

Dear Broward County Public Schools Community,

Thank you for your patience and flexibility as we navigate new territory with the coronavirus. To maintain ongoing communications with the community, families and staff, and to ensure everyone is well informed about the virus and important information affecting Broward County Public Schools, we have a dedicated page on our website at [browardschools.com/coronavirus](http://browardschools.com/coronavirus). This site also contains frequently asked questions that provide useful information. We remind parents to update their contact information with their child's school to ensure they receive the most accurate news.

As we continue to monitor the details of this rapidly changing situation, at this time the District has decided that schools will remain open. It is important to provide continued instruction and, for some students, meals, unless an infection prevents us from doing so. Most healthy students are not at risk for complications from the virus. Medically vulnerable individuals and people over the age of 60 are most at risk from the coronavirus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states for most of the American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk from coronavirus is considered to be low. Closing schools is not currently recommended by the Florida Department of Health-Broward (FDOH) or the CDC.

We understand each family situation is different, and some may have family members they want to protect from possible exposure. Parents and guardians are the ultimate decision makers about what steps to take to keep your family safe. If you are concerned about symptoms or possible exposure, stay home and contact the FDOH 1-866-779-6121 or your health care provider.

Below is an outline of information that may be helpful to you regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19). It is lengthy, but we believe it is important, so please review it completely.

**1. If you know someone in your school or department is getting tested for coronavirus:**

- a. This information should be considered private and personal, unless the test is confirmed positive. A person with a confirmed positive result for COVID-19 should submit the Self-Isolation Form via the following link: <http://bit.ly/reportselfisolation>.

**2. If you know of a family member or close contact who is getting tested for coronavirus:**

- a. This information should be considered private and personal, unless the test is confirmed positive.

**3. If you are concerned someone is sick:**

- a. Unless the individual needs emergency care, no one needs to be notified.

**4. Limiting access to schools:**

- a. Effective March 16, 2020, schools shall suspend all non-essential access by visitors and school allied groups such as, but not limited to: PTA, PTSA, Boosters, Innovation Zone

Meetings, SAC, SAF, and School Board-Established Advisory Committees until further notice.

- b. The District will not enter into any new school facility rentals until further notice. Current lessees will be notified about the status of their lease.

**5. Will transportation continue providing service to and from school?**

- a. Yes. There will be no interruption to bus service to and from school.

**6. Will there still be senior activities and graduation ceremonies?**

- a. As we continue to monitor this fluid situation, decisions regarding senior activities and graduation ceremonies will be made at a later time.

**7. Will food services be available for schools that close?**

- a. Yes. There are several ways to provide food services to impacted schools and communities.

**8. Before and After School Childcare Services:**

- a. Before and after school childcare services will continue to be provided at District schools by both School Board operated programs and contracted private providers.
- b. School-based childcare camps during spring break will continue as planned.
- c. Field trips, for all aftercare childcare programs operating at District schools, are suspended until further notice.

**9. If you have questions about messaging or District procedures on the coronavirus:**

- a. Please visit the Broward County Public Schools website at [browardschools.com/coronavirus](http://browardschools.com/coronavirus).
- b. Contact the Office of Communications at 754-321-2300.
- c. Contact the Coordinated Student Health Services Department at 754-321-1771 or 754-321-1772.

**10. If you have questions regarding leave of absence or leave utilization related to coronavirus:**

- a. Contact the District's Leaves Department at 754-321-3130.

**11. If you need more cleaning supplies for your department or classroom:**

- a. Contact your Head Facilities serviceperson.

**12. If you have a confirmed, positive case of coronavirus in your school:**

- a. Contact your administrator or supervisor, who will contact the Office of School Performance and Accountability (OSPA) between 7 a.m. - 5 p.m. at 754-321-3838.

**13. If you have a confirmed, positive case of coronavirus in your District department:**

- a. Contact the Risk Management Department 24 hours at 754-321-1901.

**14. Lines of communications:**

- a. If you work in a school, your first line of communication is to your administrator.
- b. If you are not school-based, contact your supervisor.
- c. Supervisors and administrators funnel all coronavirus questions, messaging, concerns and suggestions through the Office of Communications at 754-321-2300.
- d. The Office of Communications works with the Superintendent and District leadership directing the coronavirus response planning.

**15. What to do if you have symptoms:**

- a. If you are concerned about your symptoms or possible exposure, stay home and contact your health care provider.
- b. Submit the Self-Isolation Form via the following link:  
<http://bit.ly/reportselfisolation>.

**16. What to do if you suspect a student or staff member is sick:**

- a. Students and staff can have symptoms of being ill despite not being ill or contagious. There are many reasons a person could have a cough or a runny nose, including seasonal flu or allergies. It is important not to assume any type of illness.
- b. It is always appropriate to discreetly ask someone if they are okay or if they need a tissue. It is not appropriate to call them out in front of others or ask them to leave the classroom or workplace.
- c. There is also no need to "report" a potentially sick student or staff member.

**17. After school events:**

- a. Effective Monday, March 16, 2020, all after school activities for students are suspended until further notice. This includes field trips, athletic events and practices, academic competitions, and all club and extracurricular activities.

**18. Cleaning plan:**

- a. The District's Maintenance Department has cleaning practices and has developed an action plan that takes students and staff into consideration. Facilities servicepersons have been instructed to make cleaning high frequency contact areas a priority.

**19. What hygiene practices should we reinforce with students and staff?**

- a. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- b. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- c. Stay at home, away from others, if you are sick.
- d. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- e. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.

## 20. Confidentiality:

- a. Although you may hear people discuss/speculate about the names of the students self-isolated due to the coronavirus, it is important to understand that the only people in the District to whom names are released (by the authority of the Florida Department of Health-Broward) are the parents of the students, District nurses, principals and nurses at the affected school, the Superintendent, and our communications officer. If you have heard names being shared, please do not repeat them to anyone either verbally or through email.

## 21. What to do if media calls:

- a. If the media calls a District employee to comment or give any sort of information about the coronavirus, please direct them to the Office of Communications at 754-321-2300.

## 22. Avoid profiling:

- a. It is important to remember that while this virus was first identified in China, it is not linked to any ethnic or racial group. There have been reports of bias, hate speech and isolating behavior toward Asian Americans from those who are afraid of catching the virus. If you see such behavior, speak up and address the issues of hate and bias.

## 23. Remain calm:

- a. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of remaining calm, prepared and informed. It is our duty to stay above the panic and set the tone and example for our students and families. Remember, the CDC states for most of the American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk from coronavirus is considered to be low.

The same steps you take to reduce the spread of flu or other respiratory illnesses are key tools for reducing the spread of the virus. The FDOH is tracking the coronavirus carefully and making plans should it present a more significant threat to the health of our community.

## 24. What you can do:

- a. Immediately reduce clutter to minimize dust and other particle collection areas. It makes it easier for our custodial staff to clean.
- b. Take home non-washable fabric materials such as stuffed animals, seat covers, etc.
- c. Thank our custodians for all they have done.
- d. Keep calm and keep about the business of the District.
- e. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- f. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- g. Stay at home away from others if you are sick.
- h. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

- i. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.

**25. What if a student/staff requests to wear face masks at school?**

- a. Face masks are not allowed in school. Furthermore, the CDC has noted that face masks do not prevent contracting the disease.

**26. What should schools and departments do as preventive actions at their location?**

- a. Provide adequate supplies of soap and paper towels in dispensers in bathrooms and the areas for handwashing for student, staff and visitors.
- b. Provide adequate supply of hand sanitizers.
- c. Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects such as doorknobs, desktops and equipment (i.e., computers, laptops) with District approved germicidal cleaner.
- d. Reinforce to staff, students and visitors to wash hands often with proper handwashing techniques and/or use hand sanitizers.
- e. Display posters throughout the school and department on proper handwashing and covering your cough.
- f. Provide parents with the "Parent Guide to the coronavirus (2019)" and post information on schools websites from the CDC.
- g. Provide information in staff meetings, PTA and other community venues.

**27. Are there any restrictions on field trips and student travel?**

- a. All international field trips have been suspended until further notice.
- b. All approved out-of-state field trips leaving after Thursday, March 12, 2020, have been suspended.
- c. Effective Monday, March 16, 2020, all field trips and student travel are suspended until further notice. This includes athletic events and practices, academic competitions, and all club and extracurricular activities.
- d. All students and employees traveling voluntarily to a Level 3 Travel Health Notice area, as identified by the CDC, must self-report and self-isolate for 14 days and submit the Self-Isolation Form via the following link: <http://bit.ly/reportselfisolation>.

**28. Are there any restrictions on staff business travel?**

- a. All staff business travel out of the county has been suspended until further notice.
- b. All students and employees traveling voluntarily to a Level 3 Travel Health Notice area, as identified by the CDC, must self-report and self-isolate for 14 days and submit the Self-Isolation Form via the following link: <http://bit.ly/reportselfisolation>.

**29. Will Broward District Schools close due to COVID-19?**

- a. At this time, schools are not scheduled to close. Guidance for school closures will be determined in collaboration with municipalities, local and state health providers and agencies, Florida Department of Health-Broward, CDC and the Superintendent.

### **30. When should children stay home?**

- a. We are advising parents/guardians to keep their child home when they are sick and report the absence to the school.
- b. Effective immediately, any student who comes to school and is presenting with flu-like symptoms will be isolated to a designated area of the school. If the school nurse, designated medical liaison, or principal confirms the student is presenting with these symptoms, the student will remain in the designated area until a parent or guardian arrives to take the student home. The student will be excluded from school and extra-curricular activities until they are medically cleared or the student no longer presents with symptoms for three (3) consecutive days.
- c. All days absent will be excused and students will be provided opportunities to continue their education from home through a variety of strategies.

### **31. Is BCPS allowing students to continue their academics from home?**

- a. For students who are self-isolating or in the event of school closure, information on learning continuity is found at: [www.browardschools.com/learningnevercloses](http://www.browardschools.com/learningnevercloses). All families should sign-in to their Launchpad using their student's number and password. Instructional materials will be accessible to all students who are homebound to ensure that learning will continue during this period.

### **32. Are school buses being cleaned?**

- a. School buses are cleaned daily.
- b. Beginning Monday March 16, 2020, Transportation staff will enhance their daily cleaning protocols.

**The District will continue to monitor the spread of the coronavirus, its impact on Broward County, particularly in Broward County Public Schools, and consider further limitations to access of schools following spring break.**

