

County of Santa Clara

Public Health Department

Public Health Administration
976 Lenzen Avenue, 2nd Floor
San José, CA 95126
408.792.5040



February 10, 2020

Update on Guidance for Students returning from Travel to Mainland China

The situation regarding the coronavirus continues to evolve rapidly. The CA Department of Public Health has issued new guidance for schools and school districts which is provided below. This guidance does not apply to Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan, where the transmission of the novel coronavirus is not widespread.

NEW GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Please note that there have been reports of students and others being stigmatized. We urge schools to ensure students' and staffs' privacy to help prevent discrimination.

Students and staff returning from mainland China arriving in the United States since February 3, 2020 should be excluded from school for 14 days, beginning the day after they left China. *This is a change from the previous guidance.*

CDC guidance on returning travelers is available here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html>

For students & staff who came back to the U.S. prior to February 3 and do not have respiratory illness, they may wish to consider staying home for 14 days after they left mainland China, but it is not mandatory.

In the unusual event that a student or staff member who returned from mainland China prior to February 3, 2020, and who:

- has symptoms of respiratory illness, such as fever and cough, **AND**
- became ill within 14 days after their departure from China,

Please take the following steps:

- separate the individual from others as much as possible and arrange for the individual to go home, and
- contact the County of Santa Clara Public Health Department during regular business hours (408-885-3980, M-F 8-5) for further guidance.

Precautions to Prevent Spread of All Infectious Diseases

At this time the health risk to the general public in Santa Clara County from novel coronavirus remains low, but schools can take common-sense precautions to prevent the spread of all infectious

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diseases. These precautions will be helpful to prevent the spread of other common illnesses such as influenza and gastroenteritis.

Encourage all students, parents, and staff to take everyday preventive actions:

- Stay home when sick.
 - Remain at home until fever has been gone for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines.
 - Seek immediate medical care if symptoms become more severe, e.g., high fever or difficulty breathing.

Use “respiratory etiquette”.

- Cover cough with a tissue or sleeve. See [CDC’s Cover Your Cough page \(https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/actions-prevent-flu.htm\)](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/actions-prevent-flu.htm) for multilingual posters and flyers, posted at the bottom of webpage.
- Provide adequate supplies within easy reach, including tissues and no-touch trash cans.
- Wash hands frequently.
 - Encourage hand washing by students and staff through education, scheduled time for handwashing, and the provision of adequate supplies.
- Routinely clean frequently touched surfaces.
- Separate sick students and staff from others until they can go home. When feasible, identify a “sick room” through which others do not regularly pass.
- Encourage flu vaccine for those who haven’t had it this season to reduce illnesses and absences on campus (but won’t prevent coronavirus illnesses).

A note about face masks: face masks are most useful for preventing disease spread when they are worn by people who have symptoms. People are asked to wear a mask at doctors’ offices and hospitals if they are coughing or sneezing.

Develop policies to respond to outbreaks and communicable diseases:

- Establish relationships with the County of Santa Clara Department of Public Health for ongoing communication.
- Update emergency plans to ensure they are in place before an outbreak occurs.

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