

**Maternity Information Letter for Employees**

**PURPOSE:** This letter is intended to provide thorough information to employees when they request maternity leave from the district. It will allow them to better prepare financially for themselves and their families.

The letter is not intended to replace documents and correspondence required by law, including those associated with the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Customize the letter as needed to reflect local policies governing your district. Remove all highlighted areas, which are information and tips for the district employee drafting the letter.

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Dear [Name]:

The [District] [Name of Department] has received your request for maternity leave. We appreciate your early communication with the district so we can ensure your job responsibilities are covered by others while you care for yourself and your growing family.

This document is intended to provide you with helpful benefit-related information as you plan your maternity leave. While it will not replace other legally required documents that must be completed, we hope it will allow you to better understand the options and support the district can provide to you. I am also attaching all [District] Board of Education policies that relate to leave following the birth of a child. **This includes the new Oklahoma law that allows eligible school employees to take up to six weeks of paid maternity leave.**

Congratulations on this wonderful milestone in your life! We are thrilled to welcome a new member – your little one – to the [Mascot] family!

Sincerely,

[Name]
[Title]

**è FMLA LEAVE**

*Qualifies:* **Under the Family and Medical Leave Act, you are eligible to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave, which will run concurrently with all paid leave available to you.** During FMLA leave, the district will continue to pay your health insurance premiums. Upon your return, you will be reinstated to your current position or, in the unlikely situation that position is eliminated, an equivalent position.

**Please note:** While the district will pay your health insurance while you are on FMLA, it will still be necessary for you to pay for applicable voluntary elections, such as dental insurance, vision insurance, family insurance, supplemental policies, etc. While you have paid sick leave available, the cost of voluntary elections will be deducted appropriately from your monthly paycheck. When paid leave is exhausted, you must submit payment to the district for these expenses.

**The monthly cost of your voluntary deductions is $[amount].** *Reminder: Premiums may change if the leave crosses two calendar years.*

*Does not qualify:* Unfortunately, you do not qualify for FMLA leave because you have not worked for the district for 12 months, have not worked at least 1,250 hours in the past 12 months or do not work at a school site that has 50 or more employees within a 75-mile radius.

**è PAID MATERNITY LEAVE**

*Qualifies:* **You will receive six weeks of paid maternity leave, thanks to a recently passed state law for public school employees.** The leave will begin immediately following your child’s birth. If your child is born during the summer months or a holiday break (or your leave overlaps with a school break), the law requires that these non-contract days be included within the six weeks available to you.Additionally, you must use this maternity leave before any other paid leave.

*Does not qualify:* Unfortunately, you do not qualify for Oklahoma’s six weeks of paid maternity leave because you have not worked for the district for 12 months or have not worked at least 1,250 hours in the past 12 months.

**è ACCRUED SICK LEAVE**

When your paid maternity leave is exhausted, you can use any paid sick leave you have accrued during your employment with the district or that has been transferred to the district.

**As of [current date], you have [number] of paid sick days available to you.**

**è SHARED SICK LEAVE POOL OR BANK**

*If your district has a sick leave pool or bank, please include the specifics of the program here.*

**Based on these guidelines, you [do or do not] qualify for a shared sick leave request.** To apply for days, please [insert steps].

**è** *For teachers only* **– 20 ADDITIONAL DAYS FOR OKLAHOMA TEACHERS**

If your paid sick leave is exhausted and you need additional time for illness, injury or medical recovery, you may be eligible for 20 additional paid sick days, which are granted by state law. When this leave is used, the district is required to deduct the cost of the substitute teacher from your salary. This leave is also available during pregnancy, if needed.

To request 20 additional days of paid sick leave please, [insert instructions].

**è OTHER LOCAL BENEFITS**

*If your district has negotiated additional benefits for those on maternity leave, please include them here.*

**è PAYROLL PROTECTION/DISABILITY INSURANCE**

Each fall, employees can purchase payroll protection/disability insurance from [Name of Vendor]. **Our records indicate you [do or do not] have a policy through this company.** To learn more, please contact [Name of Vendor] at [phone]. Any payments that are owed will be distributed by the company, not the district.

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 **\*\*FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS\*\***

**If I qualify for maternity leave and FMLA leave, how long can I be gone?**
The district will hold a position for you for up to 12 weeks or until your paid leave is exhausted, whichever is longer. Please note that FMLA does not provide paid leave during the 12 weeks; rather, it ensures your job will be protected during that time. In this scenario, your paid leave would come from the six weeks of maternity leave under state law, and other leave possibilities mentioned above. *This response will differ if there is a negotiated local agreement to allow more unpaid leave.*

**If I do not qualify for maternity leave and FMLA leave, how long can I be gone?**You can use your accrued sick days for leave. Please contact the HR office about the specifics of the situation so a plan can be developed to address your needs and the needs of the district.

**How long will I be paid while I am on leave?**
If you qualify for maternity leave under state law, you will have six weeks of paid leave, including summer and holiday breaks. When this paid leave is exhausted, you will be paid for however many days of accrued sick leave that you have.

If you are a teacher and need additional time because of illness, injury or medical recovery, you may be eligible for 20 additional sick days granted by state law; however, the cost of the substitute for your classroom will be deducted from your salary.

[Insert a statement about the district’s shared sick leave program or bank, if applicable.]

If you have a disability policy, we recommend contacting the insurance company to determine if you qualify for additional benefits while on maternity leave.

**How long will the district pay for my health insurance?**If you qualify for FMLA, your health insurance – as the employee – will be paid normally for 12 weeks or until your paid leave is exhausted, whichever is longer. If applicable, your voluntary elections – dental insurance, vision insurance, supplemental policies, family insurance, etc. – will be deducted from your paid leave. Once your paid leave is exhausted, it will be necessary to pay the district directly for the cost of these voluntary elections.