

Dear Colleagues:

As we begin an unusual school year, the University recognizes the varying challenges presented to our colleagues because of the global pandemic. Family is important at Pepperdine, and we want to remind faculty and staff parents and caregivers about different resources available to them.

### **Flexible Schedules**

At the very beginning of the pandemic, Pepperdine created [Interim Telecommuting Exceptions](#) designed to provide maximum flexibility for faculty and staff, including parents and child caregivers. Supervisors remain encouraged to utilize creativity and provide flexible schedules to employees. The University seeks to show compassion and identify creative solutions to assist working parents, even as we uphold standards of excellence in service to our students and mission.

### **Child Care Subsidy Grant**

Pepperdine understands that one of the most difficult work/life issues for employees with children is the high cost of child care. The University provides a [Child Care Subsidy Grant](#) program to assist University faculty and staff in meeting these costs.

Program grants are awarded annually based upon an application process and are funded by the University through its existing Dependent Care Spending Account on a pre-tax basis. The program provides a grant of up to \$5,000 a year to qualified employees with dependent children ages twelve and under. Program claims are administered under the same rules and regulations governing Pepperdine's Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (FSA).

Next month, all employees will receive 2021 grant information and application. Applications are due October 1, 2020.

*If you would like to reduce your 2020 Child Care Subsidy Grant because your childcare expenses have changed due to COVID-19, please contact Christine Hannick at [christine.hannick@pepperdine.edu](mailto:christine.hannick@pepperdine.edu).*

## **Dependent Care FSA**

With schools and daycares closed and many people working from home, dependent care expenses may have changed dramatically due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Certain changes in your situation, such as continued remote learning, may allow you to increase or decrease your Dependent Care FSA (flexible spending account) contributions. For example:

- If you are no longer able to send your child to daycare this fall, or if you no longer need to do so because you continue to work from home, you are eligible to decrease your Dependent Care FSA election. You can reduce your contribution to the amount you have contributed year-to-date, giving you through December 31, 2020, to use any funds remaining in your account.
- If your child's school continues to be closed and you need to enroll your child in alternate daycare to allow you to continue to work, you are eligible to increase your Dependent Care FSA election.

You can use a Dependent Care FSA to cover daycare expenses for a child who is age 12 or younger, including in-home care that allows you to work at home. The FSA can cover preschool tuition, camps, and after school care. You cannot use the FSA to pay for kindergarten or private school tuition for a child age 5 and older. Online educational programs or private tutoring are also not eligible expenses under IRS rules for Dependent Care FSA accounts.

*If you would like to make contribution changes to your 2020 Dependent Care FSA election, please contact Christine Hannick at [christine.hannick@pepperdine.edu](mailto:christine.hannick@pepperdine.edu).*

## **Major Disaster Donated Sick Pay**

Soon after Pepperdine announced the need for the majority of faculty and staff to work remotely following the Safer at Home orders, the University enacted the [Major Disaster Donated Sick Pay policy](#). This policy allows for employees to receive up to 160 additional hours of paid sick time, which may be used when an employee can demonstrate that the disaster has caused severe hardship to the employee or to a family member of the employee that requires the employee to be absent from work, including childcare issues.

Please complete a form to either [donate sick time](#) or to [request donated sick time](#) on the Human Resources website.

## **COVID-19 Child Care Leave**

Recognizing the disruption of closed schools and daycare, the University created COVID-19 Leaves for faculty and staff, including a Child Care Leave for those who are unable to work remotely and must care for children at home. You may be eligible to apply for Unemployment Insurance while on a COVID-19 Child Care Leave, as well as choose to use accrued sick pay, donated sick pay, or vacation pay for all or part of the leave.

Please apply for the appropriate [faculty](#) or [staff](#) COVID-19 Child Care Leave on the Human Resources website.

## **Monitoring Local Schools/Programs**

While Human Resources does not endorse local schools/programs, we do monitor available programs in the Malibu area.

Please view a list of [local care centers](#) on the Human Resources website.

## **Employee Assistance Program**

The University acknowledges the emotional and financial impact COVID-19 might have on those in our community. The Health Advocate EAP+Work/Life program is a core benefit available to all participating employees through their benefit package. Work/Life specialists are available to help you locate the right support service, from childcare and eldercare to financial and legal help. Their targeted child care services currently include:

- one-on-one consultations with the Work/Life Team to help any parent/member with their specific needs and to direct members to the right resources;
- access to a well-rounded parents guide on [care.com](#);
- links to a number of fun, free, and educational websites to share with children; and
- a number of webinars and other resources on their [COVID-19 webpage](#).

Visit [myhealthadvocate.pepperdine.edu](#) or call 866.799.2728 for assistance.

## Affinity Group Support

Pepperdine has a number of informal, employee-led [affinity groups](#) for colleagues who share a common interest or goal. One is a monthly family affinity group that discusses parenting challenges, juggling work and parenting, and the many transitions parents experience.

*Please contact Lisa Stone, Executive Assistant to the Executive Vice President, at [lisa.stone@pepperdine.edu](mailto:lisa.stone@pepperdine.edu) to learn more about this group.*

We recognize and empathize with faculty and staff parents and caregivers during this time of disruption, and we hope that the myriad of existing and new resources above are helpful. Please let us know how we can assist you in the meantime, and enjoy the beginning of the fall term.

