



Military Families For High Standards' Chairwoman, Christi Ham, Offers Resources to Military Families Amid COVID-19

Over the past week, we've witnessed a rapid acceleration of the spread of COVID-19 in the United States, as well as the rollout of responses from all levels of government and a broad swath of organizations and institutions, from colleges and universities to sports leagues. Perhaps more pressing to military families is the closing of several schools across the globe in efforts to help slow the spread of the disease and minimize its impact on both individuals and the health care system.

While safety is our number one priority, the reality is that this pandemic has given us several important things to consider, especially for our military families. Here are important updates we are tracking at Military Families for High Standards.

Travel disruptions for military families:

According to this article in the Military Times, the DoD has "banned all domestic travel for personnel and families amid the coronavirus crisis." You may be wondering how this will impact you and your family. Here's a broad overview:

- This travel ban is effective beginning on March 16, 2020.
- "All DoD military personnel will stop movement" until May 11th.
- "Troops will only be granted authorized local leave" which will limit "their ability to visit family and friends in faraway states."
- "The new rules cover permanent change of station (PCS) moves and temporary duty (TDY) travel," but if you've begun your PCS you can complete your move.
- Travel for medical treatment is authorized.

[You can read updates from the Pentagon here.](#)

We'd like to also acknowledge the personnel and families who are stationed abroad, especially the more than 75,000 service members and families stationed in [South Korea](#), Japan, [Italy](#), and Bahrain. While the military has halted some operations, we must keep our troops healthy and safe, not only for their wellbeing, but also for issues of [readiness](#).

Changes to Schooling:

The closing of schools is no small matter, but there is certainly precedent and schools and districts across the country are bracing for this reality. However, the issue is much more complex than simply telling students to stay home. These are issues that require both discussion and clear decision-making. Here's what families should know:

- Many school districts are continuing to provide meals and other educational services to students amidst school closures. The best thing you can do to stay updated is visit your school district's website, monitor their social media, and sign up for any updates via text, phone or email.
- Though nothing can take the place of quality instruction and teachers, there are a few free resources that can help, some of which we've included below.
- Additionally, academic testing is likely to be impacted. MFHS cares deeply about student achievement and is focused on what impact closures will have on standardized testing. March is historically the start of the season in which millions of K-12 students are tested in math, English arts, and science to fulfill federal requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act. Therefore,



many students may be out of school at the time they would typically take their designated state standardized test. As Education Dive reports, the U.S. Department of Education has released [guidance](#) surrounding testing and discussion is ongoing on whether the federal Department of Education will waive assessment requirements. This could potentially be a problem because critically important performance data will not be available to parents, schools, districts, and states to help shape decisions and policies.

While the state of testing is up in the air, we encourage you to visit [Assessment HQ](#) for the most accurate and updated information on state assessments. We also recommend using our “[Military Family’s Guide To School Transitions](#)” as well.

Resources for Families

We know parents are likely sorting through a wealth of online resources as they navigate the prospect of schooling and learning at home. With the hope of providing some quality tools, we would like to share a few suggestions to illustrate the variety of materials available to you and your children. Academic resources include:

- [Khan Academy – Daily home-learning schedule templates and recommendations](#)
- [Math Muscles – Math resources catered to grade level](#)
- [California Science Center’s Stuck At Home Science - free, downloadable science experiments](#)
- [AMNY - Free resources and subscriptions for remote learning and home schooling](#)
- [Achievement First Remote Learning](#)
- [Education Week - Online Learning Isn’t the Only Way](#)
- [Bookshare - offers accessible reading materials for readers with print disabilities, including dyslexia, blindness, cerebral palsy, and other reading barriers.](#)
- [Learning Heroes offers a free learning roadmap that includes daily activities, lessons, and resources catered to grade level.](#)
- [Smithsonian Museums - Distance Learning Resources](#)
- [Learning Heroes – “Quarantined” Mom: Day 4](#)

But we didn’t want to forget about the fun either. There are many free coloring pages, mazes and puzzles to download and a number of states have programs, virtual tours, historic data, and online activities to broaden the knowledge about your own state, the state you now live in or the state where you might be headed. And given this current situation, there are a flood of new activities and opportunities on any topic where there might be interest.

- [Stuck at Home? These 12 Famous Museums Offer Virtual Tours You Can Take on Your Couch \(Video\)](#)
- [Cincinnati Zoo Home Safari](#) - Join the zoo for a Home Safari on [Facebook Live](#) and their [YouTube channel](#) each weekday at 3 pm EDT where one of their amazing animals and an activity will be highlighted.
- [Digital Resources from Smithsonian Museums](#)
- [Social distancing: Six virtual tours you can take if you’re stuck at home](#)
- [Virtual Field Trips](#)
- [Digital Theatre- The World’s Leading Digital Platform For the Arts](#)
- [Doodle together every day at 1 pm with the Kennedy Center](#)
- [Free Coloring Books from 113 Museums](#)



Multiply the offerings here by the hundreds of thousands waiting to be discovered by your family, and you will have more than enough material to fill afternoons, hungry minds, and creative interests. Always be careful to examine the material and be cautious for the kind of advertising that accompanies them for age appropriateness.

We encourage you to reach out if you have additional questions or if you have found any great resources you'd like to share.

Hoping that your family is staying safe and healthy,

Christi Ham

Christi Ham
Chairwoman
Military Families for High Standards