

### Crisis Leave (Unclassified Employees)

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#### Applicability

This policy applies to unclassified employees of schools comprising the Louisiana Special Schools (LSS)—Louisiana Schools for the Deaf and Visually Impaired (LSDVI) and Louisiana Special Education Center (LSEC).

#### Policy

The Crisis Leave Program is a means of providing paid leave to an eligible employee who has experienced a personal emergency. The intent of the program is to assist employees who, through no fault of their own, have insufficient paid leave to cover the Crisis Leave period.

#### Definitions

**Crisis Leave Committee:** A committee comprised of the Leave Pool Manager or designee, at least one member of the Executive Staff or Cabinet, and at least one other staff member. The Committee considers requests for Crisis Leave, and may recommend guidelines and procedures for the Crisis Leave Program.

**Crisis Leave Pool Policy Year:** A calendar year.

**Eligible Family Member:** The employee's spouse or minor child.

**Licensed Medical Service Provider (LMSP):** A practitioner, as defined in the Louisiana State Licensing Law (relative to that LMSP's field of service), practicing within the scope of his or her license, including licensed Physicians (a doctor of medicine) or MD, Doctor of Osteopathy or DO, or licensed Chiropractors, Counselors, or Therapists, as recognized and licensed by appropriate State boards or authorities.

**Leave Pool Manager:** The Human Resources Director or Administrator or designee.

**Personal Emergency:** A catastrophic illness or serious injury to the employee or the employee's spouse or minor child, which prevents the employee from performing his duties for a period of more than ten consecutive days which the employee is scheduled to work, when the employee does not have sufficient paid leave available to cover the entire period of illness or injury. A personal emergency terminates when the Crisis Leave Committee determines that it no longer exists or when the employee's employment ends.

#### Donations

- Contributions to the Crisis Leave Pool are strictly voluntary. LSS may periodically request contributions to the Crisis Leave Pool; however, no employee shall be coerced or pressured to donate leave.
- An employee donating to the pool may not designate a particular employee to receive donated leave. Donations are accumulated in the pool and granted on a first-come, first-served basis to eligible employees.
- An employee may donate annual, sick, or compensatory leave by submitting a signed leave request form, designating the leave as a donation to the Crisis Leave Pool. The donor should submit the leave request form to the immediate supervisor, who will forward it to the Leave Pool Manager.
- Unclassified leave donors must be full-time employees and must have at least 15 days of sick leave remaining after the contribution.
- Donations will be deducted from the donor's leave balance and credited to the Crisis Leave Pool.
- Unused Crisis Leave is rolled forward from year to year.
- Each LSS (LSDVI and LSEC) has its own Crisis Leave Pool.

### **Eligibility Considerations**

- To be eligible to receive Crisis Leave, an employee must be full-time in a position that is eligible to earn leave and must have been employed by LSS for the length of the probationary period required for classified employees.
- An eligible employee may apply to receive Crisis Leave if the following requirements are met:
  - The employee suffers from a personal emergency; and
  - The employee has exhausted all appropriate paid leave; and
  - The employee has exhibited regular attendance (with no history of leave abuse) and is not currently absent from work for disciplinary reasons.
- An employee is not required to contribute to the Crisis Leave Pool to be eligible to receive Crisis Leave.
- The Crisis Leave Committee determines the amount of Crisis Leave granted for each personal emergency. The amount of leave granted is subject to the following limits:
  - If the personal emergency is not the employee's own medical condition, the Committee may consider the likely impact on agency morale and efficiency when considering a request for Crisis Leave.
  - A maximum of six weeks of Crisis Leave may be used by an employee during one policy year.

- One week of Crisis Leave is 75% of the employee's regularly scheduled workweek, rounded to the nearest hour.

### **Request Procedures**

An employee may request leave from the Crisis Leave Pool by submitting a letter accompanied by documentation from by the employee's or eligible family member's LMSP. The letter and documentation must include:

- The employee's name, position, title, and classification
- The beginning date of the illness or injury
- A brief description of the nature, severity, and anticipated duration of the personal emergency, including any requested information useful in making a final determination of eligibility
- Documentation to establish eligibility of a family member, if requested

A request for Crisis Leave will only be considered upon receipt of all required documentation.

The request and documentation is submitted to the Leave Pool Manager, who will review the request to verify the employee is eligible to receive Crisis Leave. The employee must provide all requested information necessary to make a final determination of eligibility.

All requests for Crisis Leave must be treated as confidential. All requests and documentation for Crisis Leave should be submitted in envelopes marked "confidential." Requests proceed directly to the Leave Pool Manager for recommendation to the Crisis Leave Committee.

Each request will be handled on a first-come, first-served basis. If the request is approved, leave may be granted beginning the day the request is received.

If the request is approved, the Leave Pool Manager or designee will credit the leave to the employee's leave record, up to the approved limit. The leave may be credited bi-weekly, or in other intervals, as determined to be most efficient by the Human Resources Office.

Crisis Leave is used and documented in the same way as regular paid leave.

The decision to approve or deny Crisis Leave by the Crisis Leave Committee is final.

### **Change in Status Affecting Crisis Leave**

The granting of Crisis Leave is meant to cover only the circumstances for which it was requested. Employees on Crisis Leave will be required to submit a medical update confirming that the qualifying condition continues, at three week intervals or at other intervals as determined by the Committee. If any change occurs in the nature or severity of an illness or injury, or of any other factor on which the approval was based, the employee must provide documentation describing the change to the Leave

Pool Manager. The employee can request additional Crisis Leave subject to the limits outlined above. Each extension must be approved on a first-come, first-served basis.

Hours granted from the Crisis Leave Pool may be used only for reasons stipulated in the approved request. The use of Crisis Leave that is not in accordance with this policy may constitute payroll fraud and will be dealt with accordingly.

Employees who are able to return to work before using all of the Crisis Leave granted must return the unused leave to the Crisis Leave Pool.

Employees who have a Crisis Leave balance upon termination will not be paid for the leave and will not receive retirement credit for the leave; the leave will be returned to the Crisis Leave Pool.

### **Compensation and Benefits**

Crisis leave will be awarded hour-for-hour, regardless of the giving or receiving employee's rate of pay.

An employee in Crisis Leave status will be considered in partial paid leave status and will continue to receive benefits as appropriate, except that the employee will not accrue leave.

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Elizabeth Moore, Superintendent  
Special School District