Closure of Chicago Public Schools (CPS)

CORRECTION TO PREVIOUS COMMUNICATION: We are currently working through options for how to best support our hourly and substitute employees regardless of their particular circumstance. Some work irregularly, while others work nearly full-time. We will be communicating further guidance for these employees in the coming days.

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Closure of Chicago Public Schools (CPS)

Is CPS closed due to COVID-19?
Yes. Governor Pritzker issued a stay-at-home order starting Saturday, March 21 at 5 p.m. CPS will remain closed through the end of the school year.

Are school buildings open for students and staff?
No. School buildings will be closed for deep cleaning. Schools will be closed to all students and staff beginning Tuesday, March 17. Only environmental cleaning experts and emergency personnel will be allowed in school buildings. Families should not send their children to schools.

What is the plan for cleaning schools?
We will deep clean all schools over the entire duration of the school closure. The scope includes, but is not limited to, cleaning all hard surfaces, flooring, walls, and all high-touch points.

Will the district provide food services to students during the closure?
We recognize that our schools provide healthy meals to many of our students, and we will be providing free grab-and-go meals for every student in each household throughout the closure. Lunchroom staff will prep, bag, and provide meals outside of the school building. Visit cps.edu/mealsites to find a meal site near your home.

Will staff be paid during closures?
All full-time and regularly scheduled staff will continue to be paid through this school closure. Employees designated as Emergency Personnel will be expected to report to work in order to perform essential functions, including food distribution and core operations. Emergency Personnel who are sick or caring for a sick dependent will be excused with regular pay. Non-Emergency Personnel will be excused with regular pay.
Which school staff are designated as Emergency Personnel?

Emergency Personnel who are required for food distribution, cleaning, and associated functions at schools are listed below.

- School Administrators (principals and assistant principals)
  - At least one administrator must report to each school unless sick or caring for a sick dependent. If no administrator is able to report to the school, the principal can request another employee from their school staff who has an administrative license to cover. If this is a teacher, they will be paid the instructional rate for hours worked.
  - Will be paid a 10% premium on top of their regular pay for days they report to work
- Lunchroom managers
  - Will be paid a 50% premium on top of their regular pay for days they report to work
- Nutrition workers
  - Will be paid a 50% premium on top of their regular pay for days they report to work
- Facilities (all custodians and engineers)
  - All Board employees in this category will be paid a 50% premium on top of their regular pay for days they report to work
- Security staff
  - Will be paid a 50% premium on top of their regular pay for days they report to work

Are Central Office and Network employees Emergency Personnel?

Some Central Office and Network staff employees are Emergency Personnel and may be asked to report to work in-person. All other Central Office and Network staff will be asked to either telework or will be excused with pay.

Emergency Personnel are those who perform essential district functions, such as designated payroll and accounting employees who will be paid a 50% premium on top of their regular pay for days on which they report to work. All other employees in this group will be paid 10% acting pay during this time, excluding any Board-approved Officer. Other non-union employees may be identified as emergency personnel by the CEO or her designee.

Is the district offering instruction to students during the closure?

Remote learning began on Monday, April 13 and will continue through June 18, 2020—the last day of scheduled classes. You can read more about our remote learning plan and download enrichment activities at cps.edu/remoteteaching.

Who can I contact with questions?

Please call the CPS Command Center at 773-553-KIDS (5437) or email familyservices@cps.edu

How will Chicago Public Schools be keeping families, staff, and students informed regarding Coronavirus and information related to the closure?

CPS is sending regular emails to families and staff to provide the most up-to-date information regarding COVID-19 and the district website. The district will also post notifications on social media. If you have any questions, please contact the CPS Command Center at familyservices@cps.edu or 773-553-KIDS.

COVID-19 in CPS

Have members of the CPS community tested positive for COVID-19?
Yes. As COVID-19 becomes more common here in Chicago, we will continue to see more positive cases both in and around CPS. Please take a moment to review “General COVID-19 Information” below.

**General COVID-19 Information**

**What is Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?**  
COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Symptoms include fever, cough and difficulty breathing. Symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure. At this time, there is no vaccine to protect against COVID-19 and no medications approved to treat it. The best way to prevent infection is to take everyday preventive actions, like avoiding close contact with people who are sick and washing your hands often.

The latest situation summary updates are available on CDC’s web page [Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).

**How does the virus spread?**  
The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

**How is COVID-19 treated?**  
There is no specific medicine to treat COVID-19 infection at this time, though studies are underway. People sick with COVID-19 should receive supportive care from a healthcare professional. Supportive care means care to help relieve symptoms; for example, medicine to bring down fevers, or oxygen if a patient’s oxygen level is low.

**How is COVID-19 diagnosed?**  
Diagnosis occurs through laboratory testing of respiratory specimens, such as a nasal swab. Talk to your healthcare provider if you think you could have COVID-19.

**How can I find the latest news about COVID-19?**  
CPS will be sending out regular updates on COVID-19 and will notify the district if this situation develops. For communication purposes, please ensure the district has your up-to-date emergency contact information. For the most reliable information about COVID-19, please visit [www.chicago.gov/coronavirus](http://www.chicago.gov/coronavirus) or [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus). For school-specific updates, visit [www.cps.edu/coronavirus](http://www.cps.edu/coronavirus).

**Who can I contact if I have questions or concerns?**  
The Chicago Department of Health has established a call center to address questions from the public. CDPH can be reached at coronavirus@chicago.gov or call 312-746-4835.
Phone lines are currently staffed from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m, seven days a week. Please note that this call center can not access COVID-19 testing results. For testing inquiries or results, please contact your healthcare provider.

If you have any CPS-specific or school-related concerns, please reach out to the CPS Command Center by calling the Healthy CPS Hotline 773-553-KIDS (5437) (staffed from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday) or by emailing familyservices@cps.edu.

**How do I know if I was exposed?**
You generally need to be in close contact with a sick person to get infected. Close contact includes:
- Living in the same household as a sick person with COVID-19,
- Caring for a sick person with COVID-19,
- Being within 6 feet of a sick person with COVID-19 for about 10 minutes, OR
- Being in direct contact with secretions from a sick person with COVID-19 (e.g., being coughed on, kissing, sharing utensils, etc.).

If you have not been in close contact with a sick person with COVID-19, you are considered to be at low risk for infection. You can continue to go to work and school, but should monitor your health for 14 days and stay away from others if you get sick.

**What should I do if I am a close contact to someone with COVID-19 but am not sick?**
You should monitor your health for fever, cough and difficulty breathing during the 14 days after the last day you were in close contact with the sick person with COVID-19. You should not go to work or school, and should avoid public places for 14 days.

**What should I do if I am a close contact to someone with COVID-19 and get sick?**
If you get sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing (even if your symptoms are very mild), you should stay at home and away from other people. If you have any of the following conditions that may increase your risk for a serious infection—are 60 years of age or over, are pregnant, or have medical conditions—contact your physician's office and tell them that you were exposed to someone with COVID-19. They may want to monitor your health more closely or test you for COVID-19.

If you do not have a high-risk condition but want medical advice, you can call your healthcare provider and tell them that you were exposed to someone with COVID-19. If you’re mildly ill, you do not need to be evaluated in person and do not need to be tested for COVID-19. Keep in mind that there are currently no medications to treat COVID-19 and you will receive the same advice whether or not you have a test. Most importantly, stay home away from others for:
- at least 7 days since your symptoms first appeared; and
- at least 3 days (72 hours) with no fever (without using fever-reducing medications) and improving symptoms.

If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you may have been exposed to COVID-19. If possible, put on a face mask before emergency medical services arrive or immediately after they arrive.

**Who is at higher risk of severe illness?**
Those at higher risk include:
People over 60 years of age. The risk increases significantly thereafter and escalates with age, with persons over age 80 in the highest risk category.

People, regardless of age, with underlying health conditions including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, or chronic lung diseases like COPD, as well as those with severely weakened immune systems.

What to do if you have confirmed or suspected COVID-19?
If you are sick and have been diagnosed with COVID-19, follow the steps below to help prevent COVID-19 from spreading to people in our homes and communities.

- You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.
- If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you must stay home away from others for:
  ○ at least 7 days since your symptoms first appeared; and
  ○ at least 3 days (72 hours) with no fever (without using fever-reducing medications) and improving symptoms.
- Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home.
  ○ People: As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.
  ○ Animals: Do not handle pets or other animals while sick.
- If you have a medical appointment, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider’s office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.
- You should wear a face mask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare provider’s office. If you are not able to wear a face mask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not be in the same room with you, or they should wear a face mask if they enter your room.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can; immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60 to 95% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water is preferred if hands are visibly dirty.
- You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water is preferred if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean all “high-touch” surfaces every day. High-touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.
Monitor your symptoms. Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g.,
difficulty breathing). Before seeking care, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you
have COVID-19. Put on a facemask before you enter the facility. These steps will help the
healthcare provider’s office to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting
infected or exposed. If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the
dispatch personnel that you have COVID-19. If possible, put on a face mask before emergency
medical services arrive.

How does COVID-19 impact children?
Based on available evidence, children do not appear to be at higher risk for COVID-19 than adults.
While some children and infants have been sick with COVID-19, adults make up most of the known
cases to date. Visit CDC for more information. The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar in children and
adults. However, children with confirmed COVID-19 have generally presented with mild symptoms.
It’s not known yet whether some children may be at higher risk for severe illness, for example,
children with underlying medical conditions and special healthcare needs. There is much more to be
learned about how the disease impacts children.

COVID-19 Testing

Should I go to my doctor and get tested for COVID-19?
If you have any of the conditions that may increase your risk for a serious viral infection—age 60 years
or over, are pregnant, or have medical conditions—call your physician’s office and ask if you need to
be evaluated in person. They may want to monitor your health more closely or test you for COVID-19.

If you do NOT have a high-risk condition and your symptoms are mild, you do NOT need to be
evaluated in person and do NOT need to be tested for COVID-19. You will receive the same advice
whether or not you have a test. For example, there is no special medicine available for treating
COVID-19. Most importantly, you must stay home away from others for:

- at least 7 days since your symptoms first appeared; and,
- at least 3 days (72 hours) since recovery defined as no fever (without using fever-reducing
  medications) and improvement in symptoms.

For example, if you have a fever and coughing for 4 days, you need to stay home 3 more days with no
fever for a total of 7 days. Or, if you have a fever and coughing for 5 days, you need to stay home 3
more days with no fever for a total of 8 days.

If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 get medical attention immediately. In adults,
emergency warning signs include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or difficulty awakening the person
- Bluish lips or face

Do I need to get tested for COVID-19?
The Chicago Department of Public Health does not perform COVID-19 testing and the hotline does
not make decisions about who should be tested. People with symptoms who are at higher risk for
serious illness (people 65 and older and people who have underlying chronic health conditions) should call their healthcare provider to determine if testing is necessary.

Please follow the guidance below or use the CDC Coronavirus Self-Checker to make decisions about seeking appropriate medical care. Call 911 if you are experiencing a medical emergency.

**No Symptoms:**
If you don't have any symptoms, you do NOT need to be tested for COVID-19

**Mild Symptoms:**
If you're at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19, contact your healthcare provider early, even if your illness is mild. Your healthcare provider will evaluate your health and decide whether you need to be tested.

If you're NOT at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19, you do NOT need to be evaluated in person and do NOT need to be tested for COVID-19. Keep in mind that there is no treatment for COVID-19 and if you're mildly ill, there is no need to call your healthcare provider. You should stay home away from others.

**Severe Symptoms:**
If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 get medical attention immediately. Emergency warning signs include:
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or difficulty waking up
- Bluish lips or face

**Preventative Measures**

**How can I protect myself and others from COVID-19?**

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way for all Chicagoans to protect themselves and others from COVID-19 is to stay home as much as possible and practice social distancing when going out in public. Everyone should follow these everyday preventive actions:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Do not shake hands. Try alternatives like an elbow bump or wave.
- Put at least six feet of distance between yourself and other people when traveling for work, going to the grocery store, or picking up medication at the pharmacy. If possible, walk or bike.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, especially if you are at higher risk for serious illness.
- If you’re sick, stay home except to get medical care. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks. If surfaces are dirty, clean them using detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection. To disinfect, most
common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work. See CDC’s recommendations for household cleaning and disinfection.

- If you have recently returned from a country, state, or region with ongoing spread of COVID-19, monitor your health and follow the instructions of public health officials.
- Get plenty of rest, drink plenty of fluids, eat healthy foods, and manage your stress to keep your immunity strong.
- Remind yourself, your family, and your friends that feeling sad, anxious, overwhelmed, or having other symptoms of distress such as trouble sleeping is normal. If symptoms become worse, encourage them, and yourself, to reach out for support and help. Check out these free mental health resources available to all Chicago residents.

**Do I need to wear a mask?**
CDPH does not recommend that people who are well wear a face mask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. Face masks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a healthcare facility).

**Do I need to wear gloves?**
CDPH doesn’t recommend wearing rubber gloves while out in public. Regularly washing your bare hands offers more protection than wearing rubber gloves. You can still pick up COVID-19 contamination on rubber gloves. If you then touch your face, the contamination goes from your glove to your face and can infect you.

**How does the Stay at Home order apply?**
To ensure the protection of all residents under this unprecedented public health challenge, the State of Illinois issued a statewide order that requires all residents to stay home, unless traveling for essential needs, and requires businesses not engaged in essential activities to cease all activities except for minimum basic operations. The order is in effect across the State of Illinois and will remain in place until the Governor’s Disaster Proclamation expires on April 30.

During the order, residents can still fulfill all of their essential needs, including:

- Traveling to obtain necessary supplies, including food, pet supplies, medicine, or take-out food;
- Attending appointments at a hospital or mental health provider;
- Visiting private businesses that offer essential services, including pharmacies, hardware stores, banks, and laundromats; and
- Using city or state governmental services, including fire and police.

Under the order, individuals will no longer be able to engage in public or private group activities, participate in social activities at bars or nightclubs, or take unnecessary trips. When going out in public residents should practice social distancing, defined as maintaining at least six feet of distancing from others, and other everyday preventive actions such as washing hands, covering coughs or sneezes, regularly cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces, and not shaking hands.

To learn more see Chicago Stay at Home Order Frequently Asked Questions.
When should I self quarantine?
If you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or if you have traveled to a location, including airport layovers, with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 (Level 3 Travel Health Notices), you should stay home for 14 days after your return date.

What should I do if I want to keep my child home for the rest of the school year?
Homeschooling is suggested if students are planning to stay home for the remainder of the school year. In order to homeschool your child, they would need to be withdrawn from school, and it will be the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian to ensure their child is being instructed at home. Please note that the school will not send work home for the student and the Illinois State Board of Education does not provide recommendations for materials or provide assistance with planning a home school curriculum. However, we have prepared a list of resources that may be helpful to review if parents or guardians are unsure where to start.

We request the homeschooling paperwork be submitted to both the school and the CPS Department of Education Policy and Procedures—you can find specific details on the website. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) only requests the Home Schooling Registration Form.

Per the Chicago Board of Education policy, homeschooled children are entitled to enroll or re-enroll in CPS, and grade placement decisions for previously homeschooled children will be made at the discretion of school administrators. Please note: this enrollment/re-enrollment pertains to neighborhood schools. If a student withdraws from a non-neighborhood school, the student could lose their seat.

Staff
Who is designated as emergency personnel?
CPS designated school administrators, lunchroom managers, lunchroom staff, custodians, engineers, facilities staff, warehouse staff, security officers, motor truck drivers, and related contracted vendors as emergency personnel on March 16, 2020.

Are emergency personnel required to work in-person during Governor JB Pritzker’s stay-at-home order?
Emergency personnel already reporting to work in-person will continue to be asked to work in-person during the stay-at-home order. Per the Governor’s order, all work activities must be performed while maintaining social distancing of six-feet per person to the greatest extent possible. Emergency personnel will continue to be paid an increased rate.

Emergency personnel who are ill, medically vulnerable, or caring for a dependent who is ill or medically vulnerable are not expected to report to work. Emergency staff who are unable to report to work for these reasons will continue to be paid. Emergency personnel must continue to follow call-out procedures if unable to report to work.

What support is available to CPS employees?
If you are experiencing increased stress related to the COVID-19, please contact our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at 1-800-424-4776 or visit www.magellanascend.com. If you need assistance locating a primary care provider (PCP), please contact BCBSIL at http://www.bcbsil.com/members or 1-800-331-8032. Blue Cross Blue Shield and CVS Caremark have made some modifications to their...
policies to ensure members can easily access the right care and prescriptions. If you participate in these plans, please [click here](#) for more information.

**Travel**

**What is the CDC’s current travel guidance?**

*Please note that this guidance is evolving—for the most recent recommendations, please visit the [CDC website](#). Guidance from CDPH is listed below:*

Travelers returning from any country with a [Travel Alert Level 3](#) should stay home and monitor their health for up to 14 days. Please follow instructions during this time. Your cooperation is integral to the ongoing public health response to try to slow the spread of this virus.

- Do not go to school or work. Absences for this purpose should be excused and alternate arrangements should be made for teleworking and online school assignments.
- Take your temperature with a thermometer 2 times a day and watch your health.
- If you develop a fever (100.4F/38C) or cough, seek medical care right away. Call ahead before going to a doctor’s office or emergency room. Tell them your symptoms and that you were in an affected area. You could also call CDPH at 312-746-7425 (SICK) during business hours, after hours call 311 and request to speak to the Medical Director on call. In the case of a medical emergency, call 911.

Travelers returning from any country with a [Travel Alert Level 2](#) are also encouraged to monitor their health but do not need to limit their movement or activity. If you develop COVID-19 symptoms, contact your healthcare provider, and tell them about your symptoms and your recent travel to an area with community spread of COVID-19.

**What if I recently traveled to an area affected by COVID-19 and got sick?**

If you were in a country with a COVID-19 outbreak and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, within 14 days after you left, you should:

- Seek medical advice. Call ahead before you go to a doctor’s office or emergency room. Tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Not travel on public transportation while sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds to avoid spreading the virus to others.
- Wash your hands with soap and water immediately after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60%–95% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.

**What should I do if a family member or someone I’ve been in close contact with traveled to a location with widespread community transmission of COVID-19?**

While the person who did travel is required to stay home for 14 days after returning, your exposure is classified as secondary exposure, and you are not required to take any additional steps at this time.
My international trip on behalf of the district was canceled. When will I be getting a refund? The district is currently working with travel vendors to work out refunds for anyone who paid for international trips.

Resources and Support

How do I find medical care?
If you need help locating medical care, please reach out to the CPS Office of Student Health and Wellness at oshw@cps.edu or by calling the Healthy CPS Hotline 773-553-KIDS (5437).

What should I do if I or my child is being bullied or experiencing stigma and discrimination because of COVID-19?
Bullying, harassment, and discrimination are always unacceptable. COVID-19 does not distinguish between race, nationality, or geographic borders. Stigma and discrimination against people who have the virus or who have family members with the virus discourages early reporting of symptoms and further perpetuates community spread.

- If there is a concern related to student discrimination or bullying, please reach out to the Office of Student Protections (OSP) by calling 773-535-4400 or by emailing osp@cps.edu. You can also contact the Student Safety Center at 773-553-3335.
- If there is a concern related to staff discrimination, please reach out to the Equal Opportunity Compliance Office (EOCO) by calling 773-553-1013 or by emailing eoco@cps.edu.