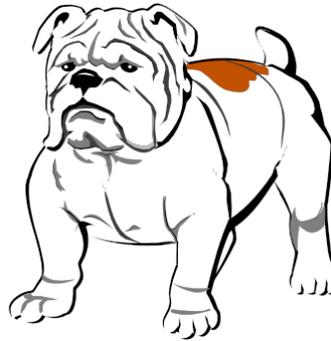


HITCHCOCK INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



VOLUNTARY CATASTROPHIC SICK LEAVE PROGRAM

HISD DEC (LOCAL)

HANDBOOK

Effective 09/01/2015

SECTION I: PURPOSE AND DEFINITION

A. PURPOSE

The Voluntary Catastrophic Sick Leave Program of the Hitchcock Independent School District is a bank of local sick leave days contributed by personnel to be used by members of the plan who suffer a qualifying incapacitating illness or accident personally or through the illness or injury of an immediate family member which extends beyond any leave available to an employee.

B. DEFINITION OF CATASTROPHIC SICK LEAVE DAYS FOR MEMBERS

A catastrophic illness or injury is a severe condition or combination of conditions affecting the mental or physical health of the employee or a member of the employee's immediate family that requires the services of a licensed practitioner for a prolonged period of time and that forces the employee to exhaust all leave time earned by that employee and to lose compensation from the District. Complications resulting from pregnancy shall be treated the same as any other condition. DEC (LOCAL)

Examples of illnesses that qualify for the benefits of the program include, but are not limited to: Cancer, Heart Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Stroke and Muscular Dystrophy.

SECTION II: MEMBERSHIP

A. ELIGIBILITY

All full-time employees of the Hitchcock Independent School District may participate in the Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank. "Full time employees" shall be defined as those employees who are classified as full-time by HISD. Less than full-time employees are eligible for membership only if they receive local sick leave benefits.

B. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Eligible employees may participate in the Catastrophic Sick Leave Program annually each September through August.

C. PROCEDURES FOR JOINING THE CATASTROPHIC SICK LEAVE BANK

1. Any employee who is eligible to join the Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank may do so by contributing one (1) day of accrued or anticipated local sick leave. An employee desiring to join during the current school year must be able to earn at least one (1) day from the time of his/her employment until the completion of his/her total number of days of work at the end of the school year.
2. The enrollment period of current employees and new employees hired prior to the opening of the school year shall be July 1 through September 30.

3. All employees who join the Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank within the enrollment period are eligible for membership beginning with the first official day of work.
4. All new personnel employed after the enrollment period must be able to earn at least one (1) day of local sick leave during the current school year to be eligible for membership and must enroll within 30 days of hire date.
5. Employees desiring to join the Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank shall complete the membership application form and submit it to the HISD Payroll Office by September 30th.

SECTION III: REGULATIONS CONCERNING CONTRIBUTION OF DAYS

- A. To become a member of the Bank, an employee must contribute one (1) day from his/her accrued or anticipated local sick leave for the current school year. Employees may not donate leave to purchase membership on behalf of other employees.
- B. This day will be subtracted from the member's local sick leave record.
- C. The day donated becomes the property of the Hitchcock ISD Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank. All donations will remain in force and cannot be returned even upon cancellation of membership.
- D. For Bank purposes the school year will be from September 1 through August 31. If a member uses three (3) or more days from the Bank during this time period, he/she will be required to donate one (1) day the following school year regardless of he/she choosing to become a member the following school year. (September through August)
- E. Upon return to work with Hitchcock ISD, personnel on approved leave of absence will retain membership in the Bank and will not be required to donate additional days within the current school year.

SECTION IV: REGULATIONS CONCERNING GRANTING OF SICK LEAVE DAYS FROM THE BANK FOR EMPLOYEES OWN CATASTROPHIC ILLNESS/INJURY

- A. Catastrophic sick leave days from the Bank will be granted only after the member has exhausted all earned state and local leave days. Employees who receive vacation/non-duty days or compensatory overtime must first exhaust this earned time as well.
- B. Days from the Bank shall be granted only for unexpected extended critical illness or critical injury which necessitates an absence from work for five consecutive days or longer. The committee may override the consecutive days rule in extenuating circumstances such as treatments for cancer or leukemia where the member is able to return to work between treatments. However, the member must present a written statement from the physician of each treatment date to the advisor of the plan.

- C. The condition of pregnancy shall not be covered by the Bank. Concerning cesarean delivery, as per Source: (Medical Disability Advisor) most women can return to most jobs within 4 to 6 weeks of a vaginal delivery, and within 8 weeks following cesarean delivery, with this in mind, 4 to 6 weeks is considered normal pregnancy recovery time and only the additional 2 weeks may be considered for leave purposes only where emergency cesarean section circumstances exist. For example, the baby is in distress or breech position. An elected or non-emergency cesarean section is not eligible for leave. However, complications resulting from pregnancy shall be treated the same as any other condition.
- D. Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank days shall be granted only for absences occurring within the members scheduled working days and will not be granted for holidays, vacation days or other such days for which the member is not paid.
- E. The maximum number of Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank days that may be granted to a member eligible for Family Medical Leave must not exceed 60 days within that members individual Family Medical Leave 12 month period. If the member is not eligible for Family Medical Leave the maximum number of Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank days must not exceed 30 days within the 12 month period as if the member were eligible for Family Medical Leave.
- F. If a member who has received fewer than 20 days from the Catastrophic Leave Bank returns to work and then is ill again with the same or different illness, he/she may apply to the Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank for additional days needed. Each separate illness applied for must meet the initial criteria of just cause.
- G. Catastrophic sick leave days from the Bank may not be used to supplement monies paid to the member under the Workers' Compensation Act. However, the 7 days prior to worker's compensation benefits being paid, (Employee Choice), may be considered eligible by the committee.
- H. All unused catastrophic sick leave days in the Bank at the end of the plan year, August 31, shall be carried over to the next school year, September 1 through August 31.
- I. A contributor will lose the right to utilize the benefits of the Bank due to:
 - 1. Termination of employment.
 - 2. Voluntary cancellation of participation by the member in writing at any time.
 - 3. Suspension or Administrative leave for misconduct or investigation.
 - 4. Abuse or misuse of the plan as determined by the committee.
- J. The Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank Committee reserves the right to evaluate eligibility for granting days from the Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank. An employee may appeal a denial through the District's grievance process. See policy DGBA (Local).

SECTION V: PROCEDURES FOR APPLYING FOR CATASTROPHIC SICK LEAVE DAYS

- A.** Should the member have an unexpected critical illness or injury necessitating the need for additional leave after all available leave days have been used, the member may submit a request for days from the Bank.
- B.** A member who requests days from the Bank must submit to the Superintendent or Designee forms containing the following information:
 - 1.** Completion of the attending physician's statement which includes:
 - a.** Identification of the nature of illness and/or extent of injury.
 - b.** Date of initial onset of this particular condition.
 - c.** Anticipated date eligible to return to work on a full or part-time basis.
 - d.** Anticipated days, if any, for follow-up examinations.
- C.** Forms for the above purpose have been prepared and are available in the Payroll Office and in the District's Public Folder.
- D.** The Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank Committee may refuse to consider an application that does not contain the required information.
- E.** If a member is critically ill and unable to file an application for catastrophic sick leave days from the Bank, the school principal, immediate supervisor, or department head may initiate the application form at the request of the family.

SECTION VI: GOVERNING COMMITTEE

A. NAME

The governing committee, which will approve or disapprove all requests for sick leave bank days, shall be called "The Hitchcock ISD Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank Committee."

B. COMPOSITION OF MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEE

The Hitchcock ISD Finance Director shall be the Chairperson of the Committee. The Chairperson shall not be a voting member of the Committee except in the event of a tie vote. The Hitchcock ISD Payroll and Employee Benefits Supervisor shall serve on the committee in an advisory capacity. The Payroll and Employee Benefits Supervisor shall not be a voting member of the Committee.

- 1.** Members of the Committee must have been employed by the school district for at least two years prior to serving on the Committee.
- 2.** The Committee shall have the following composition:
 - a.** One exempt employee from each campus for a total of 5 representatives
 - b.** One non-exempt employee from each campus for a total of 5 representatives
 - c.** One representative from Greater Gulf Coast Cooperative
 - d.** One representative from Central Office
 - e.** One representative from Maintenance and Technology

TOTAL-15 members (including the Chairperson and Advisor)

C. TERM OF OFFICE

The term of office will be two years, with initial members drawing lots for one or two year terms in order to establish staggered terms. The term of office shall run from September 1 to August 31. A member may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms.

D. SELECTION PROCEDURES

1. Selections will be made during the month of September. Only members of the Bank are eligible to serve. Initial selection of the Committee will be made in September 2012 with terms of service to begin October 1, 2012.
2. Members of each group named above may be selected from their group. "Group" means one of the five categories listed in Section VI. B. 2
3. Members may be selected by: (1) being appointed by the group they represent, (2) being elected by the group they represent, or (3) volunteering to represent their group with no opposition.
4. In the event no one is appointed, elected or volunteers for one of the positions on the Committee, the Committee shall fill such position by appointment at the first Committee meeting following the vacancy. The selection will be made from the group which would be represented by the vacant position.
5. If a member of the Committee is representing one group on the Committee and accepts or is transferred to a new classification, then he/she must resign his/her position and another member appointed.

E. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

1. All applications for sick leave bank days shall be reviewed individually by the Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank Committee in a called meeting. A quorum shall consist of at least seven (7) members.
2. The Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank Committee shall determine the number of days approved, up to 20 days at a time, based on a medical statement and reserves the right to approve, disapprove, or modify the days requested.
3. All decisions regarding the Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank may be appealed in accordance with DGBA (LOCAL), beginning with the Superintendent or designee.
4. Vacancies on the Sick Leave Committee that arise during the school year will be filled by the Committee at the next Catastrophic Sick Leave Committee meeting. The selection will be made from the group which was represented by the member who resigned.
5. The HISD Payroll and Employee Benefits Supervisor, Advisor, shall keep the name of the requestors confidential, organize and set up committee meetings, contact requestors regarding decisions made by the committee, process all approved catastrophic sick leave days for members and keep accurate records for audit purposes.

6. The details of individual cases brought before the Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank Committee are confidential. A breach of confidentiality will result in removal from the Committee and possible disciplinary action. DH(LOCAL)

SECTION VII: USE OF CATASTROPHIC SICK LEAVE BANK FOR IMMEDIATE FAMILY

To make the Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank a more significant benefit for the Hitchcock ISD employees, the committee has included the immediate family.

A. PURPOSE

To provide additional sick leave days for members whose immediate family as defined in DEC (LOCAL) has suffered a catastrophic illness or injury.

B. DEFINITION OF IMMEDIATE FAMILY

The term "immediate family" is defined in DEC(LOCAL) as:

1. Spouse.
 2. Son or daughter, including a biological, adopted, or foster child, a son- or daughter-in-law, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child for whom the employee stands *in loco parentis*.
 3. Parent, stepparent, parent-in-law or other individual who stand *in loco parentis* to the employee.
 4. Sibling, stepsibling, and sibling-in-law.
 5. Grandparent and grandchild.
 6. Any person residing in the employee's household at the time of illness or death.
- C.** To apply for catastrophic sick leave days, the member must follow the procedures set out in Section IV and Section V.
- D.** All regulations pertaining to the use and issuing of catastrophic sick leave days will also be applied to the illness or injury of the family member.

SECTION VIII: PROCEDURES FOR OTHER ISSUES THAT MAY ARISE

Any questions concerning membership, regulations, or application for sick leave days that may arise after adoption of this plan and not specifically covered herein, shall be submitted to the Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank Committee who will make a recommendation to the Superintendent for a final decision.

SECTION IX: AMENDMENTS

These guidelines may be amended upon recommendation of the Committee of the Bank followed by approval of the Superintendent of Hitchcock ISD.