



Date: March 13, 2020

To: All K-12 Schools, Preschools, and Childcare Providers

From: Maggie Park, M.D., Interim Health Officer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "MP".

2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

San Joaquin County School and Childcare Guidance

Background

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a novel virus that has been spreading worldwide. Community-acquired cases have now been confirmed in California and as of March 12, 2020 there are multiple confirmed cases in San Joaquin County. Educational institutions should prepare for possible impacts of COVID-19 and take precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Prevention

Students, teachers, and staff should:

- Use “respiratory etiquette” - cover cough with a tissue or sleeve, not hands.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid shaking hands and hugging.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Encourage flu vaccine for those over 6 months of age who have not had it this season.
- Stay home when sick. Remain at home until fever has been gone for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines.
- The California Department of Education (CDE) and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) would urge schools to ensure students’ and staffs’ privacy to help prevent discrimination or unnecessary stigmatization based on country of origin or health status.

FYI: Face masks are not recommended for healthy people for prevention purposes. Face masks are most useful in limiting the spread of disease when they are worn by people who already have symptoms.

Action Items

- Provide adequate supplies within easy reach including tissues, no-touch trash cans, and hand sanitizer for each classroom and at entrances when possible.



- Post signs with proper “respiratory etiquette” in all classrooms and public areas (see Resources section below).
- Review and update comprehensive school safety plans, including continuity plans for teaching and learning if students are absent from school.
- Send students, teachers, or staff who present with fever and/or respiratory infection symptoms home immediately. Separate them from others until they go home. When feasible, identify a “sick room” through which others do not regularly pass.
- Ensure sick leave/attendance policies allow students, teachers, and staff to stay home if they have respiratory infection symptoms and that all are aware of these policies.
- Consider relaxing requirements for a doctors’ note for a child to return to school after illness.
- Follow enhanced cleaning protocol (see Environmental Cleaning section below).
- Educate staff and workers performing cleaning, laundry, and trash pick-up activities to recognize the symptoms of COVID-19 and provide instruction on what to do if they develop symptoms within 14 days after their last possible exposure to the virus.
- Postpone or cancel school-sponsored mass gatherings for 250 people or more (i.e., sporting events, concerts, theater productions, assemblies).
 - Smaller gatherings held in venues that do not allow social distancing of six feet per person should also be postponed or canceled.
 - Stagger regular activities that involve large groups like lunch and recess.
 - Full Guidance on Mass Gatherings can be found on the [PHS website](#).
 - This guidance will remain in place at least through the end of the month of March. At that time, it will be revisited to evaluate the continued public health need for it and whether any elements need to be changed.
- Contact PHS immediately if you notice any concerning clusters of respiratory disease or spikes in absenteeism. To report, call (209) 468-3822. During after hours and weekends, call (209) 468-2215.

Environmental Cleaning

- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. Gloves should be discarded after each cleaning. Clean hands immediately after gloves are removed.
- Routinely clean frequently touched surfaces (for example: tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks, keyboards, phones) with household cleaners and EPA-Registered disinfectants that are appropriate for the surface, following label instructions.
- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfections should be effective.



- Diluted household bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.
- Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water OR
 - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
- Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims are expected to be effective against COVID-19 based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).
 - List of EPA-approved Products: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-03/documents/sars-cov-2-list_03-03-2020.pdf
- For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes, remove visible contamination if present and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces. After cleaning:
 - If the items can be laundered, launder items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry completely
 - Otherwise, use products with the EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims (see link above) that are suitable for porous surfaces.
- Full guidance on Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html?deliveryName=USCDC_2067-DM21539

Regarding Potential Closures

- Consider, in consultation with PHS, whether school closure is warranted and, if so, for what length of time.
- Determine, in consultation with PHS, readmission criteria after the school closures.
- Implement a plan to communicate with students, parents, teachers, staff, and the community.
- Provide guidance to parents, teachers and staff reminding them of the importance of community social distancing measures while the 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 continuation of education, medical and social services, and meal programs and establish alternate mechanisms for these to continue.



Stay Informed

1. Full CDPH Guidance for Schools (3/7/2020):
[https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/School%20Guidance ADA%20Compliant_FINAL.pdf](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/School%20Guidance%20ADA%20Compliant_FINAL.pdf)
2. San Joaquin County Public Health Services: <http://www.sjcphs.org/>
3. California Department of Public Health (CDPH):
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx>
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Resources

1. CDC Planning Checklists: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/archived/schools-child-care-planning.html>
2. CDC's Stop the Spread of Germs: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs.pdf> (Sample enclosed)
3. CDC Handwashing Fact Sheets (Eng/Span): <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/fact-sheets.html>