

10 October 2019

TO: RAILS Board Policy Committee

FROM: Deirdre Brennan

SUBJECT: Revision of RAILS employee handbook

I. Overview of changes

The employee handbook has been extensively revised and reordered. It has also been streamlined, with duplicative policies eliminated or combined. At the same time, some policies that had been approved by the board and implemented by staff were not included in the handbook. They are now included so that all RAILS policies can be found in the handbook for any user.

II. Official policies that were not included in the handbook

- Educational benefits policy (tuition reimbursement)
- Employee Assistance Program
- COBRA
- Internet safety
- Privacy
- Paid family leave

III. Tone of voice

The language of the revised handbook is friendlier and the policies are more flexible. For example, school visit time for parents has been expanded in light of the busy schedules of modern families.

IV. Specific policy changes

- Leave and sick time – accrual based on number of hours, not days; part-time employees leave is prorated correctly and not reduced before proration
- Vacation allotment after 5 years of employment – employees will be granted one additional day per year until 10 years, instead of no additional days until 10 years and then 5 granted

- Paid family leave – added 6 weeks of paid leave in addition to vacation, sick and personal time; may be taken intermittently; runs consecutively, not concurrently with FMLA unpaid leave (this was approved by the board in September, 2017)
- Disciplinary steps – RAILS may choose to use or not use past warnings issued more than 2 years previously to a current disciplinary issue
- Jury duty – leave amount extended to 4 weeks in light of possible length of jury service required
- Funeral leave- added discretion on family member definition
- Performance reviews and salary increases – revised language
- Visitor policy revised for more flexibility and friendlier tone

V. Other

- No more separate section for “system guidelines”
- Marijuana becomes legal on January 1, 2020 so policy related to drugs and alcohol will have to be revised at that time. We are already working on this, and it is a thorny issue.

VI. Approval process

The new handbook has been thoroughly reviewed by HR Source and our attorneys at Ancel, Glink.

The board policy committee will review the entire handbook and possibly suggest changes. At our first meeting, we will discuss the best way to approach discussion and approval of the manual. I suggest that we break it up into sections to make it more manageable.

After the committee review, we will report to the board which may then also choose to review the manual in some detail. This process could take some time, but we will expedite it as much as possible. Policy changes are not official and will not go into effect until final board approval. My best guess: March 1, 2020, optimistically.

CC: Paul Mills, RAILS Board President
 Jim Kregor
 Jane Plass