

CONNECTION

A NEWSLETTER FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS PARENTS

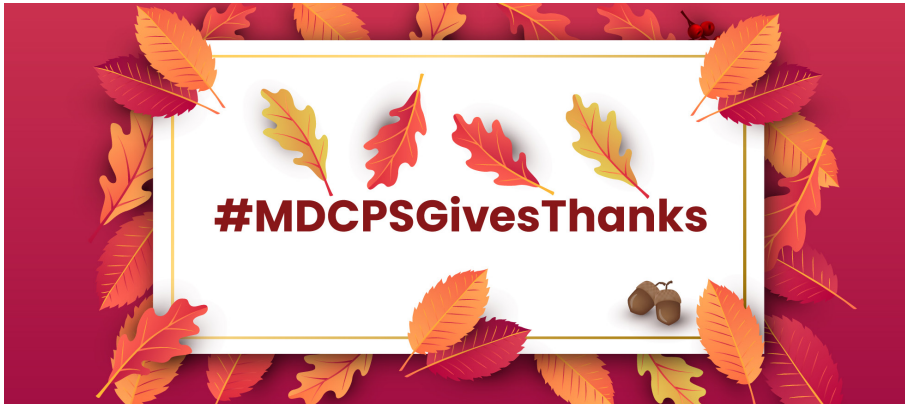
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November 2020

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WE ARE THANKFUL FOR YOU



As Thanksgiving approaches and as we continue to navigate through unprecedented times, we want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all students, teachers, administrators, employees and families. While 2020 has been challenging and unpredictable, it has also shown us the power of connection, community, and has helped us reflect on what is truly important. Today, we take this opportunity to say THANK YOU. We are grateful for your patience as we continue to steer through uncharted

territory, for your compassion, and for your commitment to the education of our students.

Virtual instruction has played a significant role in our school district and homes across Miami-Dade County this year, and has reemphasized the critical role families play in their children's education. To our families, thank you for your unwavering support of Miami-Dade County Public Schools and for becoming our true partners in

education. To our teachers, thank you for going to incredible lengths to ensure all of our students have access to a world-class education. To our administrators, thank you for your responsiveness and leadership. To all of our employees, from custodial to food services personnel, thank you for the extraordinary job you are doing in making sure our schools operate smoothly as healthy and safe spaces. Lastly, to our students, thank you for your adaptability, responsibility, and resiliency. We know it has not been easy, but we are standing with you – six feet apart.

As we countdown to Thanksgiving, we invite you to join us by sharing what you are thankful for this holiday season. Post on your social media accounts using the hashtag #MDCPSGivesThanks and join our gratitude conversation.

FLU



Protect yourself and your family during the height of flu season by getting a flu vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone six months of age and older as the first and most important step in protecting against the virus.

Contact your medical provider to schedule an appointment or the Florida Department of Health at (786) 845-0550, which will provide free flu vaccines for all children under 18.



What happens if a student becomes ill at school?

If a student becomes ill or exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, the student will be separated from other students and staff to the designated space identified as the school's Isolation Room. While in the Isolation Room, the student will be monitored. The District will contact parents/guardians and, if needed, the student's emergency contacts. Parents/guardians and/or emergency contacts will be informed of the importance of the student being picked up immediately for the safety of the student and others.

If a student is ill, when may he or she return to school?

Students presenting general illness symptoms that are non-COVID related will need to remain home until they are symptom-free without the use of medication for 24 hours. Students presenting COVID-like symptoms, but no known COVID contact, MUST remain home in isolation for at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications AND symptoms have improved, UNLESS student obtains a clearance letter from health care provider.

If a student is confirmed by the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) in Miami-Dade as testing positive for COVID-19, what type of clearance is needed for the student to return to school?

The FDOH will notify the District School Health Office (DSHO) when the student is cleared to return to school. The DSHO office will notify the school principal who will notify the student's parent/guardian.

If a student is asked to quarantine because they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, when will they be allowed to return to their school?

If the student has no symptoms, they will be asked to quarantine for 14 days from the date of their last contact with a person who has COVID-19 before returning to school. If the student develops symptoms, they must remain home in isolation for at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications AND symptoms have improved.

If you have been identified as being in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 and are asked to quarantine, do other members of your household who attend or work at District schools have to quarantine as well?

If other household members did not come in direct contact with someone that tested positive, and the individual in quarantine does not have symptoms, other household members, including siblings, do not need to quarantine or isolate. However, if the individual in quarantine has symptoms or tests positive, the household member should contact their medical provider and get tested.

If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, when is he or she allowed to return to their worksite?

Employees who were medically confirmed to have COVID-19, and demonstrated symptoms, may be allowed to return to work if:

- At least 10 days have passed since their symptoms first appeared; 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; COVID-19 symptoms have improved (for example, cough, shortness of breath); and submit a doctor's note allowing them to return to work.

Employees who had a laboratory-confirmed case of COVID-19, but did not show any symptoms, may be allowed to return to work if:

- At least 10 days have passed since they had a positive viral test for COVID-19; have no apparent symptoms; and submit a doctor's note allowing them to return to work.

If an employee has been in direct contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, when may he or she return to their worksite?

Employees must quarantine for 14 days after their last direct contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 and may return to work if they are not experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (for example, cough, or shortness of breath).

What steps will be taken if a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19?

The District notifies the FDOH in Miami-Dade of every self-reported case of a student and employee. An in-school contact investigation/tracing process is initiated immediately. A major part of the investigation is to determine who came in close contact with the individual who tested positive. In most cases, those individuals who are identified as having come in close contact are told to quarantine. These actions are in addition to other mitigation strategies that may be implemented.

What is the criteria for closing an individual classroom or multiple ones versus an entire school due to one or more positive cases of COVID-19?

In many cases, the decision to close a classroom(s) or a school is the result of the close contact investigation. However, these determinations will be made on an individual school-by-school basis due to multiple factors that potentially impact the final decision. These factors include, but are not limited to:

- Number of COVID-19 positive cases of students and staff
- Potential exposure to other students and employees identified through contact tracing
- Ability to sanitize the school-site prior to the return of students and staff
- Potential for outbreak
- Cases that are linked within same school
- Ability to notify those impacted based on the day of the week and the time that the case was reported

What is the procedure if a child arrives at school exhibiting COVID-19-like symptoms?

The student will be assessed, and the parents will be notified immediately

to pick-up the student. Based on signs and symptoms, the student may be placed in the isolation room until parent pick-up occurs.

What information is included in the dashboard and how often is the dashboard updated?

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) began reporting cases on the COVID-19 dashboard on October 5 – when students returned to school. Confirmed cases among students and employees who are physically in school will be reported on the dashboard, which is updated daily. Positive student COVID-19 cases are uploaded after they have been confirmed by FDOH in Miami-Dade County. All M-DCPS employees must self-report a positive COVID-19 test result in accordance with Board policy. Self-reported employee cases are uploaded once they have been verified using an internal vetting process.

The school site case numbers reflected in the system are provided by principals and vetted by the DSHO to ensure data quality is maintained. This may result in several days lag for self-reported cases. The confirmation process for student cases and subsequent entry into the system are dependent on test verification from the FDOH in Miami-Dade County.

Dashboard data entry is separate and apart from the immediate mitigation activities occurring at school sites such as self-isolation for suspected/positive cases, the quarantining of employees and students who are close contacts, and the deep sanitization of all areas of the impacted school. The District COVID-19 Dashboard is not intended to be a real-time system for tracking self-reported employee and student confirmed student cases. It is a lagging indicator and should not be interpreted as an immediate notification system of cases. Families and employees should not rely on the dashboard to learn about cases in their school or worksite as they will learn about self-reported cases from their school or worksite well ahead of that information being populated onto the dashboard.

What is the procedure to report a COVID-19 diagnosis in a household?

If anyone in the student’s household tests positive for COVID-19, the parents/guardians must immediately self-report the result to the school(s). After school hours and on weekends, cases can be reported by calling 305-995-3000. The school principal will then report the case to the DSHO.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN FAMILIES AND SCHOOL



Family is the single most important influence in a child’s life. Your child is who they are because of you and the

support, lessons, and guidance you provide every day. Research shows that students do better when families and educators work together as equal partners and engage in meaningful two-way conversations. The first step to two-way communication between school and home is to ensure that your child’s school has up-to-date contact information. If you have recently moved, call your child’s school to provide an updated address, phone number and email. This is the

only way to ensure you are receiving information from the school.

Families are equal partners in our students’ academic success, and our teachers and administrators look forward to building strong and lasting relationships with our families this year. We encourage you to reach out to your child’s teacher and school throughout the year. Remember, it’s okay to ask questions. We want to make sure you understand your child’s academic goals for this year.

A great way to connect with your child's teacher is to schedule a virtual parent-teacher conference. Use the questions below to help guide your discussion during the session.

1. What questions do you have about this school year?
2. What are you worried about?
3. What do you want your child to accomplish this year?
4. Where can you access additional help for your child this year if they need it?
5. What is the best way to get in touch with your child's teacher? Do they prefer phone/email?
6. What are your child's teachers' goals for this year? What will they accomplish?

It is important to share your concerns and open up to your child's teacher. Knowing how your child is doing in school – academically, emotionally, socially, and mentally – will help you better understand their overall wellbeing and academic progress. Information that you share with your child's teachers and administrators will ensure that your child receives the support and education they need to be successful in life. In addition to regularly staying involved with your child's teacher(s), here are some

additional suggestions for staying actively engaged throughout the school year:

- Respond to your teacher's texts messages or emails.
- Check out your school's website or social media for general updates.
- Log into your parent portal once a week for academic and attendance updates.
- Download the Dadeschools Mobile app.

Every good relationship is based on regular, meaningful, two-way communication. When concerns arise, we encourage you to follow the M-DCPS chain of support. This starts by communicating with your child's teacher. If a concern is still there, the next point of contact should be an assistant principal at your school. If there is no resolution, it would be appropriate to get in touch with the principal. If there is still no resolution, your region office would be an appropriate next step. We are all here to support you and want to ensure that your concerns are heard. We recognize that there are added stressors and anxieties this year, and we are in this together!

PARENT E-TIPS

Creating a Positive Learning Environment
<https://bit.ly/3oCzk98>

SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

November 17
10:00 a.m.
Organization Meeting

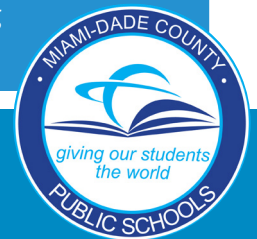
November 18
1:00 p.m.
Regular Meeting

December 9
11:00 a.m.
Regular Meeting

IMPORTANT DATES & INFORMATION

November 25
Teacher Planning Day

November 27
Thanksgiving Recess



www.dadeschools.net

Stay connected with Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Make sure you follow us on social media for the latest news and updates regarding the school district. #MDCPSConnects

SOCIAL MEDIA



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Susie V. Castillo
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Dr. Martin Karp
Dr. Lubby Navarro

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Superintendent of Schools
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Student Advisor to the School Board