

Harrisburg Community Unit School District #3

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OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

[3-16-2020]

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Thank you for your extraordinary support over the past several days, as we have worked together to protect our community during the growing coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic. To further safeguard Illinois from the spread of the virus, Governor JB Pritzker has declared mandatory school closures for all buildings, both public and private, serving pre-kindergarten through 12th grade students.

This mandatory closure takes effect Tuesday, March 17. Harrisburg Unit # 3 will be closed on Monday, March 16th as well. This will allow staff and administration prepare materials for our learning packets as well as our e-learning program. Currently, we anticipate reopening on March 31.

Free lunch and breakfast will still be available to all students. We will send out details on Monday, March 16 regarding pick up sites for meals on our district APP, all social media locations and through our POWER SCHOOL - ALL CALL system several times on Monday. These meals will begin on Tuesday, March 17th and will continue throughout the closure.

We will also continue to have staff in the unit office each day during the closure. Should you not be able to reach anyone at your child's building, we will be here at the unit office during our regular school day hours of [8]a.m. to [3]p.m., in case you need information about locations for the meal program, access to learning packets, or just general questions about the closure. Please try and contact your child's school first as you will get much more specific information from them, but the unit office will assist you in any way we can.

We are committed to keeping students engaged in their learning during this statewide school closure. We will be sending out specific detailed information about the district's E-Learning programs and when and where to pick up Learning Packets if you have no access to internet service. Tentatively the pick up for those packets is set for 2 p.m. thru 4 p.m. at your child's school. Teachers will make sure to have their e-mail contacts and any informational APP they may use in their class (class dojo, remind) on packets to be available from 8-3:30 each day to answer any questions children or parents have about the packets and/or e-learning materials.

To supplement these services, we encourage you to engage your children in other free, online educational activities. The Illinois State Board of Education has compiled a library of resources at www.isbe.net/keeplearning.

Concern over this new virus can make children anxious. It is very important to remember that children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events. If adults seem overly worried, children's anxiety may rise. Adults should reassure children that health and school officials are working hard to ensure that people throughout the country stay healthy.

Children also need factual, age-appropriate information about the potential seriousness of disease risk, so the focus of conversation should be concrete instructions about how to avoid infections and the spread of disease. Teaching children positive measures, talking with them about their fears, and giving them a sense of some control over their risk of infections can help reduce anxiety. Please talk with your children about precautions they can take to stay healthy, including:

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is best, especially if they are visibly dirty. An alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol is a suitable alternative. Consider showing your children one of these videos about proper handwashing technique: www.cdc.gov/handwashing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.
- Stay home if you are able to stay home. Avoid travel if you can.

The National Association of School Psychologists has additional guidelines about talking to children about COVID-19 at [https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource).

We will continue to inform you as quickly as we can about any further changes to school services. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact

We appreciate your partnership, and we will get through this together.

Respectfully,

Mike Gauch
Superintendent