

Allendale Columbia opts to hold classes online; public schools still open

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Rochester-area school districts on Thursday afternoon were mostly holding off on canceling in-person classes, though they did not rule out doing so in the future.

Allendale Columbia School did cancel classes for Friday. Starting Monday all its instruction will be online, the school announced. The Harley School also alluded to a move to remote learning beginning Tuesday in a letter to parents.

“This decision has been made out of an abundance of caution for the safety of students, staff, and our wider community, which is our top priority,” Allendale Columbia Head of School Mick Gee wrote to parents. “The most important action we can take as a school is to be proactive and precautionary instead of reactionary.”

All local public schools said students should continue to come to class while canceling nearly everything else.

Penfield, for instance, canceled its high school musical, overnight trips and all volunteers and outside presenters in its schools. Pittsford Sutherland High School said it would have a live-stream of its musical tonight and otherwise canceled most non-classroom activities. Greece and Rochester canceled trips as well.

Most high school sports have either been canceled or, in the case of some state sectional competitions, will play without crowds.

The schools have been taking their lead from County Health Commissioner Michael Mendoza, who urged the cancellation of gatherings of more than 50 people.

Colleges and universities have been much quicker to close their doors and switch to online learning. Education for younger children poses a more difficult decision, since young children who stay home will need parents or caretakers to stay with them, potentially sending a shock wave through workplaces and the economy.

Many students also rely upon their schools for breakfast and lunch. Across Monroe County, 53,000 students are classified as economically disadvantaged, according to the most recent state data.

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