

Department of Education and
Early Childhood Development
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Date: April 8, 2020
To: All school district personnel (Part II)
From: George Daley, Deputy Minister
Copies: Craig Caldwell, Assistant Deputy Minister, Educational Services
Robert Penney, Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services
Subject: **Bulletin #10: Vacation requests during the state of emergency (COVID-19)**

During GNB's response to the pandemic event, we have had to review a few of our policies originally developed for more "business as usual" circumstances. As a result, we have adapted the application of certain policies to provide flexibility and support to employees and the organization.

The vacation benefit is intended to provide periods of rest from work. As a norm, GNB encourages its employees to use the vacation leave credits during the year in which they are earned. Timely and regular use of vacation promotes work-life balance and is beneficial to our well-being, stress and overall health.

As normal practice, managers approve vacation requests based on operational requirements. During this state of emergency and the recovery period that will follow, operational requirements are and will be quite different than during "business as usual."

While most of the workforce in Part II follow the school calendar and do not work during the summer months, the following directives apply to Part II employees who have access to vacation leave.

Vacation leave during the state of emergency

Managers must review all employee vacation requests - including those already approved - during the state of emergency and decide whether the request can be approved, on a case by case basis. This does not mean vacation requests cannot be approved, simply that **approval will be exceptional**. Managers must ensure critical functions can continue operating at the required level.

Vacation leave is a separate issue from regular days of rest. It is critical that employees working additional hours and days have days off. I recognize that many of you have given up your weekends or other regular days of rest over the past month. In order to sustain GNB's response to the pandemic, please make sure you and your managers determine how and when you can get the rest you need to stay healthy and productive.

During the state of emergency, GNB programs and services which did not operate for a certain period will resume according to need.

The approval of vacation requests during this period will be based on operational requirements. As your workplace resumes some operations, there will likely be a significant backlog of work to clear. New Brunswickers will also be eager to have access to services which were unavailable during this period.

The approval of vacation requests will therefore be evaluated against service needs during the first few weeks or months back at work after a period of inactivity. Managers must assess all requests – including those already approved – for vacation during the next few months (including summer) from staff not working through the state of emergency and determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether operational requirements will allow vacation time when work resumes.

As always, managers will need to consider many factors: is the request for one or two days or a week or more, the circumstances of the request (e.g. wedding, etc.), how many other employees will be at work to ensure business can run at the required level, etc. **Priority consideration for vacation approvals during the recovery period will be given to the employees working many additional hours and days in difficult circumstances during the state of emergency.** They will be in great need of rest for their well-being and overall health.

If you are making vacation plans, please discuss with your manager before making any travel and lodging reservations.

Not having vacation does not mean not having days of rest. It will be important for managers to manage workload and work hours to make sure employees can enjoy their normal days off as much as possible during the recovery period.

Keep safe and well and continue to stay informed by checking GNB's coronavirus [website](#) regularly for up to date information.

You can find additional COVID-19 related resources [here](#).



George Daley
Deputy Minister