



## PRESS RELEASE

VI Department of Human Services reminds Head Start families that all in-person program instruction resumes on Monday, October 4, 2021, for all St. Croix locations

*For Immediate Release: October 1, 2021*

**U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS** - The Virgin Islands Department of Human Services (DHS), issued a reminder today, that in-person classroom activities on St. Croix, will resume on Monday, October 4, 2021. The Head Start Program had experienced COVID positives, as well as exposures at several Head Start sites and notification of confirmed COVID positives in the homes of program participants. DHS opted to close all classrooms for a one-week period to allow for COVID testing and to curtail on-the-job exposures.

Department of Human Services Commissioner Kimberley Causey Gomez stated, “We believe that we have acted responsibly and always with the safety of our staff and students as the primary concern in our minds. While in-person instruction was paused on St Croix, staff was working diligently to ensure that if this pandemic environment is going to require us to toggle back and forth between in-person and virtual, when necessary, we will be able to do so with undue interruption to our provision of services to our children and families.”

Assistant Commissioner Carla Benjamin added, “We are going to keep our eyes and ears open. We are going to try our best to improve communication with staff, the union, our Head Start parents, our sister agencies and the community, so that we all understand our assignments. We don’t necessarily have to agree but doing this safely is DHS’ responsibility.”

For information, contact the VIDHS Head Start Program at telephone number (340)773-1972 in the St. Croix district or (340)774-0930 extension 4200 in the St. Thomas/St. John district, email [headstartvi@dhs.vi.gov](mailto:headstartvi@dhs.vi.gov) or visit <http://www.dhs.gov.vi/preschool/index.html>

To enroll your child in the Head Start program, utilize the online application portal:

1. Go to <https://vihs.mycopa.com/familyPortal/childCare.epi>
2. Select preferred language (English or Spanish) by clicking on English or Espanol in the

- top right corner
3. Click on “Register”
  4. Give consent
  5. Create a family and child profile

**Please be reminded to maintain CDC best practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19:**

- Wear your mask (covering your nose and mouth while in the workplace).
- Maintain social distance.
- Wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds, often.
- Wear appropriate other PPE while in contact with other staff or clients.
- Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol when you cannot your wash hands.
- Routinely clean and disinfect frequently used surfaces.
- Share FACTS, not rumors.

For general information, please visit the Department of Human Services website, [www.dhs.gov.vi](http://www.dhs.gov.vi) or on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/usvidhs>) at US Virgin Islands Department of Human Services.

If you are experiencing any of the coronavirus symptoms listed on the Department of Health website (listed below), self-quarantine and immediately contact the Department of Health:

- V.I. DOH website: <https://doh.vi.gov/>
- COVID-19 Hotline: (340) 712-6299 or (340) 776-1519

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For more information on Covid19, the new strain of coronavirus, please visit the USVI Department of Health's website, [www.doh.vi.gov/coronavirus](http://www.doh.vi.gov/coronavirus) or text COVID19USVI to 888777. #COVID19USVI

*The Department of Human Services (VIDHS) exists to provide social services to members in our community with diverse needs. In times of national uncertainty and hardship we act as a safety-net and exist to inspire hope and empower change through non-judgmental, quality delivery of needed services and resources. Please visit the Department of Human Services website, [www.dhs.gov.vi](http://www.dhs.gov.vi) for more information.*

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