



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Parents/Guardians

During the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) System Closure

This document has been prepared to assist parents and guardians during the network-wide closure of the Independence Mission School (IMS) network. If you have any additional questions, please direct them to your school's Principal.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Why is the IMS network closed? All 15 schools operated by the Independence Mission School network have been closed for an extended period, effective Monday, March 16, 2020 through at least April 6, 2020. This closure was ordered of all schools in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by Governor Wolf in an effort to minimize social spread of the Coronavirus COVID-19 throughout the state (including greater Philadelphia).

How long will the closure last? We will follow the recommendations of the local, state and national authorities to determine if we will be able to re-open on Monday, April 6, 2020 and do our best to keep you updated on the status of re-opening in the coming weeks.

Are school personnel still working during the closure?

Yes. Principals and teachers have been asked to deliver distance learning during the closure (see below). Other staff members are also working remotely to support teaching staff and families.

Are school buildings being cleaned during the closure?

Each school was thoroughly cleaned and sanitized on Tuesday, 03/17/2020. All buildings will be closed during the closure using the guidelines of the CDC.

Will school calendars be adjusted as a result of the closure?

Possibly. We will inform parents if/when adjustments are made.

Does the closure affect extra-curricular activities and other school events?

Yes. All extra-curricular activities including after school enrichment programs, athletics and other school events will not take place during the closure.

Are school lunches still being offered during the closure?

The city of Philadelphia has designated meal distribution locations during this closure. Please refer to this link for a full list: <https://www.phila.gov/2020-03-14-find-free-meals-and-safe-spaces-for-students-while-schools-are-closed/>

QUESTIONS ABOUT DISTANCE LEARNING

What is distance learning?

Distance learning relates to student learning that is delivered either through technology or through printed packets or assignments from textbooks. The IMS academic team has provided resources to schools for promoting learning during the school closure. Principals at each school have been asked to communicate with parents/caregivers to share learning plans and additional resources. If you need support in obtaining learning resources, please contact your school's principal. Additional resources can be found on the IMS Coronavirus update website under the "Keep Learning Going" section: <https://independencemissionschools.org/about/coronavirus-update/>.

How will distance learning take place?

Schools will be sending regular communications home regarding distance learning expectations and assignments. Students should complete distance learning, ideally during regular school hours, throughout the closure. Distance learning can relate to any school subject.

What if I don't have access to the Internet?

While you don't need to have internet access to participate in distance learning, many educational websites (including those that are mobile-phone friendly) are offering free access as a result of the outbreak. Families without internet can participate in the [Comcast Internet Essentials program](#) and receive free internet for 60 days. Visit the IMS Coronavirus update website and refer to the "Keep Learning Going" section for more information: <https://independencemissionschools.org/about/coronavirus-update/>

Will distance learning be of good quality?

Nothing can replace the teacher-student interactions at the heart of good learning. However, teachers and school leaders are working diligently to ensure the highest possible quality of distance learning through distributing resources and encouraging innovation and creativity. It is vital that our students continue learning during this closure!

Are younger children (preschool and kindergarten) expected to participate in distance learning?

Yes. Schools should be providing distance learning to all grade levels, including preschool and kindergarten.

I am confused or have concerns about my child's distance learning. What do I do?

You should not be afraid to contact your child's school principal if you have questions or concerns about distance learning. Our schools depend upon good communication and a spirit of partnership between teachers and parents/guardians!

Will distance learning assignments be graded?

All submitted student work in our distance-learning environment will be monitored, and students will receive regular feedback on their work and progress. To the extent possible, we are asking that distance-learning activities be completed by students. We believe it is important for students to remain engaged academically, to use their God-given intellectual gifts, even during this challenging period. However, no student will be penalized for difficulty in completing such activities because of technological or other similar barriers. Faculty have been instructed to be flexible with deadlines, as well. If students are facing any such difficulties, we ask that parents/caregivers discuss these with the student's homeroom teacher. We are also monitoring communication from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of PA, as they offer updates and guidance around assessment practices in the current school year.

Will standardized tests still be administered this year?

Currently, we have not yet received guidance from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia on postponing or cancelling the TerraNova. We are awaiting additional details on the duration of school closures in Pennsylvania before making a final determination about postponing or canceling the MAP test.

QUESTIONS ABOUT TUITION AND REGISTRATION

Should I still pay tuition during the system-wide closure?

Yes. At this time in order for our schools to offer a high-quality distance learning opportunity, ensure clean and safe environments for when our buildings reopen and continue to compensate staff during this closure, we will not be pro-rating school tuition. Cares fees, however, will not be due during this time.

I am having difficulty paying tuition, as my own workplace has been impacted by the closure. What do I do?

We know that some families may have difficulties paying tuition due to the loss of pay during workplace closures. If this is happening to you, please contact your school's Tuition & Enrollment manager.

Should I still register for next school year?

Yes. All families are encouraged to proceed with registration for next school year if you have not already done so. You should work with your school's Tuition & Enrollment manager to submit your registration materials.

I know of another family that is interested in joining my child's school next year. What should they do?

All schools are actively registering new families for next year, in spite of the closure. You should encourage any interested families to contact your school's principal or Tuition & Enrollment manager. They can also apply online at: <https://forms.tads.com/ims-admissions/>. Be sure to take advantage of our Family Referral Program when referring a new family to any of our schools. Contact the school or visit the school website for more details.

What if I have other questions?

If you have any other questions, please contact your child's school.

In all things, remember that God is watching over us and blessing our efforts. Mary, Mother of God, Pray for Us.