



**TO:** Jackson County Central Staff  
**FROM:** Barry Schmidt, Superintendent  
**DATE:** August 31, 2020  
**RE:** COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Personnel Memorandum

## Overview

On July 30, 2020, Governor Tim Walz signed [Executive Order 20-82](#) to implement Minnesota's Safe Learning Plan. This plan uses a localized, data-driven approach that allows school districts and charter schools to operate in a learning model which is responsive to the prevalence of COVID-19 cases in their community. The plan prioritizes safe learning for all Minnesota students, including requiring school districts and charter schools to give families the option to choose distance learning for their student no matter which learning model their school is implementing.

In response to this health threat and in compliance with the Safe Learning Plan, Jackson County Central Schools are taking the following measures to notify staff members on safety precautions targeted to reduce the risk of infection, procedural modifications and available leave protections that have been outlined in this personnel memorandum.

## Keeping the Workplace Safe

The protocol for protecting yourself and others in the workplace against COVID-19 is outlined by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) guidelines](#). These are simple everyday practices that can be used both at home and in the workplace to protect against bacteria and viruses:

- Wash your hands frequently;
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow; and
- Avoid touching your face.

In addition, clean personal workspace items that are frequently touched, such as your desk, computer mouse, and keyboard, with cleaning spray or wipes.

When reporting to the school, all members of the JCC community are required to:

- Pre-screen their temperature and assess symptoms (at home) prior to entering any facility;
- Practice physical distancing (6 feet);
- Follow one-way signage that guides traffic through the school buildings; and
- Wear a face covering/mask.

### Self-Monitoring

Employees with [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 at home should not come into work.

- Sick employees should follow [CDC recommendations](#) for what to do when illness occurs.
- Sick employees and employees who test positive for the virus that causes COVID-19 should not return to work

until they have met CDC's [criteria to discontinue home isolation](#).

- Persons with COVID-19 who never develop symptoms may discontinue isolation and other precautions 10 days after the date of their first positive diagnostic COVID-19 test.
- Persons with COVID-19 symptoms may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:
  - At least 10 days have passed since symptom onset; and
  - At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; and
  - Other symptoms have improved.

### Visitors and Volunteers

- Non-essential visitors and volunteers will not be allowed in district buildings except for extenuating circumstances.
- Essential visitors are individuals who must enter schools to conduct visits in accordance with Minnesota law or policy. Essential visitors are defined as individuals who conduct observations, and provide essential supports and services including, but not limited to, early intervention services, special education services, or mental health consultation.
- Essential visitors will screen themselves following the same staff/student process; must be wearing a face covering/mask to the extent possible; and must wash hands with soap or application of hand sanitizer.

## Face Covering Notice

[Executive Order 20-81](#) requires Minnesotans to wear a face covering in all public indoor spaces and indoor businesses starting on July 25, 2020. This Executive Order applies to all Minnesotans, making exemptions for children who are five-years-old and under, and those with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that makes it unreasonable for the individual to maintain a face covering.

Included in those settings where masks will be required, are school buildings, both public and nonpublic. Face coverings are generally required for all students, staff, and other persons present in any kindergarten through grade 12 school buildings or district offices or riding on school transportation vehicles. To provide a consistent, safe environment for students and staff, this requirement applies equally to kindergartners, even those aged 5 or under.

Students and staff have flexibility to wear face shields instead of face coverings, which allows visibility of facial expressions and lip movements for speech perception, in certain situations. These situations include:

- Among students in kindergarten through grade 8 when wearing a face covering is problematic;
- For educators of all grades, when wearing a face covering may impede the educational process.

For more information from the [Minnesota Department of Health](#) on masks and face coverings.

## Families First Coronavirus Response Act

### [Families First Coronavirus Response Act \(FFCRA\)](#)

Jackson County Central School provides eligible employees with emergency paid sick leave under certain conditions. Emergency family and medical leave is available to all employees that have been employed by the district for at least 30 calendar days. JCC's standard sick leave policy can be found in the applicable employee master agreement found at [www.jccschools.com/hr](http://www.jccschools.com/hr).

### Qualified Reasons for Leave

You may take emergency paid sick leave if you are unable to work (or telework) because:

1. You are subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
2. You have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine because of COVID-19;
3. You are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and are seeking a medical diagnosis;
4. You are caring for an individual or are advised to quarantine or isolate;
5. You are caring for a child whose school or place of care is closed, or whose childcare provider is unavailable, due to COVID-19 precautions; or
6. You are experiencing substantially similar conditions as specified by the CDC.

### **Duration of Leave**

Employees will have up to 12 weeks of leave to use from April 1, 2020, through December 31, 2020, for the purposes stated above. This time is included in and not in addition to the total FMLA leave entitlement of 12 weeks in a 12-month period.

*For example, if an employee has already taken 6 weeks of FMLA leave, that employee would be eligible for another 6 weeks of FMLA leave under this policy.*

### **Pay During Leave**

Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (First 10-days of Leave)

- Full-time employees are eligible for 80 hours of pay at their regular pay rate for qualifying reasons (1-3 above). When caring for a family member (4-6 above), sick leave is paid at two-thirds the employee's regular rate. A part-time employee is eligible for the number of hours of leave that the employee works on average over a two-week period.

After the first 10 days, leave will be paid at two-thirds of an employee's regular rate of pay for the number of hours the employee would otherwise be scheduled to work. Employees will be required to supplement the two-thirds pay with accrued sick, vacation or personal paid leave at a rate of 1/3 day until paid leave has been exhausted, not to exceed 100% of regular pay.

### **Procedure for Requesting Leave**

#### **Normal procedures apply to all absences from work.**

All employees requesting FMLA leave must provide written notice of the need for leave to their supervisor as soon as practicable. A form will be provided to all employees electronically and/or in a manner accessible to all. Verbal notification will be accepted until feasible to provide written notice.

Documentation supporting the need for leave must be included with the leave request form, such as:

- A copy of the federal, state or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19 applicable to the employee or the name of the government entity that issued the order.
- Written documentation by a health care provider advising the employee to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19 or the name of the provider who advised the employee.
- The name and relation of the individual the employee is taking leave to care for who is subject to a quarantine or isolation order or is advised to self-quarantine.
- The name and age of the child or children being cared for; the name of the school, place of care, or child care provider that closed or became unavailable; and a statement that no other suitable person is available to care for the child during the period of requested leave.
  - For children over age 14, a statement indicating the special circumstances that require the employee to provide care during daylight hours.

## **Job Protections**

No employee who appropriately utilizes emergency paid sick leave under this policy will be discharged, disciplined or discriminated against for work time missed due to this leave.

## **Contact During Leave**

While you are on leave, we ask that you contact us weekly to update your status. You may contact us via phone or email at (507) 847 – 3608 or emily.anderson@jccschools.net. If you fail to communicate as requested twice in a row, we will assume that you no longer wish to continue employment and we will proceed with the termination process.

## **Expiration**

This policy expires on December 31, 2020.

# **Personal Leave of Absence**

If you will require a personal leave of absence due to extenuating circumstances related to COVID-19 (but not outlined above), a formal written request should be submitted to the Superintendent of Schools, Barry Schmidt, at the earliest possible time. You will receive follow-up once your request has been reviewed and a determination has been made if it is approved or denied

## **Pay During Leave**

Your leave of absence will be unpaid. If you have available accrued paid time off, you are welcome to use those benefits during this time. If you elect to use your paid leave, please submit a written request to use your paid leave benefits.

## **Paid Time off Benefits during Leave**

Sick leave, vacation time, seniority, and other benefits will not accrue during an unpaid leave of absence. Any paid holidays that occur during the leave of absence are not paid.

## **Job Restoration**

We will attempt to accommodate your needs as well as the needs of the district during this time. It is our hope that we will be able to accommodate your needs and return you to your previous position.

## **District-Sponsored Insurance Benefits**

Continuing your benefits during this time is optional. You are not required to elect to continue benefits during such periods. If you wish to discontinue any of your benefits plans, notify us immediately so we may contact the insurance carrier(s).

If you wish to continue your benefits during this time, you will be required to remit payment for your portion, or the entire amount of the benefits premiums. As long as you continue to send in payments on time, the district will continue your district-sponsored insurance plans as long as the applicable carriers allow. You will be required to make payments on a monthly basis to continue your current insurance benefits. Insurance payments are due on the first of the month for that month's coverage.

## Excusing Employees from Work

If a supervisor identifies an employee who is ill, they will direct them to stop working, even remotely. Employees who are ill should contact their primary-care physician.

If an employee has had a known, recent (i.e. within the last 14 days) exposure to anyone with respiratory illness or specifically with the coronavirus (COVID-19), and shares this with their supervisor, the supervisor should consult with the licensed school nurse, even if the individual is not actively exhibiting symptoms.

Supervisors must follow district guidelines regarding nondiscrimination as outlined in the Nondiscrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity policy. Supervisors should pay particular attention to employee confidentiality.

Supervisors should contact HR to inform them of employees who have been instructed to not report to work due to respiratory illness. HR will record the names of employees who have been excused from work and will work with departments regarding appropriate time reporting, leave usage, and duration of time away.

## Remote Work

Sick employees are *not* required to work from home.

Telecommuting options are generally not available to district employees while classes are in session. However, reasonable accommodations may be available for employees who have been asked not to come to work due to exposure to the illness or are caring for a sick family member. The nature of our work/certain positions may make remote work unfeasible. If you have specific concerns, speak with your supervisor.