LEARN4LIFE CHARLESTON – LEAVE OF ABSENCE (LOA) POLICY

The Leave of Absence (LOA) policy ensures that eligible employees receive support during extended absences while maintaining compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Leaves may be taken on a continuous or intermittent basis.

Employees are expected to initiate a LOA request when anticipating an absence exceeding five (5) consecutive workdays. Requests must include supporting documentation and are subject to organizational approval. This includes circumstances such as terminal illness, mental health crisis (hospitalization), accident, premature birth, or pregnancy complications

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

FMLA is a federal law that provides eligible employees with job-protected, unpaid leave for specific family and medical reasons, while maintaining group health insurance coverage.

Eligibility:

- Must have worked for the employer for at least 12 months.
- Minimum of 1,250 hours worked in the past 12 months.

Leave Entitlement:

- Up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a 12-month period for:
  - Birth or care of a newborn.
  - Adoption or foster care placement.
  - Care for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition.
  - Employee's own serious health condition.
  - Qualifying exigencies related to military deployment.
- Up to 26 weeks to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness.

Job Protection:

- Protection from retaliation for requesting or taking leave.
- No reduction in other employment benefits.
- Employers may offer additional leave beyond the mandated 40 hours.

Company Parental Leave (Need Board Approval)

Learn4Life Charleston offers up to 6 weeks of unpaid Parental Leave for employees disabled by pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition.

Eligibility:

- Employed in a full-time equivalent (FTE) position.
- Experience a qualifying event (birth, adoption, or foster care placement).
- No minimum length of service required.
- Must be medically unable to work due to pregnancy, childbirth, or related condition.

Leave Entitlement:

- Up to 6 weeks of unpaid leave. Up to 8 weeks for employees that experience a C-section.
- Requires medical certification confirming the need for leave.
- Physician verification of the duration may be required.

Job Protection:

- Right to return to the same or an equivalent position.
- Accrued Sick time is required during this period, vacation is optional.

South Carolina Pregnancy Accommodations Act (SC PPA)

The SC PPA requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations for employees with medical needs related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related conditions, including lactation.

This law prohibits employers from:

Key Protections:

· Employers may not deny employment based on the need for pregnancy-related accommodations.

· Employers may not require an employee to take leave if another reasonable accommodation is available.

· Employers may not retaliate against employees for requesting or using pregnancy-related accommodations.

This law supports employees in maintaining their health and employment during and after pregnancy, promoting healthier outcomes for both parent and child.

Personal Leave

A personal leave of absence without pay may be granted at the discretion of the organization. Requests for personal leave should be limited to unusual circumstances requiring an absence of longer than two (2) weeks. Approved personal absences of shorter duration are not normally treated as leaves, but rather as unpaid absences approved by your principal. Personal leaves of absence will be limited to thirty (30) continuous calendar days in duration. Personal Leave cannot be taken intermittently. Request for extended time off under a Personal Leave designation requires approval.

Military Leave

Under South Carolina law, employees who are members of the National Guard or Reserve are entitled to:

- Up to 15 days of paid leave per calendar year for military training or deployment.
- An additional 30 days of paid leave may be granted in the event of a declared emergency.
- Covered exigencies include:
    - Short-notice deployment (within 7 days)
    - Military events and ceremonies
    - Childcare and school activities (even if the employee is not the child's parent)
    - Financial and legal arrangements
    - Counseling (related to deployment)
    - Rest and recuperation leave (up to 15 days)
    - Post-deployment activities
    - Parental care for the military member's parent
    - Other agreed-upon activities

Military Caregiver Leave

An eligible employee may take up to 26 work weeks of leave in a single 12-month period to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness.

Eligible relationships include:

- Spouse
- Child
- Parent
- Next of kin (defined as the nearest blood relative, unless the servicemember designates someone else)

This applies to:

- Current members of the Armed Forces
- Veterans discharged within the past 5 years

These provisions ensure that employees can fulfill their military obligations without jeopardizing their employment or income.

Leave of Absence Notification Requirements

Employees must provide at least 30 days' notice to the site principal if they intend to request a Leave of Absence. In cases of medical disability or emergency, employees should notify the site principal as soon as possible after the event occurs.

If the leave is unforeseeable due to a medical emergency or other unexpected circumstances—such as a terminal illness, accident, premature birth, or pregnancy complications, 30 days' advance notice is not required. However, employees must provide verbal notice as soon as possible, followed by written notice within 72 hours of beginning emergency leave.

All Leave of Absence requests must be submitted through the Leave of Absence Management System, MyLeave, the organization Leave of Absence Admin. System.

Required Medical Documentation including:

- The reason for the leave
- The anticipated start date
- The expected duration

Compensation During Leave

Leaves of absence are unpaid by the organization unless state mandated.

- Employees must use accrued sick time at the start of any medically necessary leave.
- Once sick time is exhausted, accrued vacation time may be used.
- Using accrued time does not extend the approved leave period.
- Employees will be paid for any organization-wide discretionary breaks during their leave.
- Holidays are not paid unless they fall within an official company break.

Voluntary Short-Term Disability (STD) Insurance

The organization offers all regular full-time employees the option to enroll in voluntary Short-Term Disability (STD) insurance. This plan provides financial support in the event of a non-work-related illness or injury that prevents an employee from performing their job duties.

- Replaces 60% of weekly earnings, up to $1,000 per week.
- Benefits last for up to 12 weeks.
- Coverage begins on the eighth day after starting the qualifying condition.
- Any external compensation may affect the benefit amount.
- Enrolled employees are responsible for submitting a Claim for this benefit.

Compensation calculations during a leave of absence will depend on the employee's requested leave dates within the school year. Pay adjustments, including potential pay freezes or payouts, will be reviewed and determined in coordination with the principal and payroll based on the specifics of the leave request.

Benefits Continuation During Leave

Employees on leave will continue their benefits, provided they pay their portion of the benefit premiums to Learn4Life Charleston.

- If the employee is receiving pay during leave, benefit premiums will be automatically deducted from their paycheck.
- If the employee is not receiving pay, they are responsible for submitting premium payments:
    - Payments must be made by the 1st of each month for which coverage is desired.
    - Payments can be submitted via check in person at the school site.

- Failure to pay premiums will result in termination of coverage. Re-enrollment will only be available during the next Open Enrollment (OE) period.

The Benefits Department will notify employees of their monthly premium amounts and provide instructions for payment.

Return to Work

Employees returning from a leave of absence may be required to submit medical certification confirming their ability to perform the essential functions of their position.

- Employees must notify both the Site Principal and the LLAC Leave of Absence Team at least 14 days in advance of their expected return date.
- The organization will make reasonable efforts to reinstate employees to their original or equivalent position, in accordance with business needs and applicable laws.

Work Accommodation related to Medical Conditions

Learn4Life Charleston is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for employees with disabilities, in compliance with applicable laws.

Accommodation Process:

- Employees are required to participate in the interactive process in good faith when requesting accommodation.
- Requests must be supported by medical or professional documentation verifying the conditions and the need for accommodation.
- The organization will evaluate whether the condition qualifies as a disability and whether the requested accommodation is reasonable and does not impose an undue hardship.

Remote work is not considered approved accommodation unless specifically supported by medical necessity and organizational feasibility.