

Q-and-A on School Closure – 03.15.2020

1. When do school districts and charter schools need to begin providing school-age care services for emergency workers?

The expectation is that all school districts and charter schools have a plan in place to begin offering school-age care services to children of healthcare and emergency workers as of Wednesday, March 18, 2020. **We encourage districts and charter schools who are closed on Monday, March 16 and Tuesday, March 17 to have a plan in place if a child comes to school.**

2. What is the cost of school-age care for children of emergency workers?

There is no cost for child care services during normal school hours for children of healthcare and emergency workers. The expectation is that districts and charter schools are providing that care through licensed staff, paraprofessionals and/or other support staff who would normally be working during the school day.

3. Will educators' children be eligible for the school-age care for children of emergency workers services during the school day?

Because school staff are so critical in providing care for emergency workers, schools and districts are strongly encouraged to allow their educators to access the same care for children of families of emergency workers.

4. What should we consider when setting up our school-age care program for children of emergency workers?

- a. Create a form that captures essential information about the child like name, grade level, medical needs, family contact information, and those authorized to pick up the child
- b. Require some form of ID to confirm the parent of the child belongs to priority category of emergency worker. Approved forms of Identification are:
 - i. Employee Work Badge
 - ii. Letter from Employer
- c. Ensure families are clear on bus transportation times and routes
- d. An example of grouping students in age/grade bands could be: PreK- grade 1, grade 2-3 and grades 4-5 (please remember to practice social distancing practices)
- e. Consider a rotation of teachers and paraprofessionals between classrooms in order to ensure everyone gets planning time
- f. Try to keep children in their home school sites

5. Will bus routes transport children of emergency workers to their school for school-age care services?

The expectation is for school districts and charter schools to create a plan that would allow for transportation of these students to and from school during their normal school hours. If students need

before- or after-school care, their family will be responsible for transporting them to and from the school. However, if transportation for these services is normally provided, that transportation should continue.

6. Are school districts and charter schools required to provide meals and school-age care for children of emergency workers during the time period of their already planned spring break?

No. If a school district or charter school's spring break falls in the upcoming two week window, you do not have to provide meals or free childcare services during that time.

7. When do school districts and charter schools need to begin providing meals to students outside of school?

The expectation is that all school districts and charter schools have a plan in place to begin offering meals as of Wednesday, March 18, 2020. If you are a district or charter that does not have school on Monday and Tuesday, you are encouraged to do everything you can to ensure your most vulnerable populations have meals available.

8. Can school districts and charter schools begin implementing distance learning prior to March 30?

The eight days between March 18 and March 27 are for planning purposes only. The expectation is that school districts and charter schools plan for an unprecedented potential break in school: possibly 8 weeks of lessons delivered equitably for every student – those with IEPs and 504 Plans, those learning English as a new language, those who are experiencing homelessness, those who need mental health supports, all while determining and communicating with students and families how you are going to take attendance and distribute school meals daily. That is why eight days have been set aside for planning.

9. What should the school district or charter school communicate to parents who are concerned about student absences on the days before the March 18 Governor closure date?

Districts and charters should exercise care and compassion when working with families who may choose to keep their children home from school on the days prior to the March 18 Governor closure date. We encourage districts and charters to reassure families of the low health risk in schools at this time, however, recognize that, even with that knowledge, there may be families who would still feel more comfortable keeping their students at home. It is important to reduce the burden of concern of these absent days on students and families as much as possible. Therefore, if a family chooses to have a child stay home during these two days, we encourage districts to consider all options to excuse the absence. This should be done on a case by case basis only in the situation when a family initiates this decision.

10. When do school districts and charter schools need to have their distance learning plan posted to their website?

The expectation is that school districts and charter schools will post their distance learning plans to their website before March 30, 2020. However, you are encouraged to keep your communities informed as you go about any relevant or timely information.

11. Will schools still continue to practice the Minnesota Department of Health's guidelines on hygiene and social distancing while students are participating in school-age care?

Yes. Hygiene and social distancing practices will be applied including washing hands, avoiding large

gatherings of 250+ and maintaining 6 feet of distance for smaller groups. For more information, visit the [MDH Coronavirus disease web page for schools and child care](#).

12. How do you define healthcare and emergency workers?

See the section below called [Definitions: School-Age Care for Children of Emergency Workers](#).

13. Will school districts and charter schools receive state funding for ADMs during the closure?

Yes. Regularly scheduled cash outflows to districts and charters will not be disrupted due to an infectious disease outbreak closure. Aid payments are not expected to change due to the loss of instructional days. General education revenue will be calculated as if students received instruction on those days.

14. Are school districts and charter schools still expected to pay support staff during the school closure?

Yes. Because districts and charters will be receiving full funding for providing distance learning, it is expected that all staff, including non-salaried, hourly staff, will earn pay and benefits as planned in the school budget and bargaining agreements.

15. Is e-learning and distance learning the same thing?

No. The Minnesota Department of Education is defining distance learning as providing students with access to appropriate educational materials and ensuring they receive daily interaction with their licensed teacher(s). E-learning is one method for delivery, but is not required as part of distance learning. Distance learning can be provided without the use of technology.

16. Can any program run in a school during the closure period?

No. Aside from working on distance learning plans and care for children of emergency workers, there can be no additional programming in schools during the closure period.

17. Can superintendents subscribe to the website to get notifications when it is updated? Yes. Sign up for update notifications [here](#).

MDE Contact Information for School Districts

- For general questions about COVID-19, please email the Minnesota Department of Health or call their hotline at 651-201-3920.
- For specific questions about online and distance learning, please contact jeff.plaman@state.mn.us
- For specific questions about school meal programs, please contact monica.herrera@state.mn.us
- For specific questions about special education, please contact robyn.widley@state.mn.us
- For specific questions about civil rights compliance, please contact marikay.litzau@state.mn.us
- For relevant guidance regarding how schools can protect civil rights during an outbreak, see the [U.S. DoE Office for Civil Rights Fact Sheet released during the 2014 Ebola outbreak](#).
- For specific questions about state assessments, please contact mde.testing@state.mn.us

Hotline for Families

Below is a hotline that has been created for families to obtain information about childcare resources and other general questions about the school closure. While many of the details around specific plans will come at the

district level, please feel free to share the hotline with your families to inquire about state level resources and questions.

The State Information Hotline at the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) will be staffed from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. to answer questions about childcare resources and general questions during the time of school closure.

Metro: 651-297-1304

Greater Minnesota: 1-800-657-3504

Definitions: School-Age Care for Children of Emergency Workers

Under the Governor's Executive Order 20-20, free school-age care for the children of emergency workers (including providers of healthcare, emergency medical services, long-term and post-acute care; law enforcement personnel; personnel providing correctional services; public health employees; firefighters and other first responders; and court personnel) was outlined. The orders directed schools to provide care to, at a minimum, district-enrolled students aged 12 and under.

In order to ensure that we are providing for the needs of our students, we are clarifying the work that falls within each of the identified emergency workers categories.

Healthcare personnel include:

- Personnel needed for direct care and critical administrative staff of the personnel needed for direct care
- Long-term facility personnel (full-time)
 - Group Homes
 - Residential Homes
 - Nursing Homes
- Post-acute Care personnel (full-time)
 - Long-term hospital
 - In-patient rehabilitation
 - Home Health
 - Skilled nurses

Emergency Medical Services personnel (full-time)

- Paramedics
- EMTs
- Immediate supervisory staff
- EMS Operators and dispatchers

Law Enforcement personnel:

- Full-time Police Officers and their supervisory staff
- Full-time Sheriffs and their supervisory staff
- Full-time State Patrol Officers and their supervisory staff
- 911 Operators and dispatchers their supervisory staff
- Full-time Investigators (at the discretion of their Agency Chief)

Firefighter personnel:

- Full-time firefighters
- Paid on call duty crew

Personnel providing Correctional services:

Minnesota Correctional Facility Staff

- Corrections officers
- Correctional Lieutenants
- Correctional Captains
- Physical plant
- Correctional facility case managers
- Correctional facility educators and educational paraprofessionals
- Wardens
- Associate wardens
- Correctional facility office assistants
- Correctional facility nurses and supervisors
- Correctional program therapists
- Correctional facility IT staff
- Correctional facility Human Resources staff
- Correctional facility financial services personnel
- Correctional facility records personnel
- Correctional facility safety officers

Centralized Correctional Operations Personnel

- Medical director
- Director of health services
- Reentry Services personnel
- Policy and legal services personnel
- Offender transportation personnel
- Centralized records personnel
- Centralized human resources personnel
- Investigators - Office of Special Investigations/Professional Accountability
- Minnesota Department of Corrections personnel assigned to Incident Management Team
- Minnesota Department of Corrections personnel assigned to Continuity of Operations team
- Minnesota Department of Corrections government and community relations personnel
- Minnesota Department of Corrections Hearings and Release Unit personnel
- Minnesota Department of Corrections Behavioral Health Unit personnel
- Minnesota Department of Corrections – Communications Unit
- Minnesota Department of Corrections – Office of Commissioner

Minnesota Correctional Supervision Services

- State Probation officers and supervisors
- State Probation agents and supervisors
- State Supervised release agents and supervisors
- State intensive supervised release agents and supervisors

- County Probation officers and supervisors
- County Probation agents and supervisors
- County Supervised release agents and supervisors
- County intensive supervised release agents and supervisors

Public Health employees:

- State and local public health employees directly supporting the response of COVID-19 and other infectious disease operations
- State and local public health officials responding to imminent public health threats
- Newborn health screeners
- State and local public health lab priority services
- County Emergency staff and managers supporting COVID-19
- Emergency Management essential personnel supporting COVID-19

Court Personnel:

- Full-time Court personnel