

Your LEA guide having to do with all forms of parental leave: maternity, paternity, co-parenting, adoption, and child rearing.

This guide has been revised as of November 2017. It has been updated to reflect changes to the leave language and policies that provide consistency and increased benefit to our members. The LEA would like to thank the new Director of Human Resources, Monica Visco, for working with us to create consistent language across the LEA contracts with maximum benefit to our members.

Congratulations on your impending arrival.

Please read this whole guide before you make decisions or sign letters!

Reach out to an LEA Rep and/or HR if you are still confused after reading.

1. Maternity/Paternity/Co-Parenting/Adoption Leave

Expectant mothers, father and co-parents are entitled to take up to 12 weeks of time off in year under the Family Medical Leave Act. Leaves for maternity, paternity, co-parenting and adoption are all leaves which run concurrently with and draw down from your FMLA entitlement. In Lexington, our FMLA is calculated on a rolling basis.

The Lexington Public Schools will allow employees to use any and all accrued time (sick and personal) to be paid during such leaves.

The eight weeks following a birth is, for mothers, a defined period of medical disability. Of course, this period of disability may be extended for any serious medical issue related to the birth or otherwise (i.e. bed rest, complications from birth) and covered by the additional four weeks of FMLA. Vacation weeks (when you are not scheduled to work) do not count against your FMLA entitlement.

FAQ's

Whom do I contact and when?

At a minimum, you must contact HR within two weeks of the birth of your child, but the reality is that you are going to reach out to your primary supervisor and to HR far in advance, as a professional courtesy so that suitable coverage can be found in your absence. Vickie Fotis is currently the benefits coordinator in Human Resources.

I don't have 40 sick days to cover the work days during the disability period of my leave?

Don't fret. Apply to the sick bank through HR, and you shall be granted the days as per the contract language. It is one of the best LEA benefits we have.

If a snow day or vacation happens during my leave, am I still charged a sick day?

No, you won't be charged. Those days do count towards the 56 consecutive days of the defined medical disability period following birth. They don't count as days towards the FMLA entitlement.

I don't know the exact date of birth/adoption; it's just an estimate?

Quite understandable. You'll contact HR with an anticipated date, and then update with the actual date/documentation after the birth or closer to the adoption. They'll adjust the paperwork accordingly. Communication is what's key.

What if I have pre or post natal complications such that a physician determines I am not fit for work?

In such a case, you would contact HR with the appropriate paperwork, and you would be allowed to use your accrued sick time to cover those days. If you do not have sick time to cover the days, you can make a request to the LEA sick bank committee, which will seriously consider the request.

N.B. Even after your FMLA entitlement runs out, you still may access your own sick time for your own medical needs/disability and you may apply to the sick bank under the terms of that article.

I don't have professional teacher status; can I take a maternity/paternity/co-parenting/adoptive leave?

Yes, but if you are out for any significant period of time in a year, it will not count towards the 3 full years of employment needed to gain professional status. These 3 years usually need to be consecutive (ex: 2017,2018,2019) except, happily in the case of such leaves, which represent an exception to the rule.

Health Care/Benefits?

During an FML leave, you will need to pay your share (%) of health and dental premiums. For any portion of the leave that is paid, your share will come out of your paycheck. For any portion of the leave that is unpaid you will need to arrange to pay your share through HR/ the business office.

Anything else I should know?

You need at least ½ a year (92 days) of service to qualify for step increases on the wage scales. Paid time will count as service. Unpaid time will not.

2. Child Rearing Leave

A professional staff member will be granted child rearing leave of absence by the School Committee of up to two (2) years from the effective date of commencement of leave, but in any event, it may last until the beginning of a new school year.

Child-Rearing Leave FAQ's

So what exactly is "child rearing leave"?

A "placeholder" on your employment in the LPS in a position for which you are certified and qualified. That's it.

Am I paid during a child rearing leave?

No.

Can I use sick days to be paid during a child rearing leave?

No.

Health Care/Benefits?

During child-rearing leaves, you will need to pay 100 % of the cost of health and dental premiums if you wish to remain covered through the Town of Lexington. 100% means all... no split between employer and employee.

Whom do I contact about a child-rearing leave and paying 100% of premiums if I wish to remain covered through the town?

Human resources. Vickie Fotis is the current benefits coordinator. If you already know you want child-rearing leave, indicate so in your request for maternity leave.

I don't have professional teacher status; can I take child-rearing leave?

Yes, but if you are out for any significant period of time in a year, it will not count towards the 3 full years of employment needed to gain professional status. These 3 years usually need to be consecutive (ex: 2017,2018,2019) except, happily in the case of such leaves, which represent an exception to the rule.

Anything else I should know?

Indeed.

You need at least ½ a year (92 days) of service to qualify for step increases on the wage scales. Paid time will count as service. Unpaid time will not. Child rearing leaves are unpaid.

Also, in the letters you receive from HR, there will be dates by which you need to communicate your continued interest in returning to the Lexington Public Schools. You must adhere to these dates if you wish to keep the placeholder on your job. Although you will probably receive a reminder from HR to do so, don't count on it. It's your responsibility to follow through with that communication.