

River Valley School District

Temporary District-Sponsored Paid COVID-19 Leave Program

The Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA) and Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) are set to expire on December 31, 2020. In light of this expiration, the district believes there is a need to temporarily establish a district-sponsored paid COVID-19 leave program (COVID-19 Leave Program) for the qualifying events outlined below.

The COVID-19 Leave Program will be available from January 1, 2021 through June 30, 2021. However, the district administrator shall have the right to terminate the COVID-19 Leave Program at any time in the district administrator's sole discretion. Additionally, if the state or federal government creates a new paid leave program for any district employees, including any extension of the FFCRA, the district's COVID-19 Leave Program will terminate as soon as that new leave law takes effect.

Eligibility for Leave:

All employees of the district are eligible for COVID-19 Leave for qualifying events, except for substitute employees and limited-term employees. COVID-19 Leave shall be at full pay for all qualifying events. COVID-19 Leave is in addition to any other leave that an employee might have available such as reimbursable leave or vacation leave. Employees can use COVID-19 Leave multiple times for multiple qualifying events, but each qualifying event reduces their individual bank of COVID-19 Leave.

Amount of Leave:

The district will carry over the amount of EPSLA Leave that an employee was eligible for under the FFCRA but that the employee did not use prior to January 1, 2021. The district will permit the employee to use that amount of leave as COVID-19 Leave under the COVID-19 Leave Program.

For example:

- A full-time employee that did not use any of his/her EPSLA Leave will be eligible for 2 weeks (up to 80 hours) of COVID-19 Leave on January 1, 2021.
- A full-time employee that used 40 hours of EPSLA Leave in 2020, would be eligible for 40 hours of COVID-19 Leave on January 1, 2021.

Qualifying Events for COVID-19 Leave:

Employee is unable to work or telework because the employee:

1. is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;

2. has identified that he/she was a potential close contact (less than 6 feet apart for a cumulative 15 minutes or more within any 24 hour period) to someone that was positive for COVID-19 at the time of the contact, as verified by the school nurse or district administration in their sole discretion;
3. has been advised by a health care provider to self-isolate or self-quarantine related to COVID-19; or
4. is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis.

Potential Close Contacts While Performing Work Duties:

Any employee can request COVID-19 leave if the employee believes that, while the employee was performing the employee's work duties, the employee was in potential close contact (less than 6 feet apart for a cumulative 15 minutes or more within any 24 hour period) to someone that was positive for COVID-19 at the time of the contact. The district will grant the employee's request for COVID-19 Leave in this situation, provided the district, in its sole discretion, verifies that the employee had potential close contact to an individual with COVID-19 while performing his/her work duties in the period immediately prior to the employee requesting leave. In this situation, the employee's COVID-19 Leave will not be drawn from the employee's COVID-19 Leave bank, and the duration of the employee's COVID-19 Leave can exceed the amount of leave available in the employee's COVID-19 Leave bank. The duration of such a leave will be determined by the district in its sole discretion.

This verification by the district is not an admission that the employee contracted COVID-19 while performing his/her work duties, but rather part of the district's efforts to keep its facilities safe by taking a flexible and cautious approach to employees with potential COVID-19 exposure.

If the district does not verify that the employee had such a close contact to an individual with COVID-19 while performing his/her work duties, the employee must use the employee's COVID-19 Leave bank, use regular reimbursable leave, or request an unpaid leave of absence to cover any period of absence from work by the employee.

Other Provisions:

Employees must report the need for COVID-19 Leave using the district's regular policy for calling in absences. The district administration may direct employees to telework in lieu of taking leave, as determined solely by the district administration.

The district administration reserves the right to request more information and/or documentation from any employee that takes COVID-19 Leave or teleworks in lieu of taking leave.

The district administration will interpret the provisions of this program using guidance and regulations from the federal Department of Labor regarding FFCRA leave in the district administration's sole discretion.

Employees will not be paid for any unused COVID-19 Leave upon separation from employment or at the end of the 2020-2021 school year. Unused COVID-19 Leave will not roll over to the 2021-2022 school year.