

## **Parental Leave**

Ball State University offers up to twenty-six (26) weeks of leave to eligible full and part time faculty, professional, and staff employees for the birth or adoption of a child. The purpose of Parental Leave is to promote work life balance by providing eligible parents with the time needed to recover from childbirth, to care for and bond with their child, and/or to balance their professional and work obligations while adjusting to their new family environment. This policy provides for both **paid** and **unpaid** Parental Leaves.

### **Eligibility for Parental Leave**

This benefit is available to full and part-time faculty, professional and staff employees. Temporary employees, semester contract faculty, service employees, graduate assistants and student employees are not covered by this policy.

To be eligible for **paid** parental leave, an employee must be appointed to a full-time, benefit eligible position and been employed by the University for twelve (12) continuous months when the parental leave period begins. An employee who attains twelve (12) months of service within six (6) weeks immediately following the birth or adoption of a child will be eligible to receive a pro-rated amount of paid parental leave.

### **Parental Leave General Provisions**

- Parental leave may be used for birth or adoption of a minor child. The adoption of a child by a new spouse is excluded from this policy.
- The University provides for a maximum of twenty-six (26) weeks of parental leave on either a full or half-time continuous basis to be used within one year immediately following the birth or adoption of a child. Parental leave may not be taken on an intermittent basis. Taking leave on a half-time basis will not extend the twenty-six (26) week limit. The twenty-six (26) week limit commences with the first day of parental leave used (paid or unpaid). Multiple births or adoptions do not increase the amount of paid parental leave or extend the twenty-six (26) week limit for that event.
- Parental leave is divided into two categories: paid parental leave and unpaid parental leave. Parental leave runs concurrently with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), as available.
- If both parents are employed by Ball State, they may take the parental leave concurrently or at separate times. Each may request up to twenty-six (26) weeks of parental leave (paid/unpaid).
- Professional and Staff employees who elect to take parental leave on a half-time basis will work one-half day each day they are normally scheduled. Alternate working schedules must be pre-approved by Human Resources and the appropriate Dean or Associate Vice President. Faculty who elect to work half-time are required to have an

approved plan of not less than fifty (50) percent time that includes instructional assignments and must be pre-approved by the Chair, Dean and Human Resources.

- Unpaid parental leave may be taken on a full-time or part-time continuous basis and is normally unpaid. An employee may elect to use vacation or compensatory time as available, but is not required to do so.
- An employee who is not eligible for paid parental leave may be eligible to use available sick leave as outlined in the applicable sick leave policy. In cases where the medical provider has deemed it medically necessary for an employee to be off work, available sick leave balances must be used.
- Tenure-track faculty members who are eligible for parental leave (paid or unpaid) may request an extension of their probationary period as outlined in the *University Promotion and Tenure Document*.

#### **Paid Parental Leave General Provisions**

- Eligible employees are entitled to a maximum of six (6) weeks of paid parental leave following the birth or adoption of a child. Paid parental leave does not reduce the employee's accrued time under any of the other paid leave programs. Paid parental leave is paid at 100% of the employees regular pay
- Paid parental leave must be used within six (6) months immediately following the birth or adoption; except that paid parental leave may commence prior to the event when deemed medically necessary or required to fulfill the legal requirements for the adoption. The use of paid parental leave prior to the birth or adoption of a child must be pre-approved by Human Resources.
- Once paid parental leave commences, the time must be used on a full-time continuous basis except when the six (6) weeks of time would include the summer semester and the employee would not normally be scheduled to work during the summer semester. In that situation, the use of paid parental leave will be considered to be used on a continuous basis when the time is taken immediately prior to and following the unscheduled summer semester.
- If an official university holiday or paid break (i.e. spring break, fall break, winter break) occurs during the employee's paid parental leave, the employee must use paid parental leave. Paid parental leave not used in accordance with this policy will be forfeited. Unused balances will not be paid out.
- In the case of a stillborn child, the birth mother may be eligible for a maximum six (6) weeks of paid parental leave and the non-birth parent up to two (2) weeks of paid

parental leave which must be taken immediately following the birth and is provided in lieu of funeral leave.

- Paid parental leave is intended to be used in lieu of sick leave and must be exhausted prior to the use of sick leave. An employee who elects to use paid parental leave for the adoption of a child is not entitled to use an additional fifteen (15) sick days for that event. A non-birth parent who elects to use paid parental leave is not entitled to use an additional ten (10) days of sick leave for that event. A birth mother who has exhausted paid parental leave may use ten (10) additional sick days without medical documentation. Any additional use of sick time must be medically necessary and qualified under the University's sick leave policy.

### **Parental Leave and Continued Eligibility for Benefits**

- Employees on parental leave retain benefits, but must make arrangements to pay for their portion of premiums if they are on unpaid leave.
- If the employee fails to return to work at the university on or before the expiration of the parental leave, the employee will be considered to have resigned from the university. If the employee fails to return to work at the university at the end of the leave and work for a period of time equal to the length of the leave that was not covered by FML, he or she must repay the portion of the benefit costs paid by the university during the non-FML portion of the parental leave.

### **Requesting Parental Leave**

- Requests for parental leave should be made as far in advance as possible, but generally not less than thirty (30) days before the leave commences.
- All requests for parental leave and supporting documentation must be submitted in writing to University Human Resource Services.
- All requests for parental leave must be approved by University Human Resource Services.
- All requests for parental leave beyond what is available through the Family Medical Leave Act must be approved by the appropriate Dean or Associate Vice President.
- Contact University Human Resources Services at 765-285-1036 for more information or to request leave.