

PANDEMIC RESPONSE FOR SCHOOLS

Pandemic Defined

A pandemic is a global occurrence of an infectious disease and is a disaster with unique characteristics. The two most important differences between a pandemic and other disasters are that the whole world is going through this disaster at the same time, and it may cause some people to react fearfully to others.

Typically, each year during flu season, the focus is on containing the spread of illness through hygiene practices, community messaging, and staying home when sick. In a pandemic, the focus changes from containment to one of community mitigation—taking steps to lessen the impact of the disease across a geographic area.

One particular aspect of pandemic response that is critical to consider within the Incident Command structure is that it can result in disruptions to supply chains (the process of how things get from where they are made to where they are used), transportation, and travel. Even if the disease is not spreading in our area, organizations and businesses may face difficulty obtaining the goods and services we are used to obtaining without much effort. Additionally, it may become necessary to cancel public events, restrict travel, and even expect schools to shift their instruction to support home-based and independent learning.

Adequate planning for a pandemic requires the involvement of every level of our nation and indeed, the world. The ubiquitous nature of a pandemic compels governments, communities, schools, businesses, families, and individuals to learn about, prepare for, and collaborate in efforts to slow, respond to, mitigate, and recover from a potential pandemic.

Common Definitions

School Closure

All state and county documentation are using the phrase “School Closure” in the event that standard operations of a school must shift. In order to more accurately describe what this term “school closure” means, it is important to use more accurate language. This Big Five hazard response plan for pandemic will use the following phrases for greater clarity:

Temporary School Closure for Cleaning and/or Staff Planning: Limited number of days of closure with intent to re-open. Provides school community a psychological reset and assures all community members of sanitized facilities.

School Closure with Continuity of Education and Operations: Standard operations of school have shifted to a *Home Learning* status while employees work onsite or remotely.

Schools and districts will continue to ensure hygiene and health protocols and will implement social distancing practices for all staff.

Home Learning status: Students are at home and receiving teacher-created, standards-based instruction through a variety of means including readings, worksheets, packets, research/project-based assignments, or instruction provided through digital/online platforms.

Novel Coronavirus-19: Understanding Terms: Case, Contact, Contacts to Contact

Pairing School Response Scenarios to Public Health Determinants

Common understanding of words used to explain developments in the spread of COVID-19 is extremely important for clear and accurate communication.

Public health uses the words **Case**, **Contact**, and **Contacts to Contact** to mean the following within a pandemic context, which applies to the current COVID-19 situation:



CASE: A **case** refers to a person who tests positive (for COVID-19).

School Response in the event of a case confirmed within the school community:

Based on CA Dept of Public Health (CDPH) guidance released on March 7, 2020, the appropriate school official, in consultation with SMC Health, may consider if school closure (with continuity of education and operations) is warranted and for what length of time based on the risk level within the specific community.

CONTACT: A **contact** refers to a person who has come in close contact with a **case**. A **contact** might never have symptoms/develop COVID-19 or may develop symptoms within the 14-day incubation period and potentially become diagnosed with COVID-19.

School Response in the event a contact is confirmed within the school community:

Implement a 14-day self-quarantine for the **contact**. The school official, in consultation with SMC Health, may consider a school closure for cleaning that includes disinfecting and sanitizing. The school official may also consider using the temporary school closure as an opportunity for staff to plan for home learning. Cleaning may not require closure if regular deep cleaning has been ongoing or if incident occurs during a weekend or holiday so that cleaning can occur without disruption of school.

CONTACTS TO CONTACT: **Contacts to Contact** are people who may have been in proximity to a **contact**.

School Response in the event contacts to contact are present within the school community:

Contacts to Contact within the school or community should continue to practice hygiene protocols and closely monitor their health, staying alert to onset of fever or flu-like symptoms.

If a person is not feeling well or is experiencing cold, flu, or other symptoms, they should stay

Disaster Service Worker

California Government Code, Section 3100, Title 1, Division 4, Chapter 4 states that public employees are Disaster Service Workers and are subject to such disaster service activities as may be assigned by their superiors or emergency service commanders. The term “public employees” includes all persons employed by the state or any county, city, city and county, state agency, or public district. The law applies in the following cases:

- When a local emergency is proclaimed
- When a state of emergency is proclaimed
- When a federal disaster declaration is made

WHAT DOES A DISASTER SERVICE WORKER DO?

- Public employees serving in the role of Disaster Service Workers may be asked to do jobs other than their usual duties for periods exceeding normal work hours
- Employees may be scheduled in shifts and asked to return to the work site at hours outside the normal work day
- Disaster Service Workers will be deployed within the Incident Command System and may perform a variety of duties including oversight of shelter care, communications, logistics, first aid and comfort, or community support and safety
- When pressed into disaster service, employees’ Workers Compensation coverage becomes the responsibility of state government (OES), but the employer pays the overtime. These circumstances apply only when a local or state emergency is declared.

To provide effective support as a Disaster Service Worker, employees must have the confidence their own families are well prepared to deal with emergencies in their absence. The time and energy a staff member commits to being prepared at home will provide the best assurance that they are capable of dealing with the emergency situation at the school/work site.

School Closure with Continuity of Learning and Operations

Providing support and infrastructure for continuity of operations, including instruction, is essential in a pandemic response. The key questions for school administrators are whether schools will close and for how long. Since every pandemic event is unique, it's difficult to prepare a detailed response plan in advance. However, it is well established that the communal nature of schools can fuel the spread of infectious disease and public health officials may determine that school campuses should close to students. In these instances, delivery of instruction will shift to Home Learning.

Home learning is instruction for students who are at home and who receive teacher-created, standards-based instruction through a variety of means including readings, worksheets, packets, research/project-based assignments, or instruction provided through digital/online platforms.

Therefore, in the rare event of a pandemic, closing schools may become a viable strategy to slow the spread of disease. School district leaders should follow the lead of San Mateo County Health and work cooperatively with the San Mateo County Office of Education in making any determination that local conditions have reached a threshold warranting school closures.

Once it is determined that a school or schools close within the context of a pandemic response, it is likely they will remain closed for a significant length of time based on the incubation period of the disease, the duration of the symptoms, and status of community spread.

Considerations for School Closure with Continuity of Learning and Operations Decisions

School district leaders will work in cooperation with San Mateo County Health and the San Mateo County Office of Education to determine whether local conditions have reached a threshold that warrants the dismissal of students or school closures. Depending on circumstances, recommendations may impact an individual school, groups of schools, or entire school districts.

The following provides general guidance for a pandemic. See [CDC/CDPH Guidance](#) (March 7, 2020) for more specific details related to the Coronavirus.

Individual School Closure

When the risk of the disease spreading in the larger community is low, but a member or members of a school community develop the disease, district and school leaders may be advised to temporarily close and thoroughly disinfect and sanitize the school. Protecting the privacy rights of involved students or staff members is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. The San Mateo County Office of Education is always available to support a district in drafting community messaging. The

decision to close additional schools in a district or to re-open the school should also be made in consultation with San Mateo County Health Department. When a school is temporarily closed, staff may use the time to plan for how they will continue learning and operations should an extended closure be necessary.

Multiple (All) School Closure

Unlike other disasters that might impact individual schools and districts differently, a pandemic is a countywide event and can necessitate a countywide response. If the County Health Department, in consultation with the San Mateo County Office of Education, determines the dismissal of students or the closure of schools is required to prevent the spread of disease, school districts will close all schools while maintaining a continuity of learning and operations.

The determination to re-open a school should also be made in consultation with San Mateo County Health Department.

Phases of Severe Pandemic Flu/Virus

San Mateo County Health's Pandemic Influenza Plan uses the following system to categorize the severity of an outbreak in San Mateo County. Each phase includes a set of recommended procedures for schools and districts.

1. **GREEN** - little or no transmission in humans
2. **YELLOW** - limited or moderate transmission in humans – pandemic period
3. **RED** - extensive transmission in humans – pandemic period

■ Alert Stage I: GREEN - Little or No Transmission in Humans

School Site/District Recommended Activities

- Establish Incident Command
- Consult Pandemic Guidance Checklist to consider such questions as continuing instruction, cancelling events, testing, guidance for staff, and communication
- Schedule and convene Incident Command planning meetings at the district and the school sites to continue identifying and addressing priority issues
- Review Pandemic Response Plan
- Within the Incident Command structure, review communication plan and reporting structure (who communicates with whom, how, and how often)
- Ensure essential services are identified

- Identify how essential services will be delivered when there are shortages of key personnel and essential supplies
- Implement necessary prevention procedures and communicate them with staff and parents
- Establish or review policies for identifying, separating, and transporting ill students
- Review attendance and sick leave policies. Use flexibility, when possible, to allow staff to stay home to care for sick family members. Suspend the use of perfect attendance awards and incentives
- Develop plan for coding student absences that reflects [California Department of Education \(CDE\) guidance](#)
- Inform and train employees on prevention measures
- Establish plan for home learning, making sure to address some students' limited access to technology and the internet
- Provide staff with training and support on how to prepare for effective home learning
- Prepare to support students who may rely on the school food service for daily meals
- Prepare strategies for minimizing stress in the school community around the pandemic, including social and emotional supports for students and staff (see appendix for guidance)
- Update parents and guardians on plans in case of school closures and a shift to home learning is necessary
- Develop a plan for continuity of operations including essential central office functions, payroll, and ongoing communication with students and parents
- Develop fact sheets for students to reinforce healthy hygiene practices and increase awareness of health risks of sharing water bottles or other products

■ Alert Stage 2: YELLOW - Limited or Moderate Transmission in Humans- Pandemic Period

School Site/District Recommended Activities

- Follow San Mateo County Health Department guidance, which may include quarantine, limiting gatherings, and/or school closures
- Implement increased hygiene, healthy habits, and cleaning control measures to mitigate spread of the infectious disease
- Track employees and students who report being ill
- Prepare to perform essential services only
- Prepare to provide home learning

- Increase use of telecommuting and social distancing strategies, as appropriate
- Communicate changes in status to all staff, parents, and students
- Cancel or postpone events such as after-school assemblies and pep rallies, field trips, and sporting events
- Continue to encourage basic respiratory hygiene strategies and social distancing
- Discourage student gatherings (at a friend's house, a favorite restaurant, or the local shopping mall)

■ Alert Stage 3: RED - Extensive Transmission in Humans - Pandemic Period

School Site/District Recommended Activities

- Follow San Mateo County Health Department's guidance
- Perform essential services only
- Maximize telecommuting and home learning options

Prevention

The California Department of Public Health recommends that schools increase education on respiratory hygiene. As with other respiratory illnesses, there are steps that everyone can take daily to reduce the risk of getting sick or infecting others with circulating viruses.

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Help young children do the same.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if they are visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limit close contact, like kissing and sharing cups or utensils, with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you do not have a tissue, use your sleeve (not your hands).
- Facemasks are most effective when used appropriately by health care workers and people who are sick.
- Get a flu shot to prevent influenza if you have not done so this season.

Once your students and staff begin to become ill during a pandemic, the following instructions can help to limit the spread of disease at schools or in a daycare setting.

- Limit contact with people who are ill at school or daycare.
- Educate students, parents, teachers, and other workers that they must stay away from school or daycare while they are ill.
- Those with symptoms of the disease (fever, headache, cough, or sore throat) should be sent home. If they cannot go home immediately, they should be isolated in a separate and well-ventilated room.
- Limit contact as much as possible between ill and well people. The ill person(s) should wear a protective mask(s) and anyone who must be in the room with the ill person should also wear a protective mask.
- When transporting the ill person(s) in a car, the people in the car – sick or well – should wear protective masks.
- Please do not require students to bring a doctor's note to return to school. Medical offices and hospitals will be overwhelmed during a pandemic.

Promote good hygiene through hand washing and cough etiquette.

- Encourage staff and students to regularly wash their hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub. It is important to wash hands between contacts with others, before preparing food, and before eating.
- If possible, provide alcohol-based hand rub dispensers.
- Encourage staff and students to cover their noses and mouths with a tissue when sneezing or coughing, or to sneeze or cough into their sleeves. Even when wearing a mask, they should cough or sneeze into their sleeve.
- Make sure used tissues are put in a garbage bag or wastebasket, and hands are washed with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub after handling tissues.

Keep the school or daycare environment clean and circulate fresh air.

- Fresh air can help decrease the spread of respiratory illness, so keep windows open as the climate permits, and if necessary, use a fan to circulate fresh air.
- On a regular basis, clean surfaces and commonly shared items like phones, supplies, doorknobs and handles, toilet seats and handles, faucets, light switches, microwaves, etc. Use a labeled household disinfectant or chlorine bleach mixture.

Make sure supplies are on hand.

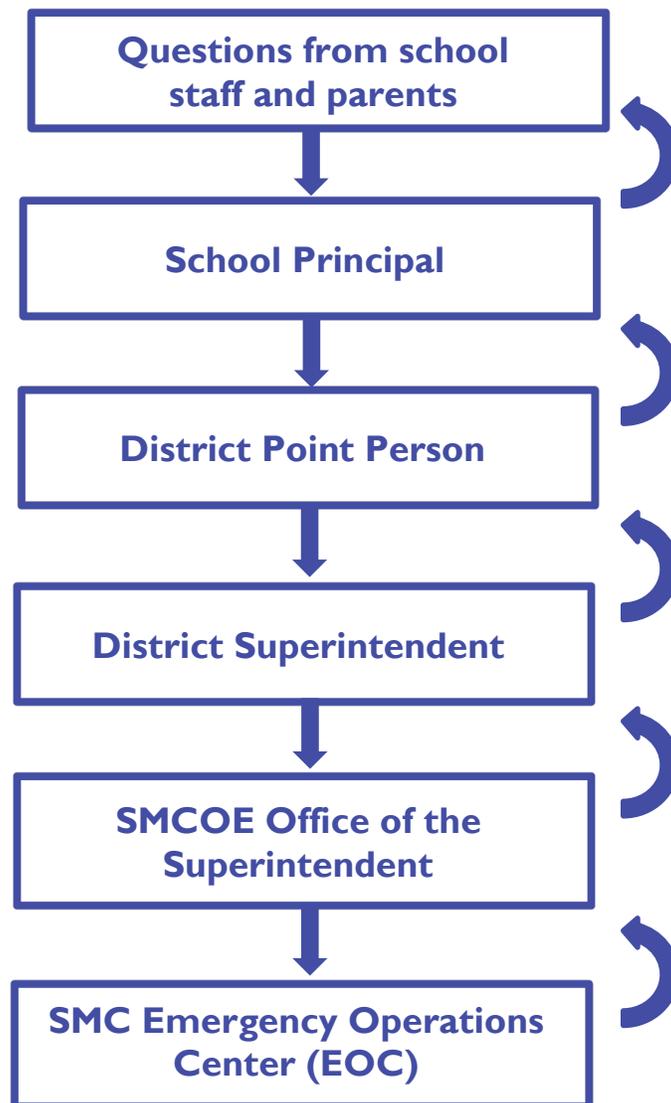
- Keep supplies of masks, gloves, soap, tissues, paper towels, garbage bags, and cleaning supplies on hand.
- Make sure all sinks and restrooms are stocked with soap and paper towels.

- Make sure that tissues, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes are available in common areas such as conference rooms, cafeterias, and break rooms.
- Store-brand chlorine bleach can be used as a disinfectant by mixing 1 cup chlorine bleach with 1 gallon of cool water

Communication Flowchart for Schools Responding to Questions about Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The following communication structure has been developed with the San Mateo County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to manage communication between schools and the EOC's Incident Command, which includes San Mateo County Health, concerning Coronavirus.

Encourage members of the general community to call 211 with any non-medical questions about Coronavirus. Medical questions should be directed to their physician.



Guidance for Effective and Efficient Communication

- Continue to add new questions and answers to your school or district FAQ
- Post FAQ and have available for all members of the communication structure
- Do not skip steps in the structure in either direction
- Eliminate steps in structure based on district size or type of school (e.g., private, charter)

Appendices

Coping with Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks, A Reference for Maintaining Mental Health & Well-Being, Los Angeles County Department of Health, 2/18/2020.

Measures to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

Cleaning and Disinfection Protocols for Schools, San Mateo County Schools Insurance Group

Templates for School Communication

Sources

Coping With Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks

The Department of Mental Health supports the wellbeing of our County family, friends and colleagues. When you hear, read, or watch news about an outbreak of an infectious disease, you may feel anxious and show signs of stress—even when the outbreak affects people far from where you live and you are at low or no risk of getting sick. These signs of stress are normal and may be more likely in people with loved ones in parts of the world affected by the outbreak. During an infectious disease outbreak, care for your own physical and mental health and reach out in kindness to those affected by the situation.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP COPE WITH EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

- 1. Manage Your Stress**
 - Stay informed. Refer to credible sources for updates on the local situation.
 - Stay focused on your personal strengths.
 - Maintain a routine.
 - Make time to relax and rest.
- 2. Be Informed and Inform Your Family**
 - Become familiar with local medical and mental health resources in your community. Attend community meetings for resources/education.
 - Avoid sharing unconfirmed news about the infectious disease to avoid creating unnecessary fear and panic.
 - Give honest age-appropriate information to children and remember to stay calm; children often feel what you feel.
- 3. Connect with Your Community**
 - Keep contact with family and friends.
 - Join community and/or faith groups.
 - Accept help from family, friends, co-workers and clergy.
 - Reach out to neighbors and friends with special needs who may need your help.
- 4. Reach Out and Help**
 - If you know someone affected by the outbreak, call them to see how they are doing, and remember to keep their confidentiality.
 - Consider an act of kindness for those who have been asked to practice social distancing, such as having a meal delivered or offering to drop off homework at their doorstep.
 - Locate and volunteer at a charity or organization near you.
 - Encourage friends and family to get involved with you.
- 5. Be Sensitive**
 - Avoid blaming anyone or assuming someone has the disease because of the way they look or where they or their families come from.
 - An infectious disease is not connected to any racial or ethnic group; speak up in kindness when you hear false rumors or negative stereotypes that foster racism and xenophobia.

Consider seeking professional help if you or a loved one is having difficulty coping.



Be Proactive!

1. Stay informed with information from credible sources.
2. Stay connected with friends, family, and community groups.
3. Help others in need by volunteering and donating time and resources to trusted organizations.
4. Keep a positive attitude and outlook

Resources

Los Angeles County
Department of Mental Health
Access Center 24/7 Helpline
(800) 854-7771
(562) 651-2549 TDD/TTY
<https://dmh.lacounty.gov>

Los Angeles County
Department of Public Health:
publichealth.lacounty.gov
or call 2-1-1 for more information

Revised 2/18/2020



Measures to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

Excerpted from [CDE/CDPH Guidance, March 7, 2020](#)

Pursuant to prior guidance released, school administrators have or should immediately take steps to slow the spread of respiratory infectious diseases, including COVID-19. CDPH has recommended implementing the following steps:

- Review and update comprehensive school safety plans, including continuity plans for teaching and learning if students are absent from school.
- Exclude students, teachers, or staff who have a travel history over the course of the last 14 days to an area identified by the [CDC as Level 3 Travel Health Notice](#). Additionally, exclude those who have been in close contact (**contact**) with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 from the school for 14 days from the day of their last exposure.
- Send students, teachers, and staff who present with fever and/or respiratory infection symptoms home immediately. Separate them from others until they go home. When feasible, identify a “sick room” through which others do not regularly pass.
- Coordinate with all partner organizations serving students to ensure consistent practices.
- Encourage flu vaccine for those persons over 6 months of age who have not had it this season.
- Develop a plan to communicate with the school community.
- Contact county emergency operations center (EOC) if it has been established or local public health department immediately if you notice any concerning clusters of respiratory disease or spikes in absenteeism.
- Encourage all students, families, 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 webpage](#) for multilingual posters and flyers.
 - 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.
 - Enhance cleaning consistent with [CDC guidance](#) and/or San Mateo County Schools Insurance Group (SMCSIG) guidance on the following page.



CLEANING AND DISINFECTION PROTOCOLS FOR SCHOOLS

Regular cleaning and disinfection of schools is an important part of preventing and minimizing the spread pathogens in the school environment. Pathogens are microbes which can cause disease and/or infection. Pathogenic microbes may found be in the form of bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites. AWS recommends using these protocols in collaboration with the Cleaning for Healthier Schools-Infection Control Handbook (CHS, 2010) to minimize and control the spread of illness and disease.

There are three lines of defense to decrease the spread of pathogens in a school environment:

- 1) Personal hygiene,
- 2) Regular cleaning procedures,
- 3) Proper disinfection and sanitizing procedures.

The difference between cleaning, disinfection and sanitizing is discussed below:

Cleaning- Removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces or objects. Cleaning works by using soap (or detergent) and water to physically remove germs from surfaces. This process does not necessarily kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection (CDC, 2016).

Disinfecting - Kills germs on surfaces or objects. Disinfecting works by using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces or objects. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection (CDC, 2016).

Sanitizing - Lowers the number of germs on surfaces or objects to a safe level, as judged by public health standards or requirements. This process works by either cleaning or disinfecting surfaces or objects to lower the risk of spreading infection (CDC, 2016). Since sanitizing is based on quantitative number of microbes killed it is most often used by a regulatory agency to certify the effectiveness of a product.

Basically, low-risk surfaces, such as floors, windows, etc., where the likelihood of pathogen transfer from the surface is low are cleaned on a daily basis. Daily cleaning is also recommended for frequently touched surfaces like desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones, and toys. Disinfection is recommended for food areas, bathrooms and other high-risk areas as discussed further below.

The spread of pathogens can be minimized in schools by employing good personal hygiene, regular cleaning and the proper use of disinfectants. These three lines of defense are detailed below:

PERSONAL HYGIENE

The use of good personal hygiene by students, staff and visitors can greatly reduce the spread of pathogens in the school. These can include the following components:

- 1) Proper hand-washing hygiene. Make sure all building occupants have access to adequate soap, water and drying mechanisms (air dryers or paper towels). Supply adequate training and signage on proper hand-washing techniques throughout the school.
- 2) Ensure building occupants practice proper sneeze and cough etiquette with ample signage and training. Coughing into the elbow is an alternative when tissues are not available. Use tissues when possible to capture droplets and dispose of them in a waste receptacle after use.
- 3) Train coughing or sneezing students/staff to leave a 3-foot buffer between themselves and others.
- 4) Provide training to building occupants on the importance of not sharing drinks, cups, food and paper towels.

REGULAR CLEANING

Comprehensive cleaning programs that use less-toxic products and updated tools and technology can help control the spread of infectious disease and illness. Cleaning is the manual removal of microbes, dirt, dust and allergens from a surface. Cleaning surfaces with microfiber cloths and mops and an all-purpose cleaner can be effective at removing 99.9 % of microbes (EPA, 2002). Most pathogenic microbes cannot live on a clean and dry surface for very long therefore physical removal of the nutrients (including dust) and moisture needed to survive and multiply is an effective first-step in preventing the transmission of diseases.

Basic Surface Cleaning Procedures

1. Wash surfaces with a certified all-purpose cleaner and a microfiber cloth.
2. Rinse and/or wipe surfaces if required.
3. Rinse cloth in clean water after each surface.
4. Reapply the cleaning solution for the next surface.
5. After the cleaning process is complete, rinse out microfiber cloths and hang to dry, or leave for pick-up by the custodial staff.

In the *Cleaning for Healthier Schools – Infection Control Handbook* (CHS, 2010) the following cleaning schedule for specific school surfaces are recommended:

Desks, Work Tables, and Computer Keyboards – Shared

Products: An all-purpose cleaning product and a high-quality microfiber cloth. Keyboard covers are more easily cleaned than the keys.

Recommended cleaning schedule: Clean daily.

During outbreak of gastrointestinal illnesses or flu: Clean in between uses or after each group session.

Desks, Work Tables, and Computer Keyboards – Not Shared

Products: An all-purpose cleaning product and a microfiber cloth.

Recommended cleaning schedule: Clean weekly or as needed.

Cafeteria Tables and Floors

Products: A cleaning detergent that removes dirt and allergenic protein matter, and high-quality microfiber cloths/mops. Sponges are not recommended due to their potential to spread contamination).

Recommended cleaning schedule: Clean after each use, before the next group arrives.

Other Surfaces Touched by a Variety of Hands (phones, light fixtures, stair railings, door knobs and push bars, elevator buttons, water fountains, etc.)

Products: An all-purpose cleaning product and a high-quality microfiber cloth.

Recommended cleaning schedule: Clean daily.

During outbreak of gastrointestinal illnesses or flu: Clean touch points in between classes or periodic events.

Floors in Classrooms and Hallways

Products: A neutral floor-cleaning product specific to flooring material that removes dirt year-round (and salt in the wintertime), and a microfiber mop.

Recommended cleaning schedule: Clean daily.

DISINFECTION

Disinfectants are EPA registered pesticides designed to kill or inactivate microbes (germs). The overuse or misuse of disinfectants can kill healthy bacteria and also lead to disease-resistant strains of pathogens. In addition, many disinfectants contain toxic ingredients have been identified as respiratory irritants, while others are considered asthmagens (IGS, 2009).

Disinfecting is a process that kills or irreversibly inactivates microbes (bacteria, fungi, and viruses) present on a nonporous surface but does not necessarily kill their spores. The product label identifies which microbes it has been tested to kill or inactivate. Disinfectants accomplish this by breaking down the microbes' cell walls or by otherwise deactivating them (CHS, 2010).

Disinfectants should be used for bathrooms, showers, locker rooms, child-care facilities with diaper changing stations, food preparation surfaces where disinfection or sanitization is

required, for bloodborne pathogens cleanup and any other high-risk areas. High-risk areas are locations where there is a higher risk for bloodborne incidents, skin contact (MRSA risk), or contact with feces and body fluids. Examples of high-risk areas include the nurse's office, athletic areas, and childcare centers. These surfaces and areas should be cleaned and disinfected daily (CHS, 2010).

Many facilities choose to use a combination disinfectant/cleaner to minimize the number of products and number of steps required to clean and disinfect the building. Even though combination products have been developed to both clean and disinfect, the best practice is to clean a surface first and then apply the disinfectant. Some disinfectants lose effectiveness in the presence of dirt, dust and other organic matter. The disinfectant should be left on the surface for the recommended amount of dwell or kill time and then rinsed or wiped (if recommended). Since different products have specific dwell times, ranging from 30 seconds to 20 minutes; check the label's instructions (IGS, 2009). Cleaning first and then applying the disinfectant for the recommended dwell time ensures that you are truly disinfecting the surface and not creating microbial resistance. When the disinfectant is not allowed the full dwell time, the microbes that survive may develop resistance to the disinfectant and become "super bugs" that cannot be controlled by that disinfectant. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions found on the product label (IGS, 2009).

Disinfection Procedures (CHS, 2010)

- Identify school personnel (e.g. custodian, nurse) responsible for disinfecting.
- Limit the use of disinfectants to: bloodborne pathogens cleanup, food preparation surfaces where disinfection or sanitization is required and high-risk areas as mentioned above (nurse's office, athletic areas, and childcare centers).
- Allow only EPA-registered disinfectants for use in the facility. Prohibit the use of cleaning and disinfecting products that have been brought in by staff or parents without school review and approval.
- Avoid using products with a strong scent that may trigger asthma and allergy complaints. Scented products may also contain known hormone disruptors (substances that interfere with our endocrine system and can cause reproductive issues, early female development, thyroid disorders, polycystic ovarian syndrome, genital deformities in newborn boys, etc.)
- Microfiber is recommended for use with disinfectants and can help prevent cross-contamination. Avoid using sponges in a school setting, as they are difficult to disinfect. Launder your cleaning cloths and mop heads/pads daily.
- Disinfect only after school hours except in the case of an incident, such as vomit, feces, bloodborne pathogens clean-up, or as written in the protocol.

Disinfection Protocol (IGS, 2009)

1. **Select** – Identify the least product that will control the targeted microbes (H1N1, MRSA etc.). Look for an HMIS or NFPA Health Rating of 0-1 applied to the product as used. The rating may be found on the product's label and/or material safety data sheet (MSDS).
2. **Clean** – Clean the surfaces to be disinfected with a third-party certified all-purpose cleaner and a microfiber cloth first. Rinse or wipe the surface as required.
3. **Ventilate** - Make sure there is ventilation in the work area, e.g., an open window or an operating HVAC system.
4. **Use proper personal protective equipment (PPE)**-such as chemically resistant gloves, if required by the label. Other PPE such as respirators or coverall may also be required per the MSDS or the label
5. **Dilute the Product** - Follow the label instructions for the proper dilution ratio, if the product is a concentrate. Follow the manufacturer's instructions exactly. If using a concentrated product, do not add more concentrate hoping to create a more effective or stronger solution. This is wasteful, can actually be less effective and may leave a harmful residue behind that could cause skin rashes and other harmful health effects for students and staff.
6. **Apply to the Surface** - Use a pump-spray or squirt bottle to apply the product by:
 - a. Saturating the microfiber cloth with the disinfectant and wiping the surface leaving a wet film. Make sure there is enough disinfectant on the cloth to cover the surface to be disinfected and ensure that it will remain wet for the required dwell time. Spraying into the cloth first minimizes the dispersion of product into the air where it can be inhaled.
 - b. Directly squirting the solution on the surface and using a microfiber cloth to distribute evenly.
7. **Dwell Time** – Leave the disinfectant on the surface for the amount of dwell time (time needed for the disinfectant to kill the microbes) required on the product label.
8. **Remove Residue** - Rinse or wipe the surface, if required. Rinsing removes any toxic residue that may be left on the surface that could be transferred to skin. Not all disinfectants leave a residue.
9. **Allow to Dry** – Allow the surface to dry before use.

Disinfecting in the Classroom by Teachers (if permitted)

If the district or school allows disinfectant products to be used by teachers or other staff, the following guidelines are recommended:

1. Do not ask students to use disinfectant products. Children's developing bodies are much more susceptible to the effects of chemicals than the bodies of most adults. Disinfectant sprays and wipes can contain ingredients that are recognized as asthmagens and scented products can contain ingredients identified as hormone disruptors. Use disinfectant products only after students have left the building.

2. Train teachers on the proper use and storage of disinfectants and on the Hazard Communication Law which will help them interpret the product management and health and safety information provided in the product's material safety data sheet (MSDS). Provide copies of the MSDS in case of an accident in the classroom.
3. Use only non-scented disinfectant products because scented products can trigger asthma and allergy episodes.
4. Provide chemically resistant gloves as specified on the product's MSDS or label.
5. Ensure that the products are stored properly in a secured area away from students, with other compatible chemicals. Check the product's MSDS to determine how to safely store the disinfectant.

References:

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Using Microfiber Mops in Hospitals, Environmental Best Practices for Health Care Facilities. Region 9 Pollution Prevention Program. 2002.

Informed Green Solutions, Inc./ Cleaning for Health (IGS)/ 802-626-8643, 2009

Cleaning for Healthier Schools –Infection Control Handbook (CHS), National Cleaning for Healthier Schools and Infection Control Workgroup, Lynn Rose and Carol Westinghouse, 2010.

How To Clean and Disinfect Schools To Help Slow the Spread of Flu, [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) [National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\)](#) 2016



PROCOLOS DE LIMPIEZA Y DESINFECCIÓN PARA ESCUELAS

La limpieza y desinfección periódica de las escuelas es una parte importante para prevenir y minimizar la propagación de patógenos en el entorno escolar. Los patógenos son microbios que pueden causar enfermedades y/o infecciones. Los microbios patógenos pueden encontrarse bajo forma de bacterias, virus, hongos o parásitos. AWS recomienda usar estos protocolos en colaboración con el Manual de Limpieza para Escuelas más Saludables - Control de Infecciones (Cleaning for Healthier Schools-Infection Control Handbook - CHS, 2010) para minimizar y controlar la propagación de enfermedades.

Existen tres líneas de defensa para disminuir la propagación de patógenos en un entorno escolar:

1. Higiene personal,
2. Procedimientos regulares de limpieza,
3. Procedimientos adecuados de desinfección e higiene.

A continuación se analiza la diferencia entre limpieza, desinfección e higiene:

Limpieza: elimina gérmenes, suciedad e impurezas de superficies u objetos. La limpieza funciona usando jabón (o detergente) y agua para eliminar físicamente los gérmenes de las superficies. Este proceso no necesariamente mata los gérmenes, pero al quitarlos, disminuye su número y el riesgo de propagación de infecciones (CDC, 2016).

Desinfección: mata gérmenes sobre superficies u objetos. La desinfección funciona mediante el uso de productos químicos para matar gérmenes en superficies u objetos. Este proceso no necesariamente limpia las superficies sucias ni quita los gérmenes, pero al matar los gérmenes en una superficie después de la limpieza, puede reducir aún más el riesgo de propagación de la infección (CDC, 2016).

Higiene: reduce el número de gérmenes en superficies u objetos a un nivel seguro, según lo determinado por los estándares o requisitos de salud pública. Este proceso funciona limpiando o desinfectando superficies u objetos para reducir el riesgo de propagación de la infección (CDC, 2016). Dado que la higienización se basa en el número cuantitativo de microbios muertos, es lo que utiliza con mayor frecuencia una agencia reguladora para certificar la eficacia de un producto.

Básicamente, las superficies de bajo riesgo, como pisos, ventanas, etc., donde la probabilidad de transferencia de patógenos desde la superficie es baja, se limpian diariamente. La limpieza diaria también se recomienda para superficies que se tocan con frecuencia, como escritorios, encimeras,

picaportes, teclados de computadora, artículos de aprendizaje práctico, grifos de agua, teléfonos y juguetes. La desinfección se recomienda para áreas de alimentos, baños y otras áreas de alto riesgo como se analiza más adelante.

La propagación de agentes patógenos se puede minimizar en las escuelas empleando buena higiene personal, limpieza regular y el uso adecuado de desinfectantes. Estas tres líneas de defensa se detallan a continuación:

HIGIENE PERSONAL

El uso de una buena higiene personal por parte de los estudiantes, el personal y los visitantes puede reducir en gran medida la propagación de agentes patógenos en la escuela. Esto puede incluir los siguientes componentes:

- 1) Higiene adecuada en el lavado de manos. Asegúrese de que todos los ocupantes del edificio tengan acceso a mecanismos adecuados de jabón, agua y secado (secadores de aire o toallas de papel). Proporcione una capacitación y señalización adecuadas sobre técnicas apropiadas de lavado de manos en toda la escuela.
- 2) Asegúrese de que los ocupantes del edificio sigan el protocolo apropiado de estornudos y tos con una amplia señalización y capacitación. Toser en el codo es una alternativa cuando no hay pañuelos desechables disponibles. Use pañuelos desechables para capturar las gotas toda vez que sea posible y deséchelos en un recipiente de basura después de su uso.
- 3) Capacite a los estudiantes/personal que tosa o estornude para dejar un espacio de 3 pies (1 metro) entre ellos y los demás.
- 4) Brinde capacitación a los ocupantes del edificio sobre la importancia de no compartir bebidas, tazas, alimentos y toallas de papel.

LIMPIEZA REGULAR

Los programas integrales de limpieza que usan productos menos tóxicos y herramientas y tecnología actualizadas pueden ayudar a controlar la propagación de enfermedades infecciosas. La limpieza es la eliminación manual de microbios, suciedad, polvo y alérgenos de una superficie. La limpieza de superficies con paños y trapeadores de microfibra y un producto de limpieza multiuso pueden ser efectivos para eliminar el 99.9% de los microbios (EPA, 2002). La mayoría de los microbios patógenos no pueden vivir en una superficie limpia y seca durante mucho tiempo. Por lo tanto, la eliminación física de los nutrientes (incluido el polvo) y la humedad necesarios para sobrevivir y multiplicarse es un primer paso eficaz para prevenir la transmisión de enfermedades.

Procedimientos básicos de limpieza de superficies

1. Lave las superficies con un producto de limpieza multiuso certificado y un paño de microfibra.
2. Enjuague y/o limpie las superficies si es necesario.
3. Enjuague la tela en agua limpia después de cada superficie.
4. Vuelva a aplicar la solución de limpieza para la siguiente superficie.
5. Después de completar el proceso de limpieza, enjuague los paños de microfibra y cuélguelos para secar, o déjelos para ser recogidos por el personal de servicio.

En el Manual de Limpieza para Escuelas más Saludables - Control de Infecciones (Cleaning for Healthier Schools-Infection Control Handbook - CHS, 2010) se recomienda el siguiente programa de limpieza para superficies escolares específicas:

Escritorios, mesas de trabajo y teclados de computadora - Compartidos

Productos: un producto de limpieza multiuso y un paño de microfibra de alta calidad. Las fundas de teclado se limpian más fácilmente que las teclas.

Programa de limpieza recomendado: Limpiar diariamente.

Durante el brote de enfermedades gastrointestinales o gripe: Limpie entre usos o después de cada sesión de grupo.

Escritorios, mesas de trabajo y teclados de computadora - No compartidos

Productos: un producto de limpieza multiuso y un paño de microfibra.

Programa de limpieza recomendado: Limpie semanalmente o según sea necesario.

Mesas y pisos de cafetería

Productos: un detergente de limpieza que elimine la suciedad y las proteínas alergénicas, y paños/trapeadores de microfibra de alta calidad. (No se recomiendan las esponjas debido a su potencial para propagar la contaminación).

Programa de limpieza recomendado: Limpie después de cada uso, antes de que llegue el siguiente grupo.

Otras superficies tocadas por una variedad de manos (teléfonos, artefactos de iluminación, barandas de escaleras, picaportes y barras, botones de elevadores, bebederos, etc.)

Productos: un producto de limpieza multiuso y un paño de microfibra de alta calidad.

Programa de limpieza recomendado: Limpiar diariamente.

Durante el brote de enfermedades gastrointestinales o gripe: Limpie los puntos que se tocan entre clases o eventos periódicos.

Pisos en aulas y pasillos

Productos: un producto neutro para limpieza de pisos específico para material de pisos que elimine la suciedad durante todo el año (y la sal en invierno) y un trapeador de microfibra.

Programa de limpieza recomendado: Limpiar diariamente.

DESINFECCIÓN

Los desinfectantes son pesticidas registrados por la EPA diseñados para matar o desactivar microbios (gérmenes). El uso excesivo o incorrecto de desinfectantes puede matar las bacterias saludables y también hacer que cepas de patógenos se tornen resistentes a las enfermedades. Además, muchos desinfectantes contienen ingredientes tóxicos que se han identificado como irritantes respiratorios, mientras que otros se consideran causantes de problemas de asma (IGS, 2009).

La desinfección es un proceso que mata o desactiva irreversiblemente los microbios (bacterias, hongos y virus) presentes en una superficie no porosa, pero no necesariamente mata sus esporas. La etiqueta del producto identifica qué microbios se ha comprobado que mata o desactiva. Los desinfectantes logran esto al romper las paredes celulares de los microbios o al desactivarlos de alguna forma (CHS, 2010).

Los desinfectantes deben usarse para baños, duchas, vestuarios, instalaciones de cuidado infantil con estaciones para cambiar pañales, superficies de preparación de alimentos donde se requiere desinfección o higienización, para la limpieza de patógenos transmitidos por la sangre y cualquier otra área de alto riesgo. Las áreas de alto riesgo son lugares donde existe un mayor riesgo de incidentes transmitidos por la sangre, contacto con la piel (riesgo de MRSA - Staphylococcus aureus resistente a la metilicina) o contacto con materia fecal y fluidos corporales. Algunos ejemplos de áreas de alto riesgo incluyen enfermerías, áreas deportivas y centros de cuidado infantil. Estas superficies y áreas deben limpiarse y desinfectarse diariamente (CHS, 2010).

Muchas instalaciones eligen usar una combinación de desinfectante/producto de limpieza para minimizar la cantidad de productos y la cantidad de pasos necesarios para limpiar y desinfectar el edificio. Aunque los productos combinados se han desarrollado para limpiar y desinfectar, la mejor práctica es limpiar primero una superficie y luego aplicar el desinfectante. Algunos desinfectantes pierden efectividad en presencia de suciedad, polvo y otras materias orgánicas. El desinfectante debe dejarse en la superficie durante el tiempo recomendado de permanencia o tiempo requerido para matar y luego enjuagarse o limpiarse (si se recomienda). Dado que los diferentes productos tienen tiempos de espera específicos, que van desde 30 segundos a 20 minutos; consulte las instrucciones de la etiqueta (IGS, 2009). Limpiar primero y luego aplicar el desinfectante durante el tiempo de permanencia recomendado garantiza que realmente se desinfecte la superficie y no se genere resistencia microbiana. Cuando no se permite que desinfectante quede el tiempo de permanencia completo, los microbios que sobreviven pueden desarrollar resistencia al desinfectante y convertirse en “superbichos” que no pueden ser controlados por ese desinfectante. Siempre siga las instrucciones del fabricante que se encuentran en la etiqueta del producto (IGS, 2009).

Procedimientos de desinfección (CHS, 2010)

- Identifique al personal de la escuela (por ejemplo, funcionario(a) de servicio, enfermero(a)) responsable de la desinfección.
- Limite el uso de desinfectantes a: limpieza de patógenos transmitidos por la sangre, superficies de preparación de alimentos donde se requiera desinfección o higienización y áreas de alto riesgo como se mencionó anteriormente (enfermería, áreas deportivas y centros de cuidado infantil).
- Sólo permita que se usen desinfectantes registrados por la EPA en las instalaciones. Prohíba el uso de productos de limpieza y desinfección que hayan sido introducidos por el personal o los padres sin la revisión y aprobación de la escuela.
- Evite el uso de productos con un olor fuerte que pueda desencadenar problemas de asma y alergia. Los productos perfumados también pueden contener disruptores hormonales conocidos (sustancias que interfieren con nuestro sistema endocrino y pueden causar problemas reproductivos, desarrollo femenino temprano, trastornos de la tiroides, síndrome de ovario poliquístico, deformidades genitales en niños recién nacidos, etc.)
- Se recomienda el uso de microfibras con los desinfectantes, y puede ayudar a prevenir la contaminación cruzada. Evite usar esponjas en un entorno escolar, ya que son difíciles de desinfectar. Lave sus paños de limpieza y trapeadores/almohadillas diariamente.
- Desinfecte solo después del horario escolar, excepto en el caso de un incidente, como vómito, materia fecal, limpieza de patógenos transmitidos por la sangre o según lo que esté escrito en el protocolo.

Protocolo de desinfección (IGS, 2009)

1. **Seleccionar** - Identifique el producto de menor poder que controle los microbios a los que se apunta (H1N1, MRSA, etc.). Busque una clasificación sanitaria HMIS o NFPA de 0-1 aplicada al producto tal como se utiliza. La calificación se puede encontrar en la etiqueta del producto y/o en la hoja de datos de seguridad del material (MSDS).
2. **Limpiar** - Primero limpie las superficies a desinfectar con un producto de limpieza multiuso certificado por un tercero y un paño de microfibras. Enjuague o limpie la superficie según sea necesario.
3. **Ventilar** - Asegúrese de que haya ventilación en el área de trabajo, por ejemplo, una ventana abierta o un sistema HVAC (aire acondicionado) en funcionamiento.
4. **Use el equipo de protección personal (PPE) apropiado**, como guantes resistentes a productos químicos, si así lo exige la etiqueta. También puede ser necesario otro tipo de equipo de protección personal, tal como respiradores u overol, según lo que determine la hoja de datos de seguridad del material (MSDS) o la etiqueta.
5. **Diluir el producto** - Siga las instrucciones de la etiqueta para obtener la proporción de dilución adecuada, si es que el producto es un concentrado. Siga exactamente las

instrucciones del fabricante. Si usa un producto concentrado, no agregue más concentrado con la esperanza de crear una solución más eficaz o más fuerte. Esto es un desperdicio, y en realidad puede ser menos eficaz y puede dejar un residuo nocivo que podría causar erupciones cutáneas y otros efectos perjudiciales para la salud de los estudiantes y el personal.

6. **Aplicar a la superficie** - Utilice una bomba de pulverización o una botella con atomizador para aplicar el producto:
 - a. Saturando el paño de microfibra con el desinfectante y limpiando la superficie dejando una película húmeda. Asegúrese de que haya suficiente desinfectante en el paño para cubrir la superficie a desinfectar y asegúrese de que permanezca húmeda durante el tiempo de permanencia requerido. La pulverización sobre el paño primero minimiza la dispersión del producto en el aire, donde puede ser inhalado.
 - b. Rociando la solución directamente sobre la superficie y usando un paño de microfibra para distribuirla uniformemente.
7. **Tiempo de permanencia** - Deje el desinfectante en la superficie durante el tiempo de permanencia (tiempo necesario para que el desinfectante elimine los microbios) requerido en la etiqueta del producto.
8. **Eliminar residuos** - Enjuague o limpie la superficie, si es necesario. El enjuague elimina cualquier residuo tóxico que pueda quedar en la superficie y que pueda transferirse a la piel. No todos los desinfectantes dejan residuos.
9. **Permitir que se seque** - Permita que la superficie se seque antes de usarla.

Desinfección en el salón de clase por los maestros (si está permitida)

Si el distrito o la escuela permite que los maestros u otro personal utilicen productos desinfectantes, se recomienda lo siguiente:

1. No les pida a los estudiantes que usen productos desinfectantes. Los cuerpos en desarrollo de los niños son mucho más susceptibles a los efectos de los productos químicos que los cuerpos de la mayoría de los adultos. Los aerosoles y las toallitas desinfectantes pueden contener ingredientes que se reconocen como causantes de problemas de asma y los productos perfumados pueden contener ingredientes identificados como disruptores hormonales. Use productos desinfectantes sólo después de que los estudiantes hayan abandonado el edificio.
2. Capacite a los maestros sobre el uso y almacenamiento adecuado de desinfectantes y sobre la Ley de Comunicación de Riesgos, que los ayudará a interpretar el manejo del producto y la información de salud y seguridad que se proporciona en la hoja de datos de seguridad del material (MSDS) del producto. Proporcione copias de la MSDS en caso de accidente en el salón de clase.

3. Use solo productos desinfectantes no perfumados, porque los productos perfumados pueden desencadenar episodios de asma y alergia.
4. Proporcione guantes químicamente resistentes como se especifica en la MSDS o en la etiqueta del producto.
5. Asegúrese de que los productos se guarden adecuadamente en un área segura lejos de los estudiantes, con otros productos químicos compatibles. Consulte la MSDS del producto para determinar cómo almacenar de forma segura el desinfectante.

Referencias:

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Using Microfiber Mops in Hospitals, Environmental Best Practices for Health Care Facilities. Region 9 Pollution Prevention Program. 2002.

Informed Green Solutions, Inc./ Cleaning for Health (IGS)/ 802-626-8643, 2009

Cleaning for Healthier Schools –Infection Control Handbook (CHS), National Cleaning for Healthier Schools and Infection Control Workgroup, Lynn Rose and Carol Westinghouse, 2010.

How To Clean and Disinfect Schools To Help Slow the Spread of Flu, [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) [National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\)](#) 2016

Templates

Messages to school community when a student, teacher, or staff member has been identified as first a *contact* and then a *case*.

Message to school community when a student, teacher, or staff member has been identified as a *contact*.

Message to update the school community.

Message to facility use partners/afterschool providers about following district's guidance on prevention measures.

Message to school community concerning the canceling of non-essential events and activities.

Messages to a school community when a student, teacher, or staff member has been identified as a *contact* and then as a *case*.

(First letter – contact in school community)

Dear members of the ##### school community,

We have learned that a staff member of ##### school has had contact with a relative who today tested positive for COVID-19 (Coronavirus). The school is working closely with the San Mateo County Department of Health and the CDC. Out of an abundance of caution and for the safety and well-being of our community, we have decided to close the school through the weekend. This means that all school-related activities will be canceled, including classes, athletics, arts, clubs, and planned field trips. Students, faculty, and staff are not to be on campus during this time. During the closure, we will continue to work with the health departments and will gain a better understanding of our employee's situation. We have also engaged a cleaning service and will use the time to deep clean the entire campus.

We know this news may cause understandable concern. While it is not our intent to cause undue alarm or disruption to our students' learning, the School has decided to act conservatively and in the best interest of our community members in announcing this closure. Our desire is to continue to be transparent with you and communicate what we know as frequently as possible. We will communicate with you again by early evening on Wednesday to provide any updates.

It remains important to take standard precautionary measures against respiratory illness, including:

- Avoiding close contact with those with cold and flu-like symptoms
- Covering your nose/mouth when coughing and sneezing with a flexed elbow
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cleaning your hands often by washing them with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60%–95% alcohol. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty. It is especially important to clean hands after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.

For more information on the developing public health response to COVID-19, visit the CDC's FAQ [here](#). You can find localized updates from the San Mateo County Health Department [here](#). For additional health questions, please contact #####.

Sincerely,

Messages to a school community when a student, teacher, or staff member has been identified as a *contact* and then as a *case*.

(Second letter – case in school community)

Dear Members of the ### school community,

We are writing to update you with some new information. The San Mateo County Department of Health has notified us that the employee in question has tested positive for COVID-19. We felt it important that we share this news with you. The Department of Health had already concluded yesterday that regardless of the results of their tests, the nature and details of the case made it safe to reopen the campus tomorrow. The affirmation of a positive test does not change this conclusion. Here is the message we received from Scott Morrow at the Department of Health: “This employee has not been at your school during their infectious period. Based on CDC guidance, we believe no exposure to COVID-19 occurred at the school and do not recommend any additional actions at this time.” Given this firm Health Department recommendation, in addition to the fact that the employee has been in self-isolation for the past 13 days, that no employees who work closely with the individual have reported any signs of illness or symptoms, and the fact that by this evening we will have completed the deep-cleaning of the campus, we concur with the Health Department’s finding and plan to reopen tomorrow morning.

News of a positive result can be understandably concerning and we worry that this may add to the elements of panic and anxiety we are observing in our broader society. However, continuing to share information with our community when we have it is a commitment we will not waver from and we can only hope that you will take this new information in stride. While we are doing all we can to ensure the safety of all in our community, we understand that all families must determine for themselves their appropriate course of action. We ask that you let us know of your intentions so we can continue to monitor attendance. No student choosing to stay home will be penalized from their academic work or co-curricular activities.

As a reminder, tomorrow’s academic schedule will begin with our usual check-in, followed by our normal schedule.

It is our hope that families will continue their commitment to using public transportation options to get to school, but we hasten to add that every family needs to make their own decisions about what is right for them.

We look forward to seeing our students and teachers back on campus tomorrow and will be sure to update you immediately if any of our plans should change for any reason. Barring any new information, our intention is to communicate with you again Tuesday evening with more information about our long-range plans and event scheduling.

Sincerely,

Message to school community when a student, teacher, or staff member has been

Dear ##### Staff and Families,

The ##### continues to work closely with the San Mateo County Health Department and the San Mateo County Office of Education in our preparedness and response to Coronavirus as staff and student wellness is our top priority.

We want you to know that we have just been notified by the San Mateo County Health Department that two students, one at ### and one at ###, were in contact with someone who tested positive for Coronavirus (COVID-19). The students have not displayed any symptoms of illness. However, according to the SMC Health Department protocol, the students will self-quarantine for 14 days.

Out of an abundance of caution, we are conducting a deep cleaning of both campuses over the weekend. This does include disinfecting and sanitizing. This has been the standard response for schools experiencing similar circumstances.

Schools will be open as normal on Monday, March 9.

Please see the information below regarding how COVID-19 spreads. If you would like more information on the Coronavirus, please visit the [CDC website](#).

Sincerely,

How COVID-19 Spreads

- We have learned that this virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person:
 - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
 - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).
- Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.
- It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Message to update the school community.

Dear ##### Staff, Parents and Community,

Thank you for everyone's calm and helpful responses related to the ever-evolving COVID-19 situation. We recognize that the unknown and the close proximity of confirmed cases has the potential to increase concerns and questions. As the situation evolves, we will continue to update the COVID-19 FAQ page our website.

As promised, when a meaningful change in the situation necessitates, we will provide email communication to parents in addition to adding it to the FAQ.

Late last night, our district was informed that ### school would be closing for the remainder of the week to accommodate a deep environmental cleaning of their school after an employee was exposed to a family member who tested positive with the COVID-19 virus. They made this discretionary decision out of an abundance of caution. There are currently no known positive cases of COVID-19 at that school.

At this time, there is no reason for concern that this situation puts ##### District students or staff at increased risk. ##### District continues without interruption.

Additionally, County Manager Mike Callagy proclaimed a local emergency in San Mateo County, and County Health Officer Scott Morrow declared a local health emergency. The declarations, which are part of the County's COVID-19 response efforts, may help make the County eligible for certain state and federal financial and technical resources. Several other Bay Area counties have made similar proclamations.

While the declarations may help the County in its prevention and planning efforts, they do not represent a change in direction of how schools will operate at this time.

Schools, including ##### District schools, will continue to follow recommended hygiene and health prevention measures. For example, school campuses will remain vigilant in cleaning common areas such as bathrooms, water faucets, classrooms, playground equipment, and cafeterias to minimize the spread of germs. Staff and students who are sick will be encouraged to stay home. Schools will remind students and staff to wash their hands often, avoid touching their faces with unwashed hands, and cover their sneezes and coughs.

"Even though the risk of a COVID-19 outbreak is currently low, we are grateful the County of San Mateo is taking this important step to increase its prevention and planning efforts. We turn to San Mateo County Health for guidance and assistance in helping us support schools, so we are pleased they may have more resources to do this important work," commented San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools Nancy Magee.

A PDF of the San Mateo County Office of Education's press release can be found [here](#).

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Message to facility use partners/afterschool providers about following district's guidance on prevention measures.

Dear ### School District Facility Use Partner,

We appreciate your use of our facilities and the services you provide to our families. As you know, we are in a time of heightened concern around COVID-19. We are daily fielding inquiries from concerned parents about what we are doing to keep our students safe and healthy. Likely you are receiving similar concerns. We have invested significant time and resources into creating communications and extensive FAQ documents that are both staff and parent facing, as well as implementing vigorous cleaning, handwashing, and stay-at-home guidelines.

As someone who uses our facilities and serves our students, we must require that you follow the same guidelines that our own district staff is following around health and safety. While no guidelines can guarantee that COVID-19 will not spread within our community, we are doing what we can to minimize risk and reassure parents.

Attached to this document is the district's COVID-19 FAQ for staff. Please read this document thoroughly and make sure any staff that work on ##### School District campuses also reads and understands this document. Please complete the attached form certifying that you have received the FAQ document.

In addition to following the guidelines of ### School District's COVID-19 FAQ for staff, we ask that you do the following:

- Alert the district if anyone on your staff has been or may have been exposed to COVID-19 OR has a high risk such as recent travel to a CDC Level 3 country.
- Do not allow your staff to work at any ##### School District campuses if they are experiencing even mild cold/flu-like symptoms, with or without fever.

Failure to follow the ##### School District's COVID-19 guidelines or make us aware of high risk, potentially exposed, or ill staff could result in our contract being immediately suspended and denial of future use of our facilities.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in this matter. We know this is a time of anxiety, and everything we can do to remain calm and control what we can control will help our community get through this time as smoothly as possible.

Best regards,

Message to school community concerning the canceling of non-essential events and activities.

Hello ##### Community,

Given yesterday's [revised guidance](#) from the County Health Officer, we spent today considering how to apply his recommendation that "all non-essential gatherings should be canceled, postponed, or done remotely."

San Mateo County school district representatives discussed the above recommendation and a number of other issues at a meeting today at the County Office of Education. Here is our current guidance on school activities, which is in line with many other school districts in the County:

- Before and afterschool child care on school facilities will continue as usual.
- PTA and school sponsored after school activities (e.g., the ##### school talent show, the public gathering for ##### school's science fair, and ##### school's middle grades dance) are cancelled or postponed indefinitely, with the exception of small-group activities like kindergarten intervention.
- Third-party activities, such as girl scout meetings and chess club, are subject to the decision of the organizer.
- We are suspending indefinitely assemblies, morning meetings, and other in-school activities that create large gatherings and/or mix students from different classrooms in close proximity.
- Field trips are suspended indefinitely also. On Monday, we will be making a final decision about the music program's Disneyland trip. We have not yet made a final decision regarding 5th grade Outdoor Education.
- Currently, there will be no restrictions placed on students' lunch and recess practices/activities other than handwashing ahead of snack and lunch.
- We will continue with our usual practices for elementary music and PE.
- After school sports will continue as scheduled for now. The high school and middle school leagues have decided to continue their scheduled games. We understand completely if families choose to withhold their students from participating. I will monitor closely the status of afterschool sports over the coming days.

I expect to continue to work through the specifics of the above guidance with school leaders into next week. Additionally, we are planning for the possibility of school closures. We will do our best to continue learning in the case of extended closures. I advise families to make provisional child care plans should we need to close your student's school.

We will continue to keep you updated on developments. If you have questions about your student's classroom or school, please direct those to your school leaders. If you have questions about this email, our communication, or our districtwide guidance, you are welcome to reply directly to me. I will do my best to respond.

Sincerely,

Sources

CDE/CDPH School Guidance on Novel Coronavirus or COVID-19: March 7, 2020
https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/School%20Guidance_ADA%20Compliant_FINAL.pdf

San Mateo County Health, staff edits (March 4, 2020)

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

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-for-schools.html>

Legal Requirements Related to Independent Study Options & ADA; Adapted from Emergency Preparedness: Continuity & Instruction Resources; Los Angeles Office of Education; February 2008. <http://www.lausd-oehs.org/docs/EmergencyServices/PandemicFlu/Toolkit/tk/General%20Preparedness%20%20Healthy%20Habits%20Resources/COOP/Pandemic%20Emergency%20Continuity%20of%20Instruction%20LACOE.pdf>

2019 Novel Coronavirus Guidance for Schools and School Districts; California Department of Public Health; February 7, 2020;

https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Immunization/Coronavirus%20K-12%20Schools%20Guidance%202_7_20%20FINAL.pdf

Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV); Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Guidance for Schools (ECE, K-12); Los Angeles County Department of Public Health; February 6, 2020;

<http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/GuidanceForSchools.pdf>

School District (K-12) Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist; Center for Disease Control and Prevention; Department of Health and Human Services; Retrieved February 2020.

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/pdf/schoolchecklist.pdf>