



Memorandum

To: Oneida Nation Employees
From: Oneida Business Committee
Date: March 17, 2020
Re: COVID-19 Related Policy

The purpose of this memorandum is to share information with you about the most current policy decisions being implemented to ensure proper support to our Nation's employees during the Public Health Emergency Period. These decisions are specific to employees who are impacted by the precautionary COVID-19 virus action taken by the State and the Oneida Nation regarding mandatory school closings.

Background

Over the past several weeks, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Indian Health Services, and our own internal experts have been communicating with leadership and our employees about where to obtain information on how to protect you and your families from the COVID-19 virus, and what precautions you can take to prevent its spread.

At this time, we emphasize all decisions being made remain in the precautionary stage. The situation remains fluid with circumstances changing daily, and we want you to know the Oneida Nation continues to assess, review and make decisions about precautionary actions which mitigate the spread of COVID-19. We hope our cancellations and restrictions lessen the spread of this flu strain, it is being referred to as "Flattening the curve".

One of the most prudent options available to any business or community is to practice social distancing. While this practice varies depending on the space itself and relative density of the population using it, the CDC is consistently communicating a space of 3-5 feet between individuals should be maintained and to practice good hygiene such as frequent handwashing. Another precaution being utilized by the State and the Nation is the decision to close schools.

On Friday, March 13, 2020 Governor Evers announced the mandatory closure of all public and private schools in the State of Wisconsin (State). The closures are required to start on Wednesday, March 16 and will be re-evaluated by the State by the projected end date of April 6, 2020. The Oneida Nation School System (ONSS) has followed suit. We support the decisions made the State and the ONSS to close schools as a precautionary measure and recognize this has created an urgent need for the Nation to answer questions being raised by parents who are concerned about being away from the workplace during the identified closure periods.

The Nation looks to our core values and the vision that guides us in our daily decision-making: Kahletsyalúsla; Kanolukhwásla; Kaʔnikuhli•yó; Kaʔtshatstásla; Kalihwi•yó; Twahwahtsilaya and Yukwatsistaya, as well as being a “Nation of Strong Families built on Tsi? niyukwaliho TÁ and a Strong Economy.” These core values and our vision reminds us daily that our employees are unequivocally the backbone of Oneida operation’s delivery of health care, police protection, environmental protection, housing, elder care, education, and childcare to name a few; and we also acknowledge those who are committed to generating the funds to support these functions.

Emergency Time and Attendance Time-Off Requests

We are aware many parents are seeking alternative childcare and may be considering a parent or other family members. We strongly urge employees to seek childcare from individuals who do not fall within the high-risk category, mainly persons who are 60 year of age and older or who have underlying health conditions. These guidelines can be found on the CDC’s webpage: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/high-risk/high-risk-complications.html>.

To provide the best support possible to employees during this State-wide precautionary measure, the OBC had determined the following policies will be implemented to assist employees who may not have viable alternative childcare options for school age children:

1. Telecommuting procedures will be allowed for employees who are able to work from home; the Standard Operating Procedure has been developed and already shared. We have included this information for your reference and HRD will continue to provide updates as needed;
2. Where needed, provide authorization for overtime and cross-organizational support for non-impacted employees; and finally,
3. Employees who have no other option than be absent from work, will be compensated their regularly scheduled pay. This policy will remain in effect until schools resume classes on or about April 6, 2020, until the Nation’s Public Health Emergency Declaration expires, or other economic factors warrant another course of action. HRD will be communicating instructions for employees on how to submit for this time.

We have worked with our Senior level managers to ensure the greatest latitude available is considered and granted to employees for absences from work related to the COVID-19 virus. We also want to be clear that our expectation and the expectation of managers is that employees will utilize these options prudently.

Next Steps

The OBC recognizes this immediate measure is only one solution to the issues arising from the school closures. While we are confident the overall risk to our community is still low as a result of the precautionary measures taken to date, we re-emphasize the situation remains fluid. We encourage all employees to review their own emergency preparedness plans and ask questions.

To assist in this effort, the Nation is also implementing the following steps; specifics will be communicated this week as the actions are completed:

1. A centralized phone number and email has been activated where all questions about the Nation's precautionary measures, that are not health related, can be directed to; that number is (920) 869-4481 and the email is Covid-19@oneidanation.org
2. Employee concerns regarding disinfection practices at the Nation's enterprises is being reviewed and considered in upcoming decision-making.

Lastly, please continue to communicate question and concerns to the resources provided above. Employees may continue to seek guidance from their supervisors as well. We appreciate your patience, support and diligence as the Oneida Nation, the community and State work through precautionary actions taken to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

With a good mind, a good heart and a strong fire.