



NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS COVID-19 Information and Frequently Asked Questions - Staff

Updated: March 24, 2020

The information detailed in this document is intended to provide guidance for this period. It is important to note that this is a fluid situation and this document will be regularly updated and modified. It is expected that all employees revisit frequently for the latest updates and information. This document will be kept on the Human Capital Services webpage.

Question: Who should report for duty March 23rd through April 6th?

- ✓ Only those that have been named as essential staff should report on site to work.
- ✓ All other staff is to work remotely. Please contact your immediate supervisor for additional information on remote work.
- ✓ The buildings are not open to non-essential staff during this time.

Question: Will there be access to any school buildings from March 23rd through April 6th?

- ✓ No. All schools will be closed. Only essential staff will be permitted to be in buildings.
- ✓ PRAB will be open to essential staff only and closed to outside staff and the public.

Question: Will appointed employees be compensated during the closed period?

- ✓ Yes, appointed employees will be paid as long as they are either working on site as directed or working remotely as directed.
- ✓ Please see the Payroll Memo from Superintendent Thomas Anderson that was sent to all staff via email on March 17, 2020 for additional information.
- ✓ If you are unavailable for on-site or remote work, you must enter your absence into Frontline AESOP to use accrued paid time off.

Question: How will I receive my paycheck if I do not have direct deposit?

- ✓ As a reminder Direct Deposit is mandatory. Please complete the required direct deposit forms and submit them to HCS at mrgomes@newbedfordschool.org immediately to ensure you have no delay due to US Postal service delivery schedules.
- ✓ All live paychecks will be mailed, via regular mail, to the address on file. Please ensure your address on your check is full and accurate.
- ✓ Contact HCS via email at mrgomes@newbedfordschools.org with any corrections to your home address immediately.

Question: Who do I contact if I have a problem or question with my paycheck?

All concerns and questions regarding payroll must be submitted here: [Submit payroll questions](#)

Question: I was scheduled to take a personal, sick or vacation day between March 16th – March 20th. What happened to my time?

- ✓ Since this week is counted as a week we were not in session, much like snow days, all vacation, sick, and personal time absences were cancelled, and that time was credited back to the employee's available balance.

Question: I am on Maternity Leave or Family Medical Leave. How will the closure and the remote work period due to COVID-19 impact my leave?

- ✓ March 16th through March 20th are being treated as non-workdays. As such you will not use FMLA time for this week.
- ✓ March 23rd – April 6th are considered workdays, as we will have essential staff working on site and other staff working remotely. These dates will be counted as workdays and FMLA time would apply.
- ✓ Additional information regarding FMLA can be found here: [FMLA Information](#)
- ✓ Please email Grace Rodriguez at grodriguez@newbedfordschools.org with any questions on your specific situation.

Question: I am unable to be on site to work or work remotely as instructed. What should I do?

- ✓ Please enter your absence in Frontline AESOP if you are unable to report to work on site as instructed OR unable to work remotely as instructed.

Question: I, or someone in my home, has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or told to shelter in place due to COVID-19. What should I do?

- ✓ Please enter your absence in Frontline AESOP.
- ✓ Email Heather Emsley at hemsley@newbedfordschools.org so that we can ensure you receive all available benefits and resources.
- ✓ Additional information on DOL/COVID-19 benefits can be found by visiting: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic>

Question: How will the District provide information and important announcements?

- ✓ The District will continue to send important announcements to staff via email.
- ✓ Community announcements will be sent via email, shared on the District's Facebook page, and provided to local press outlets.

Question: How can I contact families without sharing my personal phone number?

- ✓ It is important to protect your private information, even when performing required duties such as family communication. The District is continuing to gather additional resources to ensure you have multiple options. A list of available resources can be found at the link below. Options include an ability to call families through your District extension remotely, using number block features, and using various types of programs.
- ✓ [Communication Resources](#)

Question: Should everyone be practicing social distancing?

- ✓ Yes, social distancing involves avoiding large gatherings and close contact.
- ✓ Essential staff should practice social distancing while working on site
- ✓ If you must be around people, keep 6 feet (2 meters) between you when possible.
- ✓ The Governor has limited gatherings to 10 people and under. Please carefully consider the necessity of being together. This is not a vacation in the true sense of the word. It is

an extreme measure to allow for social distancing, so the virus does not spread. Not being exposed to the virus is the best way to not get sick.

- ✓ Please visit the MA Department of Health website for more information [COVID-19 Information](#)

Question: I am feeling more anxious and stressed as a result of the recent closures. Is there support for me?

- ✓ We all have times when we worry. During these unprecedented times it is only natural that we may need someone to talk with now and then, or a referral to a reliable resource. The District provides a free Employee Assistance Program (EAP) called Outlook EAP.
- ✓ All employees and their family can access Outlook EAP for confidential consultation or support anytime, day or night. Simply access services through a secure, HIPPA compliant on-line program called [Doxy.me](#). This program is used by many hospitals and offers video conferencing in the security of one's own home environment. Clients do not need any special software. Their counselor will send them an email with a link to the on-line meeting. They can use a computer, tablet or smart phone for the meeting.
- ✓ EAP clients can continue to either email the office or call (508) 990-0777 to set up an appointment. An EAP counselor will respond in a timely manner and offer a phone or video options. Each caller will receive reassurance of the confidential nature of this contact. Any instructions will be given to the caller at the time of their call.

If you have specific employee/employer questions, please contact your supervisor or Human Capital Services. I thank all NBPS employees who have worked to continue to serve the New Bedford Public Schools community including our families and the entire city.