



COVID-19 School Updates

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PROTECTING, MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF ALL MINNESOTANS

COVID-19 Situational Awareness Update

Key Messages for Schools

Action Steps for Schools

- Be sure that your contact information on MDE.org is up to date, in particular:
 - School Nurse
(<https://public.education.mn.gov/MdeOrgView/contact/contactsByContactType?contactRoleTypeCode=NURSE>)
 - District Communications/Media Manager
(https://public.education.mn.gov/MdeOrgView/contact/contactsByContactType?contactRoleTypeCode=DST_COMM_DIR)
 - EDIAM Identified Official with Authority
(https://public.education.mn.gov/MdeOrgView/contact/contactsByContactType?contactRoleTypeCode=EDIAM_IOWA)
 - If there are discrepancies, please ask your site verification coordinator to make those updates.
(https://public.education.mn.gov/MdeOrgView/contact/contactsByContactType?contactRoleTypeCode=SITE_VER)

Action Steps for Schools

Interim Guidance for Administrators of US Childcare Programs and K-12 Schools to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

This interim guidance is based on what is currently known about the transmission and severity of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

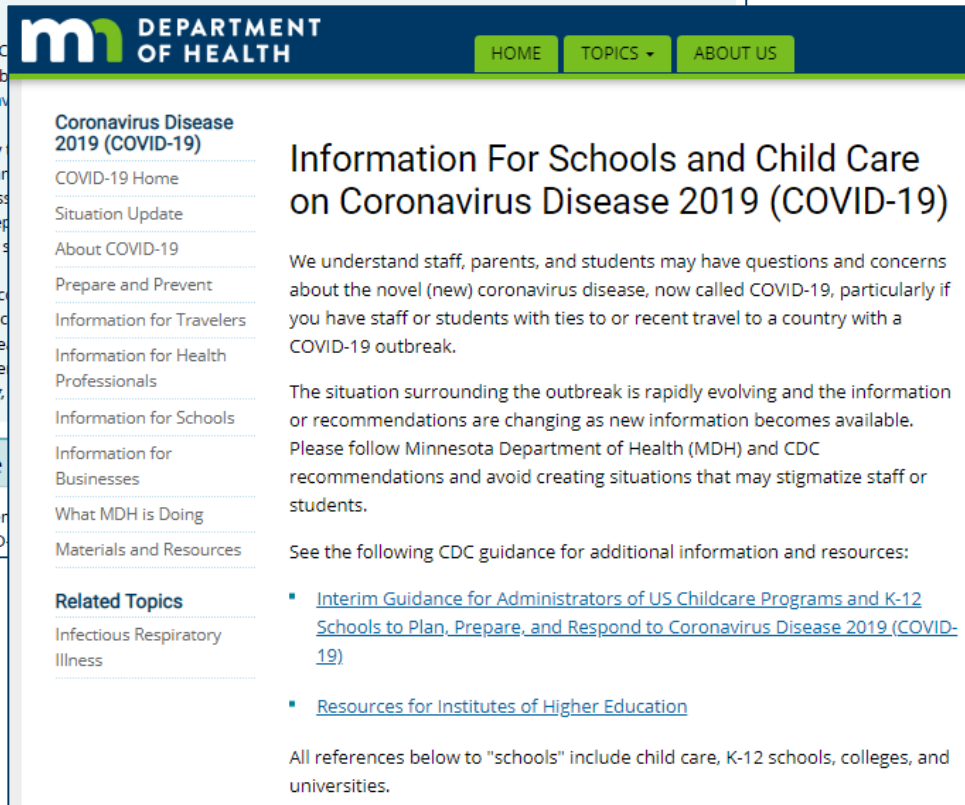
The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued interim guidance on how schools can prepare for information becomes available. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/>

Health officials are currently identifying COVID-19 cases in schools. Schools can play an important role in helping to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Schools can take steps to disrupt the transmission of COVID-19 in the school community. Schools can prepare for the possibility that local health officials identify cases in schools.

Schools should continue to encourage good hygiene practices throughout the whole school community, including students, staff, and visitors. This includes disruption to teaching and learning activities. Schools should continue to encourage good hygiene on everyday practices (e.g., eating, drinking, coughing, sneezing, and touching surfaces) and strategies for *before, during, and after* these activities.

Who is this guidance for?

This interim guidance is intended for school administrators to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in schools.



The screenshot shows the Minnesota Department of Health website. The page title is "Information For Schools and Child Care on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)". The navigation bar includes "HOME", "TOPICS", and "ABOUT US". The left sidebar contains a table of contents with items like "Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)", "COVID-19 Home", "Situation Update", "About COVID-19", "Prepare and Prevent", "Information for Travelers", "Information for Health Professionals", "Information for Schools", "Information for Businesses", "What MDH is Doing", "Materials and Resources", and "Related Topics". The main content area includes a sub-header "Information For Schools and Child Care on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)", a paragraph stating "We understand staff, parents, and students may have questions and concerns about the novel (new) coronavirus disease, now called COVID-19, particularly if you have staff or students with ties to or recent travel to a country with a COVID-19 outbreak.", another paragraph stating "The situation surrounding the outbreak is rapidly evolving and the information or recommendations are changing as new information becomes available. Please follow Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and CDC recommendations and avoid creating situations that may stigmatize staff or students.", a section titled "See the following CDC guidance for additional information and resources:" with two bullet points: "[Interim Guidance for Administrators of US Childcare Programs and K-12 Schools to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](\"#\")" and "[Resources for Institutes of Higher Education](\"#\")". At the bottom, it states "All references below to 'schools' include child care, K-12 schools, colleges, and universities."

- Please bookmark and review the following websites:
 - MDH Coronavirus for Schools: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools.html>
 - [CDC Interim Guidance for Childcare and K-12 Settings for the Management of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-for-schools.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-for-schools.html)

CDC Interim Guidance for Childcare and K-12 Settings

Guidance for schools which do not have COVID-19 identified in their community

To prepare for possible community transmission of COVID-19, the most important thing for schools to do now is **plan and prepare**. As the global outbreak evolves, schools should prepare for the possibility of community-level outbreaks. Schools want to **be ready** if COVID-19 does appear in their communities.

Childcare and K-12 school administrators nationwide can take steps to help stop or slow the spread of respiratory infectious diseases, including COVID-19:

- **Review, update, and implement emergency operations plans (EOPs).** This should be done in collaboration with local health departments and other relevant partners. Focus on the components, or annexes, of the plans that address infectious disease outbreaks.
 - Ensure the plan includes strategies to reduce the spread of a wide variety of infectious diseases (e.g., seasonal influenza). Effective strategies build on everyday school policies and practices.
 - Ensure the plan emphasizes common-sense preventive actions for students and staff. For example, emphasize actions such as staying home when sick; appropriately covering coughs and sneezes; cleaning frequently touched surfaces; and washing hands often.
 - CDC has workplace resources such as posters with messages for staff about [staying home when sick](#) and how to [avoid spreading germs at work](#).
 - Other health and education professional organizations may also have helpful resources your school can use or share. For example, the American Academy of Pediatrics provides information on [germ prevention strategies](#) and [reducing the spread of illness in childcare settings](#).
 - Ensure handwashing strategies include washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
 - CDC offers several free handwashing resources that include [health promotion materials](#), information on

Guidance for schools with identified cases of COVID-19 in their community

If local health officials report that there are cases of COVID-19 in the community, schools may need to take additional steps in **response** to prevent spread in the school. The first step for schools in this situation is to talk with local health officials. The guidance provided here is based on current knowledge of COVID-19. As additional information becomes available about the virus, how it spreads, and how severe it is, this guidance may be updated. Administrators are encouraged to work closely with local health officials to determine a course of action for their childcare programs or schools.

Determine if, when, and for how long childcare programs or schools may need to be dismissed.

Temporarily dismissing childcare programs and K-12 schools is a strategy to stop or slow the further spread of COVID-19 in communities. During school dismissals, childcare programs and schools may stay open for staff members (unless ill) while students stay home. Keeping facilities open a) allows teachers to develop and deliver lessons and materials remotely, thus maintaining continuity of teaching and learning; and b) allows other staff members to continue to provide services and help with additional response efforts.

Childcare and school administrators should work in close collaboration and coordination with local health officials to make dismissal and large event cancellation decisions. Schools are not expected to make decisions about dismissal or canceling events on their own. Schools can seek specific guidance from local health officials to determine if, when, and for how long to take these steps. Large event cancellations or school dismissals*** may be recommended for 14 days, or possibly longer if advised by local health officials. The nature of these actions (e.g., geographic scope, duration) may change as the local outbreak situation evolves.

If an ill student or staff member attended school prior to being confirmed as a COVID-19 case:

- **Local health officials may recommend temporary school dismissals if a student or staff member attended school prior to being confirmed as a COVID-19 case.** Local health officials' recommendations for the scope (e.g., a single

Key Elements of the CDC Interim Guidance for Schools

- Review, update, and implement emergency operations plans (EOPs).
- Monitor and plan for absenteeism.
- Establish procedures for students and staff who are sick at school.
- Perform routine environmental cleaning.
- Create communications plans for use with the school community.
- Review CDC's guidance for businesses and employers.

School FAQs

Do School Nurses Need N95 Respirator Masks?

- No
- If working closely with students who have a fever and cough, nurses may choose to wear a mask
- Districts may consider having students with a fever and cough wear a mask until they can be picked up

Supplies for Schools

All Students and Staff	Health Office Staff	Custodial Staff
Liquid Soap	Disposable Gloves	Disposable Gloves
Running Water	Surgical Masks (to be provided to students with fever and cough)	Paper Towels
Paper Towels	Thermometers	EPA Approved Disinfectants: https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/selected-epa-registered-disinfectants
Tissues	Disinfecting Wipes (that are on the district's approved list)	
Alcohol based hand rubs (if water is not available and hands are not visibly soiled)		
Develop routines for handwashing regularly throughout the day		

Should we exclude students who have traveled outside of the country?

- MDH follows CDC guidance
- Currently, all travelers returning from a country with a level 3 travel notice are asked to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms
- Schools should support students and staff in following this guidance
- CDC COVID-19 Travel Notices:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

How do we develop emergency plans for our district?

- Partner with your county emergency preparedness expert.
- Utilize guidance available:
 - CDC Emergency Management: <https://emergency.cdc.gov/>
 - Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools: <https://rems.ed.gov/DistrictGuide.aspx>
- MDH will continue to create and share resources to support this work
- Once COVID-19 resolves maintain emergency management teams and plans

How do we know when to close school?

- This is **not** a decision school districts need to make alone. MDH will provide guidance on when to close and how to manage if that would become necessary.

CDC Messaging Resources

- General CDC fact sheets to help staff and students' families understand COVID-19 and the steps they can take to protect themselves:
 - *What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)*
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf>
 - *What to do if you are sick with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)*
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html>
 - *Stop the spread of germs – help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses like COVID-19*
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs.pdf>
- CDC Information on COVID-19 and children: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/children-faq.html>

MDH Messaging Resources

- Sample Letter to Minnesota Families
- MDH Supply List to Prepare for COVID-19
- Community mitigation guidance, checklists

Q & A

Thank you.

Health.schools.covid19@state.mn.us

651-201-5414