

## **OVERVIEW**

Following months of extended school closures due to COVID-19, Little Sprouts now needs to temporarily adjust our vacation time approval process in order to secure and sustain day-to-day operations. For now, these adjustments will remain in place from Monday, June 22, 2020 through September 3, 2020, and could impact vacation requests approved prior to COVID closures, as well those made through the rest of the summer.

In attempts to responsibly reduce exposure and slow the spread of COVID-19, state health and education experts have imposed new guidelines and regulations on our schools. These new guidelines and regulations add a layer of both protection and complexity for early educators. As we restart operations and adhere to new guidelines and regulations, **vacation requests this summer are likely to be denied or deferred.**

That said, we recognize and respect the importance of everyone's time. Upon reopening, we will survey all returning families to understand when children may be out of school to identify any possible flexibility or reduced needs that could result in approving employee time-off requests this summer. We may also see opportunities with lower enrollment numbers to make some exceptions.

COVID-19 has caused unfortunate circumstances around the timing of both closing and reopening our schools. It's with this understanding that we attempt to provide some balance to this temporary and necessary disruption with the following compensation schedule:

**In the event that maintaining state-mandated child-to-educator ratios during the COVID crisis requires the denial of a school employee's vacation request through September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, the employee has the option to receive a one-time payout of 50% of the vacation time in addition to the employee's regular wages.**

- This vacation payout applies to vacations scheduled between June 22, 2020 through September 3, 2020.
- The 50% payout applies to a maximum of a one-week vacation request. This means that the employee can use up to 20 hours of vacation time towards a one-time payout in addition to regular wages. Only the 20 hours (or less) will be deducted from your available vacation bank, which means that you could still have approved vacation time for the rest of the year and continue to accrue vacation time after the deduction.
- If an employee's vacation request can be approved or rescheduled to take place in July, August, or by September 3<sup>rd</sup>, then the 50% denied vacation compensation will not need to be provided as the employee's summer vacation time will have been met and prioritized.

## **HOW TO DETERMINE VACATION TIME ELIGIBILITY**

Please review the following questions and statements so a determination can be made about the school's ability to approve or deny the time-off requests for the month of July, August, and possibly further as the COVID-19 guidelines continue.

If you answer **YES to ALL 5** questions below, you have the ability to move forward with approving the vacation request:

1. Does the school have a floating teacher within that age group to consistently cover each shift for the employee with scheduled time off?
2. Can the covering employee work the shifts needed without interrupting the already set hours for others, or, are others willing to temporarily adjust individual(s)' hours to support the vacation request?
3. Does your covering employee have the proper qualifications to cover the classroom?

4. Will using this covering employee keep all classrooms within ratio and will breaks continue to be covered?
5. Is the employee who is taking the time off staying local and will the employee have the ability to return immediately after taking approved time off? (e.g., no self-quarantine restrictions upon return, destination is not under travel restrictions, etc.)? We will follow the latest CDC and State Travel Guidelines.

You **will not** be able to move forward with a vacation for a staff member if:

1. You can only cover the vacation by using more than one staff member during the week.
2. The employee who is available to cover cannot work the assigned hours.
3. You can only cover the vacation if you have help from a sister school.
4. You can only cover the vacation if a RETT teacher covers or the Home Office sends coverage.
5. *Caution for schools in self-quarantining states only:* If the staff member that is taking the time off must self-quarantine for 14 days (this is additional time-off) due to traveling out of state or to a high risk area, you may need to deny the request since you'd have to cover for up to 3 weeks (which may impact staffing levels and wage management).

Please use the information above when reviewing each request you have received. There may be weeks when some team members can be on vacation and others weeks when the coverage is not sufficient and you must deny the time off.

**We pay out 50% of requested vacation time\* if:**

- The time was pre-approved before the COVID closure and we cannot cover it due to new restrictions
- The time is pending in Paylocity for vacation and we cannot cover it due to restrictions
- A staff member put in a new request and it is denied because BOTH: 1) we cannot cover it due to restrictions AND, 2) the time was available and open to take
- A staff member was traveling out of state and would need to quarantine for 14 days upon return, and they have decided to cancel their time off
- The vacation time off cannot be rescheduled by September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020

**We do not pay the 50% vacation time if:**

- A staff member puts in a new request and someone is already scheduled off during that time
- A staff member puts in a new request and other staff members that had pre-approved or pending requests were denied that same week as well due to coverage (i.e., a staff member cannot make a request knowing it will be denied just to receive the vacation incentive pay)
- The vacation time off can be rescheduled by September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020

**\*This policy pertains to vacation requests ONLY**