



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

Data Policy Updates Related to COVID-19: School Calendar & Attendance Coding

Background

As a part of the District's response to the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States, OSSE is modifying certain policies related to data practices. In all decisions, OSSE will consider relevant federal and local requirements, and fairness to LEAs and schools, during this dynamic time.

Scope

This document contains details and policies specifically relating to the **updating of school calendars** for closures and **daily attendance coding for students** during this period.

Effective Date

This policy will take effect from March 9, 2020 and will remain in effect until further notice.

Policy Guidance

For school closures

- As in the case of any school closure, whether at the individual school, LEA, or District level, the school calendar must be updated in eSchoolPLUS to reflect that the days during which the school was closed were non-instructional days and thus attendance would not be recorded for any student.
 - Specific to school closures related to cleaning or school community quarantine, OSSE has introduced a new school closure code. The specific instructions for data managers are provided in Appendix I of this document.
 - Schools must have notified the DME via the DME.DismissalAdvice@dc.gov with the specific dates and reasons for closure in order to use this code.

For individual student attendance

- The following applies only for students that are absent while the school is open; absences during a school closure are not recorded at the student level.
- Attendance for individual students should be coded depending on the circumstances:
 - Absences for illness should be **excused** as usual, if accompanied by appropriate documentation as determined by the LEA attendance policy,
 - Absences resulting from prescribed quarantine by the DC Department of Health (DOH) for individual students or populations within the school should be **excused**, if accompanied by appropriate documentation as determined by the LEA attendance policy,
- OSSE will not introduce new attendance codes for this policy update; existing instructions are reiterated in Appendix I of this document.

- Documentation required to excuse absences for the purposes of attendance tracking remains the purview of the LEA. OSSE expects that some LEAs may choose to provide interim guidance on required documentation for the duration of this public health action
- OSSE suggests that LEAs maintain attempts to collect appropriate documentation but exercise judgment during this unique time

Forthcoming policy updates

In addition to these immediately applicable policy updates, OSSE is developing further guidance on the following issues on the timelines provided below:

- Impact of student attendance and school closures on state-wide assessment administration;
 - This guidance is forthcoming by March 16th, and will address test administration and testing windows for all statewide assessments;
- Impact of closures on the DC school year duration requirement (“180-day rule”) and any necessary flexibilities that OSSE may provide to LEAs and schools;
 - OSSE has the authority under current regulations to approve flexibility from the 180-day requirement, and will be closely monitoring the overall impact of the public health actions on the education system and on specific schools.
 - Timely updates and guidance on this topic will be forthcoming prior to the end of the 2019-20 school year.
- Impact of student attendance and school closures on data validation;
 - This guidance will be addressed prior to the end of the 2019-20 school year, upon review of the overall impact of the public health actions on the education system
- Impact of individual student attendance and school closure on accountability.
 - This guidance will be addressed after the end of the 2019-20 school year, upon review of the overall impact of the public health actions on the education system and coordination with other agency partners such as Public Charter School Board.

Again, in all decisions, OSSE will consider relevant federal and local requirements, and fairness to LEAs and schools, during this dynamic time.

Questions?

If you have questions relating to this policy please contact OSSE’s Director of Applications, Stephanie Davis at Stephanie.Davis3@dc.gov.

Appendix I. Data Manager Guidance for School Closures and Individual Absences related to COVID-19

Use the following value to update the LEA calendar in eSchoolPLUS when the LEA or an individual school is closed due to related public health emergency.

Code	Description	State Code Equivalent
PHE	Public Health Emergency	PHE

Please note that no attendance will be expected for any day(s) coded with PHE in the nightly feed.

Use the following value to update attendance absence reason for an individual student not reporting to school due to an illness related to the public health emergency in your student information system (SIS).

Data Element	ADT Value Descriptor	ADT Value
Attendance Absence Reason	Student Illness	11