

Information for non-public schools, preschools, childcare or other learning programs

The County Superintendent of Schools and the superintendents of each public school district in the County has closed its schools to students for three weeks for the purpose of creating long-term plans to operate in ways that will facilitate social distancing, provide all necessary hygiene and cleaning supplies, ensure adequate staff time and resources to follow public health guidance, and create plans in the event of significant staff shortage due to illness.

Other schools, preschools, and childcare providers in the County may choose to remain open. If a staff member or student at one of those schools or childcare centers is confirmed to have COVID-19, the Public Health Department will consider, based on the specific facts and circumstances of that case, whether closure of that school, preschool or child-care facility is warranted.

The negative effects of the closure of such facilities for children, families, and communities are significant, and children have not been shown to be a high-risk group for serious illness from this virus.

Actions to Take

We encourage all school and child-care facility officials to carefully review and follow the CDC's guidance for schools and childcare centers, as well as our recommendations for canceling certain gatherings and events that apply to these facilities, as well as our general guidance and orders.

Some children have underlying health conditions, such as severely weakened immune systems, that put them at higher risk. Caregivers of children with underlying health conditions should consult with healthcare providers about whether their children should stay home from school or child care.

Schools and child-care facilities are responsible for taking the following steps:

- Teachers and staff with any fever and/or respiratory symptoms should not come to work. Teachers and staff should self-screen (i.e., check themselves for subjective fever and/or respiratory symptoms such as cough) for symptoms each morning before interacting with children.
- Ensure sick leave policies that allow teachers and staff to stay home if they have symptoms of respiratory infection.
- Implement staggered recess times to limit the number of children who are together; and, if possible, group recess by classrooms to reduce opportunities for mixing.
- Consider alternatives to group programming within the facility including any large or communal activities such as assemblies and sporting events. Alternate approaches which limit close contact may include conducting assemblies via webcasts or intercom announcement and limiting the number of spectators who can attend sporting events.
- Limit visitors to the facility by not allowing those with symptoms of fever and/or respiratory infection.

Stay home if sick

All children and staff should stay home if they feel sick. Make sure that your facility's sick leave/attendance policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that children/staff are aware of these policies. Don't require sick employees to have doctors' notes as healthcare offices may be very busy and unable to provide that documentation right away.

Regular cleaning

Exposure is thought to mostly occur through respiratory droplets but surfaces can still transfer the virus from person to person. Frequently touched surfaces should be regularly cleaned. Doorknobs, tabletops, counters, phones, keyboards and fixtures should be disinfected several times throughout the day. Cleaning is especially important for classroom and childcare environments where desks and tables are shared.