

Parent Letter Regarding COVID-19

March 13, 2020

Student and staff safety is of primary importance in our district, and Hackett Public Schools continues to monitor efforts within our state to contain the spread of COVID-19. We also continue to follow guidance and instructions provided from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Arkansas Department of Health (ADH), and Arkansas Department of Education's Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (ADE/DESE). COVID-19 creates many challenges for families and schools. With this in mind, we are addressing the following topics to help you prepare for the weeks ahead and provide resources you can use to stay informed and guide your children through this new challenge.

Topics covered below include:

- Cancellation
- Important Information for Getting Assistance
- Talking with Children about COVID-19 or Coronavirus
- Student Absences
- Links to Other Resources

Cancellation

Any cancellations due to COVID-19 and the duration of a closure will be made at the State level. This is NOT a local decision.

Important Information for Getting Assistance

The Arkansas Department of Health has been designated as the lead agency in coordinating information and response to the virus. ADH has established a dedicated phone line for school officials to call with questions: (833) 504-0155. The phone line is open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. For urgent after-hours needs or on weekends, call (800) 803-7847.

Talking with Children about COVID-19

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) has published a resource entitled "[Talking to Children About COVID-19](#)". The American School Counselor Association has provided a [kid-friendly video](#) to help children understand the Coronavirus on their level. Click [here](#) to view this very short video.

Student Absences

Students who are absent because of illness or other concerns related to COVID-19 exposure should be allowed to make up any and all work missed while absent. To reduce the burden on our health care providers as they prepare to serve a higher number of patients, the requirement to secure written documentation from a health care provider in order to excuse an absence for health reasons is suspended for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. A parent note will meet the requirement to excuse a health-related absence. Due to the concerns surrounding COVID-19, Hackett School District will suspend perfect attendance rules for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. As a result, 2019-2020 perfect attendance recognition will be based on attendance from August 15, 2019 – March 13, 2020. Please note that the compulsory attendance law still applies.

Links

[Arkansas Department of Health COVID-19 Updates](#)
[CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)