Important Information
FMLA and Disability Submission Process

Dougherty County School System utilizes AbsencePro for Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) request, Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML), and Mutual of Omaha Short-Term Disability (STD) claims (if applicable). To ensure you have the support and information you need when requesting a leave of absence, we have outlined the steps to initiate and manage your FMLA and STD claims. Please also refer to the **Instruction Flyer** as well.

Step 1: Initiating Your Claim

- Make AbsencePro your first point of contact for your absence.
- Filing a claim with AbsencePro initiates your Leave and Short-Term Disability Claim (this includes maternity claims as well).
- Employees are encouraged to provide at least 30 days' advance notice of a leave request when the need for leave is foreseeable.
- **You can submit your FMLA, STD, PFML, and PPL (Paid Parental Leave) leave information to the Absence Management Team via phone at 866-964-3577 or online at www.doughertybenefits.com/fmla.**
- Submitting your leave takes approximately 15 minutes.
- The Absence Management Team handles the FMLA claim and completes the STD and PFML intake questions.

Step 2: Submitting Medical Documentation

- FMLA requires medical certification within 15 days.
- Your physician must complete the Medical Certification form and Attending Physician Statement (if applicable for disability) within 15 days.
- Either you provide the Medical Certification form to your physician, or the Absence Management Team can send them to your physician on your behalf.
- Please verify that the health care provider fully and accurately completes all fields on the Medical Certification form and faxes it to AbsencePro at 877-309-0218 within the certification period stated on your Request letter.
- Late paperwork will be processed according to your company's policy regarding late paperwork, which may result in your absence being delayed or denied.

Step 3: Receiving a Decision

- The Absence Management Team receives the completed documents and reviews them in order to render a decision.
- Incoming information typically takes 5 business days to review documentation and render a decision once all completed documentation has been received.
- Each time we receive documentation, you will receive a notification. A decision packet will be sent via your preferred communication method within 48 hours of receipt of the documentation.
- Decisions will be communicated via phone, email, or mail, and provide next steps, if necessary.

Step 4: Managing and Reporting Your Absence

- Log in by visiting absencepro.absencemgmt.com to choose the leave you want to report and select Report Time.
- In addition, refer to **Your Next Steps** document for additional important information.
- **Intermittent Leave: If you are going to be absent from work intermittently, track your absence dates. All FMLA leave must be reported within 48 hours of the absence.**
- **Any time reported outside this window will be treated as unprotected and subject to the standard attendance policy.**
- Whenever you need to miss work due to your leave of absence, contact Benefits and AbsencePro and provide us with the date and amount of time used so we can track the time for your job protection.
- If you are going to be absent on a continuous basis, the dates you requested are already in our system. You do not need to call and report the time you're out, though you should let us know if your needs change.

Step 5: Returning to Work

- Before your return to work, you will be required to present proof of your certified Fitness for Duty.
- If such certification is not received, your return to active employment will be delayed until certification is provided.
- If you are returning to work earlier than anticipated, you must notify Benefits 1 week prior to your expected return date.
- When your approved absence period ends, you will be expected to return to work. Failure to return on or before the specified return date without an approved extension may result in discipline up to and including the termination of employment.

Important Notes

- **Disability Benefits:** For those who have elected short-term disability, there may be a waiting period before benefits begin. Please report any other income you are receiving or entitled to receive, as it could reduce your benefit.
- **Maintaining Health Benefits:** To maintain your health benefits, you are required to pay your share of the premium payments for health insurance and other voluntary benefits on the same basis as during active employment. If your absence is unpaid, you must contact Benefits to make arrangements.
- **Pay and Time Off:** You must use any accrued vacation, personal and sick time concurrently with your absence, so as to be paid for all or a portion of the absence. Please contact the Benefits Department to make arrangements.
- **Moonlighting Policy:** You may not work for another employer while on family or medical absence. Such outside employment is grounds for immediate termination.

Contact Information

- If you have any questions, live representatives at Absence Pro are available between 7:30 AM and 9:30 PM Central Time at 866-964-3577, or you can email Support@AbsencePro.absencemgmt.com
- If you need to contact the Dougherty County School System Benefits Department, you can reach them at 229-431-1260, or you can email dl-benefits@docoschools.org