



**MATERNITY, ADOPTION & PARENTAL LEAVE INFORMATION  
FOR SUPPORT STAFF EMPLOYEES**



## **WHAT ARTICLE IN THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT DO I REFERENCE?**

For WVMEA members, the Collective Agreement details the requirements for Maternity, Parental and Adoption Leave in Article 616.

## **HOW MUCH NOTICE IS REQUIRED TO ACCESS LEAVE?**

A request for Maternity Leave shall be made in writing to the Assistant Director of Human Resources. The Board appreciates as much notice as possible so that we are able to arrange suitable replacement resources for the absence. At a minimum, four (4) weeks' notice must be provided to the Board. You will be required to produce a doctor's note confirming the due date of the baby.

When a pregnant employee gives birth prior to requesting Maternity Leave or before commencing Maternity Leave, the Leave will be deemed to start on the date of the birth of the child.

A request for Parental Leave shall be made in writing to the Assistant Director, Human Resources and must be requested no later than four (4) weeks prior to the start of the leave. If you are only requesting parental leave, you will be required to produce confirmation of the date of birth of the baby.

In the case of adoption of a child, the Employee will provide as much notice as possible regarding the date of the adoption and the commencement of the leave. At a minimum, four (4) weeks' notice must be provided to the Board.

## **WHAT ARE MY ENTITLEMENTS UNDER THE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT?**

The *Employment Standards Act* describes the amount of time that can be taken away from the workplace. Part 6 of the *Employment Standards Act*, outlines the information regarding pregnancy and parental leave.

A pregnant employee is entitled to up to 17 consecutive weeks of unpaid leave.

For Parental Leave:

A birth mother who takes the 17 weeks of pregnancy leave can take up to an additional 61 consecutive weeks of unpaid leave.

A birth father can take up to 62 consecutive weeks of unpaid leave.

An adopting parent can take up to 62 consecutive weeks of unpaid leave.

## **EXTENSION TO LEAVES**

There are limited extensions to the leaves. The specific language for the extensions can be found in the *Employment Standards Act*.

For employees who adopt a child who is of school-attending age, the Board will consider additional leaves of absence without pay to cover after school hours to facilitate the transition of the new child into the employee's life. The process for requesting or approving such a leave of absence shall be as per the collective agreement.

## **HOW DO I GET EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE WHILE I AM OFF?**

Employment Insurance (EI) provides Maternity and Parental Benefits to individuals who are pregnant, have recently given birth, are adopting a child or are caring for a newborn.

It is the individual employee's responsibility to make application for Employment Insurance benefits. The application can be made either in person at your local Service Canada office (check online for a location) or online at [www.servicecanada.ca](http://www.servicecanada.ca). The payroll department will complete a Record of Employment on your last day worked. This record will be filed electronically with Service Canada. You do not need to bring a copy to the Service Canada location.

The Service Canada website provides detailed information about the types of personal and employment information you will need to have available to apply for benefits.

Once you have applied for Employment Insurance, there is a one week, unpaid, waiting period for benefits to begin. You will receive an access code which will allow you to view your claim information online. You will be able to see your Record of Employment as well as the payments made.

Any information regarding Employment Insurance benefits should be directed to a Service Canada representative.

## **HOW MUCH CAN I EXPECT TO RECEIVE UNDER EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE?**

The amount received is determined by a formula. Exact amounts cannot be calculated in advance. For most people, the basic rate for calculating Employment Insurance benefits is 55% of your average insurable weekly earnings, up to a maximum amount. As of January 1 2018, the maximum yearly insurable earnings amount is \$51,700. This means that you can receive a maximum amount of \$547 per week.

## **HOW LONG WILL THE EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS CONTINUE?**

El Maternity benefits can be paid for a maximum period of 15 weeks.

El Parental benefits can be paid for a maximum period of 35 weeks (or 61 weeks under the extended parental leave option).

## **DOES THE SCHOOL BOARD TOP UP ANY OF THE EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS?**

Yes, the School Board will top up the salary of those employees eligible for El Maternity benefits. This is calculated as follows:

For the first week:

Hourly rate x hours per week x 95% x 1 week waiting period = top up amount paid

After the first week:

Hourly rate x hours per week x 95% - amount paid by El = top up amount paid for 5 weeks

The School Board pays the full weekly top-up amount for the first week which is unpaid by Employment Insurance and tops up the amount paid by Employment Insurance for the next five (5) weeks of Maternity benefits to the weekly top up amount. The first week of the top up is automatically paid for the one week period following the start of your maternity leave (except if your leave commences over the summer months, then it is paid at September 30<sup>th</sup>). After the first week, the remaining weeks of top up are only paid when you supply proof of receipt of Employment Insurance benefits in the form of payment stubs from Employment Insurance or by print outs from the "My Account" on the El website.

For ten (10) month employees, the top up payments can only be processed on bi-weekly pay periods that fall between September and June. During July and August, you are entitled to a top up for the Employment Insurance benefits, however your top up will not be paid until the first bi-weekly pay period in September. For twelve (12) month employees, top-up payments can be processed on any bi-weekly pay period throughout the year.

Please note that top up is only paid to those employees eligible for El benefits. Employees that do not qualify for El will not receive a top up.

There is no top up for the Employment Insurance Parental benefits.

## **DO I CONTINUE TO ACCRUE SICK LEAVE OR VACATION?**

You will continue to accrue vacation and sick leave entitlements based on your percent employed at the start of your leave.

## **DO MY BENEFITS CONTINUE DURING MY MATERNITY / PARENTAL LEAVE?**

During your leave, BC Medical Services Plan (Provincial health care), Dental and Extended Health Benefits and Long Term Disability coverage will be maintained in the same manner as it was prior to maternity or parental leave of absence. Where there was a cost share arrangement for the benefits, the benefits will continue only if the employee pays, in advance, the employee's portion of the premiums from the first day of the month following the date of separation. Voluntary benefits can continue with the employee paying the cost. If requested, the Board will prepare a statement of the benefits costs the employee will have to pay during the leave.

Pension contributions cease during the period of the leave. However, the pensionable time can be repurchased within five (5) years of the end of the leave in accordance with the rules of the Municipal Pension Plan.

## **HOW DO I GET MY NEW BABY ON TO MY MEDICAL BENEFITS?**

If the mother of a newborn has MSP coverage, the easiest way to enrol the newborn in MSP is by completing the MSP application on the reverse side of the Registration of Live Birth form. You will receive this form at the hospital where the baby is born. You can also find forms at the Vital Statistics website ([www.vs.gov.bc.ca](http://www.vs.gov.bc.ca)) and the Health Insurance BC website ([www.health.gov.bc.ca](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca)).

To enroll the baby on your Dental and Extended Health plans please advise payroll of the baby's full name and date of birth. You can do this by sending an email to the payroll department at [payroll@wvschools.ca](mailto:payroll@wvschools.ca).

\*Please note that you must enroll your child for benefits within 30 days of the date of birth.

## **WHEN DO I NOTIFY THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MY RETURN TO WORK?**

An employee on leave shall notify their manager or administrator at least one month before they intend to return to work. The Board will choose a return date that allows for adequate arrangements to be made for the return of the employee.

If an employee fails to contact the Board within fifty-two (52) weeks from the date of the commencement of the leave, the employee will be deemed to have resigned their employment with the Board.

**On resuming employment, the employee shall be reinstated to their previous position or a position comparable to the one they left.**