Novel Coronavirus – Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Planning for Schools and Child Care

What is Novel Coronavirus?

The disease called COVID-19 is caused by a novel (new) coronavirus this means the virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), is not the same as the <u>coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans</u> and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

Signs and Symptoms

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Incubation period

Ranges from 2-14 days

Contagious Period and Spread

The 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.

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.

There is not enough information about the transmission of the virus to completely understand when a patient can spread the virus to others.

Treatment

There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms. For severe cases, treatment should include care to support vital organ functions.

Control Measures of Spread

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

Teach children and staff to:

- Cough or sneeze into their sleeved arm or cover their nose and mouth with a tissue. Throw away the tissue after they use it and wash hands
- Avoid touching their eyes, nose, or mouth
- Wash their hands frequently and for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, especially after they cough or sneeze; an alcohol-based hand rub can be used if soap and water are not nearby
- Avoid sharing cups and eating utensils with others
- Increase deep cleaning to at least 2 times per week and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces like doorknobs, tables, drinking fountains and handrails. For instructions regarding disinfecting see here. For an additional list of recommended products visit: https://www.americanchemistry.com/Novel-Coronavirus-Fighting-Products-List.pdf
- Family style serving should be avoided if possible. It is recommended that the school and child care facility staff prepare and serve snacks and meals using gloves.
- If napping mats are used, children should be kept at least 6 feet apart if possible and mats should be cleaned after each use.

Teachers, Caregivers, and Families

- Practice control measures listed above at home and in group care settings.
- If a child or staff member develops symptoms associated with COVID-19, report to the staff member designated (health staff, school nurse, or Childcare Director) by the child care program or school.

School Staff and Local Public Health Agency

- The school staff notified about a child or staff member becoming symptomatic will inform designated school personnel with decision-making authority.
- Designated school personnel with decision-making authority will, in collaboration with the registered school nurse, coordinate next steps with Local Public Health Agency (LPHA). https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/find-your-local-public-health-agency
- LPHAs and state health department will determine next steps in collaboration with the school administration and school nurse.

Exclusion

EXCLUDE children/students/staff with fever or respiratory symptoms from child care/school/work until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever (without use of fever-reducing medicine), runny nose or productive cough and other symptoms are improving.

Ill children/students/staff should be separated from others until they can be picked up/go home.

RESPONSE – ACTIVE CASES IN THE COMMUNITY

School, child care, and event closure is not indicated while there is no evidence of community transmission. Some children and family members may be at higher risk for severe illness because of older age, underlying health conditions or a weakened immune system. **Allow parents along with the child's heathcare provider to make the best decision regarding the child's attendance.**

1. Review, update, and implement emergency operations plans (EOPs). This should be done in collaboration with local health departments and other relevant partners where possible. Focus on the components, or annexes, of the plans that address infectious disease outbreaks.

- Review Infectious Disease Guidelines for Schools and Childcare Settings
  https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/infectious-disease-guidelines-schools-and-childcare-settings   (Specific pages include pp 7-8, 18-20)
- **PLEASE NOTE: Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a REPORTABLE CONDITION**
  - o **If you are notified that a student has novel coronavirus contact your local health department. This is allowed for under FERPA here.**

2. Monitor and plan for absenteeism

- Review the usual absenteeism patterns at your school/child care among both students and staff.
- Alert local health officials about increases in student and staff absenteeism, particularly if absences appear due to respiratory illnesses (like the common cold or the "flu," which have symptoms similar to COVID-19).
  - o If possible, school/child care personnel monitoring attendance should ask the following information:
    - ▪ Name of student
    - ▪ Symptoms of child – especially for fever, cough and/or shortness of breath
    - ▪ Have they been seen by a medical provider
- Review attendance and sick leave policies. Require students and staff to stay home when sick. Use flexibility, when possible, to allow staff to stay home to care 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.
- Determine what level of absenteeism will disrupt continuity of teaching and learning.

3. Continue to educate students, staff and families on the importance of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Communicate community norms/expectations that everyone will follow hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

4. Work with local education representatives and the local health officials to determine what actions should be taken to mitigate transmission. Actions could include:

- Heighten disease surveillance and reporting to the local health department. Follow normal reporting procedures even in cases of suspected Novel Coronavirus.
- Communicate regularly with parents informing them of the community and school status and expectations during periods of increased disease.
- Identify specific steps to keep school in session. Work with local education representatives and the local health officials to determine what actions should be taken to mitigate transmission. Actions could include:
  - Cancel extracurricular activities and large public events when there is a confirmed case within the community
  - **Schools should cancel or postpone trips that could expose students or staff to COVID-19**
  - Students and staff returning from travel to areas with community spread of COVID-19 must follow guidance they received from health officials
  - Limit visitor access to the school who have a known travel history within the last 14 days to an area with ongoing transmission
  - Cancel large class activities such as physical education, music education, etc.
  - Stagger times for larger groups to congregate (e.g., entrance and dismissal, recess, meal times)
  - Provide alternative education opportunities
- Identify steps for dismissing students while providing educational services
  http://www.cde.state.co.us/safeschools/covid19-faq#e-learning
  - Dismiss students and keep teachers in school to provide alternative learning
  - Dismiss staff and students and have teachers provide alternative learning
- Consider how to handle school lunches if students have been dismissed. Emergency feeding options may be available:
  http://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/nutriemergencyfeeding

5. **Protecting vulnerable populations**

- For students and staff at high risk for COVID-19 (diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, immune deficiency, aged over 60 years) consider:
  - Avoiding crowds and public gatherings as much as possible
  - Avoid non-essential air travel
  - Allow parents to make the best decision for their families regarding their child's attendance.
  - Avoid contact with individuals with any illness

School and Child Care Closure

Rationale for School Closure - There are three primary rationale for closing schools and child care:

(1) Limiting spread of the virus in the community,

(2) Protecting vulnerable children and family members, and

(3) Reacting to staff shortages or children kept at home because of infections or parents' fears of infection.[1]

Addressing Parent Fear

It is important to keep students and families informed of actions that the school and child care is taking, including the most up to date information regarding COVID-19 from reliable sources such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and your local public health department.

In rapidly changing health events and outbreaks such as COVID-19, there can be large amounts of incorrect or partially correct information that can add to stress and confusion as a parent/caregiver, student, or school staff. Providing current, accurate, and frequent updates can help reduce stress and fear.

Get the most up-to-date and accurate information at:

- CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html
- CDPHE: https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/2019-novel-coronavirus
- CO HELP 303-389-1687 or 1-877-462-2911

Supporting Students, Families, and School and Child Care Staff

In addition to providing information regarding school actions and the latest information regarding COVID-19, students, family, and staff can benefit from information regarding emotional support. Here are some resources that could be helpful.

Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope with the Coronavirus Disease 2019
WHO Infographic Helping Children Cope
National Association of School Psychologists Helping Kids Cope
Colorado Crisis Services: Call 1-844-493-TALK (8255) or Text to Talk 38255

Guidelines for emergency school or child care closure

The state may modify or update closure criteria based on new information

It will be important to work closely with your Local Public Health Department as you begin considering closing school or child care. Public Health is not currently recommending that schools or child care proactively close unless they have a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a staff or student. The following guidance should be considered a requirement for all schools and child care in Colorado, and schools and child care in partnership with their local public health agencies can choose to close at an earlier time in order to prevent further COVID-19 transmission.

State ordered closure criteria

- Any school* in Colorado with a single confirmed case of COVID-19 in a staff or student will close for a minimum of 72 hours for cleaning and social distancing
- Any schools that are closed will partner with their local public health agency to conduct contact tracing and further COVID-19 testing.
- Any school with a second confirmed case of COVID-19 in a staff or student within a 30 day period requires a second minimum 72 closure for cleaning, testing and public health investigation.

- Any school with 3 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in staff or students within a 30 day period requires a closure for a minimum of 14 days.
- If 3 schools in a district have confirmed cases of COVID-19 within a 30 day period, all schools within the district are required to close for a minimum of 14 days for cleaning, testing and public health investigation.
- Other factors to consider when making decisions to close one or more schools, include:
  - Families with students in multiple buildings
  - Shared facilities
  - Shared transportation
  - Central kitchens
  - Shared staff

Cleaning guidance

Increase deep cleaning to at least 2 times per week and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces like doorknobs, tables, drinking fountains and handrails. For instructions regarding disinfecting see [here.](#) For an additional list of recommended products visit: https://www.americanchemistry.com/Novel-Coronavirus-Fighting-Products-List.pdf

District guidance

If an immediate family member, caregiver, or guardian of a student tests positive for COVID-19, the site leader and superintendent should determine if that individual was recently on campus. The student should be tested, and decisions regarding school closure should be based on information gathered. Schools may choose to close for 24 hours based on the immediate family member, caregiver, or guardian's positive test while waiting for the student's test results. If the student tests positive, follow the state ordered closure criteria above.

How long to close a school or child care

Decisions to reopen a school should be done in consultation with your local Public Health Department

Consideration/challenges for when schools and child care are closed

- Children being fed – access to meals

- Child protection issues - younger children unsupervised because parent(s) has to work

- Children/youth congregating in other sites

- Parent absenteeism from work in order to care for children

- Children with special needs can have more difficulty learning when returning to school after extended absence

- Availability of substitute teacher pool

- Setting and size of school/district

- Addressing fear and stigma associated with being sick

- Privacy concerns

*Also refers to preschools and child care centers

Reference

[1] Klaiman et al. BMC Public Health 2011, 11:73
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3039590/

Resources:

- CDC Interim Guidance for School Administration: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-for-schools.html
- Fact sheets and posters: https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1eZydLBynhD2jmvxI8jFRutagMDbor5qe