

NORTH PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Staff Attendance Protocol

I. Protocol

The Superintendent, either directly or through their Administration Office designee (hereafter “Administration” unless otherwise indicated) is responsible for authorizing absences in accordance with District policy and applicable law. This authorization from the Administration is a core educational responsibility essential to carrying out North Providence Public Schools’ mission of providing each student with a highly qualified and effective staff for the entirety of each school year. This responsibility requires the Administration be able to plan for and minimize interruptions in the delivery of those educational services and the responsibility of all staff to attend the workplace daily with fidelity.

All staff are expected to be regular in attendance as consistent instruction from highly effective staff is in the best educational interest of students.

This protocol is intended to set North Providence Public Schools’ expectation and guidance for attendance and shall be applied in conjunction with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and applicable District policies.

II. AUTHORIZED ABSENCES¹

Staff who are absent from work must receive such authorization prior to, contemporaneously with, or shortly after the absence commences. The following types of absences are authorized:

Short-Term Absence:

Staff who experience a short-term illness (requiring absence of 5 consecutive calendar days or fewer) that renders them unable to carry out their work responsibilities shall notify the appropriate Administration personnel and/or building administrator of the need to be absent and to record that absence in the District’s attendance tracking system (currently “Frontline”) as much in advance as possible so that appropriate coverage may be arranged. The service will be available to all staff, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and can be accessed via internet or phone. Please contact the Office of Human Resources if you are a permanent staff member and do not have access to the system.

¹ Authorized leaves are further defined in the staff member’s collective bargaining agreement or individual employment agreement.

FMLA/RIPFMLA Leave:

Staff who are absent due to their own “serious health condition,” (as described under the FMLA) may be eligible for a job protected leave of 12 and or/13 weeks under FMLA and/or the RIPFMLA. Staff should refer to the FMLA and RIPFMLA for details about eligibility and grounds for such leave, health benefits during such leave, and related matters.

The Administration is responsible for reviewing requests for FMLA/RIPFMLA leave and authorizing or denying such leave in accordance with law. A leave under the FMLA/RIPFMLA is unpaid, although the staff member granted such leave **shall** discharge accrued sick and personal time, and thereafter, may seek such additional leave as set forth in their respective collective bargaining agreement.

Leave of Absence as Accommodation:

A staff member who is not eligible for or is denied FMLA/RIPFMLA leave may be eligible for a leave of absence as a reasonable accommodation under the ADA and related state law.

The Administration is responsible for reviewing requests for such leave and granting or denying those requests in accordance with the ADA. The duration of the leave is case-specific and can vary from a few days to a longer period but will often be of shorter duration than that permitted under the FMLA/RIPFMLA. A leave of absence as an accommodation is not the same as leave authorized under the FMLA/RIPFMLA.

The Administration and staff member shall confer and review documentation and information from the staff members health care provider so that the Administration can assess whether the leave is reasonable and for the purpose of enabling the staff member to return to work to carry out the essential job functions, and if so, whether granting such leave would nonetheless place an undue burden on North Providence Public Schools. A leave of absence as an accommodation is unpaid, although the staff member granted such leave **shall** discharge accrued sick and personal time, and thereafter, may seek such additional leave as set forth in the collective bargaining agreement.

Other Leave:

Staff may request, and the Administration may grant other types of leave as permitted and described and subject to the terms set forth under the provisions set forth in the collective bargaining agreement (e.g. bereavement leave, jury leave, et cetera).

Use of Paid Leave Prior to Unpaid Leave:

Staff are required to exhaust all available accrued vacation and personal leave prior to requesting unpaid leave, unless otherwise explicitly permitted under the terms of their respective collective bargaining agreement. All unpaid leave requests are subject to approval by the North Providence School Committee.

Personal Leave:

Staff recognize the importance of every school day attendance. Therefore, with regard to personal leave, staff may only utilize these days in conformance with the terms and conditions of the collective bargaining agreement.

District-Requested Professional Development Leave:

Staff who are asked to participate in District-Requested Professional Development must follow the proper reporting process. Upon notification from a building administrator, staff must:

1. Create their absence using their own "Professional Development" leave as the absence reason in the absence reporting system.
2. Immediately send an email to the building principal, Director of Human Resources, and Assistant Superintendent notifying them of the request and submission.
3. Wait for confirmation from the Assistant Superintendent, who will provide final approval and notify the Director of Human Resources to update the absence entry to "Professional Development – District Requested."

Professional Development should not be assumed to be District-Requested. An administrator must initiate the request prior to the professional development opportunity, and the above process must be completed in advance. Failure to follow these steps will result in the discharge of the staff member's personal professional development leave.

Absence Reporting:

The Frontline automated service simplifies and streamlines the process of recording and managing absences while finding substitutes. As mentioned above, this system is available to all staff, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and can be accessed via the internet or phone. Staff shall be responsible to familiarize themselves with the District's reporting system and ensure that it operates correctly with their internet accessible devices. Any permanent staff member not having access to the system or unaware of how to use it should contact the Office of Human Resources.

It is expected that all permanent staff members use Frontline for reporting all absences from work and adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Staff must record their absence in the District's online reporting system no later than 1 hour prior to the start of their workday. Failure to record absences may result in loss of pay.
2. Staff must wait until a confirmation number is received prior to logging out of the District's online reporting system.
3. Except as otherwise stated in a staff member's respective collective bargaining agreement, all absences shall be recorded in half or full day increments.
4. If for any reason staff are unsuccessful in recording an absence prior to the deadline, they must immediately send an email to their supervisor and the Director of Human Resources.
5. Staff are not permitted to access another staff member's Frontline account for any reason.

Coaches are expected to check with the Athletic Director to review the department's procedures.

At the start of the workday, if a staff member has not reported to work and has not appropriately informed the District of their absence as outlined above, an absence will be recorded as “No Call No Pay” in Frontline and the staff member may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Providing lesson plans for Substitutes:

An educator absent from North Providence Public Schools for any reason is expected to provide adequate, appropriate, current written lesson plans and other pertinent materials relating to schedule, curriculum and instruction planned for the day or whatever period of leave to the building administrator or their designee, which shall be made available to the substitute educator. Except in extraordinary cases, such information shall be submitted prior to the start of the workday. Additional information or materials may be requested by the building administrator.

Tardiness and Early Departures:

Staff are expected to report to work and return from their scheduled breaks in a timely manner. If staff cannot report to work on time, they must notify their supervisor as soon as possible and record their absence in the absence reporting system. Staff who leave work before the end of their scheduled shift must notify a supervisor immediately and record their absence in the absence reporting system. These notifications do not excuse tardiness.

Administration Responsibilities:

The Administration shall:

1. Maintain appropriately detailed, accurate, and up-to-date absence records regarding all staff;
2. Periodically analyze the frequency of use and reasons for use by staff of absences and leaves of absence;
3. Ensure that all staff timely provide the necessary information for the Administration to assess requests for all types of leave; and
4. Implement disciplinary procedures when necessary.

All building administrators, as directed by the Administration, shall take the following actions in managing absenteeism within North Providence Public Schools:

1. Ensure that appropriate coverage is provided during staff absences;
2. Be a point of contact for the staff member’s advance notification of the request to be absent from the workplace and if a short-term absence, ensure that the automated absence reporting system is functional and monitored;
3. Identify any patterns or trends regarding staff absences and report the same to the Administration;
4. After consultation with Administration, discuss the attendance record reflecting excessive or patterned absences with staff; and
5. Limit the number of staff out on personal leave and professional development leave to ensure the successful management of the school.

Disciplinary Action:

If the District detects evidence of issues related to attendance for any reason, to include but not limited to the below, the District may impose disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

1. Patterned absences.
2. Considered chronically absent as defined by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE).
3. Not reporting to work and not appropriately informing the District of said absence.
4. Taking unauthorized leave.
5. Overuse or inappropriate use of sick leave, for example, inappropriately using leave to extend a vacation, holiday period or school recess.

Staff are expected to submit medical documentation for their illness in accordance with their respective collective bargaining agreement. The medical note must be from a licensed medical professional and must indicate whether the staff member is able to return to work with or without restrictions. Any restrictions must be reviewed by the Director of Human Resources prior to staff returning.