

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM WORK – FAQs

What is Leave?

In general terms, when an employee is absent from work, it is often referred to as “leave”. An approved absence is when an employee uses accrued **Authorized Compensatory Absences (ACA), Personal, Sick or Vacation** time and, under eligible conditions, when taking a Leave of Absence authorized through Talent Management.

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 accrue authorized compensatory absence benefits and you have a sufficient balance to use, you may be absent from work with pay by using ACA, Sick, or Personal days 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 or Personal time for reasons that are restricted under the authorized compensatory absence benefits, or for certain Blackout days throughout the school year as outlined.
- If you do not have sufficient accrued paid time to cover the leave period, or your reason for being absent does not conform to authorized usage, an unpaid absence from work must be approved in advance in order to comply with District policy.

When do I have to request a Leave of Absence?

Please contact Talent Management, to inquire about a Leave of Absence under any of these conditions:

- Your **absence will be more than ten (10) consecutive work days**
- You have an **insufficient number of accrued paid days** to cover an absence period of three days or longer
- 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 are subject to being “absent without leave” per Policy GCC. When a Leave of Absence is approved, you obtain the authorization to be absent from work that is required under policy.

What kinds of Leaves are available?

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:

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

Basic Leave Entitlement: FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees for the following reasons:

- 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: Eligible employees whose spouse, son, daughter, or parent is on covered active duty or call to covered active duty status may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings. FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service-member during a single 12-month period.

General Medical Leave: Granted for the employee's medically necessary surgery, accident, major illness, or childbirth and recovery in cases where the employee is not eligible under FMLA

Annual Non-Compensable Leave: Unpaid annual leave not to exceed one (1) year for approved requests received in Human Resources by February 15 of the year prior to the leave. See Meet and Confer/Terms and Conditions documents for eligibility criteria.

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

Victim Leave:

Granted to an employee who is a victim of juvenile or adult crime and is exercising a right to be present at a proceeding as defined in Arizona Statute

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

The **Request for Leave Packet** is designed to provide the District with the appropriate information necessary to determine eligibility for authorizing a Leave.

Under Federal law, it is the responsibility of the employer 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.

How do I complete a Request for Leave Packet?

1. Print and complete the online **Request for Leave Packet** at least thirty (30) days before the leave is to begin when the need for leave is foreseeable, and submit it to Talent Management.
2. When the leave is not foreseeable thirty (30) days in advance, the leave packet must be submitted as soon as the need for leave is known.
3. You may submit your leave packet by District mail, Mail Stop #13; by fax to (480) 541-1813; or by email attachment to benefits@kyrene.org.
4. As an option, you may contact Talent Management to schedule an appointment to discuss all aspects of your upcoming leave and submit your paperwork at that time.

What else should I consider?

- You may need additional documentation to complete the Request for Leave Packet (such as a **health care provider certification**). Review the packet thoroughly before you submit it. If you cannot obtain all the required documentation prior to your leave, be sure you communicate that 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 are claiming a **Workers Compensation** injury, please indicate this on your Request for Leave so that you will be provided with the appropriate paperwork to submit your claim.
- In general, a leave packet will not be accepted after the employee has returned to work. Retroactive approval for leave of absence will only be granted in extraordinary circumstances.
- If your absence requires a **substitute**, you should enter your absence into Absence Management immediately to ensure a substitute is assigned to your classroom.

Do I have to use accrued ACA/Personal/Sick or Vacation time during my Leave?

District Policy GCCC states that all accrued ACA, vacation and other paid leave shall be applied to the leave period, unless otherwise agreed to by the District or prohibited under FMLA. If an employee's accrued time is exhausted, the remaining portion of the leave period will be unpaid.

What options for compensation are available if I don't have any accrued paid time?

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 authorized benefits for Sick Day or ACA usage. 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*.
- Employees may be eligible to participate in the KAC, KEA or KESPA **employee sick leave bank**. Information pertaining to eligibility is found in the Certified and Support *Meet and Confer* documents and *Terms and Conditions* document.
- **Policy GCCG** Professional/Support Staff "Sick Leave Assistance" provides the Superintendent with the authorization to grant additional paid days to employees or their immediate family members with "seriously incapacitating and extended illness or injury." Eligibility and procedures to request this assistance are provided in Policy GCCG.

Who can I contact?

- Deb Spurgin, Chief Benefits Officer
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- Nancy Bran, Talent Management Specialist
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- benefits@kyrene.org