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D.H.S. Closes Head Start Programs Over Coronavirus Concerns; Remote Learning, Meal Delivery Plans Being Developed, Department Says

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The Virgin Islands Department of Human Services Head Start Program will temporarily close classrooms territory-wide beginning Wednesday to follow precautionary federal guidelines from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the V.I. D.H.S. has announced.

Today will be students' last day of school for at least three weeks in accordance with Governor Albert Bryan's directive to close schools throughout the territory, the V.I. D.H.S. said. Staff are to report to work as normally scheduled, the department said.

The date for students' return to school will be determined as the department works through the COVID-19 pandemic, D.H.S. said. Classrooms will be sanitized in preparation for having students return to a safe environment when classes resume.

D.H.S. said staff and teachers currently are working to provide Head Start students and their families with learning activities to keep the students' minds engaged during their time away from the classroom.

Additionally, V.I. D.H.S. said it's exploring options for staying in contact with parents and for disseminating educational resources.

The V.I. D.H.S. Head Start team is said to be developing a plan and will advise students' families how meals for students will continue to be provided during the closure.

The department will continue to communicate with all Head Start families, who are asked to stay tuned to email, phone calls, radio, TV and social media platforms, including the department's page at [Facebook.com/usvidhs](https://www.facebook.com/usvidhs) for updates.

The V.I. D.H.S. asks that you contact the Head Start office at 340-773-1972 on St. Croix or 340-774-0930 ext. 4200 on St. Thomas with questions or concerns.

"The Virgin Islands Department of Human Services is committed to providing social services that enhance the quality of life for individuals and families with diverse needs and working toward its vision of empowering individuals and families toward self-sufficiency through a seamless delivery system, " V.I. D.H.S. said.

For more information on COVID-19, the new strain of coronavirus, visit the USVI Department of Health's website, doh.vi.gov/coronavirus or text COVID19USVI to 888777.