8 weeks of disability leave for a Cesarean section. **If additional recovery time is needed, you will need to submit a new Disability Certification form from your physician with the medical diagnosis supporting the need for additional time.** The length of the disability period is a continuous 6 or 8 weeks regardless of whether there are any holidays/or non-workweeks during that period.

If I have a medical reason to take time off prior to my due date, how does this affect my maternity leave?

You will begin using your accrued short term leave days the first day you are out; however, your 6 or 8 week disability period will not begin until the day you actually deliver your baby. Remember, we must have a Disability Certification form completed by your physician, stating the medical diagnosis as why you should start your leave prior to your delivery (remember, your physician's office can fax it to the Benefits Office to 770-514-3871).

How does my short-term maternity leave affect the short-term leave (sick leave) that I've accrued?

You will use your accumulated short-term leave days for income during your maternity disability period. To obtain the number of short term leave days you have accumulated, please refer to your last paycheck stub or contact the CCSD Payroll Department at 770-426-3311. Your short-term leave days will be deducted for actual work days missed and not for holidays or non-workdays.

What happens if I run out of short-term leave days before my leave is over?

If you enrolled in the District's Short-Term Disability Insurance, you may apply for Short Term Disability Insurance when your short-term leave runs out by contacting your Benefits Leave representative. The representative will be happy to file a claim for you with our Short Term Disability Insurance carrier. If approved, this will allow you to receive partial pay for the remainder of your approved disability period. Additional information regarding Short-Term Disability Insurance may be found on the Benefits Website <http://www.cobbk12.org/centraloffice/hr/benefits/> under CCSD: Your Benefit Connection.

If you DID NOT enroll in the District's Short-term Disability Insurance, you will be on leave without pay (full-deduct) for the remaining days of your approved disability period. You will be responsible for contacting the Benefits Office to make arrangements to pay your insurance premiums (see next question).

How do the insurance premiums for my District benefits get paid while I'm on leave if I'm not getting paid by the District?

As you're aware, insurance premiums for your benefits are automatically deducted from your Cobb County School District paycheck. If you are on leave without pay from the District, it is your responsibility to contact the Benefits Office at 770-426-3537 to make arrangements to pay your insurance premiums. If you are receiving short-term disability insurance checks, your District insurance premiums are not deducted from them. You must make those payments directly to the Benefits office.

How does Family Medical Leave coordinate with my short-term maternity leave?

If you have been working in a benefit eligible position with Cobb County School District for one year or longer, you may be eligible for leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Under FMLA, eligible employees are allowed up to 12 UNPAID workweeks off for the birth and first-year care of their child. Short-term maternity leave runs concurrently (at the same time) with FML. FML begins the first day that you are out. Your available Family Medical Leave must be used when you are out for the birth of a child.

How do I apply for FML?

Complete the Request for Family Medical Leave Form (GCC-1) which may be found on the Benefits Website <http://www.cobbk12.org/centraloffice/hr/benefits/>. After your supervisor signs it, you return the completed form to the Benefits Office for review. You will then receive a letter from the Benefits Office regarding your approval status.

What are the other benefits of the FMLA?

The FMLA protects your current insurance rates; this means that the rates you pay as an active employee at work will remain the same while you are on maternity leave/FMLA. Upon returning from your Family Medical Leave, you are entitled to restoration to your position or an equivalent position with equivalent employment benefits, pay and other applicable terms and conditions of employment.

What do I need to do when my baby is born?

Call the Benefits Office within 5 days of your baby's birth so the dates of your leave approval can be adjusted. At that time, you will also need to provide the following information:

1. Baby's date of birth
2. Type of birth (normal or Cesarean section)
3. Last day worked
4. First work day not at work
5. If you want to add the baby to your insurance
6. If eligible, whether you will be taking your 12 weeks FMLA time
7. If eligible, whether you will be taking Long Term Leave

What do I need to do to prepare to return to work?

Before you may return to work, you must submit a completed Release to Return to Work Form (GCC-8). This form may be completed by your physician at your post partum 6/8 weeks check-up. Please have the physician release you at the end of your disability period and not the end of your leave. This form may be faxed to the Benefits Office to (770) 514-3871.

What if I want to stay home with my baby for longer than the 12 work weeks provided under FMLA?

Long Term Leave is available for those individuals who would like to take up to a year's UNPAID leave of absence. If you want to apply for Long-Term Leave, the Benefits Office should receive your completed Request for Long Term Leave Form (GCC-6) before the birth of your baby or no later than 30 days after the birth of your baby. The Long-Term Leave will begin when you have used up all of your short term leave days, or at the end of your disability period, whichever comes first.

How does going on Long-Term Leave affect my current position with the District?

If you decide to take a Long-Term Leave, you will be relinquishing your current position/assignment with the District. When you are ready to return from Long Term Leave, you must complete the Request to Return from Long-Term Leave Form (GCC-7). At that time, CCSD will assist you in seeking a vacant position that matches the same status/category as your position before your Long-Term Leave.

How does a District holiday break affect my maternity leave?

If FMLA Qualified:

Your disability period is continuous from the date the baby is born, either 6 weeks (normal delivery) or 8 weeks (Cesarean delivery), however, if a holiday break falls during your disability period, your FMLA time stops on the last contracted workday and begins on the contracted workday following the holiday break:

Example: You have a normal delivery on December 10, 2009. Your disability period would be from December 10, 2009 - January 21, 2010. You have requested 2 weeks of FMLA leave in addition to your disability period. Your FMLA time would be from December 10, 2009 - December 18, 2009 (last contracted workday prior to holiday break), and would begin again on January 4, 2010 (contracted workday following the holiday break) and extend through February 4, 2010. You would be expected to return to work on February 5, 2010. The additional two weeks of FMLA time are unpaid. Why? Because you are only compensated for leave during your disability period.

If Non-FMLA Qualified:

Your disability period is continuous from the date the baby is born, either 6 weeks (normal delivery), or 8 weeks (Cesarean delivery). You have not been employed with the District for 12 months and are not qualified for FMLA. You are permitted to be on maternity leave for the applicable number of weeks (6 or 8).

Example: You have a Cesarean delivery on December 10, 2009. Your disability period would be from December 10, 2009 to February 4, 2010. You would be expected to return to work on February 5, 2010 unless you have a Disability Certification from your physician advising that you are not medically released to return to work.

If my baby is born in May and there are not 12 work weeks left in the school year calendar, what happens to my full 12 weeks FMLA time?

Your FMLA time begins when you have your baby and will continue until your last contracted workday. You may then restart your FMLA time when school begins until you have exhausted a total of 12 work weeks. It's very important to remember that if your 6/8 weeks of disability period has ended, the remaining FMLA weeks will be unpaid time.

I'm off during the summer months; if my maternity leave starts before school is out, why can't I continue using my short term leave days during the summer?

You can only use your accrued short term sick leave days for actual workdays. Once school is out and/or your post-planning is over, there are no remaining workdays. Any remaining short term leave days in your sick leave account will be available for future use. *They may come in handy for your new baby's care!*

How is my remaining salary affected when I am out on leave?

If you are out on leave and have over 50% of the month on full deduct (unpaid days), the payroll department will adjust the payroll checks that remain. Upon your return to work, your pay will reflect the days you were full deducted for the scheduled days that you did not work - this will DECREASE your remaining paychecks. Please contact the CCSD Payroll Department at 770-426-3311 to determine the amount of your remaining checks.

I'm off during the summer months. If my baby is born in the summer and my 6 weeks is not up when school starts, how does this affect my maternity leave?

Your disability period begins the day you have your baby regardless of whether your baby is born on a workday or not. The disability period is continuous for 6 or 8 weeks. If you are still considered disabled at the time that school starts, you would remain out of work due to your disability. If you are qualified for FML, you would be able to use that time starting the first contracted work day of the new school year. If you are not qualified for FML, you are expected to return to work at the end of your disability period.

NOTE: A completed Release To Return To Work Form (GCC-8) is required prior to returning to work from maternity/FML leave.