



2020-2021 Employee Leave Frequently Asked Questions

1. What do Plans A, B, and C look like at the school level?

Each of these plans were developed using the guidance given to school systems by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). For more information on their guidelines, please visit the following link: [NCDPI Lighting Our Way Forward](#)

- Plan A allows for all students to be in schools with increase screening and safety protocols. This is the least restrictive plan of all. For more information on Plan A, please visit the following link: [Plan A](#)
- Plan B allows for hybrid between face-to-face instruction in school buildings for two days per week and three days per week online. There are also more strict screening and safety protocols under this plan. For more information on Plan B, please visit the following link: [Plan B](#)
- Plan C allows for all students to learn remotely. This means that students will not be present in the school buildings at any time. For more information on Plan C, please visit the following link: [Plan C](#)

2. What safety precautions will be taken at the school level to protect students and staff members?

Ashe County Schools is prepared to implement procedures and follow all required safety protocols put in place by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS). For more information on health guidelines and safety protocol, please visit the following link: [NCDHHS Health Toolkit \(K-12\)](#)

3. What do I do if I suspect that a student, staff member, or that I have symptoms of COVID-19?

NCDHHS has provided screening forms for schools to help us assess the symptoms of students and staff members. For more information on these screening forms and protocol, please visit the following link: [NCDHHS Reference Guide for COVID-19 \(K-12\)](#)

4. If I am unable to come to work due to a COVID-19 related illness or situation, would I be eligible for the “Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFRCA)” Emergency Sick Leave?

The FFCRA requires all employers to provide 10 days of emergency sick leave to all full and part-time employees regardless of tenure if they meet one of the qualifying

reasons. For more details, please visit the following links: [NCDPI Leave Guidance](#); [FFCRA Leave Poster](#)

5. How much FFCRA Emergency Sick Leave time am I eligible for if I qualify under FFCRA?

Qualifying full-time employees are entitled to 80 hours of paid sick leave. Qualifying part-time employees are entitled to 10 days of their normal work hours or the number of hours equal to the number of hours they work on average over a two-week period for the last 6 months.

6. Is the FFCRA Emergency Sick Leave in addition to the current sick leave available?

Yes. In addition, an employer cannot require you to exhaust your current sick leave first.

7. Can I use the FFCRA Emergency Sick Leave because I am concerned about exposing a family member that is high risk to COVID?

The FFCRA does not include this scenario as a qualifying reason to use the Emergency Sick Leave.

8. Is the FFCRA leave the same as the Emergency Sick Leave provided by NCDPI that expired in June 2020?

No, the FFCRA Emergency Sick Leave is a federal leave.

9. What if I am considered high risk by the CDC and do not feel safe to return to work?

The federal FFCRA leave is different from the state emergency leave that expired in June, in which high-risk is not included in this leave. High risk is also not covered by available state sick leave. However, if you would like to discuss the possibility of an accommodation to your job duties please contact Human Resources.

10. What if my childcare provider is not available for childcare services due to COVID? Am I eligible for FFCRA Emergency Sick Leave or Expanded FMLA Leave?

Yes, only if the child care services were not available due to the child care provider closure or school closure due to COVID. Documentation of closure will be required.

11. Can an employee supplement FFCRA Emergency Sick Leave with other accrued sick leave for the additional 1/3 pay?

Yes, however the leave used will be dependent on the qualifying reason.

12. Can you define “son or daughter”?

Son or daughter is defined as “biological, adopted, foster child, step child, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis. It also includes a child who is 18 years of age or older who is incapable of self-care because of a physical or mental disability.

13. Regarding childcare, can my employer inquire to see if there is someone at home available to provide childcare?

Yes. Employees may be required to make a representation that no other suitable person is available to care for the child during the period of requested leave.

14. Will medical documentation be required to determine eligibility of a FFCRA Emergency Sick Leave or Expanded FMLA Leave benefit?

Yes

15. When does the FFCRA benefits expire?

The benefits expire December 31, 2020.

16. In order to be eligible for FFCRA Expanded FMLA Leave benefits do I have to meet the normal FMLA requirements of 12 months employed and worked 1,250 hours during the previous 12 months?

No, however, an employee must be employed 30 calendar days at the time the leave is requested.

17. How do I make a request of FFCRA benefits?

Employees wishing to inquire about eligibility of FFCRA benefits will need to contact Human Resources.

18. Are the first 10 days of the FFCRA Expanded FMLA Leave unpaid?

Yes, however an employee can use the FFCRA Emergency Sick Leave or may substitute annual leave.

19. Does the use of the FFCRA Expanded FMLA Leave count against the 12 weeks of traditional FMLA if eligible?

Yes

20. Am I entitled to health care coverage under the FFCRA Expanded FMLA Leave?

Yes

21. Am I protected by FMLA in the event I contract COVID?

Yes, if the employee has a qualifying event of a serious medical condition related to COVID. An employee is protected by FMLA if they have worked 12 months and at 1,250 hours during the last 12 months of the qualifying event.

22. What if I have a disability?

If an employee has a disability that needs a reasonable accommodation under the ADA regarding PPE or other protocols that do not cause an undue hardship, the employee

should contact Human Resources to make this request.

23. For what purposes can I use my state sick leave in relation to COVID?

Sick leave may be used for:

- An actual period of temporary disability caused by or contributed to by personal illness or injury that prevents an employee from performing his or her job duties.
- Medical appointments
- Illness of the immediate family and medical appointments related to the illness or injury that necessitates the employee's attendance

24. What do I do if I have been exposed to a person who has not been diagnosed with a positive COVID test and has not been directed to quarantine by a health care provider or local health department, however has demonstrated signs of sickness in-line with some of the COVID symptoms such as fever, cough, headache, etc.?

[Lighting Our Way Forward](#) resources only provide guidance for employees who have been exposed to a positive case, have tested positive for COVID, or are demonstrating signs of sickness. Please refer to that document for proper protocols.