Baltimore County Public Schools
Department of Human Resources
Office of Employee Absence and Risk Management

Leave Requirements and Information Sheet

Child Rearing

Summary
- Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) provides eligible employees up to one (1) or two (2) years of unpaid leave to care for a newborn or adopted child (ren).
- Application for child rearing must be made by the employee prior to the birth or adoption of a child (ren) except in the event of premature delivery (see information provided in General Information).

Eligibility
- Regular employees of BCPS with a full-time equivalency of .5 or greater and with one (1) or more years of satisfactory continuous service with BCPS.
- However, non-tenured and provisional/conditional teachers are not eligible for Child Rearing leave.

Approved By: The Board of Education (Board)

The application and all required documentation noted below should be sent to:

The Department of Human Resources
Office of Employee Absence and Risk Management
6901N. Charles Street, Building B, Towson, MD 21204
Fax: 410-337-0160
Email: leaves@bcps.org

For additional information and questions, contact the Office of Leaves, 443-809-4133.

General Information
- The employee must apply for Child Rearing leave prior to the birth of the employee’s child (ren) or prior to when the employee will assume legal parental responsibility for the child (ren) for adoption. If the employee is granted maternity/paternity/adoption leave prior to the birth/adoption and later requests child rearing leave, the employee’s request for child rearing leave will be denied, with the exception of a premature delivery as noted below.
- In the event of a premature delivery (before completion of the 37th week), where the employee has not yet requested a Board Approved leave of absence (and has not taken the temporary disability leave), the Application for Leaves of Absence and Conversions must be received by the OEARM Office no later than thirty (30) days from the date of the birth of the child (ren).
• The effective date of the commencement of the Child Rearing leave will be the date of birth or when the employee will assume legal parental responsibility for the child (ren) for adoption.

• As a part of the Child Rearing leave, employees may use available personal illness absence time for up to 6 calendar weeks (for regular childbirth or adoption) or for up to 8 calendar weeks (for C-section delivery) in regards to the documented period of temporary disability after giving birth. This is in addition to any period of documented disability prior to the birth of the child.

• After the expiration of 6 or 8 calendar weeks or the exhaustion of available personal illness time (whichever occurs first), the remainder of the child rearing leave will be unpaid.

• Employees may not draw from the Unified or TABCO Sick Leave Bank for any portion of Child Rearing leave.

• Any unused personal illness absence time of an employee who has been granted a Child Rearing leave of absence will be held in abeyance until he/she returns to active status.

• The OEARM Office will send notification of the approval or denial of the leave request immediately following the applicable Board meeting.

• Employees must notify the OEARM Office immediately if there is no longer a need for leave or dates/circumstances change.

• Gainful, permanent employment with another employer while on an approved leave of absence is prohibited.

• Employees on approved leave, paid or unpaid, are prohibited from being employed by BCPS in a temporary assignment unless authorized by the Chief Human Resources Officer.

**Required Documentation**

- (1) Completed *Application for Leaves of Absence and Conversions* prior to the birth or when the employee will assume legal parental responsibility for the child (ren) for adoption.

- (2) For the birth of a newborn child(ren):
  - Certification of Health Care Provider for Employee’s Serious Health Condition (FMLA leaves) or Medical Certification for Leave Request (non-FMLA Leaves)
  - Proper documentation from the adoption agency showing approval of the adoption and the effective date of when the employee will assume legal parental responsibility for the child.

- (3) Members of the Maryland State Teachers’ Pension System (MSTPS) must complete the Maryland State Retirement Agency (MSRA), form 46, *Qualified Leave Of Absence Request or Notification of Military Service Entry*. This form is required to obtain retirement service credit for the period of the approved leave and for the survivor benefit to remain in effect during this leave. For additional information employees may refer to the MSRA website, [www.sra.state.md.us](http://www.sra.state.md.us).

- Required documentation must be received at least 30 days prior to the expected delivery date. If an emergency situation arises, or circumstances prevent this, employees must contact OEARM as soon as possible but no later than 30 days from the date of
birth of the child(ren) or when the employee will assume legal parental responsibility for the child (ren) for adoption

- Leave processing may be delayed or denied if documentation is not received within the required timeframe.

**Technology Device Requirements**

- Employees must surrender all technology devices and all assigned device accessories to his/her principal or supervisor prior to the commencement of this type of leave of absence.

**Effect on Position**

- The employee’s current position is released at the beginning of the approved Child Rearing Leave.
- Employees returning from leave will be restored to a comparable position (see procedures outlined in the appropriate bargaining unit agreements concerning the release of positions and job restoration).
- Certificated teachers will be placed no later than the beginning of the next school year if the leave expires during the school year, as per the bargaining unit agreement.
- If an employee rejects a position offered within his/her classification upon reinstatement, BCPS is relieved of its commitment to provide any employment.

**Effect on Salary Increment**

- In general, an unpaid leave of absence is not counted towards the calculation for a step increase. However, employees should refer to the bargaining unit agreements for specific details.

**Effect on Payroll**

- As a part of the Child Rearing leave, employees may use available personal illness absence time for up to 6 calendar weeks (for regular childbirth or adoption) or for up to 8 calendar weeks (for C-section delivery) in regards to the documented period of temporary disability after giving birth. This is in addition to any period of documented disability prior to the birth of the child.
- After the expiration of 6 or 8 calendar weeks or the exhaustion of available personal illness time (whichever occurs first), the remainder of the child rearing leave will be unpaid.
- In the case of consecutive leaves, if an employee does not return to work prior to the commencement of the second leave, no earned paid time (e.g., personal illness) can be used.
- **No more than two (2) consecutive Board Approved leaves of absence of any type, excluding military leave, will be granted.**
- Upon completion of the Child Rearing Leave and return to active status with BCPS, employees are responsible for notifying the Office of Payroll (443-809-4240) immediately to re-establish any applicable payroll deductions.
**Effect on Healthcare Benefits**

- Healthcare coverage for the child (ren) must be requested within 30 days of the birth of the employee’s child (ren) or when the employee assumes legal parental responsibility for the child (ren) for adoption.
- During the paid period of documented temporary disability (up to 6 or 8 weeks as indicated before), all current enrolled benefits will continue.
- BCPS-paid basic life insurance continues during the entire approved Child Rearing leave.
- Employees must handle other payroll deductions (e.g., First Financial Federal Credit Union, optional life insurance, etc.) directly with the appropriate organization.
- Once Child Rearing leave becomes unpaid, the Office of Benefits will notify employees regarding continuation of healthcare coverage options, payment method, etc.
- Employees may choose to continue healthcare and flexible spending plan coverage by paying a monthly premium equivalent to the COBRA rate (full cost plus an administrative charge of 2%).
- Unless continuation of benefits is elected, **benefits terminate on the last day of the month in which the employee worked or is in active pay status**. If the employee ceases employment with BCPS after the final benefit deduction is taken at the end of the school year, coverage continues through the end of August.
- Upon completion of the Child Rearing leave and return to active status with BCPS, employees are responsible for notifying the Office of Employee Benefits (443-809-8943) to re-enroll in any applicable benefit plans **(must be re-enrolled within 30 days of return to work)**.

**Effect on Retirement Plans**

- MSRA recognizes this leave as a qualified leave of absence for service credit purposes; therefore, the unpaid service time may be purchased. To purchase the unpaid service time, upon completion of the Child Rearing leave, employees must contact the BCPS Office of Retirement at 443-809-8949 to initiate the process. There is no deadline to initiate the purchase of the service credit, if the employee returns to work. However, if the employee decides to resign from employment with BCPS after the completion of the Child Rearing leave and wants to purchase the service credit, BCPS requires the MSRA, form 26, *Request to Purchase Previous Service*, be sent to the Office of Retirement no later than 45 days after the expiration of the leave. This is to ensure the employee meets MSRA’s deadline of receiving the paperwork no later than 60 days after the expiration of the leave.
- The Baltimore County Employees’ Retirement System (ERS) does not recognize this leave as a qualified leave of absence for credit purposes. Therefore, the unpaid service time cannot be purchased.

**Return-to-Work Requirements**

- At least fifteen (15) business days prior to the expected date return to active status with BCPS, employees are responsible for notifying OEARM of the intent to (1) return to work, (2) request an extension, if available OR (3) resign via email, letter or phone call.
The appropriate HR Officer/Analyst will review the staffing needs of the schools/offices for placement and will notify the employee and offer the employee a comparable position as available.

The appropriate HR Officer/Analyst will notify the employee’s Principal/Supervisor of the employee’s expected return to work date.

Upon completion of the Child Rearing leave and return to active service with BCPS, employees are responsible for notifying (1) the Office of Payroll (443-809-4240) to re-establish the payroll deduction plans as soon as possible, (2) the Office of Employee Benefits (443-809-8943) to re-enroll in benefit plans (must be reenrolled within 30 days of return to work) AND (3) the BCPS Office of Retirement (443-809-8949) to purchase the qualified service time (optional).

If an employee rejects a position offered within his/her classification upon reinstatement, BCPS is relieved of the commitment to provide any employment.

**Extension of Leave Requirements**

- Extensions of the Child Rearing leave are available if there is a subsequent pregnancy or a planned adoption prior to the expiration of the first Child Rearing leave.
- If approved, the second Child Rearing leave of absence will begin on the date of birth for the subsequent child (ren) or when the employee assumes legal parental responsibility for the subsequent child (ren) for adoption.
- Please see the Required Documentation section above for information that is required to apply for an extension of the Child Rearing leave.
- **No more than two (2) consecutive Board Approved leaves of absence of any type, excluding military leave, will be granted.**

**Resignation Requirements**

- Employees who choose to resign from BCPS after the completion of a Child Rearing leave must complete the resignation and off-boarding process, available on the Human Resources Intranet at [https://intranet.bcps.org/offices/human_resources/](https://intranet.bcps.org/offices/human_resources/).
- Also, employees must notify the Office of Leaves at 443-809-4133 or [leaves@bcps.org](mailto:leaves@bcps.org) if they are planning to resign.
- Members of the MSTPS who choose to resign from BCPS after the completion of a Child Rearing leave and wish to purchase the time off taken for this type of leave of absence must complete MSRA form 26, *Request to Purchase Previous Service*. BCPS requires forms to be submitted to the BCPS Retirement Office within 45 days of the expiration date of the leave in order to satisfy the state’s 60 day requirement in order for the service to be purchased (refer to Retirement Section).

**Policy:** Board of Education Policy 4203, Absences and Leaves  
**Rule:** Superintendent’s Rule 4203, Absences and Leaves  

**Bargaining Unit Information**

- American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)  
  Article VII - Absences & Leaves  
  Sections 7b.1-7b.7 - Maternity Leave
For informational purposes only. For additional questions or concerns, employees must refer to Board Policies, Superintendent’s Rules and appropriate bargaining unit agreements.