

Employee Guide for Working Remotely: All Staff

March 30, 2020

General Remote Work Expectations

Employees are expected to be working throughout the school closures, nearly all remotely, with a limited number of people who have prior permission working on site.

During this time, daily work schedules should remain largely unchanged. However, reasonable flexibility shall also be used to accommodate employees' individual needs. While working remotely, employees who are working from home are expected to:

- Remain accessible via phone and email during their daily scheduled work hours.
- Review and respond to email throughout the day, if this is an expectation of your day-to-day work in a more traditional workday.
- Provide a contact number to their supervisor where they can be reached during business hours.
- Retrieve voicemail from their SDP direct line, daily, if applicable.
 - School administrators can access their voicemail by calling their school's main telephone number, pressing "9", and then entering the mailbox extension and password when prompted.
 - Central Office employees can access their voicemail remotely by following the instructions found [HERE](#).
- Check-in via email or phone with their supervisor on a regular basis to discuss the status of their deliverables and open issues. (To the extent possible, managers should maintain one-on-one check-ins and other routine team meetings.)
- Be available for virtual meetings, as scheduled.
- Please be mindful to avoid early morning calls and calls after traditional work hours, unless it is an emergency.

Again, we realize that everyone's capacity to do work is different given their unique situations at home and therefore understand that more flexibility is necessary when working from home during this time. Simply put, this situation requires compassion, understanding, and an ability to adapt to changing needs.

For teachers, counselors, and other school-based staff specifically, there is an additional guidance document that provides more specific guidance as to what your work should look like

at this time. Guidance will continue to be updated as plans for education, instruction, or enrichment are developed by the Office of Academics.

Additionally, certain represented essential employees are required to report to a physical location in order to perform their job functions. These employees include, but are not limited to:

- Facilities Area Coordinators and Building Engineers
- Food Service Supervisors, Managers, and Workers/Assistants
- School Sergeants, Lieutenants, and Police
- Central staff essential for operations (Payroll staff, IT staff, Senior Leadership)

Other essential employees – such as principals, Talent staff, Finance staff, etc. – are expected to work from home for now, but may be called in for specific essential duties. The specific reasons and duties will depend on the situation as it evolves; explicit communication to these essential employees will be shared as the needs arise.

We know that not all employees will experience this time working remotely in the same manner. For instance, there are groups of employees who cannot work remotely such as employees whose work cannot be accessed or performed while at home. These employees may be assigned other duties to perform from home by their managers, if applicable. These employees should be available to report to work with 12 hours notice upon notification of their manager; every attempt will be made to provide more than 12 hours notice if possible.

Timekeeping Expectations

During this time of extended building closure, full-time employees do NOT have to submit their regular hours through Advantage. Their time will be entered centrally by Payroll during the closure. Employees who are required to report onsite to an SDP location will have their time submitted by their departments to Payroll.

For the first two weeks of closure (March 16th through March 27th), the District centrally coded active employees as “present” regardless of whether they were all working so as to provide flexibility to employees during the initial period of school closure. (Note: Employees who were on long-term leave, wage continuation, health sabbatical, and/or consecutive FMLA prior to March 16, 2020 remained in this status unless they went through a process to return from leave.)

As we enter an extended time of working remotely, the District will return to coding time off based on employee’s individual requests effective Monday, March 30th. This is not intended to track every hour of the work you are doing from home, as we understand that individual situations at home make it difficult to maintain a regular schedule every day. Rather, this is intended to ensure that if employees want to take off during this time and be away from work, they have a mechanism to do so. Rather than attempting to work through sickness, for example, we encourage employees to take a sick day just as they would if they were expected to be working in a physical District location.

- The District will follow our regular policies on personal, sick, and vacation time.
 - If prior to the school closures you routinely called a substitute for your position, and you wish to take sick or personal leave, you should record your absences in Aesop by contacting Kelly Educational Staffing at 855-535-5955, or by entering the absence directly at www.aesoponline.com. You can find a [stepper here](#) and [video instructions here](#). (Please note that this will not call a sub at this time, and is currently just intended to record your absence.)
 - For all other employees, to request personal, sick, or vacation leave, email your supervisor with the details of your request. A separate email to supervisors and payroll secretaries will be forthcoming to provide more details on this process.
- If you would like to apply for a leave, are in the process of applying for leave but have not yet received approval, or are in the process of returning from a leave, our Employee Health office is still receiving and processing these requests. You can email documentation to employeehealth@philasd.org or fax to 215-400-4661. We are aware that our healthcare system is overwhelmed during this time. We do not want to encourage staff to go to a doctor for a non-medical emergency, so we are also granting extensions for receiving medical documentation.
- Employees should request supervisor approval, in advance, before working any overtime hours (*this is only applicable to non-exempt employees*).

Compensation & Benefits

Compensation: During the current closure for COVID19 in the 2019-20 school year, we remain committed that all full-time and regularly-scheduled part-time staff will continue to be paid. (In this context, this definition includes 3-, 4-, and 5- hour climate staff.)

In addition to the commitment to ongoing compensation for our full- and regularly-scheduled part-time employees, we would like to share a few other updates on compensation during this time:

- Hourly employees, such as our interns, will also be supported during this time. As we value all of our employees and know that our hourly employees work irregularly, we have asked managers of hourly employees to submit the average number of hours they would have worked during a pay period to provide the best approximation of hours. Managers should contact payroll@philasd.org for further instructions on how to enter this time, if needed.
- Extra-curricular pay for services such as athletic coaches, after-school activities, and other similar programs is suspended, as these services are not being provided at this time. When these activities resume, employees who would earn this extra-curricular pay will be notified.
- Contracted teachers with our various provider organizations and long-term substitutes from Kelly Services who are already covering a long-term leave will provide academic enrichment to students virtually and therefore will be paid through their vendors. However, daily substitutes will not be deployed and therefore will not be receiving pay during this time.
- Pursuant to Board Policy 300, Employee Code of Ethics, under no circumstances shall an employee be engaging in secondary employment or non-District business during assigned work hours.

Benefits: We understand the utmost importance of the continuity of benefits at this time. Employees will see no change in their benefits. We do encourage people to utilize the [Teledoc services](#), if appropriate for non-emergencies, which have no copay and can reduce the need to go to a medical facility. For benefits-related updates, please visit [https://www.philasd.org/benefits/..](https://www.philasd.org/benefits/)

Equipment & System Access

During this time, access to technology is critical to keep the work moving. This section provides certain details about the use of technology and equipment while working remotely.

- The District expanded Google Hangouts Meet options to allow for up to 250 participants in one hangout (available through June). All SDP employees and students have access to Google Hangouts Meet. Central Office, networks, and schools are encouraged to use Google Hangouts Meet to host meetings, collaborate with teams, and stay informed of critical updates during this time. This remote technology is also beneficial so that you do not have to provide a personal number to others, if you would prefer not to during this time. (Instructions for using Google Hangouts Meet can be found [HERE](#).)
- For Central Office employees whose responsibilities require access to SDP enterprise systems (e.g., Advantage, Crystal Reports), remote access to the SDP network is required. Employees who require this should have received VPN access at this point with approval of their manager. VPN access requires the use of an SDP-issued computer. Please discuss this with your manager if you require additional access.
- Access to Central Office departmental file shares is not available outside of the District's network. Send an email to ITSecurity@philasd.org for options for retrieving files from departmental shares.
- Employees may use their personal equipment for remote working purposes. In such cases, the employee will be responsible for the maintenance and IT support for their equipment. Out-of-pocket expenses for supplies will not be reimbursed.
- If you are using personal equipment that can be used by other people in your household, make sure to log-out of applications when you're not using them to maintain confidentiality.
- For those who need additional access to the internet while working remotely, there are several options which are continuing to expand during this time.
 - One option is Xfinity WiFi hotspots which are available – including non-Xfinity Internet subscribers. For a map of Xfinity WiFi hotspots, visit www.xfinity.com/wifi. Once at a hotspot, consumers should select the “xfinitywifi” network name in the list of available hotspots and then launch a browser.
 - Other options for accessing the internet prepared by the IT Department are included [HERE](#).
 - If after reviewing these options, you still do not have the ability to access the internet, please email HelpDesk@philasd.org so that they can support in identifying your area as one in need of a hot spot.
- If you are experiencing technical issues in general while working remotely, please email HelpDesk@philasd.org.

Best Practices for Working Remotely

Communication is Key: Keep in mind that in a physical work space, colleagues can access you readily and can see when you're available, on a call, in a meeting, or at lunch. Since they can't easily look around the corner or walk to your desk, be sure to communicate your availability. Physical distance tends to lead to less communication; however, now more than ever, proactive and frequent communications are a necessity.

- Be transparent and upfront with your manager on household and family responsibilities that may distract you from completing work.
- Ask for clarification if you are unsure of an expectation or deadline for the work you typically own or are assigned.

Prioritize the Most Urgent Needs: Given that schools are closed in the short-term, priorities and outcomes will be shifting to focus on the work that matters most. When contacting your colleagues with a request or a need for their input, try to communicate the urgency of the request or when it would be ideal for you to have a response by. Otherwise, everything can seem equally and highly urgent.

Participate in Virtual Meetings Effectively: Building connection and collaborating in a new environment can be more challenging during prolonged closure. Virtual meetings can help with this. If for some reason participating via video is not possible, please communicate this challenge to your manager or the meeting organizer in advance of the meeting. [Additionally, set norms for virtual meetings](#) to minimize disruptions and increase efficiency which can include:

- Determine upfront whether your group will use cameras for group meetings.
- Check your audio and video settings beforehand to ensure they are working properly.
- Mute your microphone when you're not speaking (and remember to un-mute when you start to speak).
- Be aware of what is in the background while on a video conference. People can see more than just your face on video calls, so just be aware of what is in the frame.

Protect Sensitive and Personal Data and Information:

- All elements of the District's [Acceptable Use of Internet, Technology, and Network Resources](#) policy remain in effect.
- Please maintain confidentiality in compliance with FERPA, HIPAA, and other related Board policies and privacy laws.
- To maintain privacy you can also utilize a Google Hangout Meet dial-in number or you can create a personal Google account to obtain a Google Voice number.
- For those who do not want to share their private number, you can either enter *67 prior to calling someone else or change your settings so that your number is blocked.

Mental Health and Wellness

We cannot be our best for the students we serve if we are not taking care of ourselves. During this stressful time, we urge everyone to practice self-care, reach out to others for help when needed, and utilize the following District resources if needed:

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP): EAP is a voluntary service that provides free and confidential assessments, short-term counseling, referrals, and follow-up services to employees who may be facing issues, such as stress, grief, family problems, alcohol/substance abuse, and so forth.
 - You can reach out to our EAP provider 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via phone at 833-812-5180 or on the web at www.guidanceresources.com (Web ID: SDP)
- Headspace: As a reminder, each of you also has access to a free 1-year subscription to the [Headspace App](#) which provides an entire library of wellness activities and advice, including: meditation skills, pointers for better sleep, tips for managing anxiety, mindful eating and more. Remember to use your District email when setting up your account to access the free features.

Remember to pace yourself and take breaks when needed throughout the day – walk around the house, grab a cup of tea, call your extended friends and family! Giving yourself small breaks will make this time easier to manage as we enter into a longer time working remotely. Finally, reach out to your co-workers as needed - we are a large family at the School District of Philadelphia and should lean on each other as needed during this time.