

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) Preparedness Update From Hamilton County Schools

The health and safety of children is our top priority, and we are working daily with top health professionals in the field to make sure we are following recommended procedures regarding the coronavirus. The district works with the local Health Department, the Tennessee Department of Health, and the CDC to remain alert to the latest information to keep our children and staff healthy. We are fortunate that to date, we have not seen any cases of the coronavirus within our community.

The district's Leadership Team meets each day to monitor the latest coronavirus updates and plan for future scenarios and responses from the school district. Below is an update on precautionary steps we are taking and procedures we are implementing in Hamilton County Schools in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19).

## Preventative Measures

Health officials recommend everyday preventative actions to help halt the spread of respiratory diseases. The school district is reinforcing these measures at school, and we appreciate that families are helping with this at home.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you or your child is sick. A fever must be absent for 24-hours with no fever-reducing medication before returning to school.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you don't have a tissue, use your elbow and not your hands to cover the sneeze or cough.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- The custodial staff for each school will continue to clean high contact areas, including door handles, desks, handrails, and counters each school day.

## Student Attendance

Our top priority is the safety and well-being of our staff and students. Many families have expressed concern about student absences, and we will support students in the area of leniency regarding absenteeism from classes and extracurricular activities. If students miss school due to illness, their absences will be excused with a parent note.

## Employee Attendance

Normal work attendance policies remain in effect. Employees who are sick are encouraged to stay home until they are fever-free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.

## Student/Employee Travel and Field Trips

We are carefully monitoring field trips for destination and purpose. Domestic and area field trips already approved have not been canceled as of now, but, again, we are monitoring trips daily. Future international travel as a school group will not be approved at this time. Certainly, parents have the final decision regarding a child's participation in any field trip or activity with a school group.

## Re-entry of Students Traveling

Parents and guardians should inform their schools and the Health Department if anyone in their household has traveled to areas outside of the United States with **travel advisories** or travel health notices for COVID-19. Schools will work with district leadership and public health officials to determine appropriate action regarding when children in the household can return to school.

## Re-entry of Employees Traveling

Employees should inform their supervisor if anyone in their household has traveled to areas outside of the United States with travel advisories or travel health notices for COVID-19. Supervisors will work with district leadership and public health officials to determine appropriate actions regarding when the employee and/or children in the household can return to school.

### School and District Sponsored Events

Currently, there are no restrictions placed on team or student participation in athletics, regional, state, or national competitions. The district will continue to monitor and will notify families and staff if these events become restricted, postponed or canceled.

### HCS Continued Learning Plan

The Leadership Team has also put into place plans for learning to continue if school should need to be canceled or for students who need to stay home. These strategies will be invaluable in the future as we seek to expand our learning opportunities available on days we must close schools due to inclement weather.

### Resources

The district will continue to monitor the situation and adhere to the direction of our professional health partners. The district has developed a webpage, [www.hcde.org/coronavirus](http://www.hcde.org/coronavirus), that has updates from the Hamilton County Health Department, CDC, TN Department of Health as well as general information on the steps we are taking as a district.

As a reminder, school will be closed on **Monday, March 16**, as approved by the school board for teacher professional development. We will take advantage of this day to continue to address building cleaning. We appreciate your partnership!

For updates on COVID-19:

[The Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department](#)

[The CDC](#)

[Tennessee Department of Health](#)



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