

April 3, 2020

Dear Families:

Since closing school buildings and shifting to remote learning last week, all of you, in partnership with our more than 150,000 staff, have shown incredible resilience and fortitude as we leap into a new reality. Together, we have been transforming public education in the nation's largest school system in ways we never imagined even a few weeks ago.

Throughout this process, we have approached every decision with the health, safety, and continuous learning of our students at the forefront of our minds. Through it all, I've emphasized that we need to operate with flexibility and patience for all our school communities.

Those values, along with the fact that social distancing remains an imperative for all New Yorkers, means we must take a new approach to Spring Recess, originally scheduled for Thursday, April 9 through Friday, April 17, 2020.

For the health and wellbeing of all New Yorkers, the City and the State are in agreement that schools must continue to offer remote learning, including during days that were previously scheduled as breaks. As a result, our schools will continue with remote learning through the time originally scheduled for Spring Recess.

We know that many New Yorkers plan to observe religious holidays on April 9 and 10. Any students and school staff who individually wish to observe those holidays may do so. However, these days will not be considered "days off" for the school system, and remote learning activities will continue for students who are not observing the holidays.

Here is additional important information for families during this time:

Remote Learning

We know that Spring Recess is a time of rest and recharging for our educators and students alike—and we know how hard all of our students and educators have been working to adapt to a new approach to learning.

With this in mind, we will offer schools remote learning resources that focus on daily themes and enrichment activities for all students for April 9-17. This will keep students and their teachers meaningfully engaged and connected with each other and ideas happening in the world around them—even as we all remain socially distant at home.

Resources will include "theme" days (e.g., wellness, world language, computer science, college and career readiness) and taking advantage virtually of the unparalleled educational and cultural resources right here in the city (e.g., museums, libraries, and cultural institutions).

More information on these activities will be shared with schools next week. We are confident that continuing remote learning will help ensure that families adhere to social distancing in the coming weeks, which is imperative to slowing the spread of the virus and keeping ourselves and our neighbors safe.

Regional Enrichment Centers

Regional Enrichment Centers (RECs) serve the children of first responders, healthcare workers, and other essential employees across the City. The majority of the REC sites will remain open from April 9-17. We will proactively communicate with families who may need to be temporarily reassigned to a REC during that time. Visit schools.nyc.gov/recs for more information.

Free Meals

Meal Hubs offer free meals to any New Yorker who wants them. The majority of our Meal Hub sites will also continue to operate. To find the nearest Meal Hub to you during this period or anytime, visit schools.nyc.gov/freemeals.

Health Precautions

We know our families are working hard to stop the spread of coronavirus. People who do not show symptoms may still be able to spread COVID-19, and therefore the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) recommends wearing a face covering or mask whenever you leave home. A face covering will not protect you from infection, but it can help others. A face covering can include anything that covers your nose and mouth, including dust masks, scarves and bandanas. Do not use health care worker masks, as those must be preserved for people in the health care system. Even if you have a face covering, continue to stay home as much as possible and avoid close contact with other people. Please visit nyc.gov/coronavirus for more information and an FAQ on face coverings, as well as other important information on the virus.

We continue to operate with health, safety, and high-quality learning as our top priorities for every child and adult in the DOE community across all five boroughs. Time and time again, you and your children—and all the educators who serve them—are proving that New York City has the best students and staff in the world, and that nothing will ever change that.

Please call 311 or visit schools.nyc.gov for any questions regarding Spring Break, RECs, Free Meals, and much more. As always, you should reach out to your teacher, principal, and others at your school for continued information about remote learning and your child.

Sincerely,



Richard A. Carranza
Chancellor
New York City Department of Education