

# Interim Guidance for K-12 Schools and Pre-K Programs Operated by Schools

February 28, 2020

This interim guidance is based on what is currently known about the transmission and severity of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Currently, in the United States, the risk of COVID-19 for the general public is **low**. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will update this guidance as needed and as additional information becomes available. Please check the [CDC website](#) and the [Kansas Department of Health & Environment website](#) periodically for updated interim guidance.

Although precautions are necessary to prevent the entry and spread of COVID-19 into US communities, care should be taken to avoid stigmatizing students and staff who may have been exposed to the virus. K-12 schools and Pre-K programs operated by schools offer a welcoming, respectful, inclusive, and supportive environment to all and should continue to do so. Measures taken by US K-12 schools and Pre-K programs should help prevent the entry and spread of COVID-19 by students and staff who may have been exposed to the virus while minimizing disruption and protecting students and staff from discrimination.

This interim guidance is intended primarily for administrators\* of public and private K-12 schools and Pre-K programs operated by schools in the United States to help prevent the introduction of COVID-19 into their facilities. It recommends actions that school administrators should take now to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 among students and staff and to help maintain continuity of teaching and learning if there is community spread of COVID-19 in the future. This interim guidance also suggests strategies to consider if public health officials determine that COVID-19 is spreading in US communities and educational settings.

## Planning and Preparedness Recommendations for All US Schools Nationwide

There are laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the United States. As this global outbreak evolves, US communities, including schools, are encouraged to prepare for the possibility of community-level outbreaks in the United States. Administrators of K-12 schools and Pre-K programs nationwide should take the following actions to **plan and prepare** for COVID-19:

- Stay informed about COVID-19 through CDC and your state and local health departments.
  - Share the following [CDC fact sheets](#) and poster with students and staff:
    - ✦ [What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019pdf icon](#)
    - ✦ [What the public should do to prevent spread of COVID-19 in the United States](#)

- ✦ [Stop the spread of germs – help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses like COVID-19](#)
  - Share the following CDC fact sheet with students and staff who recently traveled back to the United States from China:
    - ✦ [Travelers from China arriving in the United States – health alert](#)
- Collaborate with your local public organizations and boards of education to review, update, and implement emergency operations plans (EOPs), particularly for infectious disease outbreaks.
  - The US Department of Education has outlined a 6-step process for creating EOPs for K-12 schools (see <https://rems.ed.gov/K12GuideForDevelHQSchool.aspx>).
  - Develop flexible attendance and sick leave policies that encourage students and staff to stay home when sick or when caring for sick family members.
  - Discourage the use of perfect attendance awards and incentives.
  - Identify critical job functions and positions, and plan for alternative coverage by cross-training staff.
  - Implement school absenteeism monitoring systems to track student and staff absences.
  - Understand the usual absenteeism patterns at your school.
  - Alert your local health department about large increases in student and staff absenteeism due to respiratory illnesses.
  - Determine what level of absenteeism will disrupt continuity of teaching and learning.
  - Establish procedures for separating sick students and staff from those who are well and for sending sick students and staff home as soon as possible.

## **Response Recommendations for Schools in US Jurisdictions with Laboratory Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 Infection**

In addition to taking the actions listed above, administrators of K-12 schools and Pre-K programs in US jurisdictions with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases may need to implement the following activities in **response** to COVID-19 if there is community spread in the future. Administrators should develop plans for:

## **School dismissals\*\***

Decisions to temporarily dismiss K-12 schools and Pre-K programs in the affected area should be considered on a school-by-school basis, and in consultation and coordination with school district officials and state and local health officials.

- Decisions to dismiss schools based on COVID-19 concerns should be discussed with KDHE and your local public health department.
- The length (duration), geographic scope, and public health objective of school dismissals may be reassessed and changed as the local outbreak situation evolves.
- When schools are dismissed, schools should:
  - Temporarily cancel extracurricular group activities and large events, such as after-school assemblies and pep rallies, field trips, and sporting events.
  - Discourage students and staff from gathering or socializing anywhere, like at a friend's house, a favorite restaurant, or the local shopping mall.
  - Implement e-learning plans and distance learning options for continuity of education, to the extent possible.
  - Work with state and local health officials to ensure continuity of school children-directed supplemental feeding programs.
  - Meal Service during Unanticipated School
    - Closures <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/meal-service-during-unanticipated-schoolclosures>).

**This is an interim document and when more information is received from the CDC and Kansas Department of Health and Environment more guidance will be provided at that time.**

### **Definitions Used in this Guidance**

\*Administrators oversee the daily operations of K-12 schools and Pre-K programs. Administrators may include positions like school district superintendents, principals, and assistant principals.

Pre-K program means an early childhood program operated by a public or private school.

[This interim document will be updated when credible and up-to-date guidance is provided by the CDC and KDHE.](#)

## For More Information

### CDC Resources

- [Coronavirus Disease 2019 website](#)
- [Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs in Emergencies](#)
- [Do Your Part. Slow the Spread of Germs](#)
- [Don't Spread Germs at Work](#)
- [Stay Home if You're Sick](#)

### Other Federal Agencies and Partners Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) •

Hand Washing: A Powerful Antidote

to

Illness: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/prevention/Pages/Hand-Washing-A-Powerful-Antidote-toIllness.aspx>

- Reducing the Spread of Illness in Child Care: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/prevention/Pages/Prevention-In-Child-Care-or-School.aspx>
- Germ Prevention Strategies: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthissues/conditions/prevention/Pages/Germ-Prevention-Strategies.aspx>
- When to Keep Your Child Home from Child Care: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/work-play/Pages/When-toKeep-Your-Child-Home-from-Child-Care.aspx>

