

3.13.2020: Update on COVID-19 and District Supports

Dear CPS Parents, Families, and Staff,

We are writing to provide the latest updates on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Chicago Public Schools (CPS). Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) officials have continued testing Vaughn students and staff who have shown symptoms of COVID-19, and thankfully, there are still no positive results. All students and school staff, including clinicians, remain self-quarantined until March 18. I know this situation is stressful, and I want to sincerely thank each of you for your patience and support of the Vaughn community during this time.

Earlier today, the district was made aware that a CPS parent contracted COVID-19 while traveling abroad. This individual did not enter any CPS schools and CDPH is not recommending closure at this time. This situation would be classified as a secondary exposure for the students and staff at the school, and it's important to note that exposure to COVID-19 does not necessarily mean transmission.

The family members who had direct contact with the diagnosed individual are now under self-quarantine for the recommended 14-day period. We wish their family well and hope for a speedy recovery.

As the situation develops, let's continue to treat everyone in the CPS family with kindness and respect. As a district, we must create an environment that empowers people to come forward and report if they're ill. Stigmatizing COVID-19 will only make us more anxious and ensure community spread.

In close consultation with CDPH, we are developing a plan of action should other members of any school community be diagnosed with COVID-19, and we will be sharing details as soon as possible. This week, we will also share a live FAQ with responses to questions that we have received in the past week from families and staff.

I also want to clarify a few points of confusion that I have been hearing and seeing on social media.

- At the direction of public health experts at CDPH, there are no plans to close any other schools at this time. Vaughn remains an isolated incident of COVID-19 at a CPS school.
- Testing for COVID-19 is only a useful option if someone presents with symptoms of the virus (e.g., fever, cough, and shortness of breath). Testing those who are not symptomatic would not provide us with reliable results and potentially, false negatives.
- CDPH Commissioner Dr. Arwady has addressed many of these concerns during her regular [updates](#) to the public.

We will continue to keep you informed as this situation develops. For the most reliable information about COVID-19, please visit:

- [Chicago Department of Public Health](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [Chicago Public Schools](#)

If you need help locating medical care, please reach out to the CPS Office of Student Health and Wellness at oshw@cps.edu or by calling the Healthy CPS Hotline 773-553-KIDS (5437). If you or your child has a fever, cough, or difficulty breathing and did **not** have direct contact with a COVID-19 positive person, please contact your primary care provider. If you are concerned that you or your child have had direct contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, please contact the CDPH at coronavirus@chicago.gov or call 312-746-4835.

Sincerely,

Janice K. Jackson, EdD
Chief Executive Officer
Chicago Public Schools