



Preparing for Your Absence:

Leaves and Disability Benefits for Employees Expanding Their Families



Department of Financial Services
Office of Benefit Services
Disability & Leaves Section
8115 Gatehouse Road, Suite 2700
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Congratulations!

Welcoming a new child into your home and life, whether a newborn infant or an adopted child, can be both exciting and overwhelming. This packet will help answer the many questions you may have about time off from work to recover from your delivery, and, if need be, provide support for your prenatal and/or postpartum needs. It will also discuss important information pertaining to parental and adoption-related leaves.

For a more interactive experience, you may want to consider attending a *virtual* Expectant Parent workshop, which provides an in-depth discussion about disability and leaves as well as how your FCPS benefits may be impacted during this time. All course materials, including the voiceover presentation, are posted on the [Expectant Parent webpage](#), so you can also view at your own convenience (www.fcps.edu, search keywords “expectant parent”).

The information contained in this packet is in accordance with FCPS' leave policies that affect the time you take off during and after your pregnancy. It is important to review the FCPS regulations that guide these policies. [Regulations 4822 and 4835](#) are available online (www.fcps.edu, search keyword “regulations”).

Request for Reasonable Accommodations

You may qualify as a person with a disability and are requesting reasonable accommodations upon your return to work, you will need to submit a reasonable accommodation request form, completed by your attending doctor(s). Reasonable accommodations may include: “more frequent or longer bathroom breaks, breaks to express breast milk, access to private locations other than a bathroom for the expressing of breast milk, acquisition or modification of equipment or access to or modifications of employee seating, a temporary transfer to a less strenuous or hazardous position, assistance with manual labor, job restructuring, a modified work schedule, light duty assignments, and leave to recover from childbirth. Should you need accommodations, you may contact Human Resources, Office of Employee Relations (OER) at 571-423-3070 or EERADA@fcps.edu and they will engage you in the interactive process to determine how FCPS can support your needs.

Who to Call: A Quick Reference Sheet

Leave and Disability Benefits	FCPS Disability and Leaves Section <ul style="list-style-type: none">• www.fcps.edu, search “time away.”• Submit a question via FCPS StaffConnect• Call the Office of Benefit Services at 571- 423-3200• Hours: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., M – F
Short-Term Disability (STD) Benefits	Sedgwick (to start an STD claim for the pregnant employee) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• www.mySedgwick.com/FCPS• Call 855-937-1387• Hours: 8 a.m. – 8 p.m., M – F
Health & Dental Insurance Flexible Spending Accounts Life Insurance	FCPS Benefit Services <ul style="list-style-type: none">• www.fcps.edu, search “insurance benefits”• Submit a question via FCPS StaffConnect• Call the Office of Benefit Services at 571- 423-3200• Hours: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., M – F 

Pregnancy, Parental, and Adoption-related Leaves: An Overview

Working parents have a lot of their minds, whether they're pregnant or planning ahead for a new child. FCPS offers leave programs that can help make this time of transition a little easier:

- **Short-Term Disability (STD)** for personal illnesses/injuries lasting longer than 20 continuous workdays. New employees are enrolled in this program the first of the month after completing 12 months of service.
- **Family Medical Leave** provides 12 weeks (60 workdays) unpaid leave for incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or for childbirth; or caring for newborn or newly adopted or foster child(ren). All employees who have worked for FCPS for at least 12 months may be eligible for an absence qualified under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).
- **Leave of Absence (LOA)** is an extended, unpaid leave to care for a child. Typically, this is taken after the 12-week FMLA entitlement. For employees who may be ineligible for STD or FMLA, an LOA can be taken for the duration of your "medical recovery period".



These programs work together to give parents time to spend with their child as well as provide some level of income replacement. The chart below provides an overview of how that looks beginning with the date the baby is born or the date of adoption/custody. The following pages will go into deeper detail about each program and its eligibility requirements.



WEEKS OF LEAVE													
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13+	
Medical Recovery Period for Vaginal Delivery					C-Section Delivery								
Elimination Period for STD			Approved STD										
Family Medical Leave (FMLA)													
													Return to Work or Take an Unpaid LOA

Short-term Disability (STD) and How It Works

Your postpartum recovery and as applicable, prenatal absences such as medically-prescribed bed rest, fall under FCPS Integrated Disability Management (IDM) Program's STD benefits and are treated the same as an illness or injury that prevents you from attending to your normal work duties at FCPS. You must have one year of service (if hired after July 1, 2010) to be eligible to file an STD claim.

If you are pregnant, you will need to contact Sedgwick, FCPS' IDM Program Administrator, to start an STD claim 30 days prior to your anticipated due date. You can reach Sedgwick by calling 855-937-1387 or accessing their online portal available at www.mySedgwick.com/FCPS. Sedgwick will ask you for your due date as well as other medical information related to your pregnancy (if you give birth early, you can contact Sedgwick to adjust your dates accordingly). Sedgwick will notify FCPS of your STD claim status (pending, approved, denied, or closed).

The Medical Recovery Period

The date that you give birth is referred to as the first day of your "medical recovery period", or the length of time that the doctors say you will need to recover from the delivery and/or birth. Typically, a doctor allows six (6) weeks of recovery time for a vaginal delivery or eight (8) weeks for a cesarean birth. The medical recovery period does not skip any days; every day is counted until the period ends, even if it includes weekends and holidays. If your STD claim is approved, your medical recovery period and your approved STD claim dates will be the same.

The Elimination Period

In order to be approved for STD, you must meet a 20 contractual workday "elimination period", which will begin counting on the first day of your medical recovery period. For example, if you give birth on March 1st, you will start counting your 20-workday elimination period on March 1st as well. The elimination period will end on the 20th workday. Because STD is an income replacement program, we only count the days that you are expected to report to work and would need income replacement. You must use your accrued leave balances (if available) to be paid for the elimination period; if you do not have leave, the elimination period will be without pay.

Short-term Disability Benefits

STD benefits are paid after an initial 20-workday elimination period and the claim has been approved with objective medical documentation from your doctor(s) by Sedgwick. If your medical recovery period ends prior to the elimination period, you will not be approved for STD and will not receive income replacement payments.

If you meet the elimination period requirement and your STD claim is approved, you will receive income replacement through the end of your medical recovery period. As part of the paperwork you filled out to file your STD claim with Sedgwick, there is an [Option to Use Accrued Leave Balances after the Elimination Period form \(HR-178\)](#). This will allow you to choose your pay option if you are approved for income replacement under STD:

- **Option 1: 90% of your current salary**
 - This option allows you to preserve your accrued leave balances so that you have leave available upon return to work.
- **Option 2: 100% of your current salary**
 - With this option, you will use available accrued leave to receive income replacement of 100%. This continues while approved to receive STD payments and while leave balances are available. If you run out of leave, your STD benefit period will convert to the 90% pay option until your STD claim ends.

The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

FMLA is a 12-week unpaid entitlement (or 60 contractual workdays) that allows eligible FCPS employees to take leave due to the birth or adoption of a child. You may be eligible if you have 12 months of FCPS service (if hired after July 1, 2010) and have worked at least 1,250 hours. FMLA will start on the date of delivery or on the first day of bed rest, if ordered by your physician and approved by Sedgwick, and will run concurrently with short-term disability (STD). Employees who are expecting a child, but may not be eligible for STD, are still able to use their FMLA entitlement provided they meet the eligibility requirements.

To apply, you must submit a [Request for Family Medical Leave through FCPS StaffConnect](#). Your Principal/Program Manager will be notified so that they are aware of your request.

While you are out on leave, you are responsible for entering your leave in MyTime. You will need to use the leave code "SICK-FMLA".

Important Notes about FMLA:

- FMLA is unpaid; however, you are able to use your accrued leave to receive pay during this time. If no leave is available, then the FMLA time will be without pay.
- The number of FMLA days available may be impacted if you accessed the FMLA entitlement in the preceding 12 months. Once your 12-week entitlement has been used, you are not eligible to apply for FMLA again for 12 months.

Want Additional Time? You can apply for an Unpaid Leave of Absence (LOA).

If you are looking to take more time beyond the 12-week FMLA entitlement, you can apply for an Unpaid Leave of Absence (LOA).

- If you are a **12-month employee**, you could be approved for additional time, up to one year from your FMLA start date
- If you are a **less-than-12-month employee**, you could be approved to the end of your contract, which would be June 30.

To apply for an LOA, you will need to complete the [Request for an Unpaid Leave of Absence form \(HR-136\)](#) and submit the form to the Disability and Leaves Section via [FCPS StaffConnect](#). Your Principal/Program Manager will need to sign the form as an acknowledgement of your request.

Remember, there is no use of accrued leave after your FMLA has ended. All leave time requested after FMLA will be unpaid.

Being on a leave may change your FCPS benefits premium amounts and how you pay for them. Be sure to review the [Benefits While on LOA packet](#), so you can see how a leave could impact you and your family's benefits!

Employees Who Are Not Eligible for Short-term Disability or Family Medical Leave

Employees who may not meet the eligibility requirements for STD or FMLA are placed on an unpaid leave of absence during the recovery period. Again, it would be 6 weeks for a vaginal birth or 8 weeks for a c-section.

If you do not meet the STD or FMLA requirements, you will need to contact the Disability and Leaves Section prior to your anticipated due date or medically prescribed bed rest. You will need to complete the [Request for an Unpaid Leave of Absence form \(HR-136\)](#) and submit the form to the Disability and Leaves Section via [FCPS StaffConnect](#). Your Principal/Program Manager will need to sign the form as an acknowledgement of your request.

For example:

We realize that everyone's situation is unique and understanding the different types of leave options can be tricky. The below example shows how an employee's leave might look for a baby born via vaginal birth on March 4, 2024. Each calendar day is labeled with the applicable type of leave program if the employee was eligible for STD and wanted to take the full 12-week FMLA entitlement.

MARCH 2024				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
4 Medical Recovery Period STD Elimination Period 1 FMLA 	5 Medical Recovery Period STD Elimination Period 2 FMLA	6 Medical Recovery Period STD Elimination Period 3 FMLA	7 Medical Recovery Period STD Elimination Period 4 FMLA	8 Medical Recovery Period STD Elimination Period 5 FMLA
11 Medical Recovery Period STD Elimination Period 6 FMLA	12 Medical Recovery Period STD Elimination Period 7 FMLA	13 Medical Recovery Period STD Elimination Period 8 FMLA	14 Medical Recovery Period STD Elimination Period 9 FMLA	15 Medical Recovery Period STD Elimination Period 10 FMLA
18 Medical Recovery Period STD Elimination Period 11 FMLA	19 Medical Recovery Period STD Elimination Period 12 FMLA	20 Medical Recovery Period STD Elimination Period 13 FMLA	21 Medical Recovery Period STD Elimination Period 14 FMLA	22 Medical Recovery Period STD Elimination Period 15 FMLA
25 Medical Recovery Period <i>Employee Holiday</i>	26 Medical Recovery Period <i>Employee Holiday</i>	27 Medical Recovery Period <i>Employee Holiday</i>	28 Medical Recovery Period <i>Employee Holiday</i>	29 Medical Recovery Period <i>Employee Holiday</i>
APRIL 2024				
1 Medical Recovery Period STD Elimination Period 16 FMLA	2 Medical Recovery Period STD Elimination Period 17 FMLA	3 Medical Recovery Period STD Elimination Period 18 FMLA	4 Medical Recovery Period STD Elimination Period 19 FMLA	5 Medical Recovery Period STD Elimination Period 20 FMLA
8 Medical Recovery Period Approved STD FMLA	9 Medical Recovery Period Approved STD FMLA	10 Medical Recovery Period <i>Employee Holiday</i>	11 Medical Recovery Period Approved STD FMLA	12 Medical Recovery Period Approved STD FMLA
15 FMLA only	16 FMLA only	17 FMLA only	18 FMLA only	19 FMLA only
22 FMLA only	23 FMLA only	24 FMLA only	25 FMLA only	26 FMLA only
MAY 2024				
29 FMLA only	30 FMLA only	1 FMLA only	2 FMLA only	3 FMLA only
6 FMLA only	7 FMLA only	8 FMLA only	9 FMLA only	10 FMLA only
13	14 FMLA only	15 FMLA only	16 FMLA only	17 FMLA only
20 FMLA only	21 FMLA only	22 FMLA only	23 FMLA only	24 FMLA only
27 <i>Employee Holiday</i>	28 FMLA only	29 FMLA only	30 FMLA only	31 FMLA only
JUNE 2024				
3 FMLA only	4 FMLA only	5 Return to Work or Day 1 of Unpaid LOA	6	7

Again, we understand that your situation is unique. For questions about your specific leave needs, please contact the Disability and Leaves Section by submitting a question via [FCPS StaffConnect](#) or by calling 571-423-3200.

My Leave Checklist



30 days prior to due date/date of adoption/date of custody:

- Contact Sedgwick: 1-855-937-1387 or visit <https://mySedwick.com/FCPS> to report my anticipated delivery date (if applicable).
- Prepare leave forms:
 - [Request for Family Medical Leave in FCPS StaffConnect](#)
 - [Request for Unpaid Leave of Absence \(HR-136\)](#)
- Have a conversation with my Principal/Program Manager to communicate my intentions.

Within the first week of giving birth/date of adoption:

- Contact Sedgwick (for short-term disability claims only).
 - Let my case manager know that I gave birth.
- Update my leave dates in MyTime. Use leave code “SICK - FMLA”.
- Submit a copy of the proof of birth letter.

Within 30 calendar days of giving birth/date of adoption, if I have or want FCPS benefits:

- Download and print the [Medical and Dental Enrollment and Change Form \(HR-124\)](#) to add my child.
- Submit the completed HR-124 to the FCPS Benefits Office WITH a copy of the proof of birth letter, birth certificate, or court adoption confirmation by:
 - Uploading to [Benefits Document Submission in FCPS StaffConnect](#)
 - Faxing to 571-423-5000
- Consider enrollment of adjustments to my flexible spending account (FSA)
 - Visit the FCPS website (www.fcps.edu, search “FSA”) for more information.

Within 30 calendar days of expiration of FMLA or STD period:

- If taking additional time, submit the completed and signed HR-136 form to the Disability and Leaves Section.

At least 3 weeks prior to returning to work from my approved leave:

- Read the [FCPS Lactation Toolkit](#) and submit lactation time request form to my Principal/Program Manager (if needed).

! Don't hold onto paperwork while you wait for the birth certificate! If you wait for the official birth certificate, you may miss the 30 calendar day window. The Proof of Birth letter is acceptable until you receive the birth certificate.