

Congratulations!

CMCSS wants to help you prepare for this exciting experience with the least amount of stress possible. Here are some helpful insights and answers to questions for navigating CMCSS policies regarding Parental Leave.

# Commonly Asked Questions

## Do we have maternity/parental leave?

Yes, CMCSS does have maternity/parental leave benefits (see policy HUM-A031). Maternity leave is granted to employees in accordance with the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the Tennessee Maternity Leave Act (TMLA), and other applicable Tennessee laws. The CMCSS Maternity/Parental Leave policy provides for unpaid leave unless an employee has accrued sick, vacation, personal or comp leave. Employees eligible for Tennessee Paid Parental leave are eligible for six weeks of paid parental leave. Employees on maternity/parental leave may use accumulated sick, vacation, and personal leave, and comp leave if a non-exempt employee, or twelve (12) weeks, whichever is less, for the birth and care of a newborn child. Once an employee's accrued leave has been used, any remaining portion of maternity/parental leave will be without pay.

## What is FMLA (Family Medical Leave Act)?

FMLA provides for up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a 12-month period for certain medical and family reasons. The birth or adoption of a child or placement of a foster child qualifies under FMLA. While on FMLA, you are required to use your accumulated sick, vacation, and personal leave, and comp leave if you are a non-exempt employee. Employees eligible for Tennessee Paid Parental leave are eligible for six weeks of paid leave for the birth or adoption of a child. Once your accumulated leave is used, any remaining portion of maternity/parental leave will be without pay. For more details on the FMLA policy, please see form HUM-A016. Your maternity/parental leave and FMLA leave will run concurrently.

## Does adoption of a child fall under the Tennessee Maternity Act/FMLA?

Yes, the adoption of a child constitutes a valid reason for requesting a leave under the procedures of the Maternity/Parental Leave Policy. Employees on parental leave may take up to twelve (12) weeks of leave, and are required to use accumulated sick, vacation, and personal leave, and comp leave if the employee is a non-exempt employee. Employees eligible for Tennessee Paid Parental leave are eligible for six weeks of paid parental leave. If both adoptive parents are employed with CMCSS, only one (1) parent is entitled to use accumulated leave for adoption. If both adoptive parents are eligible for the Tennessee Paid Parental leave, both would be eligible for 6 weeks of paid leave. Verification from an adoption agency or other entity handling the adoption is required at the time of the leave request.

### How do I apply for Maternity/FMLA leave?

On the CMCSS website login to Class link and submit your request using the Leave of Absence Portal. You will also need to upload a physician's certification (form HUM F108 or HUM F109) when you submit your request.

### How much notice must I provide?

In order to take FMLA/Parental you must submit your request through the online portal at least 30 days in advance. The 30-day requirement may be waived if the leave is due to an emergency.

### Can I choose NOT to use accrued leave while on maternity/FMLA leave?

No. Per our FMLA policy, employees are required to use all accrued sick, personal, vacation, and comp leave if an employee is non-exempt.

### What happens if I need to extend my maternity leave?

You must fill out the Extension for Leave of Absence/FMLA form (HUM-F031) and submit through the online portal. Your supervisor and Human Resources will review these documents.

### What happens if my dates change?

You must contact your supervisor and Human Resources to inform them of the changes. A physician's statement must be provided documenting the changes.

### What if my doctor requires me to go on bed rest?

If you have been placed on bed rest per doctor's orders, you may start your Maternity/FMLA leave early. You will use accrued leave during this time.

### **What happens if I want to come back early from my maternity leave?**

You must contact Human Resources and request permission to return early. If granted permission, you must also contact the substitute department and your supervisor to inform them of your early return.

### **Do I have the option to keep CMCSS insurance for myself, husband, and baby while I am on leave of absence?**

While on Maternity/Parental/FMLA leave, your health care benefits will continue as if you are actively employed up to a maximum of 12 weeks/3 months. The Board of Education will continue to contribute to the premium. As long as you receive a paycheck, your benefit deductions will continue as normal. If you do not return to work at the end of the 12-week FMLA period and you have exhausted all paid leave, you may continue health care coverage, but you are required to cover the full cost of premiums. Anytime a payroll is missed, please contact the Benefits office to arrange for the payment of missed benefit deductions at 931-920-7929.

### **How do I ensure that my new baby is added to the Blue Cross Blue Shield Medical plan with CMCSS?**

Simply contact the Benefits Office and request an "Add Dependent/Change Request" form within 31 days of delivery. Then, return the completed form to the Benefits Office for processing.

Note: You will NOT have the baby's social security number yet, but that is okay. You will need to call the Benefits Office with the social security number when you receive it.

### **Both my husband and I are CMCSS employees. What benefits are available to us?**

A husband and wife who are eligible for FMLA leave are limited to a combined total of 12 weeks of leave if the leave is taken for the birth and care of the newborn child, or adoption of a child. If both husband and wife are eligible for Tennessee Paid Parental leave the combined total will be 18 weeks of leave with 6 weeks each being provided by the Tennessee Paid Parental leave. The wife may use 6 weeks of sick leave after using her 6 weeks of paid leave. Accrued leave shall be used in accordance with District policy (HUM-A031).

### **My leave will be during Winter Break. Will I get paid for these two weeks?**

You must be on paid leave or worked the scheduled work day immediately before and after a holiday in order to be paid for a holiday. You will be paid for vacation days, which are earned according to how many days you will work for the year.

**Since I will be on Maternity/FMLA leave during days out of the calendar (i.e. MLK day and President's day) will I get paid for those days or will my sick days have to cover them?**

MLK Day and Presidents Day are days out of the calendar, which means these are not paid days regardless of status. Therefore, no sick, vacation, or personal days will be applied.

**Do I still earn sick leave and vacation while on Maternity/FMLA leave?**

Sick leave and vacation will accrue if you are on paid leave. If you are on unpaid leave, no accruals will occur. Sick leave and vacation accruals will resume the first full pay period after you return from leave.

**What effect does my leave of absence have on my required in-service hours?**

If you take a paid leave of absence, you must complete the required hours based on your assignment. However, if you go on an unpaid leave of absence, you may be required to complete fewer hours. Please contact the Professional Development Office at 931-553-1120, 931-553-1123, or 931-920-1126 for more information.

**Will my Maternity/FMLA leave affect my years of service or retirement?**

Leave with pay does not affect retirement or years of service. Time spent out on leave without pay is not counted for retirement purposes or as years of service in placing you on the salary schedule.

**How does my Maternity/FMLA affect my ability to become tenured?**

A teacher must work 27 months in five (5) consecutive years to be eligible for tenure. Any time taken without pay while on maternity leave will not count towards the required 27 months.

If you have questions regarding your Maternity/Parental or FMLA please contact:

**Michael Tharpe**  
[michael.tharpe@cmcss.net](mailto:michael.tharpe@cmcss.net)  
931-920-7966

If you have questions regarding your Insurance Benefits the following Benefits Staff Members are available to assist you:

**Amy Wigington**  
[amy.wigington@cmcss.net](mailto:amy.wigington@cmcss.net)  
920-7810

**Christy Rowland**  
[Christy.rowland@cmcss.net](mailto:Christy.rowland@cmcss.net)  
920-7826

**Stacey Smith**  
[stacey.smith2@cmcss.net](mailto:stacey.smith2@cmcss.net)  
920-7788

If you have questions regarding your payroll while out on Maternity/Parental or FMLA please contact the Payroll Department at 920-7857, 920-7856, 920-7900 or 920-7853.