



## Preparing for Your Absence:

Leaves and Disability Benefits for Employees Expanding Their Families



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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](http://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, 4762 and 4835](#) are available online ([www.fcps.edu](http://www.fcps.edu), search keyword “regulations”).

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

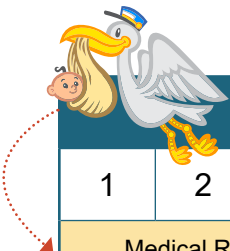
# An Overview of FCPS Leave Programming

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:

- **Paid Parental Leave (PPL)** gives new parents 8 weeks of paid leave for the birth, adoption, or custody of a child. Benefits-eligible employees eligible for 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).
- **Short-Term Disability (STD)** for personal illnesses/injuries lasting longer than 10 continuous workdays. (In this situation, pregnancy is considered a personal illness/injury.) Benefits-eligible employees are enrolled in this program the first of the month after completing 12 months of service.
- **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 for the birthing parent. The following pages will go into deeper detail about each program and its eligibility requirements.



Leave Overview by Weeks for the Birthing Parent

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17+		
Medical Recovery Period for Vaginal Delivery						If C-section												
Elimination Period for STD		Approved STD				If C-section												
						Paid Parental Leave (8 weeks immediately following end of STD for vaginal delivery)						Unpaid LOA						
												Paid Parental Leave (8 weeks immediately following end of STD for C-section)						Unpaid LOA
FMLA																		

Please note: This chart is for illustrative purposes only. It shows the general idea of how these leave programs would overlay for non-complicated vaginal and C-section births.

## Paid Parental Leave (PPL)

FCPS is excited to announce its new Paid Parental Leave (PPL) program that provides 8 weeks of paid leave to eligible employees for the birth, adoption, or custody of a child. You must be a benefits-eligible employee with one year of service to be eligible for PPL. PPL will start at different times based on whether you are a birthing-parent or non-birthing, adoptive, or foster parent:

- **Birthing parents** will start their PPL on the first workday after their STD claim has been closed. For less-than-12 month employees who give birth over the summer break and may not be eligible for STD, PPL will begin on the first contracted workday of the new school year.
- **Non-birthing, adoptive, or foster parents** can choose which day to start their PPL as long as it's within 30 calendar days from the date of the child's birth/ date of adoption or placement into foster care.



To apply, you must submit a [Request for Paid Parental Leave through FCPS StaffConnect](#) within twenty (20) calendar days from the date of the child's birth or twenty (20) calendar days from the effective date of the child's adoption or placement into foster care. Be sure to provide the appropriate required documentation (e.g. birth certificate, letter of live birth, adoption decree, custody paperwork, etc.) as soon as possible. Requests submitted after 30 calendar days will not be approved.

If approved, you are responsible for entering your leave in MyTime. You will need to use the leave code "SICK-IND".

## 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, adoption, or custody of a child. You may be eligible if you have 12 months of FCPS service 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) and paid parental leave (PPL).

Employees who will not be approved for STD may want to apply for FMLA in addition to PPL. Doing so will allow you to utilize the remaining 4 weeks of your 12-week entitlement after your 8-week PPL ends. The PPL application provides the option to take your additional FMLA time after your PPL ends. You will want to check "Yes" or "No" when asked about taking your additional FMLA time when completing the Request for PPL form.

If approved, 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.

## 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 be a benefits-eligible employee with 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](http://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 date that you give birth is referred to as the first day of your **Medical Recovery Period**. This is 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 (C-section) 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. The **Elimination Period** and **Short-term Disability Benefits**, if approved, fall within the Medical Recovery Period.

### Elimination Period

In order to be approved for STD, you must meet a 10 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 1<sup>st</sup>, you will start counting your 10-workday elimination period on March 1<sup>st</sup> as well. The elimination period will end on the 10<sup>th</sup> workday.

STD is an income replacement program, the only the days that you are expected to report to work and would need income replacement count. You must use your accrued leave balances (if available) to be paid for the elimination period; if you don't have leave, the elimination period will be without pay.

### Short-term Disability Benefits

STD benefits are paid after an initial 10-workday elimination period and the claim has been approved with objective medical documentation from your doctor(s) by Sedgwick. You will receive income replacement at 90% of your current salary through the end of your medical recovery period. 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.

### Request for Reasonable Accommodations

You may qualify as a person with a disability and request reasonable accommodations, such as "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](mailto:EERADA@fcps.edu) and they will engage you in the interactive process to determine how FCPS can support your needs.

## Leaves of Absence (LOA)

If you are looking to take more time, 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.

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.

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 PPL/FMLA has ended. All leave time requested after FMLA will be unpaid.

We know these leave programs and how they overlap can be confusing. The chart below provides an overview of how that looks beginning with the date the baby is born for the non-birthing, adoptive, and foster parent.



Leave Overview by Weeks for Non-Birthing, Adoptive, Foster Parents												
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13+
Paid Parental Leave (8 weeks of paid leave)								Remaining FMLA time (paid through use of leave or unpaid)				Unpaid LOA

## Employees Who May Not Be Eligible for STD, PPL, or FMLA

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, PPL, or FMLA requirements, you will need to contact the Disability and Leaves Team 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.



# 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 Paid Parental Leave through FCPS StaffConnect](#)
  - [Request for Family Medical Leave in FCPS StaffConnect](#) (if not applying for PPL)
  - [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/date of custody:

- 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/adoption decree/custody paperwork

## 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 along 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/adjustment to my flexible spending account (FSA).
  - Visit the FCPS website ([www.fcps.edu](http://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).