

# LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM WORK – FAQs

## *What is a Leave?*

In general terms, when an employee is on an approved absence from work, it is “leave”. An absence may be approved by using **Authorized Compensatory Absences (ACA)**, requesting **Vacation** (for 12 month employees) and, under certain conditions, by completing a **Request for Leave Packet** through Human Resource Services, Employee Relations Department for an authorized Leave of Absence.

## *Do I need prior approval for every absence from work?*

Employees are expected to follow District policy and procedures for reporting absences and obtaining necessary authorization to be gone. All **vacation** requests must be approved by your Supervisor in advance. If you earn ACA benefits and you have a sufficient balance to use, you can be absent from work with pay by using ACA without prior approval, but only if the reason for your absence is approved under [Meet and Confer or Terms and Conditions of Employment](#) guidelines. Employees may not use ACA for reasons that are restricted under the ACA benefits, or for certain days and time periods throughout the school year as outlined. Exceptions to the restrictions must be requested of your Supervisor in writing and in advance of the absence.

If you (1) do not earn ACA benefits, (2) you do not have any ACA balance, or (3) your reason for being absent does not conform to authorized ACA usage, your absence from work must be approved in advance in order to comply with District policy.

## *When do I have to make a written request for Leave of Absence?*

You should make a **request for Leave of Absence** under any of these conditions:

- Your **absence is for more than five (5) consecutive days** – regardless of whether or not you have ACA (this does not apply to absences pre-approved as vacation)
- Your **absence is intermittent for a foreseeable reason** and for an extended period of time
- You need to be absent, but you have **exhausted all ACA**
- You do **not have enough ACA** to cover the entire absence period
- You need to be absent, but **you do not earn ACA** at all
- You are requesting leave under **FMLA** for any length of time

If you do not request a Leave of Absence under any of the above conditions, you may be considered Absent Without Leave, per Policy GCC. By applying for a Leave of Absence, you are obtaining the prior approval to be gone from work that is required by policy, and this will protect you from possible disciplinary action.

## ***What kinds of Leaves are available?***

There are many approved leaves available to employees. You can find details about specific leaves in the [Meet and Confer and Terms and Conditions of Employment](#) documents. Leave of Absence may be requested for, but not limited to, the following purposes:

### **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) – for eligible employees:**

**Basic Leave Entitlement:** leave for up to 12 weeks for incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or child birth; to care for the employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care; to care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition; for a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job.

**Military Family Leave Entitlements:** leave for up to 12 weeks for employees with a spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active duty or call to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. A special leave entitlement of up to 26 weeks for a covered servicemember who is a current member of the Armed forces, National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the servicemember medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the servicemember is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

**General Medical Leave:** granted in cases where the employee is not eligible for FMLA leave.

**Annual Non-Compensable Leave:** unpaid annual leave not to exceed one (1) year granted for approved reasons by February 15 of the year prior to the leave.

### **Personal Leave**

**Support Staff:** for hardship situations, less than one year

**Certified/Administrative Staff:** for extraordinary circumstances, less than one year.

**Military Leave:** granted in accordance with existing state and federal statutes.

**Sabbatical Leave:** granted by the Board contingent upon availability of District funds for certified or administrative employees with at least 7 years of employment.

## ***Why do I need to complete a written Request for Leave?***

Under Federal law, it is the responsibility of the employer (Kyrene School District) to designate leave as FMLA if it qualifies, and a request for such leave will not be denied by the District if the employee is entitled to leave under FMLA. All other leaves of absence, however, may be granted or denied by the District in its sole discretion, per Policy GCCC. The **Request for Leave Packet** is designed to provide the District with the appropriate information necessary upon which a decision is made to grant or deny leave to the employee.

### ***How do I complete a Request for Leave Packet?***

1. After you have determined the need to make a request for Leave of Absence, you should immediately notify your Supervisor of your need to take leave, and the reason why.
2. Print and complete the **Request for Leave Packet** at least thirty (30) days before the leave is to begin, when foreseeable, and submit it to Human Resource Services, Employee Relations Department. When the leave is not foreseeable thirty days in advance, the leave packet must be submitted as soon as possible before the leave begins.
3. Contact Employee Relations at (480) 783-4013 or (480) 783-4007 to make an appointment to submit your Leave paperwork and discuss the leave in person. Otherwise, you may submit it by mail, attention Employee Relations, Mail Stop #13 or by fax to (480) 783-5357.

### ***Why is it important to apply for a Leave of Absence or to use my ACA only under approved circumstances?***

District Policy GCC, pertaining to employee leaves, states that an employee who is absent from work without prior approval is subject to disciplinary action, as is one who was unable to obtain prior approval due to unusual circumstances and such approval is denied upon the employee's return. Policy also states: "Any employee who can be shown to have willfully violated or misused the District's leave policies or misrepresented any statement or condition will be subject to discipline, which may include reprimand, suspension, loss of pay, and/or dismissal."

Misuse of ACA constitutes failure to comply with ACA standards and procedures as outlined in the [Meet and Confer and Terms and Conditions of Employment](#) documents and will result in a deduction of a day's pay for each day in question. Repeated failure to comply may also result in disciplinary action as defined in District Policy.

### ***Do I have to use my accrued ACA or Vacation during my Leave?***

District Policy GCCC states that all accrued ACA, vacation and other paid leave shall be applied to the leave period. Once exhausted, or if no ACA or vacation has been accrued, the leave period will be unpaid.

### ***If I do not have any accrued ACA or Vacation, what options for payment are available during my Leave?***

Under specified conditions, some options for paid leave may be available:

- Certified and Administrative employees may use up to 24 hours per contract year of **Deductible Absences** under the same provisions as ACA. The rate of pay is a portion of the employee's daily rate, as outlined in [Meet and Confer and Terms and Conditions of Employment](#). Requests for Deductible Absences should be applied for through the Employee [Self-Service Portal](#) in *iVisions*.

- Certified and Support employees may be eligible to participate in the **employee sick leave bank**. Information pertaining to eligibility is found in the Certified and Support Meet and Confer documents.
- Policy GCCG “Professional/Support Staff Sick Leave Assistance” provides the Superintendent with the authorization to grant additional ACA days to employees with “seriously incapacitating and extended illness or injury.” Eligibility and procedures to request this assistance are provided in [Kyrene District Policy](#).

### ***What else should I consider if I need to request a Leave of Absence?***

You may need some additional documentation to complete the Request for Leave Packet (such as a medical note or certification). Review the packet thoroughly to ensure you have all the required paperwork before you submit it. If you cannot obtain all the documentation prior to your leave, be sure you communicate that to Employee Relations upon submission of your paperwork.

If your absence is due to a personal medical reason and you also have **Short Term Disability Insurance** or you have a **Workers Compensation injury**, please contact the Benefits Department at (480) 783-4010 to request the appropriate paperwork to submit your claim.

If your absence requires a substitute, you will need to contact the Substitute Coordinator at (480) 783-4006. Please keep in mind that if you are a classroom teacher who will need to utilize a substitute for 4 consecutive weeks or more, the substitute must be Highly Qualified per state standards.

### ***How can I contact Employee Relations?***

- Karla Izzett, Employee Relations Supervisor  
[kizzett@kyrene.org](mailto:kizzett@kyrene.org)  
(483) 783-4007
- Kim Prina, Employee Relations Technician  
[kprina@kyrene.org](mailto:kprina@kyrene.org)  
(480) 783-4013
- Employee Relations Confidential Fax: (480) 783-7357