

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SCHOOL STAFF AND STUDENTS TO PREVENT AND CONTROL THE SPREAD OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Riverside University Health System – Public Health

This guidance is intended to support safe, in-person learning and care by mitigating the spread of communicable diseases in childcare settings and TK–12 schools. The following strategies form a general prevention framework to reduce the spread of communicable diseases, including but not limited to, COVID-19, influenza, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

- **Vaccinate:** Stay up to date with recommended immunizations. Vaccines are safe, effective tools that protect against a wide range of serious diseases, including COVID-19, influenza, and other communicable diseases.
- **Stay Home:** When you are sick, stay home and away from others until your symptoms are getting better and you are fever free (without using fever-reducing medication) for 24 hours.
- **Hand Hygiene:** Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- **Wear a Mask:** Consider wearing a mask if you are sick and need to be around other people, especially in indoor settings.
 - Masking is strongly recommended for all individuals (e.g., students and staff) in K-12 indoor settings through Day 10 of positive test or illness.
- **Avoid Close Contact:** Stay away from people who are sick and maintain distance from others when you are sick.
- **Testing:** If you are sick or have been around someone who is sick get tested for respiratory viruses to help make prevention or treatment choices.
- **Increase Ventilation:** Improving indoor air quality can help reduce the spread of airborne diseases and lower the risk of exposure. To increase airflow, open windows and doors or choose to gather outdoors. Using air purifiers can also help clean the air.

CDC Guidance: Preventing Spread of Infections in K-12 Schools

[Preventing Spread of Infections in K-12 Schools | CDC](#)

Key Points:

1. Health and Safety Plans:

- Schools should develop and implement comprehensive health and safety plans.
- Plans should include strategies for preventing the spread of common infectious diseases.
- Health and safety measures should be regularly reviewed and updated based on current public health guidance.

2. Promoting Hand Hygiene:

- Encourage frequent handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Provide hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol in areas where handwashing is not feasible.
- Educate students and staff on proper hand hygiene techniques.

3. Respiratory Etiquette:

- Teach and reinforce the importance of covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of the elbow.
- Dispose of tissues properly and perform hand hygiene immediately after using tissues.

4. Cleaning and Disinfecting:

- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, light switches, and desks.
- Use EPA-approved disinfectants that are effective against common pathogens.
- Ensure that cleaning protocols are followed consistently and correctly.

5. Staying Home When Sick:

- Encourage students and staff to stay home when they are sick to prevent the spread of illness.
- Develop policies that support staying home without penalizing students academically or staff professionally.
- Communicate clear guidelines on when it is safe to return to school after being sick.

6. Vaccination:

- Promote vaccination as a critical tool in preventing the spread of infectious diseases.
- Provide information on recommended vaccines for students and staff.
- Collaborate with Riverside University Health System- Public Health (RUHS-PH) to facilitate vaccination clinics and educational campaigns.

7. Monitoring and Managing Illness:

- Establish protocols for monitoring and managing illness within the school setting.
- Utilize SPOT (School Portal for Outbreak Tracking) to report COVID-19 cases, outbreaks or hospitalized cases. All other disease reporting contact RUHS PH Disease Control 951-358-5107.
- Ensure that school health personnel are trained to recognize and respond to signs of illness.

8. Communication and Education:

- Provide ongoing education and training for students, staff, and families on infection prevention.
- Use various communication channels to share information about health and safety practices.
- Foster a culture of health and safety by promoting awareness and encouraging responsible behaviors.

9. Collaboration with Public Health Authorities:

- Work closely with RUHS-PH authorities to stay informed about current health threats and guidance.
- Coordinate efforts to implement public health recommendations and respond to outbreaks.
- Participate in community-wide initiatives to promote health and prevent the spread of infections.

Reporting Requirements

- K-12 schools should refer to California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 17, [§2500](#) and [§2508](#) for reporting requirements.
 - Recommended reporting of all COVID-19 cases. Required reporting for when hospitalization occurs or a suspected outbreak (3 or more cases within a 7-day period among people who are epidemiologically linked).
 - Report via the School Portal for Outbreak Tracking (SPOT)
- [Influenza, COVID-19 and Respiratory Illness Outbreak Quicksheet](#)

Additional Resources and Information

For comprehensive information on our updated protocols, please refer to the following resources:

- [Riverside County Respiratory Viruses](#)
- [Respiratory Viruses Hub](#)
- [State of California Safe Schools for All Hub](#)
- [Considerations when a Child has Symptoms of Illness in Child Care or School](#)
- [Preventing Spread of Infections in K-12 Schools | CDC](#)

**We thank you for your continued cooperation and commitment to keeping our school community safe.
Together, we can ensure a healthy environment for all.**

This guidance will now be updated on an as needed basis. It will not be updated at the beginning of each school year.