

School Closure FAQ

Which schools are closing, and for how long?

The Governor has declared that all schools in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties will be closed for at least six weeks. Schools will close no later than Tuesday, March 17, and will not reopen before Monday, April 27. Schools outside of this area may also be closed. Check [the OSPI website for a closure tracker](#).

Why are schools closing?

There are multiple factors that led to this decision:

- The number of cases is rapidly expanding.
- Health officials can no longer map the contacts of infected individuals reliably.
- School districts within the region are experiencing unparalleled student absences.
- Many districts are on the brink of no longer being able to staff their schools due to staff absences.

Will more schools close?

There is the potential for additional school closures in other regions of the state. Decisions about additional closures will be made based on the number of cases, the inability to map infected individuals, and student and staff absences.

Are childcare options being provided during closures?

Closing schools has a major impact on our ability to staff hospitals, health care facilities, and other fire and medical departments. Superintendents have been asked to provide childcare, at no cost, to families who are in the medical field or who are first responders.

If childcare options are provided, how will those children be kept safe?

Districts that provide childcare should take every measure possible to keep students and staff safe, including providing social distancing, ensuring consistent hand washing, sending students and staff home if they're sick, and routinely disinfecting commonly touched surfaces.

What if I don't work in those fields?

If families don't work in the healthcare or first responder fields but are expected to continue to attend work during the closure, they should reach out to their school district. Districts can make additional decisions that are needed for their communities.



Will meals be provided for students during closures?

School meal programs will continue for schools closed because of COVID-19. Families should contact their school to find out about meal services and distribution.

Will students be learning from home during the closure?

Superintendents have been advised to explore opportunities for extended learning, similar to packets that are sent home during Thanksgiving and winter breaks. Schools should not be providing online learning services unless they can provide those services equitably.

How will schools support students experiencing homelessness?

Schools are expected to plan how they will continue to support students experiencing homelessness during the closure. Reach out to your school district for more information.

Will students have to make up missed days?

Schools and districts that close in response to the COVID-19 outbreak should make every effort to make up missed time, including using scheduled vacation days and planned school closure days. However, OSPI will grant emergency waivers to allow districts to end the school year on Friday, June 19 at the latest.

Will this have an impact on student testing?

OSPI is canceling all state testing for the 2019–20 school year. This includes the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA), the Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science (WCAS), the Washington Access to Instruction and Measurement (WA-AIM), and WIDA Alternate ACCESS for English learners.

If schools are not impacted by closures, they are encouraged to continue administering the English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21) until the end of the testing window, March 27. This is subject to change based on additional closure announcements.

How will families be notified about additional information?

Districts are expected to follow their standard procedures for notifying families. This includes, but is not limited to, calls, emails, text messages, and contacting local news stations. If families are not hearing from their districts during a closure, they should get in touch with their school principal or district superintendent.

What should districts outside of the closure area be doing to prepare?

Districts that are outside of the closure area (King, Snohomish, and Pierce counties) should continue their contingency planning in the event that schools should close. Districts should also be working closely with their local health officer.