Department of Education
Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

March 22, 2020

Dear Families,

Tomorrow, we will all come together to take the first steps of a huge new educational journey as New York City brings remote learning to our 1.1 million students.

While none of us could have predicted even a few weeks ago that we would launch this dramatic new transition in education, I could not be prouder of the way our educators have come together to ready themselves to teach your children from their own homes. And I could not be more grateful to all of you for your faith in our educators, and all of the hardworking staff at DOE.

This will not be perfect. Nothing can ever replace a talented teacher in a classroom. We know the challenges and inequities our students face. But over the past week I have seen DOE's 150,000 staff rise to this challenge in astounding ways. Your faith in them is deserved and earned.

Things have moved very quickly since Mayor de Blasio and I made the very difficult decision one week ago that school buildings would close for student instruction until at least April 20. Educators citywide created a remote curriculum in days. Every school has been equipped with an online platform. Learning resources, including those for special education and multilingual learners, have been developed and posted on our website—and there is so much more to come.

All the relevant information you need about engaging in remote learning is on our website at schools.nyc.gov—please visit it frequently for updates. And please check in with your teachers and principals if you have questions: just as they were before last week, they will continue to be your guide to instruction and (virtual) engagement during these unprecedented times. I will share a few key pieces of information here to keep in mind for this week:

- Remote Learning: Each school has its own online platform, with many schools using Google Classroom. Educators have contacted school communities to let you know what remote learning tool your child's school will be using.
    - You can find instructions on DOE student accounts and getting started in Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams at schools.nyc.gov/learnathome.
    - If you are having additional problems connecting, contact your school directly via email. Our Find a School tool can help you find contact info for your school as well, if you do not already have it: schools.nyc.gov/find-a-school.
- Electronic Devices: If your child needs an internet-connected device to participate in remote learning, and you have not yet filled out a device request form, please visit coronavirus.schools.nyc/RemoteLearningDevices to request a device on loan from DOE.

Department of Education
Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

- Many of you have already received a device on loan from your school. If you have not and you still require a device, please fill out the survey. Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs): If your student is recommended for integrated co-teaching, special class, or special education teacher support services, your school will make every effort to arrange for them to continue to receive instruction from the same special education teachers and classroom paraprofessionals that usually teach them. Someone from your school will contact you to discuss how instruction will be delivered.

    - Your child's IEP meetings will still take place; IEP meetings will be conducted by phone. To make a referral for initial evaluation or reevaluation, you can email your principal or specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov, or call 311.

    - For more on remote learning for students with IEPs, please visit schools.nyc.gov/learnathome.

- Free Meals: We will continue to offer free meals in the weeks ahead at more than 400 sites across the city. Food hubs will operate Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. through 1:30 p.m., and any student of any age can get 3 meals daily. Visit schools.nyc.gov/freemeals to find a site near you.

- Regional Enrichment Centers: On Monday, March 23, the City will open Regional Enrichment Centers (RECs) for the children of front-line workers in the fight against COVID-19—including first responders and healthcare workers. If you believe your child may be eligible to attend a REC, please visit schools.nyc.gov/recs.

- Enrollment and Placement Support**:** Family Welcome Center staff are available by email, and are prepared to assist with enrollment and placement of new admissions, questions around admissions, information about offers, and waitlists. They do not handle REC enrollment.

    - Please be aware FWCs are processing a high volume of questions at this time in connection to the recent release of high school admissions offer letters. We ask for your patience, and are aiming to respond to all requests within 48 hours. Here's how to receive direct support on these topics:

- Bronx: bronxfwc@schools.nyc.gov
- Brooklyn: brooklynfwc@schools.nyc.gov
- Manhattan: manhattanfwc@schools.nyc.gov
- Queens: queensfwc@schools.nyc.gov
- Staten Island: statenislandfwc@schools.nyc.gov

Parents can also call 311 and say "Schools" to be routed to someone who can help with school-related questions.

Department of Education
Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

If you need help with a problem that cannot be resolved at the school level or wish to report a complaint, please reach out to your district superintendent's office. Contact information for your district support team can be found here: schools.nyc.gov/about-us/leadership/district-leadership. If you do not know the district in which your child's school is located, please use the Find A School tool: schools.nyc.gov/find-a-school.

There will surely be bumps in the road as we all adjust to this new reality, and I want to thank you for the patience that will be demanded of you as we undertake this transformation together.

In just a few hours, we will all take a great leap together into uncharted territory. We will be successful if we continue to work together as a community of families, educators, and staff. We all share two key goals: a high-quality education for every single one of our 1.1 million students, and protecting health and safety of everyone in our school communities.

That means that public education in New York City is going to look tremendously different for the foreseeable future. But together, we will chart this path forward, and I have no doubt that we will eventually look back and say this was our finest hour: when we confronted this great challenge and overcame it, in unity, with shared strength and commitment.

New York City has the greatest students and staff in the world, and nothing will ever change that—today, tomorrow, or ever. I am excited to be on this journey with you. Together, I am confident we will learn and grow with boundless potential.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Carranza
Chancellor
New York City Department of Education

Department of Education
Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

March 16, 2020

Dear Families,

All of us are living through an unprecedented time as we work to keep our communities safe and healthy in the face of the coronavirus. New Yorkers are joining millions in cities, states, and nations across the world in confronting decisions that we've never had to face—and maybe never could have imagined having to.

Here in New York, Mayor de Blasio and I have been clear that any changes to our school system as we know it would be an extreme measure—a last resort. We've been monitoring the outbreak in New York City day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute. This weekend, it became clear that continuing public education in our school buildings was no longer sustainable for the time being.

On Sunday, we announced that for the next three and a half weeks, we are moving to a remote learning model, with a projected reopening of school buildings the week of April 20, 2020. I know this may feel abrupt, and has the potential to cause disruption in your lives. We are committed to consistent and clear communication with you throughout this time period, and a clear understanding of what will happen.

Our announcement today means that Monday, March 16, school buildings are closed and students will be out of session. However, students and families can pick up medication or receive any standard medical services from Tuesday through Thursday, during regular school hours; school nurses and school based health center staff will be on site. During that time, teachers will also be expected to report to their buildings and receive full-day professional development on remote learning.

Later in the week, students will begin picking up materials, including technology to participate in remote learning when needed. Additional guidance on all of this will be shared with you in the next couple of days. All throughout this week, grab-and-go breakfast will be available at the entrance of every school building from 7:30 AM – 1:30 PM. Any student can pick up breakfast and lunch at any school building.

On Monday, March 23, we will be opening several dozen Regional Enrichment Centers across the City, to serve the children of our City's first responders, healthcare workers, transit workers, and our most vulnerable populations.

That Monday, we will also launch remote learning for grades K-12. I have every confidence in New York City educators and know they will rise to the occasion, and dedicate the same passion for delivering high-quality instruction remotely as they do in the classroom. We know we have the most dedicated school staff: teachers, custodians, administrators, and especially the school food workers who will be continuing to work during this time as part of a citywide meals program. More information on the launch of that program will be coming soon.

Department of Education
Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

I want to be clear that this is not a closure, but a transition. We will not lower our expectations for our students. We know they are hungry to learn and we will match their curiosity and passion with work-from-home materials, including distribution of devices that will support our remote-learning instructional model.

There are already instructional resources available for every grade level in every subject at schools.nyc.gov/learnathome.

We know this is a difficult time, and we are working hard to make sure our City continues to support families in every way we can. I want to assure families we're working to make this as seamless a transition as possible.

Now is the time to come together to do what's best for the health and safety of all New Yorkers. We are with you, partners in education in the greatest city in the world. We have the world's most talented students, educators, and staff—and nothing will ever change that.

We will continue to communicate with you in the coming days, and encourage you to visit our website at https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/health-and-wellness/coronavirus-update for more information and updates on this transition.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Carranza
Chancellor
New York City Department of Education

Department of Education
Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

March 10, 2020

Dear Families,

The health and safety of all NYC Department of Education (DOE) students continues to be our first priority in the wake of the evolving situation around the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in New York City. We are writing today with a number of important updates for all students and families, including the latest information about ways to protect your health.

There are a number of actions we have taken and many things you can do to keep our communities safe. The most important action you can take is to **stay home if you are sick.** Please see the attached What You Need to Know factsheet [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/imm/novel-coronavirus-wuhan-factsheet.pdf] and Stop the Spread flyer [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/imm/stop-the-spread-poster.pdf], and read on for additional information.

Our Preparations and Protocols

School Cleaning + Hygiene

We continue to work in close partnership with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) to enhance protocols in schools. These include:

- Ensuring that all DOE school buildings have a nurse;
- Increasing deep cleanings to two times per week, disinfecting surface areas with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)-approved cleaning disinfectant;
- Ensuring that all schools have adequate hygiene and cleaning materials so that bathrooms are continuously stocked with soap and paper towels;
- Supplying all schools with facemasks to be used if a student or staff member exhibits symptoms and requires isolation prior to transport to a doctor and/or testing; and
- Strongly encouraging regular hand washing throughout the day, particularly before meals, and making changes as needed to ensure students have the time to wash hands.

International Travel

- All DOE-sponsored international travel for students and staff for the remainder of the 2019–2020 school year is canceled.
- This includes study abroad programs, where students are scheduled to come from other countries to stay with host families in NYC, and where DOE public school students are hosted abroad.

Attendance

We are committed to easing families' concerns on attendance and admissions.

- Student absences in the current school year (2019–2020) will not impact applications of current fifth- and eighth-graders applying to middle- or high-schools for the 2020–2021 school year.
- Student absences in the current school year (2019–2020) will not impact applications of current fourth- and seventh-graders applying for middle- or high-school for the 2021–2022 school year.

What if a student feels sick in school?

- In the event a student is sick, complaining of fever, cough, or shortness of breath, that child should be taken to the school nurse.
- The nurse will ask the student to wear a face mask, call for parental pick up, and recommend calling a medical provider for instructions.
- Any student with respiratory symptoms and fever should wait in a supervised setting with a closed door, away from other students.

What if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in my school?

- In the event that DOHMH determines that there is a need for investigation, closure, or other action at a school, you will immediately be notified.
- Per New York State, if there is a confirmed case in a school, the school must be closed for at least 24 hours while DOHMH investigates and determines whether additional closure is needed.
- We urge you to ignore rumors you might hear separate and apart from official communication from DOHMH, DOE, and your school.

We are working with the State to provide more information on school closure guidance to share in the near future.

Large Gatherings

Right now, the City has not advised the cancellation of large events or public gatherings, but is monitoring developments and will adjust as needed.

- If you are sick, stay home.
- If you have chronic conditions like heart disease, diabetes, a compromised immune system, chronic lung disease, and/or cancer, avoid unnecessary gatherings and events.

What You Can Do

Reduce Overcrowding

- Walk or bike to work, if possible.
- If the train is too packed, wait for the next one.

Department of Education
Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

If You Feel Sick

- Stay home and call your doctor if you have symptoms including but not limited to coughing, shortness of breath, fever, or sore throat.
- If you do not feel better in 24–48 hours, seek care from your doctor.
- Avoid going out in public. Do not go to school or work until you have been fever-free at least 72 hours without the use of fever-reducing drugs like Tylenol or ibuprofen.
- If you need help getting medical care, call 311.
- NYC will provide care regardless of immigration status or ability to pay.

Special Guidance for Vulnerable New Yorkers

- The City is advising those with chronic lung disease, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, or a compromised immune system to avoid unnecessary events and gatherings.
- If you have family or friends who have one of these conditions, do not visit them if you feel sick.

If You Have Traveled Recently

Anyone who has traveled to Italy, Iran, South Korea, Japan, or China and returned on or after March 4, 2020, must stay home from work or school for 14 days after their last day in that country and minimize contact with other people.

- If returning travelers from affected countries develop fever, cough, or trouble breathing, they should call their medical provider and tell them about their symptoms and history of travel.
- For those self-monitoring at home, DOHMH has developed a supporting doctor's note and FAQ available at nyc.gov/coronavirus under "Returning Travelers."

Students and families who returned from the affected countries before March 4, 2020, should monitor their health; if they develop any symptoms, they should stay home and call their medical provider. Please monitor CDC.gov for updates on affected countries here: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/after-travel-precautions.html.

Continue to Practice General Viral Infection Prevention Measures Including:

- Wash your hands with soap and water often.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or sleeve when sneezing or coughing.
- Do not touch your face with unwashed hands.
- Do not shake hands. Instead wave or elbow bump.
- Monitor your health more closely than usual for cold or flu symptoms.

Department of Education
Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

How to Stay Informed and Fight Bias

To get regular updates on the latest developments regarding coronavirus in New York City, text COVID to 692-692. You will receive regular SMS texts with the latest news and developments.

- Please read the What You Need to Know factsheet [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/imm/novel-coronavirus-wuhan-factsheet.pdf] attached to this letter for more information.
- Visit nyc.gov/coronavirus at any time for important updates, including ways to fight stigma and bias around this issue.

It's important we come together as a city and support one another as neighbors and New Yorkers during this time. COVID-19 is not more likely found in any one race or nationality, and we must each model inclusion and actively work to combat bias in our workplaces and communities.

The health and safety of our students continues to be our chief priority, and we will continue to follow all guidance and take all appropriate measures accordingly, and stay in consistent communication with our 1.1 million families.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Carranza
Chancellor
New York City Department of Education

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19): What You Need to Know

What is Coronavirus?

- Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that cause mild illnesses like a cold, to more serious illnesses like pneumonia.
- A novel (new) coronavirus is a type of coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans.
- 2019 novel coronavirus is a new type of coronavirus identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness (which affects breathing) called COVID-19.
- COVID-19 infections have now been reported in many countries including the United States. For an updated list of affected areas, visit cdc.gov/coronavirus.

What are the Symptoms of Coronavirus?

- Commonly reported symptoms include fever, cough or shortness of breath.
- Most people with COVID-19 will have mild symptoms. People who are at most risk for severe illness are those who have other health conditions, including chronic lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, cancer or a weakened immune system.

How Does Coronavirus Spread?

- The virus is likely to be spread from person to person between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

Who is Most at Risk for Coronavirus?

- People who are at most risk for severe illness are elderly or have other health conditions such as chronic lung disease, heart disease, diabetes or a weakened immune system.

How Can I Protect Myself and Others from Coronavirus?

- Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when sneezing or coughing. Do not use your hands.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Do not shake hands. Instead wave or elbow bump.
- Monitor your heath more closely than usual for cold or flu symptoms.
- Get the flu shot. Although the flu shot will not protect you from COVID-19, it will help prevent the flu which has similar symptoms to this coronavirus.

What Should I do if I Feel Sick?

- Stay home and call your doctor if you have cold or flu symptoms like coughing, shortness of breath, fever or sore throat.
- If you do not feel better in 24-48 hours, seek care from your doctor.
- Avoid going out in public. Do not go to school or to work until you have been fever-free for at least 72 hours without the use of fever reducing drugs like Tylenol or ibuprofen.

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves. 3.8.20

- If you need help getting medical care, call 311.
- NYC will provide care regardless of immigration status or ability to pay.
- Hospital staff will not ask about immigration status. Receiving health care is not a public benefit identified by the public charge test.

Is it Safe to Attend Large Gatherings?

- If you are sick, stay home.
- If you have chronic lung disease, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, or a weakened immune system, avoid unnecessary events and gatherings.
- If you have no symptoms, it is okay to go to events, but practice good hygiene and remain vigilant about your health.
- Right now, no large events or public gatherings are cancelled but we are monitoring developments and will adjust as needed.

What Else Can I Do?

- Help reduce overcrowding.
- Consider telecommuting where possible. Private-sector employers should consider allowing employees to telecommute if the job allows.
- The City is also asking private-sector employers to consider staggered work hours. For example, instead of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., consider changing some work hours to 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. or 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Walk or bike to work, if you can.
- When taking the subway, if the train is too packed, be patient and wait for the next one.
- If you have family or friends who have a chronic health condition, do not visit them if you feel sick.

What Should I Do about Harassment or Discrimination Related to Coronavirus?

- It is important to separate facts from fear and guard against stigma. A lot of information circulating about coronavirus on social media and in some news reporting is not based in the facts.
- Support your friends, neighbors and colleagues by sharing this fact sheet to counter misinformation. Obtain information from trusted sources like the NYC Health Department.
- If you are being harassed due to your race, nation of origin or other identities, call 311 to report discrimination or harassment to the NYC Commission on Human Rights.
- If you are experiencing stress or feeling anxious, contact NYC Well at 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355) or text "WELL" to 65173. NYC Well is a confidential help line that is staffed 24/7 by trained counselors who can provide brief supportive therapy, crisis counseling, and connections to behavioral health treatment, in more than 200 languages.

Where Can I Get More Information?

- For real-time updates, text COVID to 692-692. Messages and data rates may apply. Check your wireless provider plan for details.
- Visit nyc.gov/coronavirus for additional resources and information.