

COVID-19: INTERIM POLICY GUIDANCE

Updated April 1, 2020

Children's Aid is committed to the health and safety of its clients and staff. We have been actively engaged in advocacy efforts with the city to (1) receive immediate guidance on specific regulations and policies for services we are obligated to deliver in compliance with government contracts, and (2) obtain assurances regarding unanticipated costs so that we have the continued capacity to offer a first line of defense for New York City's most vulnerable.

As this situation is fast developing and we know staff have questions, we are sharing the interim policy guidance below, **which will be modified as we learn more from our government partners and as the COVID-19 situation develops**. We will email and post updates to [Charlie](#)¹ as they become available. These new interim policies will supersede the current ones in the Children's Aid Employee Handbook. We may modify this policy in the future and will apply and interpret this policy as needed in accordance with applicable law.

Our current guidance is as follows:

Alternate Work Hours

- If an employee would like to alter their work schedule they must notify their supervisor to ensure business continuity, staffing ratios, coverage, etc. The staff supervisor will determine the feasibility of the request and the Deputy Director or Division Head will make the final decision.

Remote Work from Home

- If an employee is able to fulfill their job function and work remotely, they should notify their supervisor and with approval from the Division Head, should work from home. If for any reason the employee is unable to fulfill their work remotely, they should be sure to inform their supervisor.

Site Closure

- Children's Aid has been designated an essential business and will remain open unless otherwise indicated.

¹ To access Charlie remotely, go to <https://childrensaidst.peoplefluent.com>. Type your user name preceded by casny\ (e.g., Username: casny\johnd) and your regular network password.

- If New York City closes your specific work location, notify your supervisor. Your division head will provide direction on whether you should report to an alternate work site or if you should go home.
 - An employee's supervisor and division head may approve working remotely only if the employee can fulfill their job function by working productively from home.
 - If an employee who is approved for remote work is later asked to report to an alternate work site but cannot report to that work site for personal reasons that do not qualify for other leave, the employee should notify the supervisor. The division head may then re-approve remote work, or if that is no longer available, then the employee must choose to either:
 1. use paid personal time (sick, personal or vacation days) or
 2. take unpaid leave.When accrued time off runs out, employees will be placed on unpaid leave.
 - Unless otherwise directed, if an employee cannot fulfill their job function by working productively remotely, the employee will receive further direction from their supervisor or division head, which may include working from an alternate work site or other work that may be done from home.
 - If an employee is assigned to an alternate location but cannot report to work for personal reasons that do not qualify for other leave, the employee must choose to either:
 1. use paid personal time (sick, personal or vacation days) or
 2. take unpaid leave.When accrued time off runs out, employees will be placed on unpaid leave.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What do I do if I am sick or need to care for a sick relative, but we aren't sure if we have COVID-19?

Employees who are sick or who are taking care of a sick relative may use their sick leave balance. In any of the cases listed below, please notify your supervisor.

If you are feeling sick, stay home and [refer to the CDC for further guidance](#) on what to do.

o **What if I do not have enough sick time?**

Employees who use up all their sick leave must choose to either:

1. use other accrued time off (personal, vacation) or
2. take unpaid leave.

When accrued time off runs out, employees will be placed on unpaid leave. **If an employee has less than 10 days of total leave available, Children's Aid will advance up to 5 sick days prior to staff taking unpaid leave.**

o **Do I need a note from a health care provider?**

At this time, staff who are feeling sick or need to stay at home to care for a sick relative, and are not sure if they have the COVID-19 virus, do not need to provide a note from a health care provider.

2. What if I or my partner/family member has tested positive for COVID-19, but I have not received an order to self-isolate and be quarantined?

You must stay home if you or your partner/family member has tested positive for COVID-19, and may not return to work without clearance from a health provider. Contact your supervisor, who will advise TMHR.

Note: If you are a health care worker, see FAQ #4 below.

3. What if the New York Department of Health issues an Order telling me I must quarantine?

On March 18, 2020, [New York State passed legislation to provide employees with paid leave for certain specific reasons related to COVID-19](#). The guidance below is based on this new legislation.

Employees who are subject to a mandatory or precautionary order of quarantine or isolation issued by the State of New York, the New York Department of Health, a

local board of health, or any governmental entity authorized to issue such an order due to COVID-19, will be provided with 14 days of paid sick leave. This should cover the period of mandatory or precautionary order of quarantine or isolation. Employees must submit to TMHR a copy of the applicable order of quarantine or isolation received from the government.

(Note: Employees whose minor dependent child is under an order of mandatory or precautionary quarantine or isolation issued by the State of New York, the New York Department of Health, a local board of health, or any governmental entity authorized to issue such an order, due to COVID-19, may be eligible to take Paid Family Leave to care for them. Eligibility for covered employees is the same as it is for other Paid Family Leave.)

You will not be discriminated or retaliated against for taking paid sick leave or Paid Family Leave.

The 14 days of paid sick leave under the NYS COVID-19 sick leave legislation is not available if you are asymptomatic or have not yet been diagnosed with any medical condition and you are physically able to work remotely while under an order of quarantine or isolation issued by an applicable government entity.

Note: If you are a health care worker, see FAQ #4 below.

4. What if I am a Children's Aid health care worker and have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19/tested positive for COVID-19?

Please refer to the [latest guidance from the New York State Department of Health](#) and consult your supervisor for further direction.

5. What if I notice an employee or client in one of our sites who appears to be sick?

The person should be directed to go home and contact a health care provider. The person should be isolated and provided with a mask (if available) until they are able to leave the building.

6. What should I do if I cannot work remotely, but commuting to work would put my health at risk because of an underlying medical condition or because I am in a [CDC-defined high-risk group](#)?

Employees should notify their supervisor. If an employee cannot fulfill their job function by working productively remotely, the employee must choose to either:

1. use paid personal time (sick, personal or vacation days) or
2. take unpaid leave.

When accrued time off runs out, employees will be placed on unpaid leave. **If an employee has less than 10 days of total leave available, Children's Aid will advance up to 5 sick days prior to staff taking unpaid leave.**

Please note that employees with underlying medical conditions may request a reasonable accommodation and should contact their supervisor and then notify TMHR.

7. What should I do if I cannot work remotely but my child's school/daycare is closed?

Employees should notify their supervisor. If an employee cannot fulfill their job function and work productively remotely, the employee must choose to either:

1. use paid personal time (sick, personal or vacation days) or
2. take unpaid leave.

When accrued time off runs out, employees will be placed on unpaid leave. **If an employee has less than 10 days of total leave available, Children's Aid will advance up to 5 sick days prior to staff taking unpaid leave.**

If your workplace or your child's school is closed due to a public health emergency, mandatory or precautionary quarantine or order of isolation, you may be eligible for paid leave and should consult with TMHR.

Important note: Employees may not bring their child(ren) to any Children's Aid work site.

8. If I am not sick, can I work from an alternate Children's Aid location that is more convenient for my commute?

At this time, we are unable to accommodate alternate work locations unless otherwise directed by program division leadership.

For updated information on what's happening and how you can prepare, we encourage you to visit the COVID-19 websites for the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#), the [New York State Emergency COVID-19 Paid Sick Leave](#), and the [New York City Department of Health](#).

For Children's Aid updates, check [Charlie](#) or our [website](#).