

DEPARTMENT POLICY

VI Department of Education's
"COVID-19 Employee Policy"

April 16, 2021

Last Updated



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION



COVID-19 EMPLOYEE POLICY

PURPOSE

This policy informs employees on the expectations in operations in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

ABBREVIATIONS

VIDE:	Virgin Islands Department of Education
VIDOH:	Virgin Islands Department of Health
CDC:	Centers for Disease Control
EAP:	Employee Assistance Program

POLICY

The Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE) continues to follow the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in conjunction with Virgin Islands Department of Health (VIDOH) officials to reduce the further spread of the COVID-19 disease in our community.

Business with the Public

VIDE affirms that the health and safety of its employees are of primary concern. As a result of the recommended precautionary measures to contain the spread of COVID-19, VIDE will continue to limit in-person interactions at its State and District worksites as well as on St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix. Thus, we ask that all business be conducted electronically, whenever possible, until further notice. We understand that there is some business that requires in-person interaction; therefore, directors and managers have been asked to implement and adhere to in-person public interaction protocols for each respective office

Below is guidance for employees:

Personal Safety

Your safety is important. As VIDE continues to take preventative measures, it is imperative that employees continue to wash hands, use hand sanitizer (when handwashing is not possible), wipe down work surfaces, wipe down shared equipment after usage, and maintain social distancing, when possible. In addition, all employees are required to comply with the following to reduce exposure:

- Contact your direct supervisor immediately if you or someone in your household is experiencing coronavirus symptoms. Immediately self-quarantine.
- Contact your direct supervisor immediately if you and/or someone you have been in contact with has tested positive for COVID-19. Immediately self-quarantine.
- Supervisors should reach out to their superiors immediately for guidance and next steps



Mask Mandate

Employees, and visitors/guests, are required to wear a face mask or facial covering when entering/exiting worksites or cubicles, when entering shared areas, such as break rooms, restrooms, hallways, using shared office equipment, etc. Failure to adhere to the mask mandate may result in progressive discipline and/or removal from the workplace. **Masks with exhalation valves or vents, such as industrial painters' masks (see images below), are not permitted. Masks should be worn to cover both nose and mouth.**

Employees Testing Positive for COVID-19

If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, the employee needs to self-quarantine, notify their immediate supervisor, and call VIDOH at **340-712-6299 (STX)** or **340-776-1519 STT/STTJ** for additional guidance. Immediate Supervisors will contact their superiors for additional guidance. Superiors will contact the Office of Human Resources for additional guidance.

Personal Travel

Employees are strongly encouraged not to travel during the pandemic in order to reduce exposure to COVID-19. **Employees choosing to travel outside of the Territory on personal or official duty, if not vaccinated must quarantine for 72 hours upon return AND test at the end of the quarantine period (on the fourth day). They may return to work with a negative COVID-19 test result OR if positive, isolate under the orders of VIDOH and not return to work until cleared by VIDOH.** The approved COVID-19 tests accepted are:

- COVID-19 molecular (e.g., RT-PCR, viral or nucleic acid amplification) test from a nasal or throat or saliva swab sample OR
- COVID-19 antigen (rapid) test from a nasal or throat swab sample
- COVID-19 antibody (rapid) finger stick or blood draw test taken (ONLY if Vaccinated)

Below are some additional travel guidelines that must be followed:

Prior to Travel:

- If an employee chooses to travel during the COVID-19 pandemic, for any reason and/or time, they shall give their supervisor timely notice and advise if they intend on utilizing annual or sick leave.
- If the employee requires accrued annual leave, they will submit their leave request to their direct supervisor, as they have done in the past
- Accrued sick leave can only be utilized if proper documentation has been submitted for medical leave

Post Travel:

- If an employee becomes stranded due to travel restrictions, the employee will be required to use their accrued annual and/or sick leave to cover the time away from work. Proper communication with supervisors, with as much notice as possible, is required in order to ensure adequate work coverage.
- Prior to returning to the office (regardless of the number of days outside the territory):
 - COVID-19 Vaccinated – If an employee has been fully vaccinated (meaning they have completed their dose(s) at least 14 days from the final shot, they can return to work with proof of a:



- Positive antibody test and their COVID-19 vaccine document. The test is valid for 4 months from the date of the result. A quarantine period is not required. Or;
 - Negative COVID-19 Test. A quarantine period is not required.
- If not vaccinated- If an employee is not vaccinated, they will be required to quarantine for 72-hours after arriving in the Territory utilizing accrued annual and/or sick leave and take a second COVID-19 test at the end of such quarantine (on the fourth day). The COVID-19 test provided must be conducted in the United States Virgin Islands after the employee has returned from their travels. In addition, the employee must provide proof of travel to their immediate supervisor in order to show when the quarantine begins.
- If an employee receives a negative COVID-19 test on/or after the fourth day of arriving on the territory, the employee will submit the test to their immediate supervisor. The employee can return to work.
 - If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, they must self-quarantine and reach out to their immediate supervisor for additional guidance.
 - In the event an employee does not have sufficient accrued sick and/or annual leave, the employee is required to request approval in writing from the Commissioner to utilize Leave Without Pay (LWOP).

Professional Travel

Similar to personal travel, we encourage all employees not to travel during the coronavirus pandemic for professional reasons. However, if you have been granted approval for work-related travel, you must still abide by the policies for returning to the office.

Employees travelling for work-related purposes are required upon their return to self-quarantine if not vaccinated for **72-hours AND test at the end of such quarantine (on the fourth day)**. **They may return to work with a negative COVID-19 test result or if positive, isolate under the orders of VIDOH and not return to work until cleared by VIDOH.** The approved COVID-19 tests accepted are the:

- COVID-19 molecular (e.g., RT-PCR, viral or nucleic acid amplification) test from a nasal or throat or saliva swab sample OR
- COVID-19 antigen (rapid) test from a nasal or throat swab sample
- COVID-19 antibody (rapid) finger stick or blood draw test taken (**ONLY** if Vaccinated)

Below are some additional travel guidelines that must be followed:

Prior to travel:

- If there is an option to do conduct the business remotely, that should be the first choice
- If virtual training is unavailable, employees must follow the same policies for personal travel
- Direct supervisors must share with the employee traveling that the employee is required to provide a negative COVID-19 test result upon their return to the (regardless of the number of days outside the territory).

Post Travel:

- Prior to returning to the office (regardless of the number of days outside the territory):



- COVID-19 Vaccinated – If an employee has been fully vaccinated (meaning they have completed their dose(s) at least 14 days prior, they can return to work with proof of a positive antibody test and their COVID-19 vaccine document. The test is valid for 4 months from the date of the result. A quarantine period is not required.
- If not vaccinated- If an employee is not vaccinated, they will be required to quarantine for an additional 72-hours after arriving in the Territory utilizing accrued annual and/or sick leave and take a second COVID-19 test at the end of such quarantine (on the fourth day). The COVID-19 test provided must be conducted in the United States Virgin Islands after the employee has returned from their travels. In addition, the employee must provide proof of travel in order to show when the quarantine begins.
 - If an employee receives a negative COVID-19 test on/or after the fourth day of arriving on the territory, the employee will submit the test to their immediate supervisor. The employee can return to work.
 - If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, they must self-quarantine and reach out to their immediate supervisor for additional guidance.
 - In the event an employee does not have sufficient accrued sick and/or annual leave and hopes to utilize Leave Without Pay (LWOP), the employee must obtain approval in writing from the Commissioner.
 - Situational telework can be approved by your immediate supervisor, which includes duties and location if applicable. As a reminder, permission to telework can be revoked by direct supervisors, agency head or the Governor of the Virgin Island for any reason. Failure to advise your direct supervisor of teleworking outside of the territory will be considered abuse of the telework policy and can impact current and future telework approvals.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The Government of the Virgin Islands and CIGNA provides confidential and voluntary assistance through its Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to all employees and their family members covered on their plan who may be faced with challenges with COVID-19 and other issues. CIGNA has provided you webcasts available online at www.cigna.com/eapwebcasts. For more information please call:

- 1.888.371.1125
- Log in to www.mycigna.com
- Employer ID: usvgovernment

Cigna offers all active employees and retired employees under 65 access to medical services remotely through MDLive as part of your medical plan. Cigna Telehealth Connection lets you get the care needed—including most prescriptions (when appropriate) – for a wide range of minor conditions. Telehealth connects employees with a board-certified doctor via video chat or phone, without leaving their home or office.

- Choose when: Day or night, weekdays, weekends, and holidays.
- Choose where: Home, work, or on the go.
- Choose how: Phone or video chat.

How to access?

1. Go to Cignabehavioral.com to search for a video telehealth specialist.
2. Call to make an appointment with your selected provider. Telehealth visits with Cigna Behavioral Health network providers cost the same as an in-office visit.

Please note:



Cigna’s customer cost-share waiver program for COVID-19 treatment concluded on February 15, 2021. An example of treatment may be hospitalization. This means that “treatment is no longer covered at 100%, the coverage will revert to the plan benefits for hospitalization or outpatient treatment that may be necessary. You will continue to have \$0 cost-sharing for all FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines and diagnostic COVID-19 testing and related screening office or virtual visit, as required by the CARES Act. Please remember that a referral is needed for testing if you have symptoms or have been exposed to COVID-19. Members of the plan are not required to pay administrative fees to the provider that administers the vaccine. However, if other services are provided at the time of the vaccine administration, such as a chronic condition evaluation, you will be charged a co-pay for those services.

Things you can do to support your wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- ✓ Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- ✓ Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs.
- ✓ Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- ✓ Connect with others via video or phone chat. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

VERSION CONTROL

Modification Date	Modification Reason	Modification Approved By
02/2021	Updates to include travel requirements	Commissioner Berry-Benjamin
04/2021	Updates to include updated testing upon return per VIDOH	Commissioner Berry-Benjamin

APPENDIX

Masks with exhalation valves or vents:

