
UNPAID LEAVE

Preamble

Swan Valley School Division recognizes that employees may occasionally have commitments outside their regular employment that require special leave from their workplace. Additionally, personal circumstances may warrant special leave without pay.

Definitions

Short-Term Leave – leave of five (5) or less days.

Long-Term Leave – leave of over five (5) days, usually for a school year or high school semester or Kindergarten to Grade 8 term.

Guidelines

1. Staff absences would normally be covered under the provisions of the collective agreements, except for unusual circumstances.
2. Available leave provisions within the collective agreements must be utilized before considering unpaid leave.
3. Leaves of absence will not be granted for other employment. Exceptions for employment purposes may be made for bus drivers, who are self-employed.
4. Employees responding to emergencies as a member of an emergency organization (e.g., Volunteer Fire Department) may be granted a short-term leave with no loss of pay or benefits, up to a maximum of five days per year. The immediate supervisor of the employee shall be given a blanket request for leave prior to such leave being taken. The immediate supervisor shall notify the Superintendent/CEO of said request, and the Division shall respond in writing to approve the request.
5. Requests for unpaid long-term leave requests for the following school year, which shall be defined as starting July 1, shall be submitted to the Superintendent/CEO by April 1. Long-term leave requests received after April 1 may be subject to conditions such as the Division's ability to fill the vacant position.
6. Employees who have been granted unpaid leave for a period of one academic year are required to notify the Superintendent/CEO in writing prior to April 1st of the academic year for which the leave was granted, affirming their date of return to work.
7. A short-term leave of absence (up to five consecutive instructional days) may be granted to support staff employees who have worked for Swan Valley School Division for a minimum of two years without a break in employment. A break in employment is considered to be a resignation or a termination.



Leave Request Process

For employees requesting a special leave of absence without pay for non-emergency situations, the following process is required:

1. A letter outlining the reason for the request must accompany the leave request by September 30 of each school year for short-term leaves and by April 1 for long-term leaves. Days set out in Collective Agreements such as Personal Days or Extra-Curricular Days must be used first.
2. The Superintendent/CEO and/or designate shall assess each request for leave without pay using discretion prior to making a final decision. Discretion shall be based on sound judgment, interpretation of Swan Valley School Division policies, rules, collective agreements (MTS 7.12, MGEU 25:01), availability of a suitable replacement, past precedents, the nature of the leave (e.g., extenuating circumstances outside of the staff member's control such as an immediate family member's destination wedding or graduation), and the impact on Divisional programming or services.
3. If a staff member wishes to be considered for any other leave (with or without pay) outside the provisions of the collective agreements and this procedure, a written letter to the Superintendent/CEO is required in a timely manner.