FY 2027 Paid Parental Leave

Frequently Asked Questions

These frequently asked questions explain employee eligibility, leave use, required documentation, and charter school participation under the supplied FY 2027 Paid Parental Leave policy.

Effective date: This guidance applies to qualifying events occurring on or after **October 1, 2026**. The date of birth or placement determines which policy applies.

Policy source: PPL 2027 .docx, Parental Leave, Policy ID 8.1. Questions 19–21 identify substitute reimbursement matters that are not addressed in the supplied policy and require separate FY 2027 guidance.

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Effective dates

1. When does the FY 2027 Paid Parental Leave policy apply?

The fiscal year (FY) 2027 Paid Parental Leave (PPL) policy and these FAQs apply only to qualifying events occurring on or after **October 1, 2026**.

Events before October 1, 2026, are subject to the policies, procedures, and eligibility requirements in effect at the time of the event. For those events, refer to the Paid Parental Leave guidance applicable to the event date.

Schools should determine eligibility based on the date of birth, adoption, foster care placement, or other qualifying legal placement.

2. Which guidance applies if the event occurred before October 1, 2026, but leave extends into FY 2027?

The date of the qualifying event determines the applicable policy. The dates on which leave is taken do not change which policy applies.

If the event occurred before October 1, 2026, use the policy and guidance in effect at that time, even if some or all of the leave is taken during FY 2027.

For events on or after October 1, 2026, use the FY 2027 Paid Parental Leave policy and these FAQs.

Employee eligibility

3. Who is eligible for Paid Parental Leave?

An employee in a permanent, probationary, or time-limited position in a covered public-school unit (PSU) may qualify. Eligibility is determined at the time of the qualifying event.

At the time of the qualifying event, the employee must meet both requirements:

- Have been in pay status with a North Carolina public school in a permanent, probationary, or time-limited appointment for at least 12 months without a break in service, subject to the aggregation and service provisions in Question 7.
- Have been in pay status for at least 1,040 hours in the previous 12 months, or the equivalent number of hours for a part-time employee.

Covered PSUs are supported by State funds and include local boards of education, participating public charter schools, laboratory schools, schools for the deaf and blind, and alternative school environments under a PSU. See Question 22 for charter school participation.

4. What qualifying events allow an employee to receive Paid Parental Leave?

A qualifying event occurs when an eligible employee becomes a parent through birth, adoption, foster care, or other legal placement. A parent is the child's legal guardian or custodian. The policy covers a newborn biological child or a newly placed adopted, foster, or otherwise legally placed child under age 18.

The employee must provide supporting documentation. Schools should verify that the documentation establishes both the qualifying event and the date of birth or placement.

5. Are part-time employees eligible for Paid Parental Leave?

Yes. Part-time employees who meet the eligibility requirements are entitled to Paid Parental Leave after a qualifying event. The pay-status requirement is the part-time equivalent of 1,040 hours in the previous 12 months. Compensation is prorated based on the percentage of total wages for the job that reflects the actual time worked.

6. Are temporary employees, contractors, or volunteers eligible?

No. Temporary employees and independent contractors are expressly excluded. A volunteer who does not hold an eligible employee position also does not meet the policy's definition of an eligible employee.

7. Does prior public employment count toward eligibility?

Yes. Employees may aggregate periods of employment with employers offering Paid Parental Leave under G.S. 126-8.6, including other PSUs or State agencies, to satisfy the eligibility requirement. Charter school employment counts only if the charter school's governing board elected to provide Paid Parental Leave under G.S. 115C-218.90(a)(6).

The policy also provides the following service protections:

- Workers' compensation or short-term disability in the 12 months before the event does not make an employee ineligible.
- Leave without pay allowed under other sections of the manual is not a break in service if the employee meets the 1,040-hour pay-status requirement.
- For 10- or 11-month employees, the two months between the end of one contract period and the start of the next are not a break in service.
- A transition between employers that both provide Paid Parental Leave is not a break in service if the time from separation to the new hire date does not exceed 31 days.
- Absence due to military service in the Armed Forces of the United States is not a break in service.

Leave amount and scheduling

8. How much Paid Parental Leave is available?

An eligible full-time employee is entitled to 12 weeks of Paid Parental Leave for bonding with the child at 100 percent of regular, straight-time pay. Eligible part-time employees receive prorated pay.

Paid Parental Leave may be used only once for a qualifying event within a 12-month period. Multiple births, adoptions, or other legal placements do not increase the total leave granted.

If an eligible employee gives birth and places the child for adoption, foster care, or with another person to serve as the child's parent, the employee is entitled to up to 4 weeks for physical and mental recuperation from birth. Neither a birthing nor a non-birthing parent is entitled to additional bonding leave in that situation. See Questions 17–18 for medical exigencies.

9. Can Paid Parental Leave be taken intermittently?

Yes. Employees may request continuous or intermittent leave during the 12 months following birth or placement. Intermittent periods range from half of the employee's regularly scheduled workday to several consecutive workdays. Unused leave is forfeited 12 months after the qualifying event.

A PSU must not deny, delay, or require intermittent use of Paid Parental Leave without the eligible employee's consent.

10. How much advance notice should employees provide?

Whenever possible, employees must submit a written request to their employing agency 10 weeks before using Paid Parental Leave. PSUs should develop a local notification policy and must exercise due diligence in securing appropriate coverage.

11. Does Paid Parental Leave run concurrently with FMLA?

Yes. Paid Parental Leave runs concurrently with Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) job protection when the employer notifies the employee that the leave qualifies for FMLA under Section 8.2.10 of the manual.

An otherwise eligible employee may receive Paid Parental Leave even after exhausting FMLA benefits. An employee may use authorized leave or leave without pay to cover additional absence while on FMLA.

12. Can Paid Parental Leave be combined with other leave?

Yes. Employees may use Paid Parental Leave in conjunction with other leave opportunities authorized by the manual, including those addressed in Section 4.1.2(b). Paid Parental Leave is not counted against or deducted from accrued leave balances.

Paid Parental Leave does not accrue, cannot be donated, is not paid out upon separation, and is not used to calculate retirement benefits.

Paid Parental Leave must be reported separately from all other paid leave. Employees and supervisors are responsible for accurately reporting its use on the employee's time record.

Required documentation

13. What documentation is required?

Eligible employees must certify that they qualify for Paid Parental Leave. A PSU may grant conditional approval and require documentation of the birth or placement during the leave period.

Documents must show the date of birth or placement if the placement date differs from the birth date. The legal parent's name or legal parents' names must appear on a legal document establishing the birth or placement. The policy's documentation examples are not exhaustive.

14. What documentation is acceptable for birth?

The policy lists a birth certificate or report of birth, certified DNA results, and a custody order as examples of acceptable official documentation. The documentation must meet the date and parentage requirements in Question 13.

15. What documentation is acceptable for adoption?

The policy lists an adoption order and proof of placement as examples of acceptable official documentation. The documentation must meet the date and parentage requirements in Question 13.

16. What documentation is acceptable for foster care or legal placement?

For foster placement, the policy lists a foster care placement agreement, custody order, and proof of placement. For other legal placement, it lists a custody order and proof of placement. The documentation must meet the date and parentage requirements in Question 13.

Pregnancy loss and death of a child

17. Are there special provisions for fetal loss?

Yes. If a fetus dies before a completed birth, the following provisions apply:

- Before the conclusion of the 12th week of pregnancy: There is no qualifying event creating an entitlement to Paid Parental Leave.
- After the conclusion of the 12th week of pregnancy but before a completed birth: An eligible employee who carried the child is entitled to up to 4 weeks of leave for physical and mental recuperation. Neither a birthing nor a non-birthing parent is entitled to additional bonding leave.

Documentation should be handled confidentially, and schools should administer benefits with sensitivity.

18. What if a child dies after birth?

If a child dies after a completed birth, an otherwise eligible employee is entitled to the same amount of leave to which the employee would otherwise be entitled.

Substitute reimbursement and participation

19. Who is eligible for substitute reimbursement?

The supplied policy does not identify positions or school units eligible for substitute reimbursement. Confirm eligibility in the applicable FY 2027 reimbursement or allotment guidance before submitting a claim.

20. Which substitutes qualify for reimbursement?

The supplied policy does not establish whether school-employed or contracted substitutes qualify for reimbursement. Confirm eligible arrangements and supporting records in the applicable FY 2027 reimbursement guidance.

21. What reimbursement amount is available?

The supplied policy does not specify reimbursement rates, funding limits, calculation methods, responsibility for excess costs, or claim records. Confirm these requirements in the applicable FY 2027 reimbursement or allotment guidance.

For leave spanning two State fiscal years, confirm claim and cost-reporting requirements for each year. The supplied policy does not establish a separate-claim rule.

22. Must charter schools elect participation in the program?

Yes. A charter school’s board of directors must opt to provide Paid Parental Leave under G.S. 115C-218.90(a)(6) and notify the Office of Charter Schools no later than October 1 of the fiscal year for which leave is to be available.