



March 13, 2020 at 6:45 pm

Parents and Employees of Pelham City Schools,

The information surrounding the new coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to emerge at a fast pace. Pelham City Schools has been proactively collaborating with our school administrators and department heads to implement prevention and planning strategies with guidance from the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) and the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE). This communication is based on the very latest information received during the Governor's press conference at 5:00 this evening, and further details received from the ALSDE at 6:30 pm.

Governor Kay Ivey has declared a state of emergency in Alabama, and all public schools will be closed Thursday, March 19 through Friday, April 3 with a plan to reopen on Monday, April 6.

The state decision to close school starting on Thursday provides parents more time to make plans regarding child care. We recognize that some parents may not need this additional time and may feel a better plan for their child is to stay home Monday through Wednesday. Therefore, Pelham City Schools will be excusing student absences Monday, March 16 through Wednesday, March 18. On those days, all school staff will report to work, and we will continue normal school operations, including the extended day program at the elementary schools.

We are also following guidelines for school operations based on recommendations from the Alabama State Department of Education that were released earlier today:

Effective March 16 through April 30 -

- We will postpone or cancel any and all field trips, whether inside or outside of Alabama.
- We will cancel or limit any events where it would be expected to have 500 or more people gathered. This will include performances, plays, athletics, conferences, etc. It was noted that amended activities may still be appropriate if attendance can be limited.

For events or field trips planned after April 30, the Alabama State Department of Education will re-assess the situation in the coming weeks and make further recommendations based on guidance from Alabama Public Health.

Additionally, all athletics/extracurricular events will be canceled beginning Saturday, March 14. We will provide further information on athletics/extracurricular events scheduled from April 6 through April 30 as more information becomes available.

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Remember that we all play a role in reducing the likelihood of a coronavirus outbreak in our community. We encourage everyone to practice good habits, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with the inside of your elbow when you cough or sneeze.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Also, if your student or someone they have been in contact with is diagnosed with COVID-19, please follow guidelines from their medical provider and notify Pelham City Schools by emailing jstevenson@pelhamcityschools.org. If you have questions about symptoms your student is experiencing, please contact your medical provider for guidance.

These are unprecedented times, and we are committed to keeping our families and employees informed of any new developments. Please check the COVID-19 page on www.pelhamcityschools.org for the latest updates and resources, including a COVID-19 Parent Guide from the Alabama State Department of Education, COVID-19 share facts, handwashing tips, and other guidelines to stop the spread of germs.

Thank you for your support as we strive to maintain a healthy environment for our students, employees, and all who visit our schools.

Dr. Scott Coefield, Superintendent
Pelham City Schools

