



## COVID-19 School Closure: Frequently Asked Questions

We are experiencing a global pandemic that has resulted in federal, state and city declarations of emergency. We are working diligently to plan our response and make decisions to protect children, families, and the community under these unprecedented circumstances. We recognize that things will probably get worse before they get better. While this is far from a perfect situation, we are dealing with it the best we can, given that there are so many unknowns. We have compiled responses for the following frequently asked questions based on the information we do have at this time.

### **Students**

#### **Why is school closing when children appear to not be at risk?**

Children could be carriers and spread the virus to at risk adults. Also, it is equally important to protect teachers and staff from potential exposure. Stopping community spread is the only way to ensure that healthcare workers don't have to decide between who lives and who dies.

#### **What expectations are there for students to do online work? Will grades be impacted if students are not able to complete work next week?**

For the week of March 17-20, we have provided HCS Continued Learning packets grades K-12. If we are out of school for any extended time, we will employ online learning options for students. We will review and honor the work that students complete as part of their expected class participation.

#### **When will ACT for Juniors be rescheduled?**

The ACT junior test day is tentatively rescheduled for April 21. Schools will share more information with students and parents when additional details become available.

#### **When will the Pre-ACT for Sophomores be rescheduled?**

The pre-ACT test day for sophomores is tentatively rescheduled for April 21. Schools will share more information with students and parents when additional details become available.



### **What is the plan for TNReady state testing in Tennessee?**

At this time, the state department is planning on operating spring assessment windows and accountability calculations as currently scheduled and will update districts if guidance from federal, state, or local officials impacts these plans. The department will be working directly with individual districts on a case-by-case basis as the need arises. Hamilton County Schools will pursue all options in seeking to extend the testing window with the Tennessee Department of Education.

### **Employees**

#### **Can teachers come to the building while kids are out of school?**

During these flexible learning days when schools are closed for students, staff can access schools, pick-up resources and then work from home as much as possible.

#### **What is the time expectation for teachers?**

For the week of March 16-20, teachers will take part in a virtual professional development day on March 16. Then from March 17-20 be available during normal work hours via phone, email, and video conferencing.

#### **What is the guidance for employees who are classified?**

All W-2 employees will be paid for a regular work week March 16-20. Part-time employees will need to enter time they were scheduled to work during the week of March 16-20.

#### **Who is working next week (Tues-Fri) in the buildings? Bookkeepers? Secretaries? APs?**

All school-based classified staff will be compensated next week. However, staff who can work from home will be asked to be available during regular school hours. Furthermore, only administrative and professional employees who are 221-day contracts or more will be expected to report to their office locations.



## **School Nutrition**

**What options are available for food during days that schools are closed for flex or virtual learning?**

Please see link with details of school breakfast and lunch sites [here](#).

## **Community**

**Who do I contact if I'm interested in volunteering, donating or providing a resource?**

Please email our Family & Community Engagement Coordinator, Kate Skonberg, at [skonberg\\_kate@hcde.org](mailto:skonberg_kate@hcde.org).

# **COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions**

**How does the coronavirus (COVID-19) spread?**

The spread pattern appears to mirror those of the common cold or flu. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person, generally between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet). This spread appears to occur through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

**What are the primary symptoms of the virus? What should I be looking for?**

Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases. The following symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

**What should I do if my child or someone in my family is exhibiting symptoms?**

Call ahead to a healthcare professional if you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or difficulty breathing, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently traveled to an area with ongoing spread. Tell your healthcare professional about your recent travel or contact. Your healthcare professional will work with your state's public health department to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19.



### **Can someone spread the virus without being sick?**

People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest). Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. 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.

### **What precautions should we take?**

Health officials recommend everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.