

for your **Benefit**

Spring 2019 Employee Benefits Newsletter



CONROE
INDEPENDENT
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Spring into good health

Spring is the perfect time to take your health and fitness to the next level. In this issue of *For Your Benefit*, you'll find information about having lab work done, scheduling off-duty, vacation, and leave days, and achieving your health goals.

Lab work

If you need lab work, make sure your lab is in the Aetna network or you may be responsible for the full cost of the testing. There are now two preferred national labs: Quest Diagnostics® and LabCorp (effective January 1, 2019), and many more in the network to choose from.

To search for network labs near you, log in to your secure member website at www.aetna.com or call **Aetna Member Services** at 1-866-381-8933. Your member website also provides a variety of tools and resources to help you get things done and find information you need, such as requesting ID cards and locating network doctors and facilities.

In this issue:

- Lab work
- Understanding off-duty, vacation, and leave days
- Applying for leave
- Three health goals worth sticking to in 2019
- Talk with a doctor 24/7

The CISD Benefits Office is ready to help

Contact a CISD Benefits Specialist for answers and information about any benefits-related questions and needs.

Hours: Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Phone: 936-709-7808

Email: benefitoffice@conroeisd.net





Understanding off-duty, vacation, and leave days

Off-duty days (217-day and 226-day employees on 7/1-6/30 work schedule)

- Off-duty days are the unpaid days that remain at the end of the work schedule. For example, from July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2019, there are 231 actual work days for 226-day employees, and 222 work days for 217-day employees. The number of off-duty days allotted each year is the difference between the actual number of days available to work and the number of days in the work schedule ($231 - 226 = 5$ and $222 - 217 = 5$). The number of off-duty days varies by year and full-time equivalent (FTE).
- Employees are able to take off-duty days in advance, before the end of the work schedule.
- Off-duty days for non-exempt employees must be used by June 30 each year.
- Off-duty days for exempt employees must be used by August 31 each year.
- If an employee leaves CISD prior to the end of his/her work schedule, the final paycheck will be adjusted per the total number of days worked and the gross earnings already paid.

Vacation leave (261-day auxiliary employees on 8/1-7/31 work schedule)

- 10 days of vacation leave are advanced at the beginning of the fiscal year (based on full-time employment at 100% FTE, with all days earned).
- Although it is advanced, vacation leave is earned based on the number of days worked.
- Vacation days must be taken by July 31 each year, and they do not carry over from one school year to the next.
- Vacation days earned are calculated for employees who leave CISD before the end of their work schedule. The cost of any unearned vacation days taken is deducted from the final paycheck.

Local personal leave — (All full-time employees)

- Two (2) days of local personal leave are advanced at the beginning of the fiscal year (based on full-time employment at 100% FTE, with all days earned). Local personal leave is earned based on the number of days worked and percentage of time employed.
- 2018-2019 local personal days must be taken by July 27, 2019. Any earned, unused local personal days will be paid in the August 15, 2019, paycheck at the substitute pay rate.
- If an employee leaves CISD prior to the end of his/her work schedule, the employee will either be docked on the final paycheck for any unearned local personal leave days used in advance, or compensated at the substitute rate for any days earned but not taken.

State personal leave — (All full-time employees)

- Five (5) days of state personal leave are advanced at the beginning of the fiscal year (based on full-time employment at 100% FTE, with all days earned). State personal leave is earned based on the number of days worked and percentage of time employed.
- State personal leave accumulates without limit, is transferable to other Texas school districts, and generally transfers to education service centers.
- If an employee leaves the District before the end of his/her work schedule, the cost of any unearned state personal leave days taken is deducted from the employee's final paycheck.
- Personnel employed prior to July 1, 1988, who retire under the eligibility provisions of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) will be paid for state leave days based on CISD policy. Please refer to the Employee Handbook for more information.

Earned leave and leave balances

- It is important to understand the difference between advanced leave and earned leave. If you separate from the District before the completion of your work schedule, only earned leave can be considered for your final pay calculation.



Earned leave information is viewable in the Employee Access Center under "Links," look for "Leave Balance." You will find information about how many days have been earned through a certain date, what was advanced, etc. Please become familiar with this link.





Applying for leave

When am I required to submit a leave application?

If you must be absent five (5) or more consecutive workdays because of a personal medical condition, or that of an immediate family member, District policy requires you to submit a leave application and medical certification of illness.* If the absence is for your personal illness, you are required to submit medical certification to the Human Resources Department in order to return to work.

To apply for leave, you need to complete an Application for Leave or Family Medical Leave Request. Both forms are available online at www.conroeisd.net/hr/benefits. If possible, submit the completed form to the Human Resources Department at least 30 days before your absence begins. When the leave is not foreseeable, submit the completed application as soon as possible.

Page one of the leave application gives notice to the District that you plan to be absent for a medical reason. Page two of the leave application is the medical certification completed by your physician. Your medical leave cannot be approved until this documentation is received.



More information is available online at www.conroeisd.net/hr/benefits and in the Employee Handbook. If you have additional questions, please call the Human Resources Leave Program Specialist at 936-709-7823.

Not sure what type of leave to apply for? Use the following outline for guidance.

Family medical leave — up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave. You must have worked for the District for at least 12 months and worked at least 1,250 hours in the 12 months immediately preceding the leave.

Extended sick leave — up to 30 workdays of paid leave at one-half your daily rate. You must have been continuously employed in a full-time position for at least 12 months prior to the need for leave. This paid benefit cannot be applied retroactively, so a complete application must be received by the Human Resources Department by the paperwork due date on the Official Payroll Due Dates Schedule for the qualified leave date(s).

Unpaid medical leave — up to 30 workdays of unpaid leave. This type of leave is available for full-time employees who are not eligible for family medical leave or extended sick leave.

Temporary disability leave — only available to full-time employees whose position requires educator certification by the State Board for Educator Certification.

All leave types run concurrently.

*Short-term and long-term disability benefits are separate from these leave of absence options. If you are enrolled in group disability insurance, and you want to access those benefits, please use the disability claim packet available online at www.conroeisd.net/department/hr/benefits-forms. Disability claim forms should be submitted to Standard Insurance Company.

Conroe ISD Employee Health & Wellness Center

Monday

7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday

10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Friday/Saturday

8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Sunday – Closed

Located on the Oak Ridge Elementary School Campus:

19675 I-45 South, Suite 100

Conroe, TX 77385

Phone: 281-465-2873

As a reminder, Memorial Hermann Medical Group Conroe, which served as the North County location, permanently closed February 8, 2019.

For more information about the Center and to schedule an appointment online, visit ConroeISDClinic.com.

Individuals enrolled in a health savings account (HSA) are not eligible to receive services from the Center.

Walk-ins are available, but appointments are preferred. We strongly encourage patients seeking a walk-in visit to call ahead to determine availability and promote a better experience for you at the Center.

Have a health concern or need support with your health goals?

Schedule a free,* confidential consultation today for help with:

- Managing chronic conditions
- Developing strategies to manage your health
- Communicating effectively with your doctor
- Navigating the medical system to coordinate services
- Making informed health decisions

Call **LaToshia Talford Gordon, RN, CCM** at 281-305-9389, or email: Latoshia.Talford@memorialhermann.org

**Employees and spouses enrolled in a CISD Aetna medical plan only. Learn more about the Care Manager Program at ConroeISDClinic.com.*



Three health goals worth sticking to in 2019

Spring is a great time to look for new opportunities to reshape your health and recharge your mind, body, and soul. But with so many diet and exercise options, it's hard to decide which healthy lifestyle changes to embrace. Here are three that are worth sticking to:

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- 1. Practice self-care.** Self-care is about taking care of yourself to improve your emotional, physical, and mental well-being. When you are less stressed, you are able to make healthier choices. Take time to unwind, get an extra hour of sleep, take a walk, put down your cell phone at night, and laugh a little more.
- 2. Ditch the diets.** Going on a diet also implies getting off a diet at some point, which often leads to gaining the weight back. However, evidence shows that losing weight gradually and making long-term changes in your daily eating and exercise habits delivers long-lasting results. Focus on making a sustainable shift toward better food choices, such as whole grains, lean meats, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Get off the diet bandwagon and work toward a permanent, healthy-eating lifestyle.
- 3. Fuel up on superfoods.** Superfoods, such as kale, brussels sprouts, blueberries, and mushrooms, have increased in popularity — and with good reason. Researchers have found they are packed with higher levels of vitamins and minerals than most foods. Some are also rich in antioxidants, which help prevent disease and protect cells from damage. As you increase your fruit and vegetable intake, be sure to add superfoods to your mix.

Talk with a doctor 24/7

With the convenience of Teladoc®, you can talk with a doctor without leaving your house. The doctor can diagnose, recommend treatment, and call in prescriptions, when needed, for you and your family. Call when you need help with routine, non-emergency medical problems (such as allergies, infections, or flu). You'll pay a \$40 copay for your consult if you're enrolled in the Aetna Whole HealthSM plan. If you're enrolled in the HDHP, your consult will be covered at 30% after the deductible, up to a maximum of \$40.

Visit www.teladoc.com/aetna to set up your account. When you need a consult, log in to your account or call 1-855-TELADOC (835-2362) to request a phone or online video consult.



Welcome Spring!

Take time for a healthier, happier you with the help of the resources in this newsletter.