



Frequently Asked Questions for COVID-19 School Closure ***April 21, 2020***

Food and Medication

Q. What is being done to feed children during this closure?

A. Our district has offered meals at no charge for children during this closure, beginning March 17, 2020. Breakfast and lunch are available to children up to 18 years of age. Children do not need to be enrolled in the Houston County School District to receive meals. Meals are offered three days a week - Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Breakfast and lunch is offered at four sites and through neighborhood delivery routes. For more information, please [click here](#).

Q. May parents pick up their child's emergency medication which is at school?

A. Parents were allowed to pick up their child's emergency medication from the school's front office on March 18. Another opportunity will be given to families once the shelter-in-place executive order ends.

School Calendar

Q. Will school reopen this year?

A. On April 1, 2020, Governor Brian Kemp issued an executive order mandating that school campuses will remain closed for in-person instruction through the end of the school year.

Q. Will the district's 2019-2020 calendar remain the same in terms of the last day of school? Will the district 2020-2021 calendar be impacted or changed?

A. At this time, we plan to continue with the school calendars as originally scheduled. The last day of school for 2019-2020 is set for May 22, 2020. Visit the district website, www.hcbe.net, and click on the Calendar tab to view the calendar. Here is a direct link: <https://www.hcbe.net/calendar>.

Q. Do we have to make up any school days this year?

A. No, students will not be asked to make up days due to the COVID-19 closure. School districts are not required to reschedule days missed due to this public health emergency.

Registration

Q. Is there any way to register my child during this closure?

A. Central Registration has implemented online registration. Parents are asked to complete registration online and to email required documentation. As of April 6, Central Registration began processing enrollments for students needing to enroll in this 2019-2020 school year, so they may begin their digital learning as soon as possible. Once a student is enrolled, the proper school is notified so a schedule can be provided and teachers may contact the student to provide assignments.

Q. What about Pre-K registration that was disrupted by the closure?

A. Central Registration staff members are working with parents to complete Pre-K registration for the lottery. The final two weeks of Pre-K registration have been rescheduled for April 9 – 23. Parents may make appointments and registration online, supplemented by the Central Registration staff providing assistance by telephone and email.

Q. What if we are moving and need to withdraw?

A. Once your new school sends a records request, we will respond as soon as possible, and your school will process your withdrawal once we reopen. You may want to print your student's schedule and grades from Infinite Campus and also use the latest report card to enroll in the new district. If you are moving and your child has personal items at the school, please contact your principal.

Academics, Digital Learning

Q. What is Google Classroom?

A. Google Classroom is a digital learning platform, which teachers use to interact with their K-12 students online. Teachers use this tool to create classes, provide instruction, distribute assignments, give tests, send feedback, and see everything in one place. Video tutorials on Google Classroom are available on the district website's eLearning Resources webpage here: <https://www.hcbe.net/elearning>.

Q. How is the digital learning being managed?

A. School principals and their administrative team have developed a school-wide plan using Google Classroom and other digital tools to interact online with K-12 students beginning April 6, 2020. Teachers contacted their students through their school email and other communication tools. Students are asked to logon to the school's SSO Portal and access the Google Classroom platform during the weekdays to receive instruction, complete, turn in or upload assignments, and receive feedback and grades. Their teachers are responding through email, phone calls, texts, and other communication tools such as ClassDojo and Edmodo.

We understand that parents have many challenges as they adapt to this new situation, to include supervision of children at home during the day, work schedules (whether teleworking or at the work site), home duties, and other issues. If there are concerns, parents are asked to communicate with the teacher. In addition, our principals and assistant principals are available by phone and email if there is an issue that can't be resolved with the teacher, just like when we are having regular school. Digital learning does not look the same as face-to-face learning, and we are all adapting. Teachers and administrators are on a steep learning curve along with their students and will continue to make improvements as experience is gained.

Q. What do we do if my child has teacher chats scheduled at the same time?

A. This is likely to occur, especially for older students who have several teachers. Anytime this happens, please let the teachers know about the scheduling conflict. The teacher may be able to record the lesson as a video file or link to be viewed by the student later. This also allows parents to view the lesson based on their own schedule. We realize that students will not be able to participate in all lessons, at the same time, and at the same pace. Communicating with the teacher is the best way to resolve any scheduling issues. As usual, though, principals and assistant principals are available by phone and email to help solve any problems that cannot be resolved with a teacher. Our campuses are closed to the public, but our employees are working to provide an education for our students.

Grading and Promotion

Q. How will promotion to the next grade work?

A. As of April 6, 2020, students have been required to complete new assignments through Google Classroom and other digital learning platforms. Teachers have been encouraged to allow students to make up any assignments. Promotion and retention decisions will be made according to our normal policy and procedures.

Q. What are the expectations for grades from now until the end of the year?

A. Teachers are making class grading decisions, just like they do during the regular, in-person instruction. Each teacher will communicate assignments, tests and grades to their students. Parents are encouraged to reach out to their child's teacher with any questions about grades.

Engaging Students

Q. How can we ensure our child continues to learn when we work all day and can't even begin online learning until the evening, after a full day?

A. Contact your child's teacher(s) about your situation and ask for suggestions. They will do their best to be flexible and responsive. Many teachers are in your same situation, juggling working from home while their own children's needs compete with their job duties and desire to help each and every one of their students. This is a challenge for everyone, and communicating your concerns will help the teacher best meet your unique needs.

Q. How do we get our child interested in this whole process of learning online instead of the classroom?

A. To get children interested in digital learning, it helps for parents to set a schedule for each child that includes school work along with time to play. Creating a routine schedule and sticking to it is the best way to get the kids back into learning. At school, they had a schedule each day. Each student's schedule will look different based on the grade level and demands of their classes. Our teachers understand the novelty of online learning for their students. Lessons and assignments will be planned to engage that student in specific learning targets.

Here are a few tips:

- Involve your child in planning the daily schedule, so they help plan the start and end times for their online coursework.
- Ask them what may distract them from sticking to the schedule, then agree upon limiting those distractors. For example, they may list television, video games, and/or social media apps. You can then help them be more successful by ensuring these potential distractions are not available during their online class times. If the child assists in setting their limitations they will be more likely to comply.
- Be sure to allow for down time - planned time for breaks.
- Identify a space in the home for online learning.
- Empower your child to advocate for themselves. Show them how to reach their teacher through their school email account or the Google Classroom platform.
- Relax and stay calm. Students are much more comfortable using technology than adults may believe. If parents seem anxious, they may sense the tension and feel negative towards the experience.

Q. What digital apps and/or online curriculum are available to keep my child engaged?

A. Ensure that the student is using the digital learning applications or tools as directed by their teacher. Teacher assignments should take priority over supplemental learning resources.

If you choose to supplement above and beyond what the teacher has assigned, here are some options, which are posted to the district's website (www.hcbe.net) on the eLearning Resources page at <https://www.hcbe.net/elearning>. Examples of items posted on this webpage are:

- <https://content.schoolinsites.com/api/documents/bb6d2131122a4cc09bf8698a695efcce.pdf> Resources by grade, by subject
- Teacher/parent resources for grades K-5 for these content areas:
 - Science - <https://wke.lt/w/s/nRhvh5>
 - Social Studies - <https://wke.lt/w/s/Xmb9B8>
 - Math - <https://wke.lt/w/s/CcOxLu>
 - English/Language Arts - <https://wke.lt/w/s/Qu1dy4>
- Free subscriptions from education companies - click [here](#).
- Resources to support special education students - click [here](#).
- Read alongs, virtual field trips and virtual tours - click [here](#).

Information on how parents and students may access Google Classrooms are posted to the district and school website homepages.

In addition, online resources have been provided to engage students in learning activities during this closure. The resources are organized by school level and subject and are posted to the district website, www.hcbe.net. For a direct link to the eLearning resources, please visit our eLearning webpage by [clicking here](#).

Q. How long should kids be doing school work in one sitting and how much screen time should they have while doing this?

A. The district has posted suggestions on the [eLearning Resources webpage](#), “[Best practices for digital learning](#),” which may help with these decisions parents are having to make.

In general, the time online will vary based on each child's age, educational level, and parental discretion. Some families are sharing a device or two among several family members, so it may help to make a schedule that allows everyone access for an appropriate amount of time based on each individual's needs and situation. There are many studies and opinions on this topic. The COVID-19 school closure for in-person instruction has increased the need for screen time due to digital learning, so the typical guidelines will be more difficult to follow during this unusual time. Here are a few to articles to consider when determining what is best for your family:

- <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000355.htm>
- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/screen-time/art-20047952>
- <https://www.common sense media.org/screen-time/how-much-screen-time-is-ok-for-my-kids>

State Assessments

Q. Will students still be required to take the state tests?

A. On March 27, 2020, the Georgia Department of Education published a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document regarding cancellation of assessments. Per this FAQs, all spring 2020 state-required assessments are cancelled, to include:

- Georgia Milestones End of Grade;
- Georgia Milestones End of Course;
- Georgia Alternate Assessment 2.0;
- GKIDS 2.0; and
- NAEP.

Q. Will students be to take Advanced Placement (AP) exams?

A. The College Board is allowing students to take the AP exam online at home this year. A 45-minute exam will be given on material representing 75% of the original course content. The exams will be given from May 11-22, with make-up tests available from June 1-5. Students will be able to take these exams on a computer, tablet, or smartphone. For the schedule and to access free resources, visit the [College Board](#) website, which includes [free AP courses and review sessions](#) led by AP teachers from across the U.S. For more information, students may email their AP teachers.

Graduation

Q. Will graduation still be held May 22 and 23?

A. We are planning to provide a graduation experience for our Class of 2020 graduates and their families. Board members, district administrators and high school principals will do everything possible to provide a ceremony so our graduates may celebrate accomplishing this milestone. By May 11, 2020, we will determine if it is safe to hold our traditional graduation ceremonies as planned on May 22 and 23.

Schools/Facilities

Q. How can I reach my child's teacher or an administrator?

A. Our schools and central office are forwarding office calls to those who are teleworking and/or to administrators' cell phones. Please email teachers. Our administrators are also regularly checking email.

Q. Are any schools or offices open?

A. All of our schools and district offices are closed. Although we are teleworking and doing our best to be responsive to the needs of our parents and students, our buildings are not open.

Q. Is the Tennis Complex open?

A. Our entire district is closed, to include the HCSD Tennis Complex.

Extracurriculars & Events

Q. Will our elementary school have field day?

A. All field days have been cancelled.

Q. Will proms be cancelled or rescheduled?

A. The prom date of April 18 was postponed. A decision about rescheduling will be made by May 11, 2020, based on what is safe for our students.

Q. What about athletic practices, games and other extracurricular events?

A. All extracurricular and co-curricular activities and sports are cancelled for the remainder of the school year.

Tech Support

Q. Is there any tech support available for the Chromebook or Google Classroom?

A. Our Technology Department is offering telephone tech support and Chromebook repair. Parents may call the technology helpdesk, Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. The telephone number is: 478-988-6145. Techs will assist with questions regarding Chromebooks, Google Classroom, Zoom, and Clever support.

In addition, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, parents may bring school-issued Chromebooks to one of two sites for repair. The two locations and times for support are:

- 9:00 - 10:00 a.m., Langston Road Elementary School
- 1:00 - 2:00 p.m., CB Watson Primary School.

Please note that this is an opportunity for repair of the Chromebooks which have already been issued and not an opportunity to sign out a device.

Updating Parent Contact Information

Q. If I'm not receiving the callouts from the district, how can I update my contact information to receive calls in the future?

A. Please update your contact information in Infinite Campus (IC), following the directions on the IC webpage. You must first have an account to access your student's record in this parent portal. If you need an account, directions are also provided for first-time users. Here is a direct link to the webpage: <https://www.hcbe.net/infinitecampus>.

Miscellaneous Questions

Q. If we see a free learning resource that requires proof from our school district of closing, where do we get the required documentation?

A. For official proof of closure, please refer to the public service announcement (PSA), which is on district letterhead for your use or download. Please [click here](#) for a direct link to the PSA.

Q. What happens to funds we have paid for meals through MySchoolBucks?

A. Any funds in a MySchoolBucks account will automatically roll over to the student's account for the next school year. The district recommends that parents deactivate any automatic payments they may have set up in MySchoolBucks. To request a refund, one may send an email to Christy.Stokes@hcbe.net.

Q. Since students are not able to take field trips which were scheduled, what happens to the funds parents paid for these trips?

A. Every effort is being made to obtain refunds and reimburse parents who have paid for field trips and other activities. Schools are in the process of issuing checks to mail refunds to parents. With a limited office staff as we adhere to social distancing guidelines, we ask that our parents please be patient. It will take a few weeks to process the hundreds of refunds due to our families.

Q. When may my student clean out his or her locker?

A. Once we know the date our campuses are safe to reopen, we will ask parents to please pickup any personal items and take care of other things such as returning text books, Chromebooks and library books. This will be publicized through a callout, on our website, and on social media.

Q. I have a question that is not yet answered. Where may I submit a question?

A. Please email our district at webmaster@hcbe.net.