



**COVID-19**  
**EMPLOYEE UPDATES & FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**  
**(Updated 3/17/2020)**

Shelby County Schools (SCS) is actively monitoring all matters related to COVID-19 and is committed to keeping staff informed. Below is a set of important updates and answers to frequently asked questions we have received from staff.

**Travel Advisory**

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is continually providing coronavirus travel advisories. This new information has led SCS to establish guidelines related to self-monitoring upon return from travel. **Please be advised that any employees passing through any Level 3 countries assume the risk of any possible exposure to COVID-19 and must notify the District ([scselfreport@scsk12.org](mailto:scselfreport@scsk12.org)) and self-quarantine at their family home in the United States for 14 days. Employees under this status must provide documentation of travel, initial self-monitoring and medical documentation to receive clearance to return.**

**Leave Time & General**

- 1. Are employees sent home due to exposure to the coronavirus (self-monitoring) entitled to paid leave?**  
Employees who are off work voluntarily or involuntarily due to the exposure to COVID-19 will be treated the same as any other employee who is off work due to a non-work-related illness or injury.
- 2. Will employees (salaried and hourly) be paid during the COVID-19 school closure period?**  
All school and District employees **scheduled** to work during Spring Break and the extended closure period will be compensated for scheduled work days. No employees will experience a loss of pay as a result of the closure.
- 3. Does the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) apply for employees or immediate family members who may contract coronavirus?**  
Employees requesting leave could conceivably be protected by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), so long as FMLA-eligibility requirements are satisfied. COVID-19 may qualify as a "serious health condition" in certain circumstances under FMLA, allowing you to take FMLA leave if either you or an immediate family member contracts the disease.
- 4. Does the District's On-the-Job Injury policy apply to individuals impacted by COVID-19?**  
Any illness or injury arising out of or in the course of employment is an industrial injury. Any contagious disease contracted at work or while traveling for work would be industrial. The District's On-the-Job Injury policy would only be implicated if travel was related to District approved business travel.
- 5. Does this closure impact contracted, non-SCS employees, such as custodial staff and bus drivers?**  
Contracted services staff are employed through a variety of external vendors. Contracted employees should refer questions to their direct employer and/or supervisor.
- 6. Are in-person PD and Praxis support sessions canceled during the school closure period?**  
Yes, all in-person sessions have been postponed. Once District operations are normalized, our Academics and HR teams will share more information on rescheduled sessions and activities.

## Discrimination

### **7. How can SCS ensure that it complies with its obligations under Title VII and state law to prohibit discrimination in light of COVID-19?**

Title VII and state law prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin and other protected classifications. To prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace, use only the guidance provided by the CDC to determine risk of COVID-19. District employees should not make determinations of risk based on race or country of origin and must be sure to maintain confidentiality of people with confirmed COVID-19. Employees are encouraged to review [this fact-sheet](#) or visit the Centers for Disease Control, Stigma and Resilience, (last accessed Mar. 11, 2020) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/related-stigma.html>.

### **8. Does the District have an obligation to prevent harassment of those suspected of being contracted by COVID-19?**

The District will take steps to prevent discrimination and harassment against individuals who are disabled or perceived as disabled because they are exhibiting symptoms that suggest an employee has contracted coronavirus. The District will work to ensure the confidentiality of all employees' medical information and leave details to prevent harassment. Employees should also be mindful of their obligations under Board Policy 4010 [Harassment of Employees \(Sexual, Racial, Ethnic, Religious\)](#). U.S. Department of Education, Letter to Education Leaders on Preventing and Addressing Potential Discrimination Associated with COVID-19, (Mar. 4, 2020), <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USED/bulletins/27f5130>.

## Safety and Health

### **9. Has the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) provided guidance on how to handle coronavirus?**

OSHA has issued a [fact sheet](#) regarding protecting workers in the case of a global health emergency. Employers should train employees on the following:

### **10. What are the best/common infection control procedures being recommended regarding the prevention and spread of the COVID-19?**

According to the US Center for Disease Control, as well as OSHA, the best procedures include the following:

- Employees should stay home if sick, especially if suffering from flu-like symptoms (fever of 100°F or higher, and cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body ache, headache, chills, unusual fatigue, diarrhea or vomiting)
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds or with a hand sanitizer (that is at least 60% alcohol-based)
- Avoid touching nose, mouth and eyes
- Cover cough and sneezes with a tissue, or upper sleeve. Dispose of tissues in no-touch trash receptacles
- Wash hands or use hand sanitizers after coughing, sneezing, or blowing nose
- Avoid close contact with coworkers and customers (within 6 feet)
- Avoid shaking hands and always wash hands after physical contact
- Keep touched common surfaces (e.g., telephones, computer equipment, copiers, etc.) clean – use disinfecting sprays, if available
- Try not to use coworker's phones, computer keyboards, etc.
- Minimize group meetings as much as possible (take advantage of web meetings, email, phone conferences)
- Ensure adequate room ventilation in meetings when you have in-person meetings
- Limit unnecessary visitors to the workplace
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle (attention to rest, diet, lots of fluids, and exercise)

**11. What steps should employees who traveled to level 3 areas follow upon returning to the United States?**

The CDC recommends that travelers returning from Level 3 countries should stay home and monitor their health during travel and for fourteen (14) days after returning to the United States.

Travelers returning from Level 2 countries should limit contact with others and monitor their health for fourteen (14) days after returning to the United States.

Employees who have traveled to Level 3 or Level 2 countries and require a period of quarantine or self-monitoring must report via [scselfreport@scsk12.org](mailto:scselfreport@scsk12.org). Documentation must be submitted electronically via this secure email.

**12. Does SCS require a doctor's note for an employee returning from a quarantine period who otherwise reports being asymptomatic?**

SCS requires a doctor's statement for all absences exceeding three (3) consecutive days and require FMLA-approved leave paperwork after ten (10) consecutive days. Employees quarantined as a result of exposure to COVID-19 are required to provide a release from their primary care physician to return to work.

**13. Is there an obligation to accommodate employees who do not want to work in public-facing positions due to risk of infection?**

Employees will not be disciplined for refusing to work if they believe that there is a risk of infection because making such a complaint may be a protected activity. If the employer can establish that there is no basis for any exposure to the disease, the employee does not have to be paid during the time period if the employee refuses to work.

**14. What precautions are being taken to protect central office employees?**

Our custodial services team is also performing deep cleaning in all central office locations. Employees should contact their direct supervisor for specific details for accommodations.

**Privacy**

**15. If a SCS employee is quarantined, what information will the District share with other employees?**

If an SCS employee is confirmed to have exposure to COVID-19, the District will work with the Shelby County Health Department to take any necessary steps to ensure that other employees are not impacted. However, the District will comply with confidentiality of impacted employees to the greatest extent possible.

**Conclusion**

The foregoing information is provided based on currently known data. The progress of this disease is constantly evolving. This information is subject to change based on evolving information. Employees are encouraged to contact their direct supervisor for any questions regarding this matter.

The Health Department has established a hotline for questions about the novel coronavirus: **(901) 692-7523**. The number is staffed during regular business hours, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. After-hours calls will be returned on the next business day.

For more information about novel coronavirus, visit: [www.shelbytnhealth.com](http://www.shelbytnhealth.com) or [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).

**Sources for Current Information**

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
  - [About Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
  - [What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)\(PDF\)](#)
  - [CDC Travel Notices](#)

- Resources for K-12 Schools and Childcare Programs
- United States Department of Education
  - Addressing Biological Hazards that may Impact Students, Staff, and Visitors
- Tennessee Department of Health