Coronavirus Response: Human Resources

March 16, 2020

The District continues to closely monitor the ongoing Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID- 19) outbreak. The health and well-being of our community remain our number one priority. In response to the COVID-19 outbreak the District is enacting the following temporary emergency actions:

1. In accordance with ongoing guidance from Gov. Newsom, employees who are 65 years or older or who have verified medical conditions or specific disabilities considered to be at higher risk if exposed to the COVID-19 virus must take steps to remain at home during this outbreak. Such employees may be eligible to request to work from home as a temporary reasonable accommodation. Any such request to work remotely as a reasonable accommodation will be addressed through an interactive process conducted by a human resources (HR) representative. The HR representative may grant temporary requests from employees to work remotely after verifying that the request is reasonably related to a medical condition; the accommodation allows the employee to still perform the essential functions of their job, and the accommodation does not create an undue hardship (i.e. significant disruption to operations) on the employee's department. Employee accommodations requested due to an elevated risk related to COVID-19 must be handled on a case-by-case basis and shall be approved for an appropriate specific period based on current conditions.

2. For employees who are sick, they should stay home and contact their local healthcare provider for direction.

3. If an employee stays home because of an illness, the employee shall use sick time to cover the duration of their time absent from work.

4. Employees can also use vacation time and compensatory time if they have first exhausted all sick days. In addition, employees can use half pay sick days after the exhaustion of full pay sick leave, if otherwise eligible.

5. Adjuncts shall use illness available sick days if a balance is available.

6. Professional Experts and temporary classified employees with sick days earned shall use their sick days if a balance is available. Such employees may be eligible to work remotely subject to the terms in paragraph 8 below.

7. Employees unable to come to work due to a COVID-l9 day care or school closure that requires them to be home with their child may temporarily work remotely if operationally feasible. If remote work is not operationally feasible, employees may use available leave balances, including sick leave.

8. Managers, in consultation with the appropriate vice president and Human Resources, may designate individual employees to work from home. If employees are assigned to work from home, it will be considered to be paid work status. Employees in positions who are directed not to come to work by the District and are unable to work from home due to the nature of their work (as determined by the department) will have to use compensatory, vacation, and sick time balances.

9. Employees who are presenting symptoms of a contagious illness based upon the illness criteria information established by the Department of Public Health may be sent home by any member of management. Current manifestations of an infectious illness like COVID-19 may include but are not limited to, fever, coughing, or shortness of breath. The employee's sick or vacation days will not be charged for the remainder of the day that they are required to go home. For any subsequent days, the employee shall use sick or vacation days as outlined above to cover the leave for the duration of the time they are home sick.

10. Employees who have tested positive for COVID-19 by their treating physician or healthcare provider will be placed on leave until their approved return has been documented by their physician. They will qualify for FMLA/CFRA leave as the condition is considered a "serious health condition." In addition, classified and academic employees may use half pay sick or differential pay time after the exhaustion of full pay sick leave, and vacation days.

11. If any of the following conditions are met, the employee will be placed on a 14-calendar day, non-voluntary quarantine:

    a. Travel to a Level 3 Travel Health Notice country per the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with a return to the U.S. less than 14 calendar days ago
    b. Known contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19
    c. Quarantine leaves related to COVID-19 are for employees who are not sick. Employees under quarantine directed by the college will use their compensatory, sick, or vacation time to cover the quarantine period. During the quarantine leave, employees currently are not eligible for extended sick leave.

12. Employees may request to self-quarantine voluntarily. An employee may wish to self-quarantine for 14 days, particularly if any of the following conditions are met:

    a. Experiencing symptoms similar to COVID-19 including fever, coughing and shortness of breath
    b. Travel within the last 14 days to, or through, an area with known community spread
    c. Suspected contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19.

d. Employees choosing to self-quarantine voluntarily shall use their compensatory, sick, or vacation time to cover the 14-calendar day quarantine period. During time of quarantine, employees currently are not eligible for extended sick leave.

13. Employees under directed or self-imposed quarantines may work remotely subject to the process described in Paragraph 8.

14. Employees who insist their symptoms are just due to a common cold or allergies will not be exempt from being sent home at the District's discretion. The District is not able to distinguish between symptoms associated with allergic reactions versus those associated with contagious conditions, such as cold, influenza, or COVID-19. Therefore, to ensure safe and healthy working conditions for all employees and a safe environment for students, the District will act in a consistent manner of sending sick employees home and will apply the same standard to all symptomatic employees. If an employee provides a certification from their treating physician or healthcare provider that the symptoms are non-communicable, the District may rely on such assurances and allow the employee to return to work. However, without such certification, the District will require that the employee remains at home until they are asymptomatic with no signs of fever, coughing, or shortness of breath.

15. Symptomatic employees sent home from work should contact a medical professional for further advice as soon as possible. The employee should engage in self-monitoring while away from work. The District will instruct the employee not to return to work unless the employee is asymptomatic. The District may require that the employee provide a note from the employee's treating physician or healthcare provider that clears the employee to return to work. An employee who returns to work after an illness and still exhibits symptoms of an infectious disease will immediately be sent home. If the employee was diagnosed with COVID-19 the District must accept the physician's certification before an employee can return to work.