

CORE CONNECTION

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
FOR LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEES



March 15, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

On Friday, March 13, [Governor Edwards declared a Public Health Emergency](#) in response to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). While state offices, including the LDOE, remain open and fully functional, the Department is implementing the following guidance pertaining to LDOE employees to be **effective Monday, March 16**.

The LDOE continues to closely monitor the situation and will continue to inform staff as information pertaining to state employees is made available. Staff should continue to direct all questions to their supervisors and continue to monitor all guidance issued by the Department on our [website](#).

COVID-19 Related Absences from Work UPDATED

Effective Monday, March 16

- Employees should work remotely, if at all possible, based on Assistant Superintendent approval.
- Assistant Superintendents should grant approval as soon as practical, on the evening of March 15 or during the workday on March 16.
- If employees must retrieve equipment or belongings from the office, the Claiborne building will remain open.
- Each employee working remotely must download and complete a weekly [teleworking log](#) and submit to their supervisor for approval at the beginning of each week (outlining tasks) and at the end of each week (outline notes relative to each task).
- If an Assistant Superintendent determines that an employee is unable to work remotely due to the nature of his/her work, employees should report to their usual workplace on March 16.
 - As a reminder, non-business related visitors are not allowed in the building. This includes children.
 - Employees should speak with their supervisors regarding any hardships created by school closures. With regard to absences, normal leave rules apply.

If an employee tests positive for COVID-19 (presumptively or confirmed)

- The employee must remain home until he/she is cleared by a medical doctor to return to work.
- Normal sick leave rules apply per review [EP 4.2 - Leave Types and Usage](#).
- If the employee exhausts all sick leave, he/she may use annual leave.
- If the employee exhausts all annual leave, he/she will qualify for "Act of God" leave.

If an employee has been possibly exposed to COVID-19 and has no symptoms of illness

In this scenario, an employee may have traveled internationally, may reside with a family member who has traveled internationally, may be aware of possible exposure to someone presumptively or positively confirmed to have COVID-19, or may have been contacted by health officials to advise that such contact has occurred.

- The employee is required to report this information to his/her supervisor and Human Resources immediately.
- The employee will be required to stay at home during the designated incubation period of the virus, which is currently 14 days.
- The supervisor may allow the employee to work from home during the designated incubation period of the virus. Employees who are permitted to work remotely are required to continually update the agency on their status through the

teleworking log.

- If an employee is unable to work remotely after consultation with their Assistant Superintendent, normal leave rules will apply.
- If the employee becomes ill, the employee will be placed in sick leave status and must remain home until he/she is cleared by a medical doctor to return to work.

If an employee becomes ill with sickness other than COVID-19

- The employee must remain home until he/she is cleared by a medical doctor to return to work.
- The employee is required to report this information to his/her supervisor.
- Normal sick leave rules apply per review [EP 4.2 - Leave Types and Usage](#).
- If the employee exhausts all sick leave, he/she may use annual leave.

Travel Restrictions UPDATE

Section 7 of [Proclamation No. 25 JBE 2020](#) addresses travel restrictions that apply to all state employees.

If an employee or any member of their household is traveling internationally, including air travel and cruise ships, the employee must inform their supervisor and Human Resources of their travel plans immediately. Upon return from international travel, it is likely employees will be required to remain at home for the 14 day incubation period.

In-state travel for work

- If at all possible, employees should use remote meeting tools, including Zoom and conference lines.
- Employees whose work necessitates in-state travel should work with their supervisor to determine requisite shifts in practice.

Out-of-state travel for work

- Effective Monday, March 16 and through Monday, April 13, all out-of-state travel for LDOE employees must be canceled.
- Employees should refer to the [LDOE Travel Notification - COVID-19 guidance](#) regarding refunds.

Louisiana 211

Louisiana 211 connects Louisiana residents to information about critical health and human services available in their community. For more information on how to access essential community services, please visit www.LA211Help.org.

Louisiana 211 provides a single access point to every day needs and in times of crisis by calling or texting the following:

- Dial 211
- Text LACOVID to 898-211

Proclamation No. JBE 2020-27

On Friday, March 13, Governor Edward issued [Proclamation No. JBE 2020-27, Additional Measures for COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#). Among other things, he directed the following:

1. All gatherings of 250 or more people between Friday, March 13, 2020, and Monday April 13, 2020, shall be postponed or cancelled. This applies only to gatherings in a single space at the same time where individuals will be in close proximity to one another. It does not apply to normal operations at locations like airports, medical facilities, shopping centers or malls, office buildings, factories or manufacturing facilities, or grocery or department stores.
2. All public schools in the State of Louisiana shall close facilities to students until April 13, 2020. Schools may offer complete distance learning, as capabilities exist. With appropriate social distancing measures, school shall, if able, continue to provide meals or other essential services with applicable staff.

COVID-19 Dedicated Email Address

A dedicated email address has been established to handle all COVID-19 related questions from the field. If an employee receives

A dedicated email address has been established to handle all COVID-19 related questions from the field. If an employee receives a COVID-19 related question from the field, you should direct them to this email address: LDOECOVID19Support@la.gov.

For example, if you receive such a question by email, please use the following response and copy LDOECOVID19Support@la.gov: "I am submitting your question to our dedicated email for COVID-19 questions."

Available Resources

The following websites will ensure you have access to all available information related to COVID-19:

- Louisiana Department of Education: <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/covid-19>
- Louisiana Department of Health: www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus
- Office of the Governor: <https://gov.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/page/89>
- CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>