



KNOW YOUR WORKING CONDITIONS! A basic guide to leave entitlements

Regardless of your location, as a state-employed teacher in Queensland you have access to a range of different types of leave. Most of these leave types are enshrined in Public Service Commission Directives, which the department's policies interpret to reflect specific workplace conditions. Individual workplaces should not apply their own conditions. Each leave type is designed to meet a specific purpose but all intended are to help you maintain a healthy work/life balance.

Sick leave

A 10-day sick leave credit is allowed at the date of beginning permanent employment. From the beginning of the second year of permanent service, or if employed on a temporary contract, sick leave is accrued at the rate of one half-day for each 18 days of service, based on a seven-day week and 52 weeks of the year.

Department of Education (DoE) payroll practice is that the minimum period of deduction is 15 minutes, processed in 15-minute increments in excess of this.

If you are absent through illness, you should notify the principal promptly, including the approximate period of absence. You are not required to provide details of the nature of the illness. A medical certificate or suitable documentation is required for sick leave of more than three days' duration. Sick leave is an entitlement, you do not need to seek "permission" to not attend work when you or a member of your immediate family is ill.

If you are subject to a formal process for monitoring performance, conduct or attendance, the Director-General may require a medical certificate to support an application for sick leave for less than three days.

Meritorious sick leave credit

An additional credit of 65 working days of sick leave on full pay may be added to the sick leave account of a full-time teacher, provided they have completed 26 years of meritorious service within the Queensland public sector which counted towards long service leave accrual (it need not be continuous). Additional credit is calculated on a pro-rata basis for teachers employed on a part-time basis. Applications should be made in writing to the appropriate regional director, through the principal - a specific form is now available on One Portal. There is no requirement to exhaust your sick leave balance prior to applying for meritorious sick leave.

Infectious diseases

A special credit of leave on full pay, not chargeable to any other leave account, may be approved if you are suffering from an infectious disease contracted during the course of employment. Diseases include German measles, measles, mumps, chicken pox, whooping cough, scabies/sarcoptes and head lice (influenza is not eligible).

Superannuation disablement benefits (income protection)

If you are off for an extended period and exhaust your entitlement to paid sick leave, you may be entitled to an income QSuper protection benefit of approximately 75 per cent of your salary.

You cannot claim income protection if you need to care for a family member. It is only paid if you are temporarily ill or injured and are unable to work.

Depending on your coverage, the benefit is payable following a waiting period, which may be 30 or 90 days. You can personalise your waiting period from 90 to 30 days, however this attracts a higher premium. You can access accrued leave such as long service leave during the waiting period.

You will not be entitled to an income protection benefit if:

- your employment ends
- you reach age 65 (if you have an Accumulation Plan)
- you reach age 75 (if you have Defined Benefit Plan).

Carer's leave

Accrued sick leave is to be used to care for family or members of your household who are sick or require care. You can also seek to use discretionary paid special leave for family illness purposes.

Long service leave

Long service leave is available to any employee (permanent, temporary or casual) who has completed 10 years' continuous service, at the rate of 1.3 weeks on full pay for each year of continuous service, i.e. 13 weeks after 10 years, and a proportionate amount for an incomplete year of service.

You are now entitled to take pro-rata long service leave after seven years' continuous service, but this does not entitle you to a cash payout.

The minimum period of long service leave which can be taken at any one time is one week. You can access it in periods of no less than one day per week or fortnight, provided the requested periods amount to:

- five days or more in total, to facilitate the engagement of a replacement temporary teacher; or
- a lesser period, where there is no requirement to utilise the Teacher Relief Scheme (TRS).

Long service leave can be taken at full or half-pay, but cannot be accessed at half-pay if not accessed continuously for five days.

Applications should be submitted through the principal and allow for two clear terms' notice, unless emergent reasons exist. Applications are granted subject to departmental convenience but should not unreasonably be denied. A reason must be provided if not approved.

Parental leave

Paid parental leave (PPL) is the umbrella term for paid maternity leave, paid spousal leave, paid adoption leave, paid surrogacy leave, paid pre-natal leave, paid pre-adoption leave or paid pre-surrogacy leave. PPL is not available to foster carers.

To be eligible for PPL, you must have met the qualifying service period of at least 12 months' continuous service at least once. This service is to be unbroken, but may be inclusive of paid and unpaid leave that is credited towards service.

For temporary employees, your continuity of service with an employer is not broken if the employer re-employs you within three months of the termination of the previous contract; you must have a contract from which to take the leave.

Birth, adoptive and surrogate parents who have the primary care for a baby are entitled to 14 weeks of PPL. This leave can be accessed at half-pay and is exclusive of any school vacation periods it falls across. Primary carer leave is a new leave type that allows partners to access paid parental leave from the employer that is not used by their spouse (with documentation), subject to:

- the employee meeting the eligibility requirement prior to the date of birth
- the employee being the primary care giver for the child/children at the time the leave is taken
- the leave being taken prior to the child/children's first birthday.

Further details can be found in the QTU Parental Leave brochure.

Up to 25 hours of pre-natal, pre-adoption, pre-surrogacy leave is available to attend appointments related to birth, adoption or surrogacy. This can be taken in one-hour blocks, half-days or full-days. Evidence of each appointment needs to be provided.

Spouses have access to five hours of both pre-natal leave paid spousal leave. Spousal leave is to be taken in conjunction with the birth.

Applications for PPL should be submitted through the principal, providing 10 weeks' notice.

Domestic and family violence

If you are affected by domestic and family violence (DFV), you can access a minimum of 10 days per year of paid leave. A request for the leave is made to the principal, and you do not have to use other leave entitlements first. It can be taken as consecutive days, single days or a fraction of a day.

You can request further paid leave to seek support in relation to DFV. The request is made to the regional executive director, through the principal. The regional director or assistant regional director have the delegated authority to approve further paid leave, beyond the 10 days.

Special leave

Non-discretionary special leave includes election (local/state), local government, Australian Volunteers International, declared emergency or disaster situation, Defence Reserve Forces and bereavement leave (two days). Miscarriage is recognised as bereavement leave.

Two days of compassionate leave (non-discretionary) are available if a member of the immediate family or household develops an illness or sustains an injury that poses a serious threat to their life. As with bereavement leave, you must provide documentation.

Discretionary special leave allows the principal to approve up to five days paid leave per year per reason, at their discretion. Examples include:

- an emergency situation or on compassionate grounds
- sporting competitions
- seminars, conferences, other than as an official representative
- returning officers
- floods, cyclones, bushfires, etc
- emergency management courses
- attendance at emergencies
- platelet and blood donors
- pre-retirement seminars
- change of residence
- leave to affect a transfer
- court attendance/jury service
- leave to extend workplace vacations
- study leave
- graduation ceremonies
- marriage leave
- cultural leave
- religious reasons
- leave in lieu of duties at camp
- other exceptional circumstances.

The principal can approve unpaid special leave where paid special leave may not be deemed appropriate and the employee does not have access to accrued long service leave. Where unpaid leave occurs either side of a mid-year school vacation, that vacation period will be without pay.

Extended special leave without salary

There are two categories:

- leave for family responsibilities: to care for dependent child or family member who requires care (minimum one term and up to seven years, inclusive of any paid leave)
- leave for other purposes, e.g. travel, study or other employment (minimum one term and up to three years).

DoE requires two terms' notice to consider applications for leave without salary, which should be submitted via the principal. The application for leave form can be accessed via OnePortal.

To be eligible to apply, you should have had your appointment confirmed through the submission of a satisfactory probationary report. Approval is at the discretion of the department and is dependent on its ability to ensure effective service delivery continues. Teachers on extended special leave can be engaged by DoE as supply or contract teachers. Leave without pay will not be granted for work in the non-government school sector.

Industrial relations education (IRE) leave

IRE leave is paid time off to acquire knowledge and competencies in industrial relations, to allow effective participation in consultative structures, representative roles and grievance and dispute settlement procedures.

Employees may be granted up to five working days (or the equivalent hours) paid time off (non-cumulative) per calendar year, approved by the chief executive, to attend industrial relations education sessions. Paid leave for industrial training would fall under school cost recovery in accordance with the Teacher Relief Scheme.