

VDH Interim Guidance for Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Infection: K-12 Schools

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) acknowledges the concerns of K-12 schools in our community in light of the evolving 2019-nCoV outbreak. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has not yet released guidance specifically for K-12 school settings, but staff, students and parents seeking general information may visit the [VDH](#) and [CDC](#) websites for the most current information. VDH recommends taking the general steps outlined below to prepare for and respond to any impacts of the 2019-nCoV outbreak.

Prepare:

- Review current plans for outbreaks and pandemics that your school or school system has already developed. Consider including county administration, emergency preparedness/planners, school health services and facilities staff in these discussions. You may also want to include a representative from your local health department. Please establish contact with your [local health department](#) so you know who to contact with questions.
- Review and/or develop a plan that allows students or staff to receive excused absences to allow for:
 - Staying home if they have recently returned from mainland China (other than Hubei Province), but do not have symptoms (i.e., self-quarantine), or
 - Staying home if they are symptomatic and being evaluated for or are diagnosed with 2019-nCoV infection but do not require hospitalization (i.e., self-isolate).
- Consider arrangements to allow students to participate in distance learning options if they are under self-quarantine or self-isolation at home.
- Ensure that students who are under self-quarantine/self-isolating have access to counseling services as needed.

Educate:

- Provide clear and factual information to your community to reduce anxiety and fear. Guidance for students and staff returning to K-12 settings is the same as for other travelers.
 - Share CDC's [current guidance for travelers with your community](#).
 - On January 27, 2020, the CDC issued a [Level 3 Travel Advisory: Avoid all Nonessential Travel to China](#).
 - On February 2, 2020, The U.S. Department of State issued a [Level 4 Travel Advisory: Do Not Travel to China](#).
 - On February 2, 2020, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) implemented temporary measures to increase the ability to detect and contact the coronavirus proactively and aggressively. The measures are as follows:
 - Any U.S. citizen returning to the U.S. who has been in Hubei Province in the previous 14 days will be subject to up to 14 days of mandatory quarantine to ensure they're provided proper medical care and health screening and to minimize the risk of spreading the disease to others.
 - Any U.S. citizen returning to the U.S. who has been in the rest of mainland China within the previous 14 days will undergo proactive entry health screening at a select number of ports of entry and up to 14 days

of monitored self-quarantine to ensure they have not contracted the virus and do not pose a public health risk.

- Pursuant to Section 212(f) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, a Presidential Proclamation has been signed temporarily suspending the entry into the United States of foreign nationals. As a result, foreign nationals, other than immediate family of U.S. citizens and permanent residents, who have traveled to China within the last 14 days will be denied entry into the U.S. for this time.
- CDC and VDH do not recommend that measures for quarantine and isolation be applied retrospectively to travelers who arrived from China before Sunday, February 2 at 5 PM who are within 14 days of their last exposure.
- It is currently the middle of flu season and VDH recommends that K-12 students and staff take the following actions to prevent the further spread of influenza and other respiratory viruses, especially as flu symptoms could be confused with symptoms of 2019-nCoV infection.
 - Get a flu vaccine.
 - Practice good hand hygiene and cough etiquette:
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
 - Take flu antivirals if prescribed by your healthcare provider if you have the flu.
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - Stay home when you are sick.
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Respond:

- If a school has individuals who arrived from China before Sunday, February 2 at 5PM, and within 14 days since their last exposure, and is concerned about unusual circumstances that pose higher risk, the local health department can work with schools to assess the situation.
- If a student, faculty, or staff member with recent travel to China becomes ill with possible symptoms of 2019-nCoV infection (e.g., fever, cough, or difficulty breathing), the person should be medically evaluated as soon as possible and should not to come to school until they have been evaluated.
- If a student, faculty, or staff member with recent travel to China or recent exposure to someone with confirmed 2019-nCoV infection becomes ill at school, the person should be provided with a mask and isolated in a private room until the person can go seek care or be picked up by a parent. The ill person should not ride the bus home. If emergency transport is needed, notify EMS that the ill student/staff member could have 2019-nCoV infection based on symptoms and possible exposure.
- If 2019-nCoV testing is being pursued, VDH recommends that close contacts to this person monitor themselves for symptoms while testing is being conducted. The local health department can work with you to help identify close contacts.
- Close contacts should:
 - Monitor for symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing) for 14 days since last contact with the person.
 - Take their temperature twice a day.

- Contact a healthcare provider if they develop symptoms and let the provider know about their close contact with someone who is being evaluated for 2019-nCoV infection. Whenever possible, they should call ahead before seeing a healthcare provider.
- A close contact is defined as being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters), or within the room of a 2019-nCoV patient under investigation for a prolonged period of time; close contact can include caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a room with a 2019-nCoV patient under investigation. Household contacts are always considered close contacts.