



School District, Administrator, and Nurse Resources for 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

This guidance is based on what is known about the transmission and severity of COVID-19. The Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), in consultation with the Nevada Department of Education (NDE), will update this guidance as needed. The purpose of this document is to support district and school administrators and school nurses in addressing local needs while ensuring the well-being and safety of students, educators, staff, and their communities.

Due to the rapidly evolving nature of the situation, information below is subject to change. The [Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health \(DPBH\)](#) will be updating information as frequently as possible. For the most current information, visit the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) website](#) for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Background

The international community is experiencing an expanding outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The virus is spreading from person-to-person, and cases have been detected in several countries, including the United States and Nevada.

Currently, the immediate risk to the general public in Nevada is low.

Please remind your community the risk of novel coronavirus is not connected with race, ethnicity, or nationality. Stigma will not help to fight this illness. Sharing accurate information during a time of heightened concern is one of the best things we can do to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading.

What are coronaviruses?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. They usually cause mild respiratory illnesses, such as the common cold. Some coronaviruses have caused more severe illness, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that had not been seen in humans before December 2019.

How does the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) infection spread?

Experts believe the COVID-19 primarily spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Droplets from a cough or sneeze can travel approximately six feet. Another person can become infected if these droplets enter their mouth, nose, or eyes directly or through contaminated hands. An infected person who coughs or sneezes into their hands and touches surfaces such as phones, tables, door handles, or toys can contaminate them. While some coronaviruses can be spread to others through contaminated surfaces, coronaviruses generally do not survive on surfaces for a prolonged period. It takes 2 to 14 days after a person gets the virus in their body to become ill.



What can I do to prevent COVID-19 infections in my school?

Schools do **not** need to take special precautions beyond what is normally recommended to prevent the spread of germs in schools. You can help students and staff reduce their risk for getting and spreading viral respiratory infections, including the flu and the common cold, by following the simple steps below.

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home while sick and avoid close contact with others.
- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash hands.

In addition, it is recommended that schools follow their regular cleaning and disinfection program.

- Disinfecting is the responsibility of school custodial staff. They are trained to use disinfectants in a safe and effective manner and to clean up potentially infectious materials and body fluid spills – blood, vomit, feces, and urine. Contact your custodian, school nurse, or school administrative staff if students are ill and your classroom needs cleaning and disinfection.
- On a daily basis, clean hard surfaces (desks, tables, countertops, sinks) and clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (door handles, faucets, railings), bathrooms, and rooms where healthcare services may be provided. Use alcohol wipes to clean keyboards, tablets, and other frequently used electronic devices.
- Clean surfaces with fragrance-free soap. Thorough cleaning with soap and water will remove most microorganisms.
- On March 5, 2020, 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.

Who should seek medical evaluation for COVID-19?

Students, staff, and volunteers 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. Those experiencing symptoms should **not** show up at their primary care physician or hospital if it is not a medical necessary or have not been instructed to do so by their local health authority or physician.

- Ill with a fever, cough, or having trouble breathing AND have traveled from a highly 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.

What should I do if I suspect a student, staff member, or volunteer is at risk for COVID-19?

If a student, staff member, or volunteer meets the above criteria, it is important to place them in a private room away from others and ask them to wear a facemask. Immediately notify your local health department; they will provide you with guidance. In the case of students, immediately notify their parents/guardians/emergency family contacts and work with the families to develop a plan to continue the student's educational program while they are away from school.



How should I respond to reported or suspected cases of coronavirus?

Below, we have outlined four (4) scenarios that should be considered by districts/schools when determining, in partnership with local health departments and professionals, how best to respond to instances of COVID-19 in a school or district.

Scenario I: Preventive measures already underway to prevent the spread of COVID-19

Per existing guidance provided to districts and schools, including prior versions of this document, as well as the Frequently Asked Questions Document released by NDE, school communities are already taking the following steps:

- Encourage all students, families, and staff to take everyday preventive actions, including:
 - Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Avoid contact with people who are sick.
 - Stay home while sick and avoid close contact with others.
 - Cover mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash hands.
- On a daily basis, clean hard surfaces (desks, tables, countertops, sinks) and clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (door handles, faucets, railings), bathrooms, and rooms where healthcare services may be provided. Use alcohol wipes to clean keyboards, tablets, and other frequently used electronic devices.
- In addition to reviewing their existing Emergency Operations Plans, districts/schools were encouraged to continue working in close coordination with local health districts to prepare and respond to emerging issues.
- If a student, staff member, or volunteer meets the above criteria, it is important to place them in a private room away from others and ask them to wear a facemask. Immediately notify your local health department; they will provide you with guidance. In the case of students, immediately notify their parents/guardians/emergency family contacts and work with the families to develop a plan to continue the student's educational program while they are away from school.

In addition to existing guidance, consider the following actions:

- Coordinate with all partner organizations serving students to ensure consistent practices.
- Encourage flu vaccine for individuals over 6 months of age who have not yet had it this season.
- Develop a plan to share accurate and timely information with the school community, including providing regular updates through multiple means of communication.

Scenario II: Measures to be taken if there are two or more community transmission cases of COVID-19, but no individuals within the school test positive

If local health officials have confirmed two or more community transmission cases, but no students, staff, or volunteers at the school have tested positive for COVID-19, in addition to the items outlined in Scenario I above, it is recommended that school administrators implement the following steps:

- Limit visitors to the school by not allowing those with symptoms of fever and/or respiratory infection or 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](#).
- Consider alternatives to group programming including any large or communal activities such as assemblies or after-school events. Consider hosting school sporting events without spectators and conducting assemblies via videoconference or webinar.
- Consider implementing staggered lunch and recess times to limit the number of students who are together at a single time.



Scenario III: Measures to be taken if one student, staff member, or volunteer tests positive for COVID-19 and exposed others at the school.

If a school community member tests positive for COVID-19 and exposed others at the school, it is recommended that school administrators implement the following steps:

- In consultation with the local public health department, the appropriate school official may consider if school closure is warranted and length of time based on the risk level within the specific community as determined by the local public health officer.
- In consultation with the local public health department, school officials may determine readmission criteria after the school closures.
- Implement communication plans for school closure to include outreach to students, parents, teachers, staff, and the community, as it will also impact local employers.
- Provide guidance to parents/families and staff reminding them of the importance of community social distancing measures while school is closed, including discouraging students or staff from gathering elsewhere. Community social distancing measures include canceling group activities or events, religious services, after-school classes and sporting events.
- Consider developing a plan for continuity of essential business functions as well as continuity of medical and social services to which students are entitled, including nutrition and special education services.
 - 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 Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program interruptions, depending on what approach local circumstances require.
- Maintain regular communications with the local public health department.
- Consult CDC guidelines (see [Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations](#)) for schools to determine what additional cleaning protocols, if any, should be deployed at the school prior to reopening the school.
- Determine the timing of return of students and staff, and any additional steps needed for the school to reopen, in consultation with the local public health department.

Scenario IV: Measures to be taken if multiple schools within a school district have a student, staff member, or volunteer test positive for COVID-19.

If multiple schools within the school district have a student, staff member, or volunteer test positive for COVID-19, school administrators should consult with local public health officials for guidance on additional school closures. If it is determined that all schools within the school district should be closed for instruction, it is recommended that school administrators implement the following steps:

- In consultation with the local public health department, the school administrator may determine if additional school closures and what length of time is warranted based on the risk level within the specific community as determined by the local public health officer.
- Develop communication plans for school closure to include outreach to students, parents/families, staff, and the community.
- Provide guidance to parents/families and staff reminding them of the importance of community social distancing measures while school is closed, including discouraging students or staff from gathering elsewhere. Community social distancing measures include canceling group activities or events, religious services, after-school classes and sporting events.
- Consider developing a plan for continuity of education, medical and social services, and meal programs and establish alternate mechanisms for these to continue.
- Maintain regular communications with the local public health department.
- Work with the local public health department to determine what additional cleaning protocols, if any, should be



deployed at the school prior to reopening the school.

- Determine the timing of return of students and staff, and any additional steps needed for the school to reopen, in consultation with the local public health department.

Where can I turn for more information?

- [The CDC's Guidance for Administrators of US Childcare Programs and K-12 Schools](#)
- [Nevada's Response to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus](#)
- [2019 Novel Coronavirus \(CDC\)](#)
- [Guidance for Travelers \(CDC\)](#)
- [US Department of Education COVID-19 \("Coronavirus"\) Information and Resources for Schools and School Personnel](#)

Public Health Agencies in Nevada:

- Nevada Division of Public & Behavioral Health: (775) 684-5911 (M-F 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM), (775) 400-0333 (after hours).
- In Clark County, contact the Southern Nevada Health District: (702) 759-1300 (24 hours).
- In Washoe County, contact the Washoe County Health District: (775) 328-2447 (24 hours).
- In Carson City, Douglas, and Lyon counties contact the Carson City Health and Human Services: (775) 887-2190 (24 hours).

As with any newly emerging infectious disease, knowledge evolves with time. It is difficult to know the ways the disease spreads, how effectively it spreads from person to person, and how severe the infection is. We will continue to update the [Novel Coronavirus Outbreak website](#) as more information becomes available.

