

# Schools, Colleges, and Universities on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Updated March 4, 2020

## Information for Schools and Child Care on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

We understand staff, parents, and students may have questions and concerns about the novel (new) coronavirus disease, now called COVID-19, particularly if you have staff or students with ties to or recent travel to a country with a COVID-19 outbreak.

The situation surrounding the outbreak is rapidly evolving and the information or recommendations are changing as new information becomes available. Please follow Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and CDC recommendations and avoid creating situations that may stigmatize staff or students.

See the following CDC guidance for additional information and resources:

- [Interim Guidance for Administrators of US Childcare Programs and K-12 Schools to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) \(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-for-schools.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-for-schools.html)
- [Resources for Institutes of Higher Education \(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities.html)

All references below to “schools” include child care, K-12 schools, colleges, and universities.

### Key Messages

- We are not making a recommendation that events or extracurricular activities be canceled.
- As always, we recommend that people stay home when sick, cover their cough, and practice good hand hygiene. These recommendations are especially important during cold and flu season.
- More information about COVID-19 is available on this website; check back periodically for updates.
- Please share this information with your child care and school health personnel and administrators, and ask them to share with staff, parents, and students as needed.

### What should schools and child care do?

- On Feb. 26, 2020, CDC guidance for managing and assessing people coming to the U.S. after travel was updated to include any person with a history of travel from affected geographic areas with widespread or sustained community transmission or who had close contact to someone diagnosed with COVID-19 AND identified clinical

symptoms (i.e., fever and cough or shortness of breath). To see the affected areas see [CDC: Coronavirus Disease 2019 Information for Travel \(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/) website.

- Students or staff in your school who came to Minnesota after travel to one of these areas since implementation of this guidance may have some restrictions on their movement for a period of 14 days from the time they left the affected area. This could include being asked to stay home from work, school, and other settings.
- These individuals will be contacted by MDH staff to provide them with details and answer questions. Schools do not need to assess anyone who recently traveled or make determinations about who should be allowed to come to work or school. If you have questions, please contact us at 651-201-5414 or 1-877-676-5414.
- We encourage schools to support students and staff who may be asked by public health officials to stay home for 14 days by allowing for leniency in absenteeism from classes and extracurricular activities. For assistance with specific questions, school administrators can contact us at 651-201-5414 or 1-877-676-5414.
- Staff and students who recently arrived from countries other than the identified affected areas do not have any special restrictions or need to seek health care unless they have been identified by public health officials as a contact of a person diagnosed with COVID-19.
- If public health officials identify a staff member or student at your school as a patient under investigation (PUI) or a confirmed case of COVID-19, we will reach out to you to provide information and guidance on notifications and other infection prevention actions. Please contact us if you have questions so we can help determine the appropriate steps to take.
- It is important to avoid prejudice to Minnesotans of Asian descent or assuming that someone of Asian descent is more likely to have COVID-19.
- Staff or students planning to travel should review travel recommendations posted on CDC: Travel Health Notices and keep an eye on the news for updates on this evolving situation.
- We are in cold and flu season. COVID-19 symptoms are similar to these more common infections, it is far more likely that anyone in Minnesota with respiratory symptoms is suffering from a cold or flu.
- We know there may be specific situations that arise where you have questions. We encourage schools to call us to discuss the situation before making recommendations so that we can work together to determine the best course of action.

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