Health Absence Policy

Introduction

Regular and punctual attendance is fundamental to the relationship between Suffolk University and each employee. However, the University recognizes that employees occasionally need time off for medical care, personal illness, or to accommodate the same for family members. This policy outlines how Health Absence Time is earned, may be used, and is reported. It also explains how the University provides income replacement for longer personal illnesses.

Definitions

Full-time Staff: For the purposes of this policy, staff who have standard hours of 35 or more per week.

Part-time Staff: For the purposes of this policy, staff who have at least 17 ½ standard hours but less than 35 hours per week.

All other staff: For the purposes of this policy, staff who have standard hours less than 17 ½ hours per week which includes, Intermittent/Seasonal and Temporary workers.

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA): The federal law that establishes national minimum wage, overtime pay standards, child labor laws, and employer record-keeping requirements for pay and time worked.

Non-exempt Staff: An employee covered by all provisions of the FLSA. A non-exempt worker must be paid for all time worked in a week and must be paid time and one half for all time worked over 40 hours in a week.

Exempt Staff: An employee who is not covered, in terms of time worked and time paid by the FLSA, and is therefore not entitled to overtime pay. A worker may be considered exempt based on the work performed and must receive a regular salary of at least $23,600 per year (or $455 per week).

Health Absence Benefit

All staff receive paid Health Absence Time.

- Full-time staff will receive an annual benefit of 70 hours (ten 7-hour days) of Health Absence Time, each July 1st.

- Part-time staff will receive a pro-rated annual benefit of Health Absence Time based on standard hours each July 1st.
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- Full-time and part-time staff scheduled to work limited months (9-month, 10-month, and 11-month employment terms) will receive a pro-rated annual benefit of up to 40 hours of Health Absence Time based on standard hours each July 1st.

- All other staff will receive an annual benefit of 40 hours of Health Absence Time, each July 1st. (*Note: Any unused Health Absence Time remaining at the end of the fiscal year does not carry over into the next fiscal year).*

As a new employee, you will receive a pro-rated Health Absence Time benefit starting from your date of hire through June 30th. However, you may not use Health Absence Time until after three months of employment. Absences in the first three months of employment will be unpaid.

Use of Health Absence Time

In accordance with the *Massachusetts Sick Time Law*, Health Absence Time is provided to allow you to:

- Care for your own physical or mental illness, injury, or other medical condition that requires home, preventative, or professional care;

- Care for your child\(^1\), parent, spouse/domestic partner\(^2\), or parent of a spouse/domestic partner who is suffering from a physical or mental illness, injury, or other medical condition that requires home, preventive, or professional care;

- Attend routine medical and dental appointments for yourself or for your child, parent, spouse/domestic partner, or parent of a spouse/domestic partner;

- Address the psychological, physical, or legal effects of domestic violence; or

- Travel to and from an appointment, a pharmacy, or other location related to the purpose for which the time was taken.

You must notify your manager prior to using Health Absence Time, except in an emergency. For foreseeable or pre-scheduled use of Health Absence Time, please

\[^{1}\text{Under the Massachusetts Sick Time Law, a child is any biological, adopted, or foster child, stepchild, a legal ward, or child for whom an employee has assumed responsibilities of parenthood. There is no reference to age.}\]

\[^{2}\text{You must have a domestic partner affidavit on file with human resources}\]
inform your manager as soon as possible to facilitate smooth operations of your work area.

Health Absence Time for staff may be used in increments of 15 minutes.

You may not use Health Absence Time to cover tardiness or early departures not related to one of the above-listed events.

You may use your accrued, unused vacation time to continue your pay if you use all of your granted or earned Health Absence Time.

If you have unused Health Absence Time remaining at the end of the fiscal year, you may carry a maximum of 70 hours unused Health Absence Time into the next fiscal year. Your Health Absence Time is capped at 140 hours. All time you have in excess of 140 hours will be transferred to your Supplemental Income Replacement Bank (see below).

**Extended Illness Benefits**

If your absence for your own personal illness extends past seven consecutive calendar days, you may be eligible for Extended Illness Benefits (EIB). EIB provides you with 60% of your regular base pay for up to 180 days after seven days of absence.

To be eligible for EIB, you must be a full-time or part-time faculty or staff member and have been continuously employed at the University for at least one year.

You must provide medical documentation to receive EIB. The University uses CIGNA to manage all documentation related to your medical condition to ensure confidentiality of your personal health information. CIGNA health professionals may work with your health provider to clarify information and determine your eligibility for EIB.

To apply for EIB, call **(800) 362-4462** or complete the **on-line** application form. All required information goes directly to CIGNA. Do not send this application form or any personal health information to your manager or to the Human Resources office. CIGNA will notify the Benefits/Leave of Absence Specialist if you have been approved to receive EIB.

You may only receive EIB for up to 25 weeks, in a 24-month period, based on CIGNA’s ongoing approval. If you believe your personal illness will continue past 26 weeks (one week of PAT and 25 weeks of EIB), you may wish to apply for the University’s Long-Term Disability (LTD) Insurance. If approved, LTD becomes effective after 180 days (approximately six months) of your initial absence.

Inform your manager if you anticipate an absence for your own personal illness as soon as possible. It is also important for you to contact the Benefits/Leaves of Absence Specialist.
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Specialist in Human Resources who can help you apply for the Extended Illness Benefit and also for a Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave. By planning in advance, you will minimize the risk of interruption in your income.

You will not accrue vacation time while you are receiving Extended Illness or LTD benefits.

Supplemental Income Replacement Benefit

Your Supplemental Income Replacement Benefit (SIRB) provides you with an additional layer of income protection.

At the end of each fiscal year, any Personal Absence Time in excess of 140 hours will be transferred to your Supplemental Income Replacement Bank (SIRB). If you are eligible for Extended Illness Benefits you may use your SIRB to supplement your EIB so you receive up to 100% of your base pay.

You may use your SIRB for the entire time you are receiving Income Replacement (depending on your SIRB bank balance).

Your SIRB is capped at a maximum of 364 hours. This is sufficient to provide a benefit for a full six months at which time you are eligible to apply for long-term disability.

Staff employed before June 30, 2016

To facilitate the transition from previous policies:

- Exempt staff employed before June 30, 2016 will have 364 hours deposited into their Supplemental Income Replacement Bank.

- Non-exempt staff employed before June 30, 2016 will have all accrued Sick Time as of June 30, 2016 deposited into their Supplemental Income Replacement Bank.