



# Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

Updated on 4/17/20

## K-12 SCHOOL CLOSURE FAQs

In Emergency Order #1, Governor Tony Evers [directed](#) Secretary-designee Andrea Palm to close all public and private schools beginning at 5pm on Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>. [Emergency Order #28](#) built upon this order, directing schools to remain closed for the rest of the 2019-2020 school year. This applies to any type of pupil instruction or extra curricular activity that occurs in a school building or on school grounds.

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is maintaining a website to provide the latest updates related to COVID-19 impacts to schools. Please visit [their website](#) for more detailed information.

### **How long will schools be closed?**

The order closes public and private K-12 school buildings for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year, which ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>. The order does not change a school's final attendance day for students. All schools must remain closed for in-person instructional and extracurricular activities. Schools may be used for essential government functions and food distribution.

### **What is the rest of my school year going to look like if schools are closed?**

Schools are strongly encouraged to facilitate distance or virtual learning. It is important for schools to continue to keep in touch with students as social connections through school are important to student mental health. The DPI has resources on its [COVID-19 website](#) to support schools in this work.

### **I'm a school employee and people are using our outdoor spaces to congregate or play group sports. What should I do?**

Use your discretion on the best path forward given the situation. We encourage all communities and individuals to work together to comply with the Safer at Home order. You can talk to the group to education them on the importance of social distancing and the Safer at Home order. Another option is to request local law enforcement to assist in communicating that message.

### **Will the required instruction hours be modified?**

[Emergency Order #10](#) suspended requirements in administrative rule related to the waiving of the hours of instruction. As a result, the DPI has an expedited waiver process for the instructional hours requirement and has indicated it will approve all such waiver requests. More information can be [found here](#).

### **How will students who qualify for free or reduced lunch be supported during the closure?**

State and federal leaders continue to work to ensure children are receiving meals during this challenging time. The DPI has created a [Child Nutrition Program COVID-19 Information website](#) to help School Food Authorities and Summer Food Service Program sponsors navigate the options for serving children meals in a non-congregate setting during school closures due to COVID-19.

The DPI was granted a Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) waiver by USDA. This request is to waive the congregate feeding requirement for SFSP meals during unanticipated school closures at school and non-school sites during a public health emergency, such as COVID-19. The waiver is for all SFSP sponsors in good standing in the state.

**What support is available for students with an IEP?**

The DPI has created a website with [special education updates and resources](#). School districts are encouraged to provide learning opportunities so students can make educational progress despite the significant disruption of school closures, including providing students with disabilities access to these opportunities to the greatest extent possible. Districts are also encouraged to provide the services specified in the student's individualized education program (IEP) to the extent possible based on the individual needs of the student during this public health emergency. If some services cannot be provided, the local educational agency (LEA) must consider, whether and to what extent, compensatory services are required once the school reopens.

**Will school playgrounds be open?**

No. Playgrounds are closed.

**What are the implications for state testing/assessments?**

The DPI received approval to implement waivers for requirements in section 1111 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, related to federal assessment and accountability requirements. Additionally, recently signed legislation, Wisconsin 2019 Act 185, specifies that assessments that are usually required to be administered annually are not required in the 2019-2020 school year.

**What are the implications for childcare/extended day programs?**

Child care settings are essential businesses and operations. Secretary-designee Andrea Palm's [Emergency Order #6](#) remains in effect, with the following amendments:

Child care settings must prioritize care for families as follows:

Tier 1: Employees, contractors, and other support staff working in health care

Tier 2: Employees, contractors, and staff in vital areas outlined in the order

Child care settings include all licensed and certified child care providers who may provide care for any age or ages of children up to 13 years of age, unless specially licensed for children with disabilities up to 19 years of age.

Please see the Department of Children and Families [FAQ on this topic](#) for additional information.

**Are all athletics and club sports canceled?**

All K-12 school buildings are closed to extracurricular activities. No team or contact sports are permitted.

**Will student graduations be affected?**

The DPI has an [FAQ](#) about graduation requirements, grading, and class promotion. Course grades and class promotions are determined by school board policies and not by state requirements. Districts have latitude in determining what grades to award, if any, for coursework, and what coursework is required for credit attainment.

**What conversations should parents have with their children at home?**

The DPI recommends the following resource: [Talking to Children about COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) - A Parent Resource](#). More resources can be found on the [DPI's website](#).

**Does the order prohibit school staff from reporting to work?**

No. The order only applies to pupil instruction and extracurricular activities, not to other functions. School leaders will make determinations on a case-by-case basis regarding access for other purposes, such as virtual learning, cleaning, food service, payroll and clerical functions. If school facilities are used for other purposes, districts should follow guidance from public health officials to ensure that appropriate health and safety measures are in place.

**Will hourly staff be paid?**

Gov. Evers recognizes that the closure presents challenges to students, families, educators, staff and districts, including financial impact. Gov. Evers encourage districts and all employers to take whatever steps they can to minimize the economic impact to workers due to public health closures. The federal CARES Act requires schools to continue to pay employees and contractors "to the greatest extent practicable" to be eligible to receive funds.