



## **School District of Philadelphia**

# **Employee Expectations and Guidance for Advancing Education Safely in 2020-2021**

*Updated: January 27, 2021*

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## I. OVERVIEW

The School District of Philadelphia is committed to supporting the health and well-being of our employees during this unprecedented time. We know that with so much uncertainty and change during a global pandemic, it is essential to have clear and consistent communication. This document, the latest version of the document shared initially on July 15th and with updates on October 20th, provides guidance and expectations for our employees in alignment with the District's [Advancing Education Safely](#) plan and the evolving nature of this work. (Note: To more easily identify which sections have been updated, we have noted at the beginning of a section *in blue* if there are substantive changes to that section since the October version of this document. Please pay particular attention to these sections to familiarize yourself with updated expectations and guidance.)

This document provides more detailed information to District employees on the following topics:

- **Health and Safety Protocols:** All employees must follow a standard set of guidance to create a safe work environment. We detail the District's guidance for general hygiene, personal protective equipment (PPE), social distancing, ongoing health screenings, responding to a positive test of or potential exposure to COVID, and our visitor protocol.
- **Building Readiness, Ventilation, and Cleanliness:** Buildings must have the appropriate supplies, be clean, and allow for appropriate air flow. We outline preparation activities being taken in buildings in advance of transitioning to hybrid learning, updated protocols and requirements for all employees around daily cleaning, and ventilation protocols.
- **Employee Return to Buildings:** Employees have and will continue to return to in-person work in phases, in alignment with the District's overall plan, described in this section.
- **Understanding Accommodations, Remote Work Requests, and Leaves:** We provide an overview of employees' options for accommodations and leaves, including the process for staff who have a medical issue that may prevent them from returning to buildings.
- **Attendance Flexibility and Timekeeping Expectations:** It is critical that staff who are ill remain at home. To this end, we have provided additional flexibility in some of our attendance policies that are highlighted here.
- **Guidance for Working Remotely:** As an organization that has not traditionally worked remotely, this section provides general guidance and expectations for effectively working offsite while maintaining a professional and effective work environment.

- **Supports for Employees:** We recognize that our employees have faced difficulties during the pandemic that may require additional support. This section outlines how we can prioritize and support the mental health and wellness of our staff.

Both the plan to return students to buildings and this document for our employees are guided by feedback and input from a variety of stakeholders collected through surveys with staff members, parents and families, community members, town halls, and working groups comprised of various stakeholders including union partners. With stakeholder input, the plan development was then driven by a core set of principles that reflect our highest priorities including:

- **Health and safety** → The District will make every effort to safeguard the health, safety, and well-being of its students, employees, and community-at-large. Planning and decision making will be guided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Pennsylvania Department of Education and Department of Health, and Philadelphia Department of Public Health guidelines and doctors and public health experts from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.
- **Continuous high-quality instruction** → The District will deliver high-quality instruction seamlessly to all students across face-to-face and digital environments to support student growth and achievement.
- **Educational equity** → The District will provide all students with access to quality grade-level instruction and social-emotional support, with a focus on removing and ending racist practices.
- **Data-driven decision making** → The District will use data and expert analysis to inform decision making and to build trust amongst all stakeholders. Our decisions will be informed by students, employees, and school community members.
- **Flexibility** → With the uncertainty and changing landscape, the District's plan will build in flexibility so we are prepared to adjust based on the needs of stakeholders and changes necessitated by medical circumstances and public health guidance.
- **Accurate and timely communication** → The District will ensure that students, employees, and families have the information they need to be safe, and keep all stakeholders up to date with important information throughout the school year.

As with all of our plans and guidance developed in an ever-changing environment, while this document contains the best practices and procedures of the moment, we expect guidance will change. As new information becomes available that would affect this guidance, we will provide updated employee guidance to make sure we are adapting to the most up to date information about school and in-person work shared by federal, state, and local officials and health experts. We appreciate your understanding as we all work together to serve our students and families during this unprecedented time.

## II. HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The most important aspect of ensuring a safe work environment upon return to buildings is to have consistent safety protocols that are grounded in scientific research and guidance. To this end, the District has developed a set of Health and Safety Protocols in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, the Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH), and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and Department of Health. As conditions and public health guidance change, these guidelines will continue to be updated and communicated to our employees and school communities.

### **Health and Safety Protocols** *\*\*Note: This section is updated with new guidance.*

Any in-person activities, whether school-based or in central offices, must be conducted in alignment with the Health and Safety Protocols. Please review each of the following protocols closely as they contain important details about expectations for all employees to ensure a safe working environment.

- [General Health and Hygiene Protocols](#)
- [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) Protocol for Employees](#) (formerly Employee Mask Protocol)
- [Social Distancing Protocol](#)
- [Health Monitoring Protocol](#)
- [\\*Presumptive and Confirmed COVID-19 Case Protocol](#)
- [Visitor Protocol During COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

\*The District has updated this Health and Safety Protocol since releasing this guidance in October. When protocols are updated, employees will be notified by email and are expected to review and comply with the updated protocols.

### **Observe All State and City Travel Restrictions and Quarantine Orders** *\*\*Note: This section is updated with new guidance.*

Because of the recent increase in COVID-19 cases across the United States, the PDPH has issued the following general recommendations:

- Avoid all unnecessary travel.
- Do not travel if you are sick or if someone in your household is sick.
- If you must travel for an urgent matter:
  - Stay six feet apart from anyone not in your household.
  - Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer frequently.
  - Wear a mask whenever you are around others.
  - Do not travel with someone who is sick or tested positive for COVID-19 and is in the quarantine period recommended below.
- If you have had an exposure to COVID-19 you should quarantine at home for 10 days. If you receive a negative COVID-19 test after day 5, AND you continue to be asymptomatic at day 7, you may end your quarantine period at that time.

Additionally, as communicated to all staff in November, the state issued an order effective November 20, 2020 until further notice that that any individual traveling to Pennsylvania from another state or country must either produce evidence of a negative COVID-19 test taken within 72 hours prior to entering Pennsylvania or must quarantine for 10 days upon arrival in Pennsylvania. The order provides an exception for individuals who travel to and from Pennsylvania for work purposes, for medical reasons, or if they will be out of state for less than 24 hours. For instance, if you are an employee who commutes from New Jersey or Delaware for your job with the District, for example, this requirement does not apply to you when you are traveling to and from the state for work purposes. However, if you leave Pennsylvania, for instance, to go on a vacation or to go to another state for more than just the day, you must follow this order and either demonstrate a negative COVID test prior to your return or quarantine for 10 days upon return. (In general, if you do need to quarantine and cannot do work remotely, you will have to take personal time that may be in the form of personal, sick, vacation or unpaid time, depending on what you have available to you.)

### **General Requirement to Comply With All Protocols**

All School District employees have an obligation to consistently maintain practices to help keep themselves and others healthy and safe. All employees, contractors, vendors, and approved visitors will be required to follow all Health and Safety Protocols while performing work on behalf of the District and/or on a District property. In addition, we ask that all employees follow any health and safety requirements issued by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the City of Philadelphia.

All employees were provided with an Employee Acknowledgement of Health and Safety Protocols form that acknowledges receipt of the Health and Safety Protocols and their agreement to comply with these and all actions. While updated protocols are shared here with all employees, it is each individual employee's responsibility to stay informed of the District's Health and Safety Protocols, given that they may change over time to address evolving guidance from federal, state, and local officials and health experts. Any updates to Health and Safety Protocols will be sent to all employees via email and will be posted on the District's website.

### **Addressing Non-Compliance with Health Protocols** *\*\*Note: This section is updated with new guidance.*

Everyone plays a role in maintaining healthy school and office environments. If you see someone who is not following the Health and Safety Protocols, please respectfully remind them of the required protocols. If you have concerns about a colleague's willful violation of the protocols or if you feel uncomfortable addressing perceived violations directly, please share this concern with your manager. Managers will be responsible for monitoring employees' and visitors' adherence to the protocols. Repeated infractions or willful disregard for the protocols by employees can result in disciplinary action.

While most issues can and should be resolved at the school or department level, the District has also established a hotline to report any concerns about non-compliance or safety issues related to the pandemic. **Employees can reach our COVID-19 hotline at 215-400-6886 or at [COVID19compliance@philasd.org](mailto:COVID19compliance@philasd.org) or they can file a complaint online: <https://www.philasd.org/schoolsafety/pandemic-compliance-monitor>**

All reports of noncompliance will be received by the Pandemic Compliance Monitor, who will work in conjunction with leadership from District departments and offices to ensure that all policies and procedures adhere to all federal, state and local regulations and best practices such as those from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Philadelphia Department of Public Health and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

When submitting a report, please provide your name, job title, location of District building, description of the issue or concern, and your contact information. The identity of the individual submitting the non-compliance report will not be disclosed to anyone they have identified. The memo from the Office of Safety that summarizes the process for this centralized compliance reporting process can be found [here](#). (Please note that this hotline is *not* for reporting any potential positive cases of COVID-19. As a reminder, please report any potential COVID-19 cases to [coronavirusreport@philasd.org](mailto:coronavirusreport@philasd.org).)

In addition to this reporting hotline, to advance the mission of the Pandemic Compliance Monitor's office, a Pandemic Compliance Liaison will be identified for every School District of Philadelphia building when students return. The liaisons will serve the primary purpose of receiving reports of noncompliance for their locations, addressing the reported instances and reporting the resolutions, resources needed or actions taken to the Compliance Monitor's office in a timely manner. The Liaisons will receive updated District policies and federal, state and local regulations, and will serve as a primary point of contact for the Pandemic Compliance Monitor's office.

### **Training on Health Protocols**

In August, all employees received access to a mandatory, online District Health and Safety Training for COVID-19. (If you would like to view this training again for a refresher, or if you joined the organization more recently, please go to the "Training Video" section of the employees section of our Advancing Education Safely website [here](#).) This training module reflects the Health and Safety Protocol guidance included in this guidance document so that all employees have multiple means of receiving, and ultimately complying with, this critical information.

### **High-Risk Employees**

The CDC has identified [health conditions that may put a person at increased risk](#) for complications related to COVID-19. Employees returning to work should consult with their doctor if they feel that they are part of a high-risk population. If your health is considered high risk and you are concerned about risks in returning to work, please see the "Understanding Accommodations, Leaves, and Remote Work Options" section below for more information on this process.

### III. BUILDING READINESS AND CLEANLINESS

The District is requiring intensive on-going cleaning, sanitization, and ventilation protocols to occur, as well as enhanced building readiness protocols before buildings reopen for students. This section provides general information about the District's detailed preparation and cleaning approach, and emphasizes all employees' increased role in maintaining a clean working environment. A more detailed description of the cleaning and ventilation process, provided by the Office of Facilities & Maintenance, is available here: [Cleaning and Ventilation Protocols](#).

#### Building Readiness

In accordance with guidelines established by the CDC, PDE, and the PDPH, central offices and school buildings are thoroughly prepared prior to a full return of staff and students. There is a building readiness assessment available on the District website that allows staff and families to look up their individual school building.

The [District's Reopening Readiness Dashboard](#) contains information about Building Health and Safety Readiness and Building Ventilation Readiness for the District as a whole as well as for every individual school. An excerpt of the dashboard is included below. We encourage you to visit [the website](#) to view any specific building's readiness. Below is an excerpt of the checklist being used for Building Health and Safety Readiness and Ventilation Readiness for all schools.

Building Health and Safety Readiness	
Building Cleaning Complete	
Bathrooms Fully Operational and Stocked	
Water Fountain and Hydration Station Bubble Heads Closed	
Hand Sanitation Stations Installed	
Partitions Installed in School Office	
Social Distancing Measures Implemented in Classrooms	
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Confirmed	
Medical Waiting Room Designated	
Building Ventilation Readiness	
Ventilation Certification Complete	

Of course, for each of these main elements, there is much more detail and work that goes into indicating that element is complete. For instance, hand sanitizing stations will be installed in the following locations:



- entrances/exits of buildings
- entryways of cafeterias
- entryways of bathrooms
- both ends of hallways
- Health Suite
- medical waiting room (a space for potential positive cases of students, which will be identified in each school before students return)
- (*when necessary*) if a sink becomes non-operational, an additional sanitizing station in or near that bathroom

The Building Readiness checklist must be completed before students return. (Note: The Building Readiness checklist also includes preparation checklists by school that focus on staff-centered needs, teacher-centered needs, family-centered needs, and student-centered needs, with focus areas for academic instruction and social-emotional learning supports. Those elements are not included in this section but are a critical element for ensuring schools are ready to support and receive students.)

### **Ventilation Assessment and Protocols**

In recent months, the importance of quality air ventilation in our buildings has been reinforced. Following guidance of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), dilution and filtration of air are very important aspects to prevent COVID-19 from spreading. We have prioritized ventilation assessment and protocols in our hybrid return plan.

As no two buildings are alike, and all of our more than 200 school and central office buildings vary in design, complexity, and function, the specific actions and updates for ventilation will vary. To account for this, the District has completed a [ventilation assessment for every building in the School District](#). This process involves an outside expert, known as an “air balancer,” completing a ventilation analysis in every space that will be used by staff and students to determine how many people can safely gather in a given building or space based on the outside air flow. The results of this air balancer analysis will tell us the maximum number of occupants for any classroom, office, or other occupied space such as a library or health suite. (Again, the specific actions are detailed in the District’s [Cleaning and Ventilation Protocol](#).)

Window fans are being installed as other means to bring outside air into a space in lieu of a nonfunctioning mechanical ventilation system. Each fan model airflow has been measured by a certified air balancer and was used to determine maximum occupancy.

Once a building’s ventilation assessment is complete, there will be a sign posted outside of every classroom that indicates the maximum occupancy allowed in that room. In designing the classroom layout, teachers will not exceed the maximum occupancy number posted outside of their classroom at any one time.

## Cleaning Requirements

In alignment with building readiness work shared above, the District custodial staff has undertaken significant measures to clean buildings in advance of being used by students and staff, and will continue to work to make sure that buildings are clean and healthy places for students and staff.

Over the summer and throughout the fall, broad based cleaning was performed which included deep cleaning and disinfecting of every accessible surface in the building by custodial staff. The week prior to re-opening a building to students, Building Engineers will conduct inspections of deep cleaning and disinfecting tasks, along with the Building Readiness checklist. Custodial staff will then utilize antiviral/disinfecting supplies to complete additional disinfection timed with re-entry to buildings, and will use on-going remote days every week to continue these procedures when buildings open.

In addition to the work necessary to prepare buildings for the return of employees, ongoing cleaning and care will be essential to maintaining a healthy environment for staff and eventually students and families. The District is also implementing increased cleaning standards. Custodial staff members will be executing the following actions:

- Increased disinfection of high touch surfaces in all buildings shall occur throughout the day, including desks, doors/knobs, light switches, handrails, water fountains, bathroom fixtures, tables, chairs, etc. Custodial crews will use an EPA-registered cleaning agent, allow proper dwell time, and wipe clean as appropriate.
- Mopping all floor surfaces using EPA-registered general floor cleaning products.
- Supplying antiviral disinfectant for the cleaning of tables and desks following breakfast and lunch periods.
- At the end of each operational day, after students and other staff have left the building, spraying with EPA-registered disinfectant in all classrooms, bathrooms, office spaces, hallways, elevators (if applicable), foyers, and vestibules.

While the primary responsibility for all preparatory cleaning and daily cleaning will be handled by District custodial staff, all employees will play a part in cleaning high touch areas. For example, all employees in District buildings will be expected to do the following:

- Disinfect high touch points in and around their work/personal space at least every four hours and prior to leaving their space at the end of each day. (High touch points are defined as areas in the employee's work space that are frequently touched. These items include, but are not limited to: desk, worktop surface, computer, including keyboard and mouse, telephone and chair arms.)
  - High touch points should be wiped down using an EPA-registered disinfectant/antiviral wipe or towel and EPA-registered disinfectant/antiviral cleaning agent supplied by the District.
  - EPA-registered cleaning wipes or towels and an EPA-registered cleaning agent will be supplied for employees and staff to conduct high touch cleaning.

- Clear and declutter work area upon initial return including (but not limited to): removing and recycling old documents, clearing areas of excess items not necessary for daily work, and keeping floor areas clear of items that would impede sweeping and vacuuming.
- Clear work surfaces of paper and other materials before leaving every day, to allow for additional cleaning by maintenance staff, if needed.
- Employees who rotate to more than one location during the day should disinfect their workspace at the end of their time using each area.

## IV. EMPLOYEE RETURN TO BUILDINGS

As we proceed with the 2020-21 school year, the District has been inviting employees to return to buildings in tiered phases. This section outlines the process for employees to return to in-person work, aligned with Health and Safety protocols and with an ongoing focus on limiting the risk of exposure to COVID-19 as much as possible.

When the pandemic began, only employees designated as essential and whose work required them to be on District property were permitted entrance to buildings. Moving into subsequent phases, the District brought back certain employees critical to the preparations for the school year and for day-to-day operations of the District. As the District moves toward a larger return to in-person activity, we continue to invite additional employees to return.

### **Return of Staff to Schools for Hybrid Model** *\*\*Note: This section is updated with new guidance.*

School administrators, facilities staff, and student climate staff are all currently reporting to buildings, with other staff on site voluntarily if they prefer that work arrangement. Once a building has been confirmed to be ready for a return of additional staff, all staff are welcome to return to buildings. As the previous announcements of hybrid returns were delayed, the District will issue separate communications regarding a revised timeline for students to return for on-site instruction as plans are updated.

We recognize that as conditions change, sometimes quickly, the District may require all staff to resume working remotely or change the phase-in timing for students and staff. The District will issue updated communications if that occurs to ensure employees understand their work duties and responsibilities while working remotely.

### **Central Office Staggered Work Shifts**

Every department lead at 440 has created updated in-person and remote work schedules for their teams based on the duties and responsibilities of the department and the guidance from PDPH about working onsite. Some departments have returned in larger numbers already to provide on-site support and meet with employees for pre-scheduled appointments. Other departments remain largely remote as their work is not required to be on site. The ongoing focus is to ensure that 440 operates in support of schools -- this may mean that some departments will have a larger return of staff at this time, while others can remain remote for the time being. To accommodate social distancing, managers can create staggered work shifts for those staff who are returning on site. For any staff who are uncertain about the expectation of working on site or remotely, please connect directly with your supervisor.

## V. UNDERSTANDING ACCOMMODATIONS, REMOTE WORK OPTIONS, AND LEAVES

We know that the decision to work in buildings right now is a sensitive personal decision for many of our employees. Health considerations and family needs are legitimate concerns as we move toward a new normal during this challenging time. We also know that our work exists to serve the students and families of Philadelphia who are returning to buildings for in-person instruction. We move forward with an aim to fulfill our mission to educate Philadelphia children, while providing flexibility to our employees in ways that do not impact the important services we provide or put staff safety at risk.

For employees who have specific concerns about returning and want to understand their options, this section details options available to you. Once you review this guidance, we encourage you to reach out to your manager to discuss your concerns and your potential plans so that they are aware of your needs and can plan accordingly.

### **Inquiring about Accommodations or Work Modifications** *\*\*Note: This section is updated with new guidance.*

The current accommodations request is intended to make it straightforward to submit an inquiry prior to returning to work. If you have a pre-existing disability, fall into a category identified by the CDC that places you at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 (medically vulnerable or older adults), or are in a category that requires you to take extra precautions during COVID-19 (for example: pregnancy), you may qualify for an accommodation or ability to work remotely. To inquire about an accommodation or a remote work request, please submit an inquiry through [this form](#). Any questions regarding this process should be directed to [accommodations@philasd.org](mailto:accommodations@philasd.org).

If you are currently caring for or living with a vulnerable family member, you do not qualify for an accommodation or remote work request. However, there may be leave options available to you, depending on your circumstance. (Please note that the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act leave expired on December 31, 2020.) Please use [this form](#) to inquire about leave options, or reach out to the Office of Employee Health Services ([employeehealth@philasd.org](mailto:employeehealth@philasd.org)) to discuss your leave options.

More details about accommodations, remote work, leaves, and other related topics is included below.

### **Options for Accommodations**

Employees who feel they cannot report to a physical location due to their own medical concerns or who may need to work under modified in-person conditions may be eligible for an accommodation under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). Employees with underlying medical conditions or who are medically vulnerable that puts them at a higher risk for severe illness as a result of COVID-19 can also apply for an accommodation. Once again, you can submit an inquiry through [this form](#). Employees will be required to submit an accommodation request and medical documentation supporting their request for

accommodation. A thorough review of an employee's request and medical documentation will be conducted to determine if the employee is eligible for accommodation under the ADA.

### **Remote Work Inquiries**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified certain groups of individuals who may be at increased risk for severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19; these groups may not qualify for an accommodation under ADA because they do not have a disability. However, employees who do not have a qualifying medical condition under the ADA but who are members of a vulnerable population (i.e., older individuals and individuals who are pregnant), and who may be able to continue working under certain conditions, may be eligible for a work modification. Employees will be required to submit a request for a work modification and may be asked to provide medical documentation supporting their requests.

Not every position is eligible for a modification of remote assignment. Possible modifications may include modifying or staggering work schedules or assignments, providing additional personal protective equipment (PPE) like a face shield, masks or gloves, installing plexiglass or other barriers, receiving relief from certain duties or temporary transfers to a different assignment, position or location. As shared above, you can submit an inquiry about this through this form [here](#).

Approved work modifications may be revisited at a later time, as the limitations caused by COVID-19 and the District's plans to provide in-person instruction are subject to change. Should there be a need to review a granted work modification, employees will be contacted and a meeting will be scheduled for that purpose. Employees will also be able to request a continuation, modification, or further review of any granted work modification.

### **Time for Quarantine** *\*\*Note: This section is updated with new guidance.*

From April 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020, employees had access to a special leave code that was authorized by the federal government, called the Families First Coronavirus Act (FFCRA) leave. This leave expired on December 31, 2020. However, we want to ensure that employees continue to have access to leave time if they are directed to quarantine in certain circumstances. Therefore, the District has created a temporary leave, called Directed Quarantine Leave, that is effective from January 2021 through June 14, 2021. (Note: If the federal government issues new regulations related to quarantine leave, those federal regulations will supersede this leave code.)

Directed Quarantine Leave would provide up to ten (10) days of paid leave to employees who have been directed by the District through PDPH to quarantine due to their possible exposure to COVID-19 while at a School District worksite or conducting School District business OR because they receive a positive test that requires them to self-isolate. Use of this leave would be for employees who cannot work from home and have been authorized by Employee Health Services pending confirmation with medical documentation. (Note: Employees that received pay for absences under the FFCRA before Dec. 31, 2020 may use Directed Quarantine Leave only up to their balance remaining under FFCRA, capped at 10 days.)

Please note that employees required to quarantine for other reasons, such as an employee who travels out of state and requires a quarantine based on the current state order, would need to use other available leave, including sick leave, personal leave and vacation, as Directed Quarantine Leave would not apply. If an employee is unable to work from home and unable to return to work after ten (10) days, they would be required to use other available leave, including sick leave, personal leave and vacation.

If there is additional time needed based on the need to self-isolate based on having a positive COVID diagnosis, employees should contact Employee Health Services at [employeehealth@philasd.org](mailto:employeehealth@philasd.org) for an explanation of leave time that may apply to you. (If you can work from home while quarantined, you will need to discuss this with your manager to confirm that it is feasible and appropriate for you to do so.) . Medical documentation may be required to support a request for leave.

You must submit your long-term leave request [using this form](#). In general, an employee can utilize any and all available leave time at their disposal in this scenario. Available leave for employees who are subject to a quarantine or quarantined by a medical professional may include:

- FMLA leave
- Sick leave
- Wage-continuation
- Illness in family leave
- Medical sabbatical
- Vacation
- Personal leave

Available leave for employees who must care for another individual subject to a quarantine or quarantined by a medical professional may also include:

- FMLA
- Illness in family leave
- Medical sabbatical
- Vacation
- Personal leave

#### **Leaves for Child Care** *\*\*Note: This section is updated with new guidance.*

We recognize that childcare needs may present difficulty for certain employees. Employees should first work with their supervisor to determine if there is a solution that can be found with adapting their work schedule. If an adjusted schedule is not feasible, there are limited options that may be available to employees who can seek approval to use vacation time that they have available in their leave bank.

#### **Do you believe that you may have contracted COVID-19 while working for the District?**

Injuries that occur while working for the District may be covered under Workers' Compensation Law. If you believe that you contracted COVID-19 while performing your work for the District, contact [Risk Management](#).

## VI. ATTENDANCE FLEXIBILITY AND TIMEKEEPING EXPECTATIONS

First and foremost, *we do not want employees to report to work who are sick*. If you are not well, please stay home, notify your immediate supervisor, and take a sick day.

### **Increased Flexibility in Attendance Policies** *\*\*Note: This section is updated with new guidance.*

We understand that the current situation calls for more flexibility in general around our attendance policies to meet the needs of our employees. To this end, we are temporarily expanding our attendance policies in two areas:

#### **Employees will have to provide medical documentation after *five* (not three) days of sick leave.**

- In our current policy, we require medical documentation after the third consecutive sick day. Under this new temporary policy, employees will have more time to provide medical documentation after the fifth consecutive sick day.
- Please note that there are different rules for medical documentation specific to COVID-19. The Office of Employee Health Services will provide more information to those individuals who report a positive COVID test.
- Please also note that this change in policy is not intended to delay medical care for any employee who needs it -- if you feel you need medical advice or assistance, please reach out to your health care provider as soon as possible!
- This temporary policy began on August 1, 2020 and will extend through June 14, 2021. (Note: This temporary flexibility was originally set to expire on December 31, 2020 but we have extended this through the end of the school year.)

#### **Employees can use up to 10 sick days from their existing sick bank for illness-in-family reasons.**

- In our current policy, if you must stay home to take care of a sick child or family member, you cannot use a sick day and instead must take an "illness in family" day which is paid at 50%. Under this new temporary policy, an employee can stay home to take care of a sick child or family member and use a sick day instead, thus receiving 100% pay for that day off (if there is sick time available in their bank).
- Please note that this does not increase the total number of sick days that anyone will receive; rather, it will allow employees to be paid at their full daily rate when they must stay home to take care of a sick family member.
- Additionally, we are also extending the timeline for medical documentation for this leave. While "illness in family" typically requires medical documentation after three (3) consecutive days, under this temporary policy, a medical note will be required after five (5) continuous days of sick days taken for this purpose.
- This temporary policy began on August 1, 2020 and will extend through June 14, 2021. (Note: This temporary flexibility was originally set to expire on December 31, 2020 but we have extended this through the end of the school year.)



We will not be suspending our discipline policy as related to attendance. However, as always, the discipline policy related to attendance can take into account someone's personal situation and is intended to take into account abuse or misuse of sick time, patterns of absences (e.g., calling out sick every Friday), and chronic attendance problems. If someone is absent because they were diagnosed with COVID-19 and they are required to stay home, these days should not be used as an occurrence in a discipline process.

### **Work Hours**

With the sudden building closure in the spring, employees' work schedules and timekeeping procedures were relaxed significantly due to the need for greatly increased flexibility and the ripple effects of a stay-at-home order. As employees return to physical buildings throughout the 2020-21 school year, and as we developed more robust procedures for remote work, all employees are expected to work their standard work schedule as established with their manager and, in certain circumstances, as dictated by various collective bargaining agreements. Of course, as with many of our plans these days, updates to work schedules and expectations may be required if there is a dramatic change due to the pandemic. Any updates to this expectation will be sent out to all employees.

### **Timekeeping Process**

By the beginning of November, we replaced our paper-based timekeeping system with a digital system -- Kronos. Kronos includes using time clocks for those reporting to a District location (for which employees will need to have their badge) and an online application for those working remotely. This system will allow employees to clock in and clock out more efficiently and effectively. Training materials and information are available on the District website [HERE](#).

Secretaries will continue to input time in Advantage even with these timekeeping systems for this school year. Supplemental Pay, Extra Curricular Pay, and Overtime Pay will also continue to be collected in the Google documents and existing systems that the District has been using and will not yet be affected by the implementation of Kronos.

School-based employees should continue to use Aesop to record their leave time requests in addition to communicating requests directly to their supervisor using the SEH-86 form. Central office employees should continue to communicate their leave time requests to their direct supervisor and office payroll administrator via email.

## VII. GUIDANCE ON WORKING REMOTELY

Prior to the pandemic, very few employees were allowed to work off-site. This unique circumstance has presented an opportunity for the District to explore the advantages for some of our employees to continue to work remotely. This section provides guidance for our employees who continue to work remotely.

### Remote Work Schedule

Employees are expected to follow their standard work hours agreed to with their manager (which may be staggered or different during this time), even when working remotely.

Employees who are off-site must still adhere to their typical job responsibilities and responsiveness requirements, remain accessible during the workday, and attend meetings/functions while working remotely. Any appointments or extended time away from job duties while working remotely or any changes to standard hours must be explicitly approved by the manager in advance, just as would be the case if an employee were working on-site.

### General Expectations for Remote Work Mirror Expectations for On-Site Work

- Remain accessible via phone and email during the daily scheduled work hours, just as you would if in your on-site work location.
- 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 your supervisor where you can be reached during business hours and be accessible throughout the workday.
- Check-in via email or phone with your supervisor on a regular basis to discuss the status of your deliverables and open issues.
- Managers should maintain one-on-one check-ins and other routine team meetings.
- Be available for meetings, as scheduled.
- Be mindful to avoid early morning calls and calls after traditional work hours, unless it is an emergency. If you are working remotely outside of the region, and in a different time zone, your work hours will nonetheless need to align with work hours set by your manager.
- Ensure that all sensitive and personal data is protected by maintaining confidentiality in compliance with FERPA, HIPAA, Board policies, privacy and other confidentiality laws and rules, and the District's [Acceptable Use of Internet, Technology, and Network Resources](#) policy.

### Guidance for Remote Work

As we have all learned recently, working from home can feel very different from working at our standard work location -- some things are easier, and some things take more time when you don't have access to all resources typically available at your office. Remote work should be guided by a few key strategies:

Create Routines that Work for You. Working remotely creates a need to clearly define your workspace and your routines. By creating a morning routine—whether that's allotting time for

coffee, a morning walk, or a quick call to your family member—this segmented time helps with establishing boundaries between work and non-work and creates a more productive work time.

Communicate Often. Physical distance tends to lead to less communication; however, now more than ever, proactive and frequent communications are a necessity. Whether it is about the status of a project that you are working on, adapting a classroom based practice to a digital interface, or what your availability is, communicating regularly with your team is critical. It is especially important to determine with your team how everyone will know when individuals are available for others.

Participate in Remote Work Effectively. Due to social distancing, even when some staff return to buildings, large group meetings will still need to be virtual. For effective meetings and remote instruction:

- 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 be aware of what is in the frame and ensure what is shown is appropriate work for work. (Several of the video conference tools do have an option to blur your background, if that is an option for those with any potential concerns in this area as well.)
- Participate from meetings or instructional settings remotely in a professional space set aside for work, just as you would if you were on site. This means that you should not be leading a meeting from a doctor's office or joining a common planning time session while driving, if possible.
- Utilize your camera appropriately for the work at hand. For example, teachers should have their camera on during instruction so that students can make a connection with their teacher. For central office staff, please set expectations about camera use with your team so that you can effectively engage with each other "face to face" as much as possible.

Foster Relationships. Just because you are distant doesn't mean your relationships have to be distant. Finding different ways to stay connected with colleagues whom you don't physically interact with everyday is important -- whether that is a "Zoom" trivia game with your colleagues or regularly scheduled one-on-one calls with someone you usually catch up with at lunch.

In addition to these strategies, you have probably all learned new ways to work effectively while remote over the past few months; necessity does breed invention. Keep doing what works for you in a remote environment to remain productive but ensure that your schedule and your strategies do allow for time away from "work" in your home. Finding the right balance to ensure you don't burn out is important.

**Reimbursement for Purchases Related to Remote Work**

In general, employees are largely responsible for costs associated with remote office set up and use. For example, the District will not provide equipment explicitly for or reimburse costs for home internet or cellular service. Specific exceptions for materials required for remote work required during the pandemic should be discussed first with your supervisor prior to purchasing. These materials should be purchased through your school or office's normal purchasing procedure, with materials delivered to the school or central office location. Employees can make arrangements with their principal or manager to pick up ordered materials. No equipment should be purchased for use at home without the approval of a Chief.

Specifically for PFT members, as outlined by the [Office of Accounts Payable](#), the School District of Philadelphia provides an annual allotment of \$100 to teachers and special administrative staff for the purchase of learning supplies and materials needed for the school year. Due to the pandemic, the allowable use of purchases was expanded this school year to include supplies that will assist virtual learning, with the exclusion of pre-paid phone cards, home internet, or cellular service. Employees are required to provide receipts indicating the use of the allotment.

## VIII. SUPPORTS FOR EMPLOYEES

Much of the work since the pandemic began has required us to learn new ways of doing our jobs. Ongoing professional development opportunities have been created and are offered by offices on academic, student support, technology, and management. Those opportunities are not described in detail here, as they are updated continuously by the various departments. However, support for employees can and should go beyond professional development offerings. We know that individuals have faced innumerable difficulties in the past few months, confronting issues with food insecurity, trauma, post-traumatic stress, illness, loss of loved ones, and more. It is essential that our employees feel supported and have access to various resources to address their mental health needs. Simply put, we cannot be our best for the students we serve if we are not taking care of ourselves.

### **A New Emphasis on Healing Together**

Wellness also goes beyond specific programs and lives in the day-to-day interactions with staff and students, where we can all find healing and purpose. We launched a [Healing Together](#) initiative that is designed to address the needs of our students, staff, and families in the wake of sustained trauma in collaboration with trusted local partners and national experts. Staff can access professional development on integrating mindfulness into their daily lives, and on using mindfulness practices with students.

In addition, all staff have had access to voluntary, virtual support sessions facilitated by the Center for Supportive School which was extended to central office staff as well this fall. These sessions will be safe spaces where staff can give and receive support around the traumatic events of the past months and share concerns they may have about the coming year. This service is being provided for staff in acknowledgment of the hardships many have faced and the anxieties many may be living with now. Additional mental health wellness events are scheduled throughout the year and communicated directly to employees.

### **Accessing Employee Benefits**

The District also offers mental health wellness measures through our Office of Benefits, including:

- *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, and alcohol/substance abuse. Employees can reach out to our EAP provider 24 hours a day, seven days a week via phone at 833-812-5180 or on the web at [www.guidanceresources.com](http://www.guidanceresources.com) (Web ID: SDP)
- *Headspace*: Every employee also has access to a free one-year subscription (when using our District email) to the Headspace App which provides an entire library of wellness activities and advice, including meditation skills and tips for better sleep, managing anxiety, mindful eating, and more.

More generally, our employees should feel that their benefits are working for them in many helpful ways during this time period, whether using Tele-medicine or accessing qualified healthcare providers. Please contact the [Office of Benefits](#) for any specific questions regarding how to leverage your existing benefits.