

## **ABSENCE REASONS: DEFINITIONS & USES**

Vance County Schools follows leave policies as outlined in the Benefits and Employment Policy Manual published by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. The information below is to be referenced in completing the Vance County Schools Leave Request Form and provides a brief summary of the most commonly used absence reasons. The summaries are not intended to take the place of existing general statutes, regulations or adopted policy.

### **Absence Without Pay**

Employees may be granted leaves of absence without pay for periods determined by Vance County Schools. This leave should be requested in advance and must comply with regulations adopted by Vance County Schools. The school administrative unit will assist with proper procedures for applying for a leave of absence without pay.

Some reasons to apply for a leave of absence without pay include: educational leave, family and medical leave, long-term military leave, parental leave (for birth, adoption or placement of a foster child), personal illness in excess of sick leave, or any other reasons approved by Vance County Schools.

### **Annual/Bonus Leave**

Employees earn annual vacation leave on a scale based on total years of state service. Annual leave includes both scheduled and unscheduled leave days. For 10-month employees, there are typically 10 annual vacation leave days built-in to each school calendar that must be taken as scheduled. All annual vacation leave taken by an employee must be with the authorization of the employee's immediate supervisor and must conform to policies established by the State Board of Education and the Vance County Schools Board of Education.

Instructional personnel and bus drivers who must be replaced by a substitute may not take annual vacation leave at any time that students are scheduled to be in attendance unless the employee's absence is due to a catastrophic illness and the employee has exhausted all of his or her sick leave. Instructional personnel who do not require a substitute may, with their supervisor's approval, take annual vacation leave on any day school is in session.

Specially distributed bonus vacation leave earned by employees can be taken under the same circumstances and provisions as annual vacation leave.

### **Approved Curricular Activity**

Employees may be granted leave of absence with pay for participating in approved curricular activities that meet clearly stated objectives that directly correlate to work performed in the classroom. All leaves of absences with pay taken under this reason must be with the authorization of the employee's immediate supervisor and must conform to policies established by the State Board of Education and the Vance County Schools Board of Education.

Examples of approved curricular activities might include educational enhanced field trips that link classroom learning, knowledge, and understanding of a subject with outside experiences; competition-

related events that match the skills and talent of Vance County Schools students with students from other school districts; and invitational events that showcase the skills and talents of Vance County Schools students.

If travel-related costs will be incurred by the employee as a result of participating in an approved curricular activity, the Vance County Schools Professional Leave Form will need to be completed in lieu of the Leave Request Form.

### **Compensatory Leave**

Employees classified as nonexempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) may accrue compensatory time off at a rate of 1.5 hours for every 1 hour worked in lieu of receiving overtime pay for hours worked beyond 40 hours in a given workweek. All employees must obtain approval from their immediate supervisors before taking compensatory leave.

Examples of nonexempt (“hourly classified non-salaried) employees are bus drivers, cafeteria workers, custodians, maintenance workers, clerical workers, and teacher assistants. Teachers, certified professional staff and salaried administrative staff are examples of exempt employees who are not eligible for compensatory time.

### **Extended Sick Leave**

Extended sick leave is available to classroom teachers and media specialists who require substitutes if they are absent due to their own personal illness or injury in excess of their accumulated sick leave and available annual vacation leave. In order to be eligible, the employee must be in a permanent full- or part-time position. Those qualifying are allowed extended sick leave of up to 20 workdays throughout the regular term of employment upon written approval from the Vance County Schools Director of Human Resources.

Employees on extended sick leave receive full salary less the required substitute deduction. The deduction is mandatory whether or not a substitute is employed. The standard deduction is \$50 per day.

### **Civic Responsibility (Community, Jury or Military Duty)**

#### **Community Responsibility**

Upon approval of the Vance County Schools Superintendent, full-time or part-time employees may be granted leave to represent Vance County Schools at community functions such as the funeral of a school child or his parent, or to attend to responsibilities of office as an elected official.

#### **Jury Duty**

Full-time or part-time employees retain full salary when absent from work to serve on a jury. The employee is entitled to regular compensation in addition to payment for jury duty. A copy of the court notice is required to be submitted by the employee to his or her immediate supervisor.

Required court attendance by an employee in connection with their official duties is also covered under this classification. Court obligations relating to personal matters are not covered.

## **Military Leave**

Full-time or part-time permanent employees are eligible for short-term military leave with pay. Vance County Schools abides by the responsibilities listed under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA). Leave with pay shall be granted to employees who are members of Reserve Components of the U.S. Armed Forces for periods of active duty training. Reserve components of the U.S. Armed Forces are the National Guard, the Army Reserve, the Naval Reserve, the Marine Corps Reserve, the Air Force Reserve and the Coast Guard Reserve.

Leave with pay shall be granted for up to 15 workdays during the federal fiscal year (October 1 to September 30) for active duty training, required physical examinations relating to membership in a reserve component, and regularly scheduled unit assemblies, also referred to as drills. For the National Guard Reserve component only, military leave with pay shall be granted for infrequent special activities in the interest of the State when so authorized by the Governor or designee. This leave is in addition to the 15 workdays allowed for military training. For active duty in excess of 30 days, employees shall be entitled to military leave with differential pay between military pay and regular pay if the military pay is less than the employee's regular pay.

Employees shall make available to the Vance County Schools Superintendent a copy of orders to report for active duty and shall advise as to the effective date of leave and the probable date of return.

## **Personal Leave**

Personal leave is earned by classroom teachers and media specialists who require substitutes. In order to be eligible, the employee must be in a permanent full- or part-time position. Personal leave is earned at a rate of .20 days for each full month of employment not to exceed two days per year.

Personal leave may be used only upon the authorization of the immediate supervisor. Unless approved by the principal, a teacher shall not take personal leave on the first day the teacher is required to report for the school year, on a required teacher workday, on days scheduled for State testing, or on the day before or the day after a holiday or scheduled annual vacation day. A teacher who requests personal leave at least five days in advance cannot be required to provide a reason and shall be automatically granted the request subject to the availability of a substitute teacher.

Employees on personal leave receive full salary less the required substitute deduction. The deduction is mandatory whether or not a substitute is employed. The standard deduction is \$50 per day.

## **Sick Leave/Medical Appointment for Myself or Immediate Family Member**

Permanent full-time employees who are working, or are on paid leave for one-half or more of the workdays in a monthly pay period, earn sick leave at the rate of one day per month. Eligible permanent part-time employees earn sick leave computed on a pro rata basis of the amount earned by a full-time employee in that class of work. The Superintendent of Vance County Schools may require a statement from a medical doctor or other acceptable proof that an employee was unable to work due to personal illness, medical appointment, illness or death in the family, or adoption. Employees who anticipate using sick leave for a period of time must inform their principal or immediate supervisor in advance so that arrangements may be made to reassign the employee's duties during the period of absence.

Sick leave may be granted for the following reasons:

- Personal illness, injury, or other temporary disability
- To care for a child placed with an employee for adoption
- Medical appointments of the employee
- Illness in the immediate family and medical appointments related to the illness
- Death in the immediate family

Sick leave may be accumulated indefinitely. Sick leave may not be used while on leave without pay or on holidays and annual vacation leave days scheduled in the school calendar. Sick leave may be used on any workday or student day including the first day employees in permanent positions report to work.

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