



Please direct inquiries to:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Feb. 3, 2025

Dear AHPS Family,

We are continuing to address a safety concern at Covington Middle School, and we want to provide you with the most up-to-date information we have.

Covington Middle School will remain closed on Tuesday, Feb. 4, as the Alleghany Highlands Public Schools Division continues to address a safety concern in the kitchen area of the cafeteria.

As you know, CMS was closed on Monday, Feb. 3, after a thorough investigation of the building revealed that a natural gas oven and a ventilation system were not working properly, causing carbon monoxide to be released.

AHPS is working to resolve the issue, and the school will be reopened as soon as possible. The school will not open until AHPS is 100 percent sure the issue has been resolved and students and staff will be safe when they return to school. AHPS takes student and staff safety seriously.

Previously released information about this situation is available on the AHPS website. The available information includes two news releases, a letter from the superintendent to students' families and staff, and a fact sheet that is being updated regularly.

AHPS launched its investigation after it received concerns about an odor at the school on Friday, Jan. 31. School administrators, under advice from the Covington Department of Public Works, promptly evacuated the school as these professionals directed.

AHPS' thorough investigation was assisted by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) and the Roanoke Valley Regional Hazardous Materials Team. AHPS has also been in close communication with the Virginia Department of Health.

AHPS will continue to provide updates on this situation on the AHPS website, at <https://ahps.k12.va.us>. AHPS is encouraging the public to keep checking the site. It is being updated to provide accurate information and answers to frequently asked questions that are posted there.

Persons with questions or helpful information may email AHPSinfo@ahps.k12.va.us. We are working as hard as possible to communicate quickly and accurately as we manage this situation.

AHPS serves approximately 2,700 students. The school division is jointly funded by Alleghany County and the City of Covington. The school division was formed when Alleghany County Public Schools, Covington City Public Schools, and Jackson River Technical Center merged on July 1, 2022.

AHPS news and events are regularly updated on Facebook at [AHPublicSchools](#) and Instagram at [ahpublicschools](#). Information is also available at [ahpublicschools](#).