



SUFFOLK
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dr. John B. Gordon III, Superintendent

100 North Main Street

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January 12, 2022

Dear SPS Family:

As we continue to press forward through these unprecedeted times, we wanted to take a moment to address the growing concerns around the impact of the Coronavirus (and variants) in our school division. On Monday, January 10, Governor Northam issued a 30-day state of Emergency as Coronavirus (COVID-19) cases have increased across the Commonwealth of Virginia. Data from the Virginia Department of Health shows that the City of Suffolk has a high transmission rate, with 1,590 total new cases per 100,000 in the past seven days.

Within our school division, we currently have over 1,000 students and an overwhelming number of staff in quarantine, which has caused us to be concerned about the operational effectiveness of our schools. As our quarantine numbers continue to rise, remaining in in-person learning is simply a risk that we can no longer continue to take in certain schools. Parents, we hear you, and we understand your concern in keeping your children safe, as the safety of our students and staff has and always will be our number one priority. Based on outbreaks in the school, percentage of staff on quarantine and class closures, **the following schools will transition to virtual learning for the week of January 17 - 21:**

Kilby Shores Elementary

Mack Benn, Jr. Elementary

Southwestern Elementary

***Please plan for in-person learning to resume on Monday, January 24.**

This decision aims to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in our buildings. During virtual learning, students will log on daily in their classes via Canvas during their regular school schedule; teachers and staff will work from their buildings.

Building rentals and facility use will be temporarily postponed. We will continue to work closely with the Suffolk Health Department to monitor the status of several other schools across the division to determine if a transition to virtual learning is needed. This is a fluid situation and we will make adjustments as necessary.

SPS Virtual Instruction

- Students will login daily at their scheduled class time and are expected to participate in all daily instructional activities provided.
- Students will follow their regular school instructional schedule.
- Student special education case management services will continue according to their current schedule.
- Attendance protocols are the same as regular instructional days. Students who do not attend live instruction will be marked absent.
- Canvas is the required learning platform for all students. Teachers will use Zoom, BigBlueButton, or Google Meet for live instruction.
- Teachers will communicate links for live instruction through Canvas.
- Grades will still be available in HAC.

School Hours

Elementary - 9:25 AM-3:50 PM

Middle - 7:25 AM-2:00 PM

High - 8:20 AM-3:00 PM

[SPS Continuity of Learning Parent Handbook 2021-2022](#)

HotSpot Checkout

Please keep in mind that Hot Spots are not substitutes for HighSpeed Internet, and households that already have an Internet Connection should not request a device. If you

are in need of a hotspot device, please complete the required form, which can be found at the link provided: [HotSpot Check Out](#)

Only students attending **Kilby Shores Elementary, Mack Benn, Jr. Elementary and Southwestern Elementary** will be able to request a HotSpot.

Forms will need to be completed by 1:00 p.m. on Friday, January 14, 2022. Please only complete ONE form per household. Completed forms will be reviewed for the following criteria:

- The family requesting a HotSpot can only receive one device per household
- The family has active students in Suffolk Public Schools
- The family does not have a device checkout or has not returned a device
- All students in the household are verified
- Address is verified to match what is in the student information system
- All contact information valid

Devices will only be available from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Monday, January 17, 2022 for pickup for the families that have received a confirmation email notifying them that they have been approved. Please see below for pick-up information.

Pickup location:

John F. Kennedy Middle School
Door #16
2325 E Washington St
Suffolk, Va 23434

Any HotSpot NOT picked up on Monday, January 17, 2022 will not be available for pickup at a later date.

SPS Childcare Plan

We will provide additional information on community child care options by Friday, January 14.

SPS Meal Distribution

Students will receive a five-day meal kit on Friday, January 14. Parents may need to make arrangements to assist. Additionally, meal distribution will be available on Tuesday, January 18, and Thursday, January 20, from 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Meal kits consist of five breakfast meals, five lunch meals, five dinner meals, and five snacks. Students in virtual learning can pick up meals from Kilby Shores Elementary, Mack Benn., Jr. Elementary, or Southwestern Elementary. Students do not have to be present to pick up meals.

SPS Medication Pick-Up

We understand that virtual learning will take place during a 4-day week. However, if your child receives daily doses and needs to pick-up any medication from Kilby Shores Elementary, Mack Benn Jr. Elementary or Southwestern Elementary during the week of January 17 - 21, please contact your child's school to make arrangements. Please keep in mind that Suffolk Public Schools will be closed on Monday, January 17 in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

We want to thank our school community for their flexibility and understanding. We know that making adjustments is not easy, but we are taking the necessary steps to keep our students and our staff safe. Thank you for your continued support of Suffolk Public Schools.

Sincerely,



Dr. John B. Gordon, III
Division Superintendent