Anoka Hennepin Education Minnesota FAQ

Adapted From Education Minnesota FAQ

AHEM is working closely with the District to share information and keep our members updated on the decisions being made, which are changing on a daily basis. The District issued guidelines in the form of FAQs Wednesday night. This is posted on our Facebook page. Until the Governor issues new guidance, the plan is to be ready to begin delivery of distance learning to students on Monday, March 30. The following are FAQs from your union to fully explain the Governor’s executive order. If you have specific questions about your legal or contractual rights, contact your AHEM field representative, David Kundin at david.kundin@edmn.org.

1. What does the governor's Executive Order do?
The governor's Executive Order 20-02, closed all Minnesota schools districts to students for the period of March 18-27. The intent of this temporary closure is to allow school districts time to plan without students. In most cases, the emphasis has been on developing plans for distance education. During March 18-27, school districts must provide care for children of emergency workers, a category that includes health care professionals, law enforcement professionals, first responders of various types and court personnel. Additionally, districts have been asked to provide child care for “essential Tier 2” personnel, which include transportation, utility, sanitation and food workers to the extent possible. Given this, a number of workers, including school health personnel, will have to work on site during this period.

2. Does the governor’s order permit staff to work on distance learning materials at home?
Yes. MDE has issued guidance clarifying that this work may take place at work or at home. Anoka-Hennepin, however, is currently requiring educators to come to their schools on Monday, March 23 to plan and work in groups less than 10.

3. Should we be having staff meetings or conducting child care when the CDC has recommended limiting gatherings to 10 people or less?
The CDC guidance urging people to limit themselves to gatherings of 10 people or less applies to individuals in high-risk populations. Anoka Hennepin is allowing groups of 10 or less to meet, regardless of whether they are considered high risk or not. Social distancing of 6 feet is recommended.

4. Who will be providing on-site care for emergency responders, health care professionals, et al?
It is all hands on deck, and districts have latitude to decide how they are staffing child care.

5. If I have a health condition that prevents me from coming to school but I am able to work from
home, can my school district require me to use sick leave?
If you have COVID-19-like symptoms, have been in contact with someone who has symptoms or have an underlying medical condition that puts you at increased risk, but still feel able to work from home, you may request the ability to work from home instead of using your sick leave.

Neither the Executive Order nor MDE guidance prohibit working from home, but whether you are legally entitled to work remotely instead of using paid leave will depend on the following factors: 1) whether you have a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act and/or Minnesota Human Rights Act, 2) whether you are well enough to work from home, and 3) whether the work you are required to perform is capable of being performed at home, so that your request is considered a "reasonable accommodation."

At a minimum, your employer is required to engage in the interactive process with you, and schools should not have a blanket policy of prohibiting work-from-home during the closure period or afterward. If your district has such a policy or if you believe your request to work-from-home was unreasonably denied, contact your AHEM field rep, David Kundin.

6. If I cannot work, will I still be paid?
If you cannot work because you are sick or caring for someone who is sick, you should be allowed to use your sick leave for yourself or for care of others. If you are unable to work because you are caring for a child during a school closure, and no other child care was available, you will be immediately eligible for unemployment benefits, and you will not have to serve the ordinary five day "waiting week."

7. Will I need a doctor's note to show that I am sick or need to be off work?
CDC guidance to employers states as follows:

Do not require a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work, as healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.

Please contact Valerie Holthus (Valerie.holthus@edmn.org) or David Kundin immediately if the district is requiring a doctor’s note in order to allow you to remain home when you are sick with COVID-19-like symptoms.

AHEM offices are closed until further notice

All events, meetings and professional development classes will be cancelled or postponed to a later date. We will provide a detailed summary of cancellations and rescheduled events next week.
Information from the Center for Disease Control

What is coronavirus disease 2019?
Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Can I get COVID-19?
Yes. COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in parts of the world. Risk of infection from the virus that causes COVID-19 is higher for people who are close contacts of someone known to have COVID-19, for example healthcare workers, or household members. Other people at higher risk for infection are those who live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.
Learn more about places with ongoing spread at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html#geographic.
The current list of global locations with cases of COVID-19 is available on CDC's web page at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/locations-confirmed-cases.html.

How does COVID-19 spread?
The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but is now spreading from person to person. The virus 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. It also 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. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?
Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:
- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

What are severe complications from this virus?
Some patients have pneumonia in both lungs, multi-organ failure and in some cases death.

People can help protect themselves from respiratory illness with everyday preventive actions.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- 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.
If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should
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.

What should I do if I recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19?
If you have traveled from an affected area, there may be restrictions on your movements for up to 2 weeks. If you develop symptoms during that period (fever, cough, trouble breathing), seek medical advice. Call the office of your health care provider before you go, and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don't go out and postpone any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

Is there a vaccine?
There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. 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.

Is there a treatment?
There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.