



MTI Frequently Asked Questions

COVID-19 Coronavirus

Visit the MMSD website, mmsd.org/covid19 daily for updates. Human Resources has issued a [COVID-19 FAQ for MMSD Employees](#) that will also be updated as the situation evolves. The District (MMSD) will be providing a weekly update, including answers to frequently asked questions, via email and on their website.

The [Dane County Public Health](#) office is another excellent resource to visit.

We will be updating the information below as we learn more, but MTI will be doing as much as possible to mitigate the negative economic impact of this public health event on MTI represented employees.

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1. What if there is an emergency school closure?

State and local officials, along with MMSD administration, are considering the logistics necessary if a decision is made to close schools for this public health emergency. At this time schools remain open and we encourage folks to remain flexible and make preparations for the possibility of an extended closure.

MTI is seeking the immediate change of Employee Handbook policies to ensure that all employees are fully compensated if schools are closed. Current Handbook policies provide teachers this assurance, but hourly staff are required to use PI, vacation, or make-up time in order to be compensated or go without pay. MTI is advocating for the District to treat all employees equitably. *We continue to await the Districts response to this request.*

2. Can the District forbid an employee from travelling?

The District is discouraging staff from travelling, but they have not issued a directive about employee travel over non-work time. **With that said, employees should seriously consider canceling travel plans over Spring Break to help slow the spread of COVID-19.**

3. Can the District prevent an employee from returning to work following a trip to an area with confirmed cases of COVID-19?

Yes, during this public health emergency, the District has stated that anyone who travels, or has travelled (for personal or work reasons) after March 11, may be asked to [self-quarantine for 14 calendar days](#) after returning home.

[Important clarification on local public health guidance on travel and other updates](#) from MMSD.

4. Will employees be paid for time they are under self-quarantine, *but not ill*?

During this time you can use accumulated Personal Illness, Vacation, Comp Time or take the time off unpaid.

5. What if I have no paid time available?

MTI is advocating for paid time for everyone in the event of an emergency closure and working with the District to encourage other ways of mitigating any negative economic impact related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The District is currently indicating that employees without available paid leave time will go without pay.

This situation is unprecedented, and, in addition to our efforts with MMSD, MTI has authorized additional funds to be made available to employees who experience financial hardship via the **Solidarity Fund**. These funds are interest-free loans that enable employees to repay small amounts

over long periods. The maximum request for immediate turnaround has been increased to \$1,000. One must be an MTI member to qualify for assistance from the Solidarity Fund.

6. What if I show COVID-19 symptoms or my doctor recommends a medical leave of absence?

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you should stay home, monitor your symptoms and contact a health care provider if you have a fever, cough, or shortness of breath. Similarly, if your health provider believes you should be on a medical leave of absence for an underlying health condition, complete a [Leave of Absence Request Form](#) and obtain medical documentation (*this is not necessary for self-quarantine*).

7. Can the District send an employee home who displays symptoms of COVID-19?

The CDC has stated that employees who becomes ill with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 while at work during a pandemic *should leave the workplace*. Therefore, the District may direct employees to go home if they show obvious symptoms of illness.

8. What should an employee do if they have an underlying health condition that may make the employee more susceptible to COVID-19 complications?

An employee is not *required* to disclose an underlying condition under these circumstances. However, an employee may voluntarily disclose such a condition and may take of leave of absence to limit exposure. At this time the District is not requiring medical documentation for such a leave and employees should inform their supervisor and complete a [Leave of Absence Request Form](#). Note that compensation while on this leave will come from personal sick leave, vacation or comp. time. Otherwise, the days off will be unpaid. MTI can assist employees with a leave of absence if there are complications. [More at COVID-19 FAQ from HR](#)

9. Do employees need to tell their employers if they develop COVID-19 or discover they have been exposed to someone with the virus?

While employees do not have an affirmative duty to reveal this information, we strongly encourage that you to do so. Employees who either contract the virus or learn they have come in contact with a person confirmed to have the virus should follow [all applicable public health recommendations](#) to ensure their health and safety and contain the virus' spread.

10. Can the District ask an employee about personal travel plans?

Yes, the law does not prohibit such inquiries.

11. What will happen if an employee travels during the pandemic and is unable to return to work due to flight delay or other travel issues related to COVID-19?

First, it is recommended that employees seriously consider canceling travel plans during this

pandemic. It is likely that the District may require an employee in this situation to utilize any paid leave available or take the time off *without pay*.

12. If an employee is away from work during the COVID-19 pandemic, can the employer require the employee provide a fitness for duty certification?

Yes. It is not generally a requirement unless MMSD tells you that it will be necessary.

13. If a district closes due to a COVID-19 pandemic, will it need to make up missed instructional time?

School districts need to comply with DPI's instructional hours requirements. While school districts may request a DPI waiver to reduce the number of required instructional hours, DPI does not anticipate granting such waivers based on the information it has to date. Days may be made up at the end of the school year and/or via online learning. However, if DPI makes a declaration closing schools, make-up time is not generally required but given these unprecedented circumstances, we will have wait and see how this is handled.

14. Can school districts comply with instructional hours requirements by providing online learning?

Yes, DPI regulations count online learning towards hours of instruction. Wis. Admin Code PI § 8.01(2)(f) provides: "Scheduled hours may also include the hours of instructional programming offered through *innovative instructional designs* that apply to the entire school or grade level."

Innovative Instructional Design means an instructional program aligned to school district standards and used to improve student academic achievement through instruction offered outside of the normal school day, virtually, or in an alternative setting." Wis. Admin Code PI § 8.001(6g). School districts have discretion in deciding when and for how long they can effectively implement online instruction.