

File: G25

### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE POLICY**

It shall be the policy of the Chicopee Public Schools (hereinafter called the “employer”) to permit an employee to take up to fifteen (15) days of domestic violence leave from work in any 12 month period. In order to be eligible for said leave:

- the employee, or a family member of the employee must be a victim of abusive behavior;
- the employee must be using the leave from work to seek or obtain medical attention, counseling, victim services or legal assistance; secure housing; obtain a protective order from court; appear before a grand jury; meet with a district attorney or other law enforcement official; or attend child custody proceedings or address other issues directly related to the abusive behavior against the employee or family member of the employee; and
- the employee must not be the perpetrator of the abusive behavior against such employee’s family member.

Domestic Violence Leave shall be unpaid. An employee seeking such leave shall exhaust all annual vacation leave, personal leave, and sick leave available to the employee, prior to requesting or taking domestic violence leave.

Except in cases of imminent danger to the health or safety of an employee, advanced notice of domestic violence leave shall be required. If such imminent danger exists the employee shall notify the employer within three (3) workdays that the leave was taken. The notification may be communicated to the employer by the employee, a family member of the employee or the employee’s counselor, social worker, health care worker, member of the clergy, shelter worker, legal advocate or other professional who has assisted the employee in addressing the effects of the abusive behavior. If an unscheduled absence occurs, an employer shall not take any negative action against the employee if the employee, within thirty (30) days from the unauthorized absence or within thirty (30) days from the employee’s last unauthorized absence in the instance of consecutive days of unauthorized absences, provides any of the documentation listed:

- a protective order, order of equitable relief or other documentation issued by a court of competent jurisdiction as a result of abusive behavior against the employee or employee’s family member;
- a document under the letterhead of the court, provider or public agency which the employee attended for the purposes of acquiring assistance as it relates to the employee or family member;
- a police report or statement of a victim or witness provided to police documenting the abusive behavior;
- documentation that the perpetrator of the abusive behavior has admitted to sufficient facts to support a finding of guilt ; or has been convicted of , or has been adjudicated a juvenile delinquent by reason of any offense constituting abusive behavior;
- medical documentation of treatment as a result of the abusive behavior;
- a sworn statement, signed under the penalties of perjury, provided by a counselor, social worker, health care worker, member of the clergy, , shelter worker, legal advocate or

other professional who has assisted the employee in addressing the effects of the abusive behavior;

- a sworn statement, signed under the penalties of perjury, from the employee attesting that the employee has been a victim of or is a family member of a victim of abusive behavior.

The employer may require documentation that the employee or employee's family member has been a victim of abusive behavior and that the leave is consistent with the eligibility clauses referenced in the first paragraph of this policy; provided, however, that an employer shall not require an employee to show evidence of an arrest, conviction or other law enforcement documentation for such abusive behavior. The documentation shall be provided to the employer within a reasonable period after the employer requests it.

All information related to the employee's leave shall be kept confidential and shall not be disclosed, except to the extent that disclosure is:

- requested or consented to, in writing, by the employee;
- ordered to be released by a court of competent jurisdiction;
- otherwise required by applicable federal or state law;
- required in the course of an investigation authorized by law enforcement, including, but not limited to, an investigation by the Attorney General; or
- necessary to protect the safety of the employee or others employed at the workplace.

The Superintendent shall ensure that notice is provided to all employees in the next school year and beyond by appropriately amending the district's employee handbooks, by whatever title they may be known, or by direct notice about the Domestic Violence Law and securing the employees signature acknowledging receipt of the handbook/notice. The Superintendent shall be responsible for notifying all current employees, unless they have been notified through the handbook, of this policy in a manner that he/she deems appropriate.

No employer shall coerce, interfere with, restrain or deny the exercise of, or any attempt to exercise, any rights provided herein or to make leave requested or taken contingent upon whether or not the victim maintains contact with the alleged abuser. No employer shall discharge or in any other manner discriminate against an employee for exercising the employee's rights under law. The taking of domestic violence leave shall not result in the loss of any employment benefit accrued prior to the date of such leave. Upon the employee's return from such leave, he/she shall be entitled to restoration to the employee's original job or to an equivalent position.

Definitions of "abuse," "abusive behavior," "domestic violence," "employees," and "family members" may be found in the laws referenced below.

Legal Refs: M.G.L. 149:52E  
Section 10 Chapter 260 of the Acts of 2014

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: Reg SC Mtg 6/3/2015

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: Reg SC Mtg 6/17/2015