



# Pajaro Valley Unified School District

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## COVID-19 Employment/Leave/Pay Frequently Asked Questions

*This FAQ is intended to provide general guidance for probationary, permanent, classified, and certificated employees. Guidance may change based on individual circumstances or other advisement.*

**MAY 1, 2020**

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## **SITE CLOSURES**

### **Q. What is my pay status if my worksite is closed in response to COVID-19?**

- A. During any closure of a PVUSD facility and/or curtailment of any PVUSD operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, employees will not suffer any loss of pay or benefits relative to their regular schedule and assignment for the period of closure or curtailment so long as they are ready and available to work during regularly assigned work hours.

During a closure, employees must be reachable at all times during their regular work hours, abstain from alcohol and other substances, and be available to report to work within one hour of notification to perform assigned duties as needed, whether on site, remote, or a combination thereof. During a closure, pre-approved vacation (classified), off contract (certificated and management), and sick leave shall continue to be used as originally planned, and the employee will not be expected to be available or on-call to work during those leaves. The employee may request to amend pre-approved sick leave under extenuating circumstances such as the cancellation of a surgery or medical appointment.

### **Q. What if I need to stay home with my own children due to school closures (not illness)?**

- A. Employees in this circumstance may be eligible for a new type of protected leave effective April 1, 2020. An employee may receive up to 12 workweeks of leave paid at 2/3 the employee's regular pay rate for up to \$200 daily and \$12,000 total in aggregate. If the employee needs additional leave after the new paid leave has exhausted, the employee may use sick leave, vacation (classified only), and/or compensatory time as available, consistent with leaves policy. Prior use of leave during the past 12 calendar months that qualified under the Family and Medical Leave Act will limit the total workweeks of employee eligibility for this new paid leave.

## HIGH-RISK GROUPS

### Q. What if I am an employee who is age 65 years or older?

- A. Employees who may be at high-risk (identified as “uniquely vulnerable” ) during this pandemic may provide the appropriate medical documentation to request a leave during the pandemic when no COVID 19 symptoms are showing in which case an interactive process meeting will be conducted to determine any reasonable accommodations that may be implemented. Employees not able or available to work remotely (i.e. from home) shall use all available paid leaves during a **preventive self-quarantine** including, Sick Leave, Vacation, Compensatory Time, and Other Entitlement. The employee may be eligible for up to two workweeks of emergency paid sick leave at their full pay rate if a healthcare provider advises the employee to self-quarantine. A note from a medical professional may be required if the employee requests emergency paid sick leave and/or plans to use leaves other than vacation (classified only) or compensatory time.

### Q. What if I am in a high-risk group as a result of a medical condition?

- A. We encourage employees who have medical conditions that put them at high risk to reach out to their health care provider and to maintain communication with their supervisor and Human Resources. An employee who has been advised to self-quarantine by a health care provider may be eligible for up to two workweeks of emergency paid sick leave at the employee’s full pay rate; this emergency paid sick leave is separate from the employee’s PVUSD leave balances and may be used prior to use of any personal leaves. If the employee needs additional leave after the emergency paid sick leave has been exhausted, the employee will use available paid leaves including sick leave, vacation (classified only), compensatory time, and/or other entitlement/differential pay, consistent with leaves policy. A note from a medical professional may be required to verify the need for preventive self-quarantine if the employee requests emergency family and medical leave and/or emergency sick leave and/or plans to use leaves other than vacation or compensatory time.

### Q. What if I am pregnant?

- A. According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Santa Cruz County Public Health Department, pregnancy alone has not been identified as a high-risk medical condition. Based on current guidance from CDC related to pregnancy and [COVID-19](#), the medical community is still learning about the risks to pregnancy. Pregnant PVUSD employees are advised to consult with their health care provider.

## QUARANTINES

### Q. What is my pay status if I am placed under an official quarantine?

- A. In the event the Health Department orders an official quarantine of PVUSD employees, and PVUSD employees are sent home, those employees who are not able or available to work

remotely (from home) shall be placed on fully paid administrative leave for the duration of **official quarantine**.

**Q. What is my pay status if I am self-quarantined due to exposure to an individual with coronavirus?**

- A. An employee who believes they have been exposed to an individual who has tested positive for coronavirus shall inform PVUSD promptly and self-quarantine for 14 calendar days to self-monitor for any potential symptoms such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath. During this self-quarantine, employees will use all available paid leaves including sick leave, vacation (classified only), compensatory time, and/or other entitlement/differential pay as available, consistent with leaves policy. The employee may be eligible for up to two workweeks of emergency paid sick leave at their full pay rate if a healthcare provider advises the employee to self-quarantine or if the employee is experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 while seeking a medical diagnosis. A note from a medical professional may be required if the employee requests emergency paid sick leave and/or plans to use leaves other than vacation (classified only) or compensatory time.

**Q. What is my pay status if I am self-quarantined due to travel outside of Santa Cruz County to an area identified by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) or California Department of Public Health (CDPH) as having widespread community transmission?**

- A. An employee who travels to an area identified by the CDC or the Santa Cruz County Health Department as having widespread community transmission shall inform PVUSD and upon return, self-quarantine for 14 calendar days to self-monitor for any potential symptoms such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath. During the post-travel self-quarantine period, employees will use all available paid leaves including sick leave, vacation (classified only), compensatory time, and/or other entitlement/differential pay as available, consistent with leaves policy. The employee may be eligible for up to two workweeks of emergency paid sick leave at their full pay rate if a health care provider advises them to self-quarantine or if they are experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 while seeking a medical diagnosis. A note from a medical professional may be required if the employee requests emergency paid sick leave and/or plans to use leaves other than vacation (classified only) or compensatory time.

**EMPLOYEE ILLNESS**

**Q. What should I do if I am experiencing symptoms associated with COVID-19 (fever, cough, and shortness of breath)?**

- A. Employees should utilize established call-in procedures and — if currently assigned to work at a PVUSD site — stay home if they have any of these symptoms. Santa Cruz County Health Department advises individuals experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 to contact their health care provider. Employees may use sick leave, vacation (classified only), compensatory time,

and/or other entitlement/differential pay as available, consistent with leaves policy. Employees may also be eligible for up to two workweeks of emergency paid sick leave at their full pay rate prior to use of personal leaves if a health care provider advises them to self-quarantine or if they are experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 while seeking a medical diagnosis. A note from a medical professional may be required if the employee requests emergency paid sick leave and/or plans to use leaves other than vacation (classified only) or compensatory time.

**Q. What is the appropriate course of action if an employee at work has visible symptoms of illness?**

- A. The employee's supervisor should ask the ill employee to go home. As a public employer, we are required to maintain safe and healthy working conditions for employees and use reasonable care in order to provide for the safety of other employees and students by furnishing a safe work and learning environment. If a co-worker has concerns about another employee's symptoms, they should report their concerns to their own supervisor and/or the other employee's supervisor so the supervisor(s) can take appropriate action. Employees may return to work when they have been asymptomatic for 72 hours and/or if they have provided documentation of medical clearance to return to work.

**Q. What is an employee's pay status after being sent home due to visible signs of illness?**

- A. Employees who are required to work on site and who that exhibit symptoms consistent with symptoms of COVID-19 as defined by the Health Department (e.g. fever, cough, and difficulty breathing) may be sent home by PVUSD and shall be placed on paid administrative leave while exhibiting symptoms if not able to work remotely (i.e. from home). Employees shall not return to work until no symptoms are showing or unless the employee provides a medical note clearing the unit member to return to work.

**Q. When can an employee who has been ill return to work?**

- A. An employee who has been off work due to illness with the type of symptoms associated with COVID-19 (fever, cough, and shortness of breath) may return to work once they have been completely asymptomatic or they have a release from a health care provider to return to work. This requirement is in accordance with guidance from local public health authorities and applies whether or not the employee has been confirmed to have COVID-19.

**CARE FOR AN ILL INDIVIDUAL**

**Q. What if I need to care for an ill or quarantined individual?**

- A. Employees in this circumstance may be eligible for up to two workweeks of emergency paid sick leave at 2/3 their regular rate of pay; this emergency paid sick leave is separate from

the employee's PVUSD leave balances and may be used prior to any personal leaves. If the employee needs additional leave after the emergency paid sick leave has been exhausted, the employee may use any remaining eligible paid leaves. If the individual for whom the employee is caring is diagnosed with COVID-19, the employee will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days.

## **REMOTE WORK**

### **Q. What is PVUSD's expectation about employees working remotely from home?**

- A. On March 19, 2020, Governor Newsom issued a stay-at-home order for all Californians; during this time, PVUSD remains operational because we are considered an essential service. Employees who are in positions identified as essential to the continuation of critical operations will report to work on-site, work remotely, or a combination thereof as authorized by supervisors and the division lead. All employees not working in person are considered on-call, working remotely, and in paid status. Supervisors will make individual arrangements and assignments for remote work, which may include assigned professional development. Employees who are authorized and expected to work remotely will receive instructions from their supervisors regarding work assignments.

## **ESSENTIAL WORKERS**

### **Q. What does it mean when I am identified as an essential worker?**

- A. Employees in positions that are identified as essential for the continuation of critical operations will be required to work remotely, on-site, or a combination thereof during a closure or curtailment.

## **DISASTER SERVICE WORKERS**

### **Q. I remember signing the Oath of Office when I was hired, and I am wondering what that means given the COVID-19 situation?**

- A. Pursuant to the California Emergency Services Act, any person employed by a county, city, state agency, or public district in California is a public employee and therefore considered a Disaster Service Worker. This means that in the event of an emergency, you may be called upon to aid in the response and recovery phases of a disaster or emergency, including approved and documented training necessary or proper to engage in such activities. As a Disaster Service Worker, you may be asked to carry on with your work as usual, or you may be asked to do something different from your everyday job.

## **OTHER BENEFITS**

### **Q. What is the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act?**

- A. Employees who have been employed for at least 30 calendar days and are unable to work on-site or remotely due to childcare issues (for children under age 18) as a result of the closure of school or place of care (or unavailability of childcare provider) may be entitled to up to 12 workweeks (first 10 days are unpaid) of paid leave for childcare purposes at a rate of 2/3 their regular rate (maximum \$200/day and \$12,000 total) during the current state of emergency related to the COVID-19 pandemic. When employee is qualified to take leave for childcare purposes, the employee is entitled to utilize a total of 12 workweeks of leave. For the first two weeks of leave under the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act, the employee may be eligible to use emergency paid sick leave, also paid at 2/3 their regular rate (maximum \$200/day and \$12,000 total).

**Q. Can I get paid leave under the new Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act?**

- A. Under the new legislation, employees may be eligible for up to two workweeks of emergency paid sick leave; this emergency paid sick leave is separate from the employee's personal leave balances and may be used prior to any personal leaves. Circumstances that may be eligible for emergency paid sick leave (at the pay rates specified) include the inability to work on site or remotely due to any of the reasons listed below.

FULL PAY (maximum \$511/day and \$5,110 aggregate):

1. The employee is subject to a quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19 by federal, state, or local government; or
2. The employee has been advised to self-quarantine related to COVID-19 by a health care provider; or
3. The employee is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking medical diagnosis

2/3 PAY (maximum \$200/day and \$2,000 aggregate):

4. The employee is caring for an individual who is subject to (1) or (2) above; or
5. The employee is caring for a son or daughter whose school or place of care is closed or whose caregiver is unavailable due to COVID-19 precautions; or
6. The employee is experiencing a "substantially similar condition" as specified by certain federal agencies.

**Q. Are employees who lose pay as a result of COVID-19 eligible for unemployment benefits?**

- A. The California Employment Development Department determines whether workers are eligible for unemployment benefits; please refer to the EDD's [COVID-19 FAQs](#) for additional information. Employees who wish to file unemployment claims may do so on the [EDD website](#). Employees who need wage history information to file with their unemployment claim should contact PVUSD Payroll Department.

**Q. Are employees who lose pay as a result of COVID-19 eligible for Paid Family Leave benefits through the California Employment Development Department?**

A. Because PVUSD does not participate in the State Disability Insurance (SDI) system, PVUSD employees are not eligible for Paid Family Leave benefits, which are paid from SDI contributions.