



COVID-19 QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

General Questions

Q: Can my employer send me home if I am displaying flu like symptoms?

A: Yes, the CDC states that employees who become ill with symptoms of influenza-like illness at work during a pandemic should leave the workplace.

Q: Can my employer require me to submit to having my temperature taking prior to entering my work?

A: Generally, measuring an employee's body temperature is a medical examination. However, in a pandemic situation, if state, local or federal health officials indicate that the pandemic is becoming widespread in the community, an employer can require having employees' temperatures taken. This information comes from EEOC guidance.

Q: How much information can my employer ask for if I become ill at work or call in sick?

A: Your employer can ask if you are experiencing influenza-like symptoms, such as fever or chills and a cough or sore throat. The employer must maintain information about illness as a confidential medical record in compliance with the ADA. If you are diagnosed with COVID-19, it is recommended that you self-report to your employer.

Q: Can my employer make a request that I report where I traveled over spring break citing fears of COVID-19?

A: Note that a request that an employee report their travel is different than a directive. Moreover, if the request is focused on disclosing travel to areas which are deemed to have a community outbreak, the request may be reasonable given the seriousness of the virus.

Q: Some of my students are traveling over spring break. Can the school require them to stay home for 14 days?

A: As of March 13, 2020, the CDC website shows that that a 14 day quarantine is now required upon return from travel to the following places: China, Italy, Iran, South Korea and now specified countries in Europe (See, <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/warning/coronavirus-europe>)

Q: Will Act of God Days count as service credit for my pension? (UPDATED 3/17/2020)

A: The Governor has signed on to a joint statement with IEA, IFT, Illinois Principals Association, Illinois Association of School Administrators, dated March 17, 2020, employees will receive full and normal service credit in their pension systems during the March 17, 2020-March 30, 2020 mandated closure.

Q: Will employees who are on approved FMLA be paid during the Act of God Days? (UPDATED 3/17/2020)

A: This is a fact specific inquiry, please contact your assigned UD for additional processing.

School Closure Issues

Q: Who makes a decision whether to close a school district as a result of COVID-19? (UPDATED 3/17/2020)

A: On March 13, 2020, at a 4:00 p.m. press conference, Governor Pritzker mandated that all public and private K-12 institutions close effective Tuesday, March 17, 2020. IEA is in ongoing conversations with ISBE in order to obtain answers to a variety of questions regarding the impact of the closure on school staff. At this time there is no statewide mandate with respect to the closure of higher education institutions and decision are being made on an institution-by-institution basis. This FAQ will be updated as answers are received. We thank you for your patience and understanding

Q: How is ISBE classifying the mandated closures dates? Are they emergency days? Act of God days? (UPDATED 3/16/2020)

A: ISBE has designated that the mandated closure dates March 17, 2020 through March 30, 2020 are Act of God Days.

Q: Will schools be required to make up school days for the period March 17, 2020 – March 30, 2020? (UPDATED 3/16/2020)

A: No. ISBE has determined that these days do not need to be made up.

Q: Are these Act of God days considered instructional days? (UPDATED 3/16/2020)

A: No. While ISBE has emphasized that schools should undertake efforts to keep up continuation of learning remotely, Act of God Days are not instructional days. Any instruction or continued learning that occurs during this period cannot be factored into student grading. Nor is ISBE has informed schools not to submit attendance reports for these days. That said, ISBE has informed schools that they may take attendance for their own purposes.

Q: Our superintendent said that all school districts must immediately submit eLearning plans to the ROE regardless of the actual capacity for eLearning– is that true?

A: That statement is not entirely accurate. ISBE strongly encourage those districts that are able to engage in e-learning that do not have approved plans to submit e-learning plans to ROEs/ISCs for approval as soon as possible, in preparation for the potential need to close school buildings. ISBE has plans to issue resources and guidance to districts about home learning, understanding that some districts are not able to implement e-learning at this time. In addition, ISBE is awaiting guidance from the Office of Special Education Programs on how districts should treat students for whom eLearning is not a reasonable method to learn.

Q: Is there a distinction on the requirements from local districts to providing free or reduced meals for emergency days vs. Act of God days vs. E-Learning days? (UPDATED 3/17/2020)

A: No. While districts are not required to provide meals to students during the mandated closure, it is strongly encouraged for the health and wellbeing of all children. According to ISBE, these lunches should be distributed free of costs to all students who need one, regardless of whether they qualify for free or reduced meals. The district may submit for reimbursement if follows appropriate state and federal guidelines and tracks the numbers of meals distributed. More information is available on ISBE's COVID-19 website.

Q: For districts that did not get an e-learning plan approved by the ROE prior to the closure, if those districts implement e-learning days in their district, will they need to be made up like any other emergency day?

A: No. E-learning during the mandated closure will not count as Instructional Days on the school calendar, so ROEs/ISCs do not need to approve plans for providing e-learning during the mandated closure. That said, ISBE encourages Districts to continue continuity of learning during the mandated closures. Efforts may still be undertaken to develop an eLearning Plan under the relaxed requirements contained in the Governor's COVID-19 proclamation for use during the effect of the proclamation.

IEA member specific questions

Q: If our buildings will be closed on the date of the NEA RA Delegate election due to the virus, what should we do? (UPDATED 3/17/2020)

A: The IEA issued guidance to Region chairs regarding how elections can be handled due to school building and IEA building closures. Please contact your Region Chair for guidance.

Q: Does the IEA notification regarding cancellation of meetings mean that vote tallies need to be cancelled? (UPDATED 3/17/2020)

A: The IEA issued guidance to Region chairs regarding how postponed tallies can be handled due to school building and IEA building closures. Please contact your Region Chair for guidance.