

CUYAHOGA COUNTY

BOARD OF HEALTH

YOUR TRUSTED SOURCE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Guidance for schools as of March 11, 2020

The Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBH) has issued the following guidance based upon recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). School administrators are also encouraged to visit the [CDC website](#) for the latest information.

Personal protection tips

Encourage students and staff to take [everyday preventive actions](#) to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses:

- cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the bend of your elbow
- cleaning frequently-touched surfaces
- do not share food, drink, utensils or cups
- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth with dirty hands
- regularly wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water
- stay home when sick

If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Remember to supervise young children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent them from swallowing alcohol, especially in childcare facilities.

Avoid close contact

Do your best to avoid people who are sick. Put ***distance between yourself and other people*** if COVID-19 is spreading in your community. This is especially important for [people who are at higher risk of getting very sick](#).

Stay home if you are sick

Unless you need to drive to get medical care or medications, please stay home. Learn [what to do if you are sick](#).

Face masks

If you are sick

You should wear a facemask when you are in close contact with other people, like when sharing a room or car ride, and before you enter a healthcare provider's office.

If you are not able to wear a facemask because it causes breathing issues or other concerns, then you should do your best to cover your coughs and sneezes. People who are caring for you should wear a facemask if they enter your room. [Learn what to do if you are sick.](#)

If you are not sick

You do not need to wear a facemask unless you are caring for someone who is sick and they are not able to wear a facemask. Facemasks may be in short supply and they should be saved for caregivers.

Clean and disinfect

Pay attention to frequently touched surfaces

Conduct daily cleaning of countertops, desks, doorknobs, handles, keyboards, light switches, phones, sink faucets and handles, and toilets.

If surfaces are dirty

Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

To properly disinfect

Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work. Use a disinfectant that is appropriate for the surface being cleaned.

Cleaning formula options

Alcohol solutions

Ensure the solution has at least 70% alcohol.

Other common EPA-registered household disinfectants

Products that claim to kill coronaviruses are expected to be effective against COVID-19 based on data showing the effectiveness of harder-to-kill viruses.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products. Be mindful of application method, concentration levels and contact time.

Diluting your household bleach

To make a bleach solution, mix 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) of bleach per gallon of water or 4 teaspoons of bleach per quart of water.

Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date.

Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.

Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.

Travel Advisories

CDC's website has updated travel advisories. School officials are encouraged to [remain aware of the situation](#) as it continues to develop.

School Closure

Temporarily dismissing childcare programs and K-12 schools can be a strategy used to stop or slow the further spread of COVID-19 in communities.

While school is closed to students, childcare programs and schools may stay open for staff members (unless ill) while students stay home. Keeping facilities open allows teachers to develop and deliver lessons and materials remotely, thus maintaining continuity of teaching and learning. It also allows other staff members to continue to provide services and help with additional response efforts.

Childcare and school administrators should work in close collaboration and coordination with local health officials before making decision about dismissal and large event cancellations.

Schools can seek specific guidance from local health officials to determine if, when, and for how long to take these steps. Large event cancellations or school dismissals may be recommended for 14 days or possibly longer, depending upon discussions with local health officials.

The nature of these actions (geographic scope, duration) may change as the local outbreak situation evolves.

If an ill student or staff member attended school prior to being confirmed as a COVID-19 case

Local health officials may recommend temporary school dismissals if a student or staff member attended school prior to being confirmed as a COVID-19 case.

Recommendations for the scope (a single school, a full district) and duration (days or weeks) of school dismissals will be made on a case-by-case basis. Considerations include current information about COVID-19 as well as the number of cases present within the impacted community.

Schools should work with the local health department and other relevant leadership to communicate the danger of possible COVID-19 exposure.

Your communication to the school community should align with the communication plan in your school's emergency operations plan. In such a circumstance, it is critical to maintain confidentiality of the affected student or staff member, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.

If a student or staff member has been identified with COVID-19, school and program administrators should seek guidance from local health officials to determine when students and staff should return to schools.

Students and staff who feel well but are living with or are otherwise exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 should follow instructions from local health officials to determine when to return to school.

For more information, please see the FAQ from the CDC:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools-faq.html>