Return to Work FAQs
for
Anchorage School District Supervisors
July 16, 2020

1) What should I do if I am feeling sick or if I have been exposed to COVID-19?

DO NOT GO TO WORK.

CONTACT A MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL AND FOLLOW THEIR INSTRUCTIONS.
CALL BEFORE GOING TO A HOSPITAL/CLINIC IF YOU ARE EXHIBITING COVID-19 SYMPTOMS. CALL 911 IF IT IS AN EMERGENCY.

PLEASE HELP KEEP EVERYONE SAFE!

2) What should I do if an employee thinks they might be, or appears to be sick?

They should not be at District facilities for any reason. Any employee who is sick with COVID-19, exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, or has had known or suspected recent exposure to COVID-19, cannot be at a District worksite. Employees absent for one of these reasons will be eligible for COVID-related paid leave for up to ten (10) workdays (if they have not already exhausted this benefit) and would then be required to use sick leave or other accrued leave until they are released to return to work.

To learn more about employees’ eligibility for different types of leave, talk to your supervisor and/or contact the ASD leave office by email at AskLeave@asdk12.org.

3) When can employees return to work after feeling sick or being exposed to COVID-19?

Employees sick with COVID-19, exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, and/or having a known or suspected recent exposure to the virus will not be allowed to enter ASD facilities until they have been released to return to work. The determination of when an employee will be allowed to return to work will require an individualized assessment based on current recommendations from the medical community and the information being provided to ASD by the employee and/or their medical provider. Before returning, employees may be required to demonstrate they have met quarantine requirements, provide a release to return to work from a medical provider, and/or show proof of a recent negative test result for COVID-19. COVID-19 testing is widely available currently and will be the preferred method for employees to demonstrate that they can safely return to ASD worksites.

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4) **What information can be shared with employees about the District’s efforts to provide a hygienic and safe workplace?**

Supervisors should make every effort to inform employees about the extraordinary measures the District has undertaken over these past few months to provide the cleanest and safest possible workplaces.

Most of these efforts will be visible to staff. The resources procured to protect staff and students will be widely available (cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer, PPE, etc.). Employees and students will be wearing masks. Some work areas will feature Plexiglas and other protective workstation features. Building signage will indicate paths of travel, designate social distancing requirements, and will provide health and safety-related information.

These efforts will continue as long as necessary in response to the current circumstances in our community, and will continue to be updated based on the best available science and knowledge from public health experts.

It will be up to each of us as District Supervisors to remind staff and students that they can help this effort by following simple, but critical instructions for safe and hygienic practices, which are:

- **Mask wearing** - required at all times in all public areas and shared workspaces.
- **Social Distancing** - stay six feet or more apart when possible.
- **Regular hand washing** - using soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- **Do not touch your face** - sneeze or cough into your elbow.

5) **Will employees continue to telework?**

Generally no, unless circumstances in our community determine that we are operating under the “High Risk” model (100% distance learning) articulated by ASD’s 2020-21 School Start Plan, or a particular employee has received special permission due to the individual’s unique circumstances. If the District returns as currently scheduled to any model that includes classroom instruction, staff will be returning to their normal District work locations on August 13th, if not earlier.

Supervisors may hear from employees reluctant to return to their District work location and that they would prefer to continue to work remotely or use leave. If, after discussing the employee’s concerns and explaining the District’s efforts to provide a safe and hygienic workplace, the employee is unwilling or unable to return to their District work location, employees should be directed to request leave and/or submit an accommodation request (if the employee has identified a medical reason for why they
cannot return to their normal workplace). Accommodation requests for teleworking assignments must be reviewed with the Office of Equity and Compliance.

Other inquiries about employees refusing to return to work should be directed to the Labor Relations office at LaborRelations@asdk12.org.

6) Am I required to wear a face mask or face covering while working at an ASD school or facility?

Yes, ASD employees are required to wear a face mask (cloth or disposable) or other face covering while working in public areas and shared workspaces at any ASD school or facility, and supervisors should make every effort to lead by example. Employees working alone in a private office or outdoors are encouraged to wear a mask, but are not required to do so.

7) What should I do if I learn someone is not wearing a mask as required?

Everyone might need an occasional, friendly reminder about the mask requirement and supervisors should make every effort to counsel staff on the requirement before addressing the concern through any formal disciplinary action. Employees should also be given the benefit of the doubt and opportunity to correct any lapse in their observance of the mask requirement, as there are certainly circumstances in our workplaces when an employee may have to remove their mask (eating, drinking, articulating words or motions to model for students, etc.) or simply forgot to appropriately reposition a mask after going outside or taking a sip of water.

8) What should I do if an employee, despite my best efforts, continues to refuse to wear a mask?

Supervisors are responsible for helping employees understand the mask requirement and why it is for everyone’s safety, enforcing this requirement within their building or department, and if necessary, addressing intentional noncompliance through escalating levels of progressive discipline. If an employee persists in their refusal to wear a mask after being instructed to do so and informed about the possibility for disciplinary action, please contact the Labor Relations office about whether the employee can be allowed to remain on District property without a mask.

If an employee has stated that they cannot wear a mask due to their own medical condition, discontinue any disciplinary action being considered, and refer to the answer to Question #9 (below).
9) What if an employee states they have a medical condition that limits their ability to wear a face covering while at work?

Any employee who is unable to wear a face covering while at work because of a health condition must contact their supervisor to request an accommodation before expecting to enter a District facility without a face covering. Any requests received for a mask exemption when a personal health condition has been cited should be referred to ASD’s Office of Equity and Compliance (907.742.4132). Employees will likely be required to provide medical information in support of their accommodation request.

If someone in your building or department has been authorized to not wear a mask, you will be notified, but the reason justifying the accommodation cannot be shared with others. A vague response to any inquiries about this concern is best, and can be answered simply with “they were authorized by the District for valid reasons that I cannot share to protect their privacy.”

Some departments have taken a proactive approach to this issue by emailing employees before they return to their District worksite with a message similar to the sample below:

All,

As you prepare to return to work as scheduled, please remember that there is a District and Municipal requirement to wear a mask or face covering while inside District work locations. For the safety of everyone in our community, this requirement will be strictly enforced.

If you have a medical condition which prevents you from complying with this mandate, please notify me as soon as possible. You may be required to produce a doctor’s verification justifying the medical based need which prevents you from wearing a mask, and your request can be more quickly considered if you can provide that information at your earliest possible convenience and before returning to work.

Please contact me with any questions.

Thank you.

10) Where can I go for additional information?

For information about ASD’s response to COVID-19, go here.

For information about the Municipality of Anchorage’s response to COVID-19, go here.

For information about the State of Alaska’s response to COVID-19, go here.

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For information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) about COVID-19, go here.

For information about COVID-19 related leave, please visit the U.S. Department of Labor website here.