

Cochrane-Fountain City School District

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To: All Employees

RE: Requesting Medical Leave and/or Work Accommodations

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, an employee may have concerns about returning to work in a school setting. The purpose of this document is to outline the general requirements associated with requesting medical leave based on a doctor's recommendation or a work accommodation based on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The information described below is designed to help increase understanding of these options. Each employee is encouraged to contact the Superintendent if they have specific questions related to a leave or work accommodation request.

Please note, although fear and nervousness associated with returning to work in a COVID-19 pandemic are understandable, they are not considered legal reasons to request a leave of absence or work accommodation.

REQUEST MEDICAL LEAVE (FMLA) BASED ON A DOCTOR'S RECOMMENDATION

Eligible employees have protected leave for up to 12 weeks in a 12-month period. At the end of the protected leave, the employee will be reinstated to the same or equivalent position. During a medical leave, the employee can use paid leave until it is exhausted. Once the paid leave runs out, any additional time-off will be unpaid. It is anticipated that due to the COVID-19 pandemic some employees may have health conditions that they are concerned about or have a need to care for a family member with a serious health condition. If a doctor certifies in writing that an employee should not return to work because of a serious health condition, then the employee will have access to FMLA. Please contact the District Office to determine eligibility, provide required doctor's certifications, and to coordinate the tentative length of the leave.

In addition, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) makes available Emergency Paid Sick Leave to employees if the leave is associate with the six specified reasons related to COVID-19, which are linked here: [FFCRA](#). An eligible employee may also request Expanded FMLA to care for their child whose school or place of care is closed (or childcare provider is unavailable) due to COVID-19 reasons. The Emergency Paid Sick Leave and Expanded FMLA available under the FFCRA are in effect through December 31, 2020. An employee requesting one or both leaves must contact the District Office to determine eligibility, provide required certifications, and to coordinate the tentative length of the leave.

Under completion of the medical leave, the employee will be reinstated to the same or equivalent position.

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Bonnie Breza, Board Clerk
Lynn Doelle, Board Treasurer

Kalene Engel, Board Director
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REQUEST WORK ACCOMMODATIONS BASED ON AMERICANS WITH DISABILITY ACT

Title I of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that the District provide reasonable accommodations to qualified employees with a disability unless doing so would cause undue hardship to the District. In relation to COVID-19, an employee with an on-going serious health condition may request an accommodation. The nature of each job assignment is different and, therefore each accommodation request will be handled on a case-by-case basis. The first step is to provide a written request directed to the District Office. Once the employee provides the documentation and specific accommodation request, the district will analyze the request to determine if it is reasonable and does not cause an undue hardship to the District.

RETURN TO WORK GUIDELINES

All employees are expected to return to work. The District will continue to follow the guidelines established by the Buffalo County Health and Human Services Department. If an employee has a medical condition or disability that prevents them from returning to work, they should follow the steps outlined in the paragraphs above.

Each employee is encouraged to contact the District Office if they have specific questions to a leave or work accommodation request.

Sailing Forward, Together

Dr. Jo-Ellen Fairbanks, Ph.D.
Superintendent