

# MONROE TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

423 Buckelew Avenue  
Monroe Township, NJ 08831

## Staff Return to Work 2020-2021: FAQs

This document was developed as guidance to assist staff with frequently asked questions as they return to work. These decisions are being informed by guidance from several sources including, Executive Orders, NJ State Reopening Guidance, state/local health department and CDC guidelines along with input from the local Monroe Township School District community. This document is provided as guidance for staff members as they return to work. Individual circumstances may result in a different response than the responses set forth herein. This is a living document and will be updated as more information becomes available.

### **Q. What is the Families First Coronavirus Response Act? When is it in effect?**

- A. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (“FFCRA”) requires certain employers (including MTSD) to provide employees with paid sick leave and expanded leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (“FMLA”) for specified reasons related to COVID-19. These provisions will apply from **April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020**. See [FFCRA Webinar Slides](#) for more information.

### **Q. What happens if I exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 while at work?**

- A. If an employee exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 while at work (shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, coughing, fever, chills, body aches, sore throat, etc.), the employee will be immediately sent home.

If an employee is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis, the employee may be entitled to the emergency paid sick leave under the FFCRA, which is up to two weeks (80 hours) based on the higher of the employee’s regular rate of pay, or the applicable state or Federal minimum wage, at 100%, up to \$511 daily and \$5,110 total. To apply for such leave, an employee must complete the required Leave Request Form – FFCRA and supply supporting documentation as listed under, “What documents do I need to give my employer to qualify for unpaid/paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave?”

If an employee remains out of work beyond the 10 days through the emergency paid sick leave under the FFCRA, the employee may be able to use his/her available sick and/or personal time.

For more information on FFCRA and the emergency paid sick leave, see these documents: [How Much Paid Leave Can Employees Take?](#) and [Determining Your FFCRA Eligibility](#).

### **Q. I have just been diagnosed with COVID-19, what do I do?**

- A. Please immediately contact your immediate supervisor. According to the CDC guidelines, the employee must remain at home in isolation for at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared, and

at least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication. If you have severe illness from COVID-19 (you were admitted to a hospital and need oxygen), your healthcare provider may recommend that you stay in isolation for longer than 10 days since your symptoms first appeared.

Any staff member diagnosed with COVID-19 or seeking a diagnosis will not be permitted to return to work until medical clearance is provided and in accordance with CDC guidelines. Follow the district policy for staff attendance and submit a note from your medical professional documenting the COVID-19 diagnosis and date of expected return to your immediate supervisor. Your immediate supervisor will forward the note to the Department of Human Resources. As always, employee medical information and all related documentation will be kept confidential and will be secured separately from employee personnel files.

Please refer to [NJ Residents with a Positive COVID-19 Test: Instructions & Next Steps](#).

In this scenario, the employee may be entitled to the emergency paid sick leave under the FFCRA, which is up to two weeks (80 hours) based on the higher of the employee's regular rate of pay, or the applicable state or Federal minimum wage, paid at 100%, up to \$511 daily and \$5110 total. To apply for such leave, an employee must complete the required Leave Request Form – FFCRA and supply supporting documentation as listed under, "What documents do I need to give my employer to qualify for unpaid/paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave?"

If an employee remains out of work beyond the 10 days through the emergency paid sick leave under the FFCRA, the employee may be able to use his/her available sick and/or personal time.

For more information on FRCRA and the emergency paid sick leave, see these documents: [How Much Paid Leave Can Employees Take?](#) and [Determining Your FFCRA Eligibility](#).

**Q. I have just become ill with suspected COVID-19 symptoms, decide to self-isolate for 10 days, and then return to work; however, I choose NOT to seek a medical diagnosis. Can I get paid for those two weeks under the FFCRA?**

- A. No. You may not take paid sick leave under the FFCRA if you unilaterally decide to self-isolate for an illness without medical advice, even if you have COVID-19 symptoms. You are urged to seek prompt medical care for any suspected COVID-19 symptoms. Note that you may not take paid sick leave under the FFCRA due to any illness not related to COVID-19.

**Q. I tested negative for COVID-19 but I am still experiencing symptoms; or I have no symptoms and tested negative but I am living with someone who is COVID-19 positive; or I have no symptoms and tested negative for COVID-19 but I was told I am a close contact of a person who is COVID-19 positive; or I tested negative but I still feel sick, what do I do?**

- A. First, please contact your immediate supervisor for further direction. You may also refer to [NJ Residents with a Negative COVID-19 Test: Instructions and Next Steps](#).

In this scenario, the employee may be entitled to the emergency paid sick leave under the FFCRA, which is up to two weeks (80 hours) based on the higher of their regular rate of pay, or the applicable state or Federal minimum wage, at 100%, up to \$511 daily and \$5,110 total. To apply for such leave, an employee must complete the required Leave Request Form – FFCRA and supply supporting documentation as listed under, “What documents do I need to give my employer to qualify for unpaid/paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave?”

If an employee remains out of work beyond the 10 days through the emergency paid sick leave under the FFCRA, the employee may be able to use his/her available sick and/or personal time.

For more information on FFCRA and the emergency paid sick leave, see these documents: [How Much Paid Leave Can Employees Take?](#) and [Determining Your FFCRA Eligibility](#).

**Q. I have been medically diagnosed with an underlying condition that places me at a greater risk for contracting COVID and my doctor recommends that I not return to work at this time.**

- A. Please send an email to your immediate supervisor to see if there are any options that might be available to you such as eligibility for a reasonable accommodation. This information will be reviewed by Mrs. Marietta Ruela, Director, Pupil Personnel Services. Additional documentation will be required from your medical professional.

**Q. What happens if I come in close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19?**

- A. If an employee learns that they have been in close contact with an individual who has tested positive outside of work, the employee should contact their immediate supervisor immediately. According to the current CDC guidelines, employees who have come in [close contact](#) with an individual that has tested positive for COVID-19 will be required to quarantine for a 14 day period. The 14 day quarantine will begin as of the last date of close contact with the positive individual. The employee should also contact their health care provider for guidance and documentation.

In this scenario, the employee may be entitled to the emergency paid sick leave under the FFCRA, which is up to two weeks (80 hours) based on the higher of their regular rate of pay, or the applicable state or Federal minimum wage, at 100%, up to \$511 daily and \$5,110 total. To apply for such leave, an employee must complete the required Leave Request Form – FFCRA and supply supporting documentation as listed under, “What documents do I need to give my employer to qualify for unpaid/paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave?”

If an employee remains out of work beyond the 10 days through the emergency paid sick leave, the employee may be able to use his/her available sick and/or personal time.

For more information on FFCRA and the emergency paid sick leave, see these documents: [How Much Paid Leave Can Employees Take?](#) and [Determining Your FFCRA Eligibility](#).

**Q. What is the district's plan in the event that there is a confirmed case in my school?**

- A. The district will follow the MTSD's Restart Plan and CDC guidelines, see page 15 of this document for additional information: [Closure Scenarios](#).

**Q. What are the qualifying reasons for a leave (paid or unpaid) due to COVID-19?**

- A. See [EMPLOYEE RIGHTS](#) for specific reasons and related caps on payments for each qualifying reason.

**Q. What documents do I need to give my employer to qualify for unpaid/paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave?**

- A. When requesting unpaid/paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave, you must complete a Leave Request Form and submit it to the Department of Human Resources, c/o Mrs. Kristine Christie via email at [kristine.christie@monroe.k12.nj.us](mailto:kristine.christie@monroe.k12.nj.us) or confidential fax number 732-656-9075.

Additional documentation will be required and is listed below.

If you request FFCRA leave because you are subject to a quarantine or isolation order or to care for an individual subject to such an order, you should additionally provide:

- the name of the government entity that issued the order.

If you request leave to self-quarantine based on the advice of a health care provider or to care for an individual who is self-quarantining based on such medical advice, you should additionally provide:

- the name/contact information/website of the health care provider who gave advice; and
- Supporting documentation from the health care provider.

Please also note that all existing certification requirements under the FMLA remain in effect if you are taking leave for one of the qualifying reasons under the FMLA. For example, if you are taking leave beyond the two weeks of emergency paid sick leave under the FFCRA because your medical condition due to COVID-19 rises to the level of a serious health condition, you must continue to provide medical certifications under the FMLA.

**Q. Can I ask for a leave under FFCRA to care for a sick family member?**

- A. That depends on the nature of the family member's illness. Under the FFCRA there are provisions for leave (with capped pay) if you are caring for a family member diagnosed with/quarantining due to COVID-19. FMLA and the New Jersey Family Leave Act have provisions for unpaid leave to care for the serious health condition of a family member. Documentation will be required: [Certification of Health Care Provider for Family Member's Serious Health Condition \(Family and Medical Leave Act\)](#).

Note that there is no provision for caring for someone other than an individual defined as a family member.

**Q. How much notice should I give for a leave of absence under FFCRA?**

- A. MTSD will need to cover your classes/work assignments while you are absent so we ask that you provide such notice of leave as is practicable to facilitate a smooth transition.

**Q. Can I continue to receive ten (10) days of paid sick leave under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act if I have to take multiple leaves?**

- A. No, you may take up to two weeks total of emergency paid sick leave for any combination of qualifying reasons. Any time beyond the ten days would be available sick, personal, and/or vacation time, as appropriate.

**Q. What do I do if I traveled to an impacted state?**

- A. On or about June 24, 2020, Governor Murphy issued an [out-of-state travel advisory](#) that recommended a fourteen (14) day self-quarantine for any New Jersey residents who have recently traveled to any of the “impacted states” currently experiencing a substantial increase in COVID-19 cases and stayed in such state for longer than 24 hours. The quarantine should be calculated beginning on the date in which the employee returned to New Jersey from an impacted state.

As a School District, we are responsible for providing a safe and healthy environment for staff and students. During the COVID-19 pandemic, nonessential out of state travel is strongly discouraged as it presents a significant safety risk to all.

Employees who traveled to an impacted state must submit written verification to their immediate supervisor and the Director of Human Resources that the employee is covered by the Travel Advisory. The verification should include proof of travel, i.e., airfare receipt, payment for tolls or gas in an impacted state or simply a signed and dated statement from the employee confirming the travel and that the employee will self-quarantine as recommended by the travel advisory. The employee will be notified by the Department of Human Resources if further information is needed.

If a member of an employee’s household travels to an impacted state and then returns home, the employee is expected to continue to report to work.