

## **Frequently Asked Questions & Answers**

### **General**

#### **Q: Is my child safe at school? Will they be exposed?**

**A:** Viruses can be spread in all settings, including schools, which is why it's important people with symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath) stay home. Public health is everyone's responsibility. Parents/families should also review with their children simple practices for reducing one's risk for getting and spreading viral respiratory infections including washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. The most vulnerable populations to COVID-19 are older adults and persons with compromised immune systems.

#### **Q: What do I do if my child is sick?**

**A:** If your child is sick, you should keep them home from school, which is the most effective way to prevent the spread of infection. Parents/families should also review with their children simple practices for reducing one's risk for getting and spreading viral respiratory infections including washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.

#### **Q: Who should seek medical evaluation for COVID-19?**

**A:** Those experiencing symptoms should not show up at their primary care physician or hospital if it is not medically necessary or have not been instructed to do so by their local health authority or physician. Individuals who are experiencing the symptoms below should contact their local health authority for instructions regarding a risk assessment and, if necessary, submitting for testing, and/or treatment:

- Ill with a fever, cough, or having trouble breathing AND have traveled from an affected area in the past 14 days,

#### **OR**

- Ill with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing AND have been identified by a healthcare provider as a recent close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case or had recent close contact with someone who is being evaluated for COVID-19 infection.

#### **Q: What support is the Department of Education providing to districts and schools?**

**A:** The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) worked with the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to develop a [resource](#) for school nurses and administrators. This resource is available on the [State's coronavirus information page](#), which is the best place to go for up-to-date information. In addition, NDE continues to collect resources that have been made available by the federal government and other national organizations to support district and school administrators. As additional resources become available, they will be added to the State's coronavirus information page.

#### **Q: Do schools have emergency plans in place in the case of a severe outbreak?**

**A:** All schools must have Emergency Operations Plans in place, and they are on file with the Department of Education. Because these plans address a wide range of issues regarding the safety of our schools, they are not available to the public. Districts and schools have been encouraged to continue working in close coordination with local health districts to prepare and respond to emerging issues.

### **District/School Closures**

#### **Q: Why aren't schools closed?**

**A:** Districts/schools are working closely with local health officials on preparedness and response plans related to COVID-19 and making decisions based on the most up-to-date and accurate information available to promote the health and safety of students and communities.

#### **Q: Who has the authority to close districts/schools for illness?**

**A:** Decisions on school closures are made locally by education and public health district leaders. Districts and schools are working in collaboration with – and taking guidance from – local health districts to ensure that school closure decisions are made with the safety of students and staff at the forefront.

#### **Q: How long does a school have to close if one of its students or staff members has the coronavirus or has come in contact with someone who has?**

**A:** To make such decisions, districts and schools should continue to work in close coordination with – and take guidance from – their local health districts. NDE will continue to work with the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services to support appropriate decisions on a case-by-case basis.

### **Quarantine**

#### **Q: How long should a student or staff member who may have come in contact with the virus wait before returning to school?**

**A:** [Centers for Disease Control Interim Guidance for Preventing the Spread of Coronavirus in Homes and Communities](#) indicates that individuals should consult with healthcare providers or local or state department of health staff before returning to normal activities. Districts and schools will continue to work in close coordination with – and take guidance from -- local health districts.

#### **Q: If a student is absent for an extended time due to illness or quarantine, how will they make up instruction? Will they be penalized?**

**A:** Districts and schools have established practices working with families to put learning plans in place for families in unique situations, including prolonged illnesses and chronic medical issues. We have advised districts and schools to review and revise emergency preparedness and crisis contingency plans for supporting a greater than normal percentage of its population in the case of quarantines that do not result in a full school closure. Districts and schools will also need to coordinate with families to ensure that students who are healthy enough to participate in learning, but unable to attend school, receive services they are entitled to under state and federal law, including nutrition services and special education services.

#### **Q: How will students who rely on school nutrition programs receive food if schools are closed or if they are quarantined?**

**A:** The [CDC's Interim Guidance for Administrators of Childcare Programs and K-12 Schools](#) recommends that, in cases of community spread illness, schools design strategies to avoid distribution in settings where people might gather in a group or crowd. The Nevada Department of Agriculture is prepared to work with local partners to implement a strategy to mitigate possible National School Lunch

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**Nevada Department of Education**

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Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program interruptions, depending on what approach local circumstances require.

**School Cleaning**

**Q: Are schools taking extra precautionary measures with regard to cleaning?**

**A:** It is flu season, so schools maintain a regular schedule of cleaning high-touch surfaces, which include desks and tables, doorknobs, bathrooms, and computers. They also perform regular cleaning of buses. T On March 5, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a list of [EPA-registered disinfectant products](#) that have qualified for use against SARS-CoV-2, the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19. It is important to note that there may be additional disinfectants that meet the criteria for use; the EPA will continue to update its list with additional products as needed.

**Additional Resources**

- **Centers for Disease Control:** [What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019](#)
  - [En español](#)
- **Centers for Disease Control:** [What to do if you are sick with coronavirus disease 2019](#)
  - [En español](#)
- **Centers for Disease Control:** [Stop the Spread of Germs](#)
  - [En español](#)
- **Centers for Disease Control:** [Symptoms of Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
  - [En español](#)
- [Vegas PBS Community Resources](#)