



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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STATEMENT ON USE OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEES

ST. THOMAS, USVI – The Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE)—in keeping with established guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Virgin Islands Department of Health—remains committed to ensuring the health and safety of its employees during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic affecting our community.

As such, VIDE kitchen managers, kitchen workers, school monitors, and school bus drivers who are essential to the preparation and distribution of meals to students during the current school closures, have been provided personal protective equipment (PPE), in the form of disposable gloves, to ensure workers' safety while performing their duties. Additionally, adequate instruction on frequent hand cleansing, social distancing and remaining at home when sick is regularly provided to all VIDE employees in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

Facemasks

It is the recommendation of international, national and local health experts that PPEs, namely single-use facemasks, be worn only by: 1. health professionals treating patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 and 2. patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 (see attached info graphic from the World Health Organization).

As the coronavirus continues to spread rapidly around the globe, there is a shortage of facemasks and gloves for use by medical professionals who are at the forefront of fighting the disease. Supplies cannot be produced fast enough, as demand far exceeds production rates. When made available, these critical items are rightly being supplied first to medical professionals and other first responders.

Finally, the V.I. Department of Education remains committed to performing, with fidelity, its esteemed duty of providing nutritious meals to students during this health crisis for as long as our available resources would allow us to safely do so.

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