



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Friday, March 13, 2020

Contact: Mayor's Office of Communications, 415-554-6131

***** PRESS RELEASE *****

**SAN FRANCISCO CONVERTS PUBLIC LIBRARIES,
RECREATION FACILITIES TO EMERGENCY CHILD CARE
CENTERS**

Facilities will be closed to the public and will provide child care to the children of health care workers and low-income families

San Francisco, CA — Mayor London N. Breed today announced that beginning Monday, March 16 the Recreation and Park Department and the San Francisco Public Library will begin to operate libraries and indoor recreation facilities as emergency care facilities for children of parents on the front lines of the COVID-19 outbreak and low-income families. Both agencies will suspend regular indoor programming effective Friday, March 13 at 6 p.m.

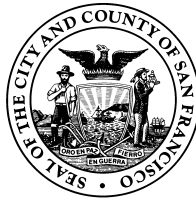
The decision comes in the wake of public school closures and other safety measures the City is undertaking to respond to the spread of COVID-19. Parents on the front line include San Francisco-based hospital staff, Department of Public Health employees, and activated Disaster Service Workers.

“During this time, health care workers and other essential staff need to be able to keep working and responding to this public health emergency,” said Mayor Breed. “With this change to our libraries and recreation facilities, young people whose parents need to respond to COVID-19 will have a safe place to go. I want to thank the Library and the Recreation and Park Department for stepping up to provide this critical service for San Francisco families.”

The centers will operate through March 31st. San Francisco Recreation and Park's recreation facilities will serve grades K through 5, Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The San Francisco Public Library will provide homework help and educational enrichment for youth grades 6-12, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Office of Early Care and Education is continuing to provide support and guidance for existing private childcare providers for children 0-5.

“San Francisco Public Library has long served as a safe haven for youth and an essential provider of educational and recreational resources,” said City Librarian Michael Lambert. “By focusing our organizational capacity on serving as Emergency Youth Care Centers, we are fulfilling our mission and supporting the City's overall resiliency at a time of critical need.”

“The San Francisco Recreation and Park Department is the largest provider of youth programming outside of the school district,” said Recreation and Park Department General



Manager Phil Ginsburg. “We will offer engaging activities akin to a summer camp in order to ease the impact of school closures on San Francisco families.”

“Health care workers are on the front lines every day, keeping our community healthy and safe,” said Dr. Grant Colfax, Director of Health. “Right now, the care they are delivering is more vital than ever, as we work together as a City to reduce the spread of the coronavirus. Practically speaking, health care workers often can’t work from home. With school closures and other impacts on our community, their childcare needs are changing fast. We are grateful to the libraries and recreation centers for stepping up to provide childcare for health care workers, so that they can continue to do what’s needed most, while knowing that their families are in good hands.”

“It’s important during this time of crisis to provide support for our most vulnerable families,” said Supervisor Ahsha Safai. “Opening up our public spaces to serve working families lifts a huge burden for those who don’t have many childcare options.”

All childcare centers will follow social distancing and related COVID-19 sanitation and hygiene recommendations. DCYF will provide three meals a day to all participants. Detailed information on emergency youth care locations, eligibility and registration will be forthcoming at <https://www.dcyf.org/care>.

In addition to the suspension of regular recreation programming, Recreation and Parks is also suspending all community meetings, volunteer events, and both indoor and athletic field permits (including all games, practices, clinics, tournaments and any other activities that would cause individuals to gather in close proximity), effective Saturday, March 14 through the end of March. Pools will also close.

The Sharon Art Studio, Conservatory of Flowers, and Carousel in Golden Gate Park are closed through the end of March. All San Francisco Youth Baseball League (SFYBL) games are cancelled through March 31, as well as the remainder of the Indoor Soccer League season. Summer day camp registration, originally scheduled for March 21, is postponed to a date to be determined. The Golden Gate Park Senior Center remains closed and senior programs are suspended citywide.

All other parks, trails and open spaces remain open. Community members are encouraged to use parks, but not to congregate.

All 28 Library locations will be closed to the public starting at 6 p.m. today and remain closed until March 31. The Library’s [robust digital services](#) will continue to give card holders 24/7 free access to [eBooks](#), [audiobooks](#), [magazines](#), [movies](#), [classes](#) and more.

Public Health Orders and recommendations from the San Francisco Department of Public Health at www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus.asp and stay up-to-date on coronavirus news and information. You can also call 311 and sign up for the City’s alert service for official updates: text COVID19SF to 888-777.



Remember, these are the best ways for all San Franciscans to reduce their risk of getting sick, and preventing COVID-19:

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your cough or sneeze.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Try alternatives to shaking hands, like a wave.
- If you have recently returned from a country, state or region with ongoing COVID-19 infections, monitor your health and follow the instructions of public health officials.
- There is no recommendation to wear masks at this time to prevent yourself from getting sick.

You can also prepare for the possible disruption caused by an outbreak:

- Prepare to work from home if that is possible for your job, and your employer.
- Make sure you have a supply of all essential medications for your family.
- Prepare a child care plan if you or a caregiver are sick.
- Make arrangements about how your family will manage a school closure.
- Plan for how you can care for a sick family member without getting sick yourself.
- Take care of each other and check in by phone with friends, family and neighbors that are vulnerable to serious illness or death if they get COVID-19.
- Keep common spaces clean to help maintain a healthy environment for you and others. Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned regularly with disinfecting sprays, wipes or common household cleaning products.

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