



2019 Novel Coronavirus Guidance for Schools and School Districts

THE 2019 NOVEL CORONAVIRUS

The 2019 novel coronavirus is a virus that was recently identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, and is now being spread widely in other parts of mainland China. More cases are being detected worldwide, and while new cases were initially linked to Hubei Province, China, at this time public health considers being anywhere in China in the past 14 days a risk factor for novel coronavirus infection.

The virus causes respiratory illness. For up-to-date information regarding the novel coronavirus, see:

- the California Department of Public Health website at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx>; or
- Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

At this time, the health risk to the general public in California from novel coronavirus remains low, but schools can take common-sense precautions to prevent the spread of all infectious diseases. These precautions will be helpful to also prevent the spread of other common illnesses such as influenza and gastroenteritis.

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The risk of exposure to this new coronavirus in China is increasing over time. Consistent with CDC guidance on returning travelers from China, local health departments are communicating with travelers returning from mainland China to provide guidance about limiting public interactions for 14 days.

Travelers from mainland China arriving in the United States since February 3, 2020 should be excluded from school for 14 days, beginning the day after they left China.

CDC guidance on returning travelers is available here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html>.

Please note that there have been reports of students and others being stigmatized. We urge schools to ensure students' and staffs' privacy to help prevent discrimination.

In the unusual event that a student or staff member is identified who:

- has symptoms of respiratory illness, such as fever and cough, **AND**
- traveled from mainland China in the prior 14 days,

Please take the following steps:

- separate the individual from others as much as possible and make arrangements for the individual to go home, and
- contact your local health department immediately.



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Encourage all students, parents, and staff to take everyday preventive actions:

- Stay home when sick.
 - Remain at home until fever has been gone for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines.
 - Seek immediate medical care if symptoms become more severe, e.g., high fever or difficulty breathing.

- Use “respiratory etiquette”.
 - Cover cough with a tissue or sleeve. See [CDC’s Cover Your Cough page \(https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/actions-prevent-flu.htm\)](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/actions-prevent-flu.htm) for multilingual posters and flyers, posted at the bottom of webpage.
 - Provide adequate supplies within easy reach, including tissues and no-touch trash cans.

- Wash hands frequently.
 - Encourage hand washing by students and staff through education, scheduled time for handwashing, and the provision of adequate supplies.

- Routinely clean frequently touched surfaces.

- Separate sick students and staff from others until they can go home. When feasible, identify a “sick room” through which others do not regularly pass.

- Encourage flu vaccine for those who haven’t had it this season to reduce illnesses and absences on campus (but won’t prevent coronavirus illnesses).

A note about face masks: face masks are most useful for preventing disease spread when they are worn by people who have symptoms. This is why people are asked to wear a mask at doctors’ offices and hospitals if they are coughing or sneezing.

Develop policies to respond to outbreaks and communicable diseases:

- Establish relationships with your local public health department for ongoing communication.

- Update emergency plans to ensure they are in place before an outbreak occurs.

At this time, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan do not have widespread transmission of the novel coronavirus and are not considered part of mainland China for this guidance. The California Department of Public Health will update this guidance if the outbreak spreads to other countries or regions.