



A Guide to Parental Leave

Murfreesboro City Schools



2023-2024 School Year
Human Resources Department



Table of Contents

- Parental Leave Overview
- Understanding Leave Types
- Procedures for Requesting Leave
- Benefits Information
- Pregnancy and Parenting Resources
- Meet the Human Resources Team

Overview

Congratulations on your growing family! Murfreesboro City Schools understands that employees may have a lot of questions during this time as they navigate leave options, resources, and general questions related to welcoming a new child into their home. We hope this guide assists you in making the best decisions for you and your family.



As soon as practicable after you have determined you have a need for parental leave, we recommend preparing a leave plan and scheduling time with your supervisor and our Human Resources Department to review your options. Federal and State law inform parental leave policy and procedures for Murfreesboro City Schools. This guide provides an overview of the applicable laws, policies, and resources available to you for pregnancy/childbirth, adoption, surrogacy, and foster care purposes. There are also additional Q&A resources for parents who are both employees of the school district and for parents who are adopting.

The information included herein does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice. All information, content, and materials available in this guide are for general information purposes only. The information set forth in this guide may be revised, modified, or amended, in which case the most current policy or procedure will govern. The online version of this publication is the governing document and all printed versions of this document are unofficial copies.

This guide may contain reference to third-party resources. Such resources are only for the convenience of the reader and Murfreesboro City Schools does not recommend or endorse the content of the third-party resources.

Understanding Leave Types



Personal and Vacation Leave

Classified personnel or other personnel employed on a 12 month basis accrue vacation leave based on years of experience as defined by [Board Policy 5.310](#). Certified employees earn 2 personal days per year with any personal leave unused at the end of the year credited to sick leave, unless an exception pursuant to [Board Policy 5.303](#) applies. Employees are entitled to use accrued personal or vacation leave for parental leave purposes.



Sick Leave

Sick leave is defined in [Board Policy 5.302](#). Sick leave is accrued at 1 day for each month of employment. Employees are entitled to use accrued sick leave for pregnancy and childbirth, to care for a family member who is incapacitated due to pregnancy or childbirth, and for adoption or surrogacy purposes.



Unpaid Leave

If an employee is eligible for Family and Medical Leave or Parental Leave under Tennessee law, and the employee has exhausted paid leave, the employee will be eligible to take unpaid leave. Unpaid leave allows the employee to take time off from work during which the employee retains their job, but does not receive a salary.

Paid Parental Leave for Eligible Employees

Understanding the newest leave type

On May 11, 2023, the Tennessee State Legislature passed a law that grants paid parental leave to eligible employees of a local education agency. Under T.C.A. 8-50-814, eligible employees are eligible for 6 work weeks of paid leave after a birth, stillbirth, or adoption of a newly placed minor child.

Under state law, eligible employees include teachers, principals, or other individuals required to hold a valid license as qualification for employment and have been employed with a local education agency on a full-time basis for at least 12 consecutive months.



Paid parental leave may be taken intermittently for a period of 12 months after the qualifying event, however, the employee must provide a proposed schedule for leave use if choosing to use the leave intermittently.

This leave will run concurrently with FMLA and Tennessee Parental Leave. If you are interested in electing this leave type, contact your Benefits Coordinator.



Understanding Leave Types

Family Medical Leave Act

- FMLA leave applies to employees of Murfreesboro City Schools who have worked for the school system for at least 12 months and worked a minimum of 1250 hours during the year preceding the start of the leave.
- FMLA provides up to 12 work weeks of unpaid leave. Parental leave under state law and leave under FMLA run concurrently.
- During work weeks that an employee takes leave designated as FMLA, the employer is responsible for paying the employer's portion of the employee's insurance premium, whether the leave is paid or unpaid.

Tennessee Parental Leave, T.C.A. 4-21-408

- Employees who have been employed by Murfreesboro City Schools for at least 12 consecutive months as full-time employees are eligible for a period of up to 4 months of unpaid parental leave for adoption, pregnancy, childbirth and nursing the infant, where applicable, in accordance with T.C.A. § 4-21-408. If both parents are employees of Murfreesboro City Schools, they are eligible for a combined 4 months of unpaid leave.
- Any employee on leave will be permitted to use accumulated sick leave during the period of the mother's physical disability.

Understanding FMLA and TN Parental Leave

- Under state law, a full-time employee who has worked with MCS for 12 months consecutively is entitled to up to 4 months of parental leave. FMLA taken as parental leave will be counted as part of these 4 months.
- If all applicable paid leave has been exhausted, the remainder of the 4 month parental leave may be taken in an unpaid leave status. During the additional 4th month of unpaid parental leave (after exhaustion of Family and Medical Leave), the employee must pay any health care contributions to retain health plan coverage.

Requesting Parental Leave

Starting the Process

Employees are required to give Murfreesboro City Schools at least thirty days' advance notice of intent to take parental leave, except in cases of medical emergency. The more notice that MCS has of your leave, the better we can prepare you and your supervisor for your leave.

Contact your Benefits Coordinator to start the parental leave process. Required documentation will be provided to you and an appointment will be scheduled to review relevant parental leave information.



Documentation Checklist

- FMLA Application, with physician statement on physician's letterhead**
- If applicable, USABLE Educator Disability Plan forms**
- If applicable, physician's statement with actual delivery date following delivery**

Benefits Information



Adding a Dependent to Your Insurance

Adoption and birth are qualifying events that allow you to enroll your child in health insurance provided by the school district and administered by ParTNers for Health during a special enrollment period that begins after the birth or adoption of the child. During this special enrollment period, you may change your health insurance election and/or add additional eligible dependents. To add your newborn child, you will need to submit the enrollment change application and the mother's copy of the birth certificate to your Benefits Coordinator within 30 days of birth. The social security card will need to be submitted within 60 days. If you have recently adopted, been given an intent to adopt document or awarded legal custody of a child, an application to add the newly acquired dependent must be submitted to Human Resources. For more information about acceptable documentation, see the [ParTNers for Health Dependent Eligibility Definitions and Required Documents](#).

Please note, there are timelines associated with adding a dependent to your insurance outside of the open enrollment period. It is imperative that you provide documentation to the Human Resources Department as soon as practicable after a qualifying life event.

Adding a Beneficiary on Your Life Insurance

A life insurance beneficiary is the individual or entity that will receive the money from your policy's benefit when you pass away. You can update your life insurance beneficiary designations any time you experience a major life event, including the birth or adoption of a child. If you would like to change or add a beneficiary to your life insurance policy following birth or adoption, contact Human Resources.

Section 125 Benefits

Murfreesboro City Schools employees are offered specific supplemental benefits which are deducted from payroll, tax free. These policies are called Section 125 Benefits and are offered through USABLE Life and Trustmark Life. If you made an election for a supplemental short term disability benefit during the annual open enrollment period, you can refer to plan documents for submitting claims to the insurance carrier. Your Benefits Coordinator can also answer questions about submitting claims for Section 125 Benefits.

Pregnancy and Parenting Resources

The information provided below contains reference to third-party resources. Such resources are only for the convenience of the reader and Murfreesboro City Schools does not recommend or endorse the content of the third-party resources cited below.

Pregnancy and Postpartum Resources

- [Tennessee Department of Health - Maternal and Child Health Resources](#)

The Tennessee Department of Health provides information on maternal and child health through various programs.

- [BlueCare Tennessee Pregnancy Support App](#)

BlueCross BlueShield offers a free CareTN pregnancy support app for members that is supported on the Apple App Store and Google Play.

- [Mother to Mother Non-Profit Organization](#)

Mother to Mother is a non-profit organization operating in Nashville that provides health and wellness items to pregnant women and mothers.

- [Moms Loving Moms Non-Profit Organization](#)

Moms Loving Moms is a non-profit organization located in Murfreesboro that provides postpartum kits to new moms following delivery. Recipients must register online to receive the postpartum kit.

Child and Family Programs

- [KidCentral TN](#)

Created by the Governor's Children's Cabinet, KidCentralTN is a one-stop resource for popular parenting topics, tracking important child milestones, and access vital resources using the state services directory.

- [Nurture the Next Non-Profit Organization](#)

Nurture the Next is a non-profit organization that provide in-home parenting support in 30 counties in Tennessee and offers several statewide parenting programs.



Meet Our Human Resources Team



Maria Johnson

Maria serves as the Director of Human Resources and Educator Effectiveness.



615-893-2313, Ext. 10036



maria.johnson@cityschools.net



Kathleen Hunsicker

Kathleen serves as the Benefits Coordinator for Murfreesboro City Schools.



615-893-2313, Ext. 10032



kathleen.hunsicker@cityschools.net



Alexanna Bragg

Alexanna serves as the Human Resources Generalist for Murfreesboro City Schools.



615-893-2313, Ext. 10030



alexanna.bragg@cityschools.net



Thank You

The information included herein does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice. All information, content, and materials available in this guide are for general information purposes only. The information set forth in this guide may be revised, modified, or amended, in which case the most current policy or procedure will govern. The online version of this publication is the governing document and all printed versions of this document are unofficial copies.

Contact Information :

 615-893-2313

 <https://cityschools.net/departments/human-resources>

 2552 South Church Street, Murfreesboro TN 37127