

CDC Readiness and Planning Tool: To Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 in Primary and Secondary Schools in Low Resource Non-U.S. Settings

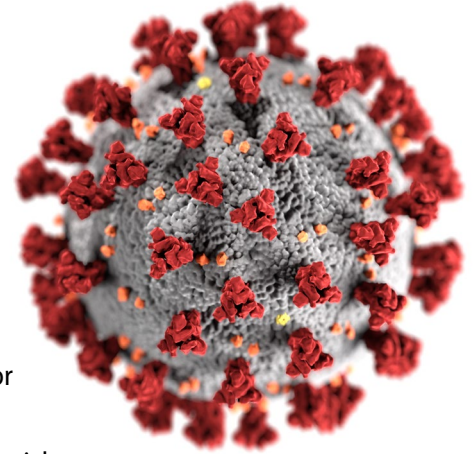
CDC offers the following readiness and planning tool to share ways school administrators can help protect students, staff, and communities, and slow the spread of COVID-19. This tool aligns with the [Operational Considerations for Schools for low resource non-US settings](#), and includes the following:

- General Readiness Assessment
- Daily/Weekly Readiness Assessment
- Preparing for if Someone Gets Sick
- Special Considerations and Resources

School administrators can review and complete the General Readiness Assessment while working with local or national public health officials in the initial planning and preparation to reduce the spread of COVID-19 through healthy behaviors, environments, and operations.

The Daily/Weekly Readiness Assessment can be used by school administrators to monitor policies and practices.

Planning lists are also included to help school administrators prepare for if someone gets sick and to identify special considerations specific to their school community. Implementation should be guided by what is feasible, practical, acceptable, and tailored to the needs and context of each school community.



Guiding Principles to Keep in Mind

While not exhaustive, this stratification attempts to characterize the risks of spread among students, teachers, and staff across this continuum:

Lowest risk:

- Students and teachers engage in virtual-only classes, activities, and events

Some risk:

- Hybrid Learning Model: Some students participate in virtual learning and other students participate in in-person learning
- Small, in-person classes, activities, and events
- Small groups (cohorting), alternating schedules, and staggered schedules are applied rigorously
- No mixing of groups of students and teachers throughout/across school days
- Students and teachers do not share objects
- Students, teachers, and staff follow all steps to [protect themselves and others](#) at all times including proper use of face masks, physical distancing, hand hygiene
- Regularly scheduled (i.e., at least daily or between uses) [cleaning and disinfection](#) of frequently touched areas implemented with fidelity

Medium risk:

- Hybrid Learning Model: Most students participate in in-person learning, some students participate in virtual learning
- Larger in-person classes, activities, and events



cdc.gov/coronavirus

cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/global-covid-19

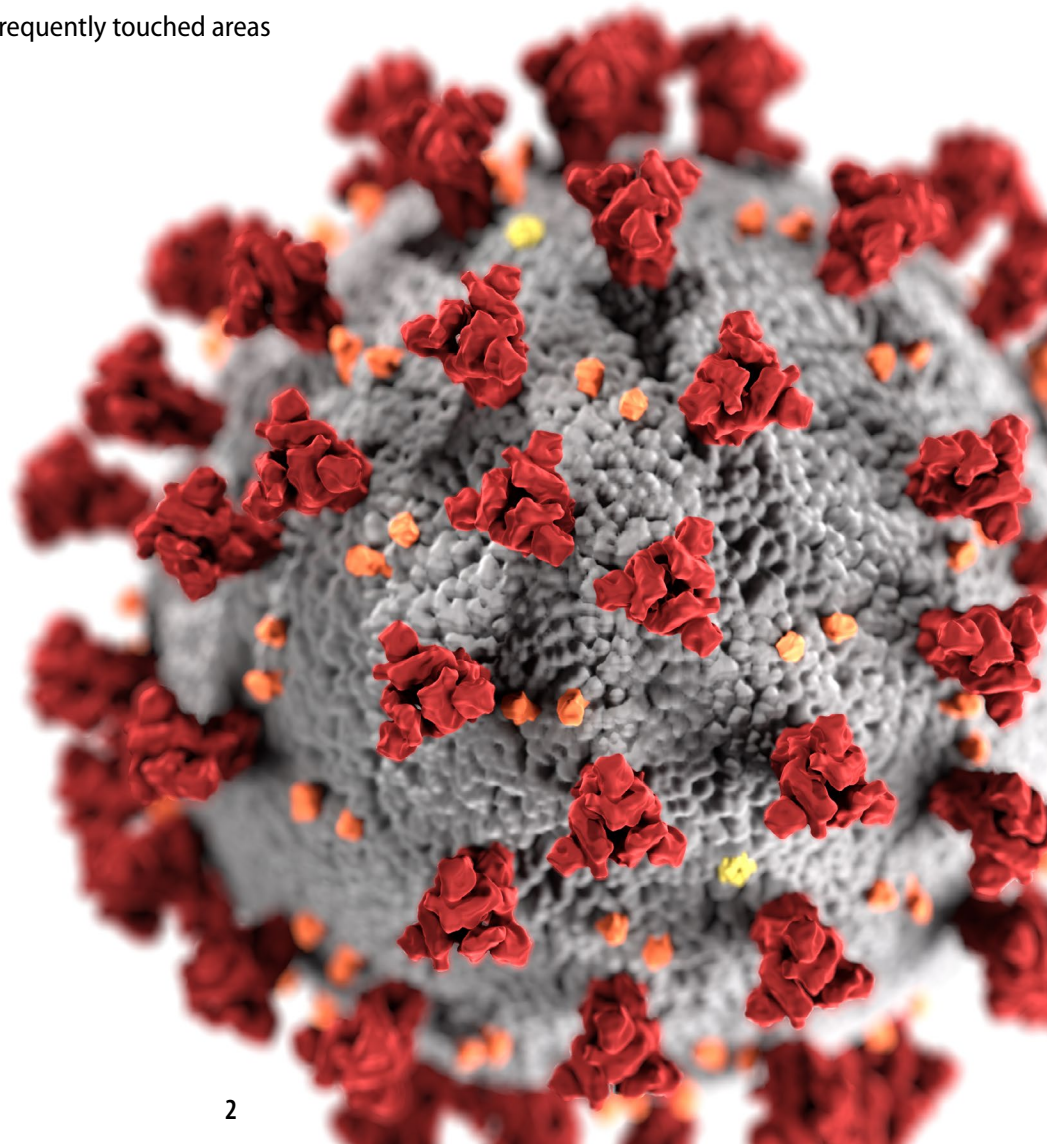
- Small groups (cohorting), alternating schedules, and staggered schedules are applied with some exceptions
- Some mixing of groups of students and teachers throughout/across school days
- Students and teachers minimally share objects
- Students, teachers, and staff follow all steps to [protect themselves and others](#) such as proper use of face masks, social distancing, hand hygiene
- Regularly scheduled [cleaning and disinfection](#) of frequently touched areas largely implemented with fidelity

Higher risk:

- Students and teachers engage in in-person only learning, activities, and events
- Students minimally mix between classes and activities
- Students and teachers share some objects
- Students, teachers, and staff follow some steps to [protect themselves and others](#) at all times such as proper use of face masks, physical distancing, hand hygiene
- Irregular [cleaning and disinfection](#) of frequently touched areas

Highest risk:

- Students and teachers engage in in-person only learning, activities, and events
- Students mix freely between classes and activities
- Students and teachers freely share objects
- Students, teachers, and staff do not follow steps to [protect themselves and others](#) such as proper use of face masks, physical distancing, hand hygiene
- Irregular [cleaning and disinfection](#) of frequently touched areas



General Readiness Assessment

Facilities and Supplies

Point Person(s):

Obtain supplies including:

- soap
- hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol)
- paper towels
- tissues
- [cleaning and disinfection supplies](#)
- [masks](#)
- trash cans/rubbish bins (preferably no-touch/foot pedal)
- soap/hand sanitizer dispensers (preferably no-touch)
- disposable food service items
- gloves
- no touch thermometers (as feasible)
- handwashing stations
- buckets, jerrycans, or other containers for transporting and storing water (if water is not always available on-site)
- other:

Assess the ability of staff, students, and caregivers to obtain [masks](#) for everyday use. Make a plan to provide masks to students who are unable to obtain one.

Develop protocol to increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible throughout the school day (e.g., opening windows and doors when it is safe to do so).

Ensure any ventilation systems operate properly. If using fans, make sure they do not blow from one person onto another.

Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions, in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least 2 meters apart (e.g., reception desk).

Provide physical guides, such as tape/paint/chalk on floors and signs on walls, to promote at least 2 meters physical distancing and establish one-way circulation of people (e.g., hallways, classrooms).

Space seating at least 2 meters apart. Turn desks or tables so that students all face the same direction.

Explore options for holding classes outside and ensure appropriate protection from the elements (e.g., sun, wind, rain, snow).

Designate a staff member (or **adult** volunteer) to be

in charge of [cleaning and disinfection](#) and [preparation](#) of solutions. Train them on safe handling and storage of disinfectants. In circumstances where students are typically responsible for cleaning the school, this should be discontinued in place of trained adults with appropriate protective equipment.

Develop a protocol to ensure [safe and correct use](#) and storage of [cleaners and disinfectants](#), including storing products securely away from students.

Close communal spaces or develop a plan for staggered use and routine [cleaning and disinfecting](#).

Develop a schedule for frequent routine cleaning and disinfection (at least once daily and between use as much as possible) Include areas such as the following:

[buses or other transport vehicles](#)

frequently touched surfaces (e.g., desks, door handles, railings)

communal spaces (e.g., toilets)

shared objects (e.g., school supplies, sport equipment, games)

other:

Ensure all [water systems](#) and features are safe to use, including [after a prolonged facility shutdown](#).

Ensure that [handwashing stations](#) with soap and water (or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol) are available near entrances and exits, each classroom, latrines, and any food preparation or eating areas (including near snack vendors).

Include a plan and designated person to ensure that water and soap are maintained throughout the school day. In water-scarce areas, [handwashing solution](#) can be used as a temporary measure when soap and water or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol are not available.

Ensure adequate supply of paper towels. If paper towels are not feasible, include messaging on air drying.

Develop a protocol to monitor and ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of objects, or limit use to one group of students at a time, and clean and disinfect between use.

Develop a policy on what items can be brought from home for use during the school day (e.g., backpacks, toys) and how these items should be cleaned and stored.

Encourage organizations that share the school facilities to follow these considerations.

Education and Training

Point Person(s):

Educate staff, students, and caregivers about when they should [stay home](#) (e.g., when they have COVID-19 [symptoms](#), have been diagnosed with COVID-19, are waiting for test results, or have been [exposed](#) to someone with confirmed or suspected COVID-19) and when they can return to school.

Educate staff on flexible work and leave policies that encourage sick staff members to stay at home without fear of job loss or other consequences.

Teach students and staff the technique and importance of frequent [handwashing](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use of hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol).

Teach students and staff the importance of [physical distancing](#) and cohorting in small groups (if applicable).

Teach students and staff the importance of covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or into an elbow, and then washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Communicate the importance of wearing [masks](#) to students, staff, and caregivers. Provide information on any relevant school policies.

Masks should **not** be placed on:

children younger than 2 years old

anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without help

Consider [feasibility and adaptations](#) for when mask use is not possible for an individual or a particular situation.

Provide information on [proper use, removal, and washing of masks](#) to students, staff, and caregivers.

Train staff on all prevention and safety protocols. Conduct training virtually or maintain [physical distancing](#) during training. Staff serve as models of healthy behavior.

Ensure staff are alert to and knowledgeable of signs of violence against children (students) and adults (other staff).

Use the following tool when making initial preparations to promote healthy behaviors, environments, and operations that reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Communication and Messaging

Point Person(s):

[Post signs](#) in highly visible locations to [promote everyday protective measures](#) and describe how to stop the spread of germs.

Signage locations include:

- entrances
- dining areas
- restrooms
- classrooms
- administrative offices
- cafeteria/canteen
- auditorium/gathering areas
- janitorial staff areas
- other:

Develop plans to include messages (e.g., [videos, posters](#)) about behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19 when communicating with students, staff, and caregivers. All messages should be culturally relevant, in plain language, and available in appropriate languages and accessible formats. Messages can be shared on:

websites

email

[social media accounts](#)

messaging apps

radio

communal areas

other:

Explore, establish, and regularly test communication channels between the school and students and their caregivers.

Develop plans to broadcast regular [announcements](#) with practical tips on reducing the spread of COVID-19 on public address systems, or during other regularly scheduled announcements. Explore opportunities for broadcasting outside of the school, including community radio. Consider regular announcements that are also accessible to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Work with faith and community leaders and other key stakeholders to share key messages about COVID-19, including information on how the virus that causes it is spread and strategies to reduce transmission.

Communicate accurate information and dispel myths, rumors, and false information. Communication should

[fight stigma](#) and express empathy to help students and families affected by COVID-19 re-enter school system. WHO has a [Guide to Social Stigma associated with COVID-19](#).

Provide mental health and well-being information to staff, students, and caregivers. Examples include [stress and coping resources](#), [positive parenting tips and tools](#), [How Right Now](#), and other support resources (e.g., community services, national support hotlines).

Notify all staff and caregivers of who to contact for questions and concerns related to COVID-19.

Ensure communication is developmentally appropriate, available in local languages, and accessible for all students, including those with disabilities. Where literacy is a challenge, use visuals instead of text.

Gatherings, Visitors, and Events

Point Person(s):

Review local and other regulatory authority policies related to group gatherings to determine if events (e.g., sport games, extracurricular activities) can be held.

Develop a protocol to limit nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as much as possible—especially those who are not from the local geographic area (e.g., community, town, city, country).

Identify opportunities to pursue virtual activities and events for large groups in lieu of any in-person gatherings. Where virtual format is not possible, consider holding activities and events outdoors with adequate space for physical distancing of at least 2 meters between people who do not live together for all attendees.

If offering [sporting activities](#), develop a plan to follow considerations that minimize the spread of COVID-19 among players, families, coaches, and communities.

If food or drink are offered at any event, have pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee instead of a self-serve food and drink.

Identify and prioritize outdoor activities, if safe to do so, where physical distancing can be maintained as much as possible.

Action Planning—Notes and Next Steps

Point Person(s):

Use this space to note any required resources and next steps, or potential barriers and opportunities:

Daily/Weekly Readiness Assessment

Use the following tool to monitor and maintain healthy behaviors, environments, and operations that reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Policies and Procedures

Point Person(s):

Maintain routine contact with local health authorities and review relevant local laws, policies, guidelines, and orders for updates.

Ensure the designated staff person or small committee continues to respond to COVID-19 concerns, to provide regular updates to staff, students, and caregivers, and to serve as a liaison with local health authorities.

Monitor absenteeism of students and staff.

Update roster of trained back-up staff or volunteers.

Continue to provide information to students, staff, and caregivers about self-monitoring for signs of infectious illness. [Students and staff who are sick](#) should not attend school in-person.

Continue to determine if school-based health checks are needed. CDC does not recommend universal symptom screening in U.S.-based schools, however CDC provides [detailed considerations](#) for making this decision. WHO has published additional [considerations](#) for screening students, teachers, and other staff. If school-based health checks are employed, do so in accordance with any applicable local laws and regulations.

Ensure options for flexible worksites (e.g., telework) as feasible, and flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts) are available and used when needed.

Review and adhere to physical distancing protocols (e.g., small group assignments, spacing desks, staggered mealtimes, staggered pick-up/drop-off).

Ensure assigned small groups ([cohorting](#)) of students and staff continue to stay together throughout the day with limited mixing between small groups. Remind that at least two meters of physical distance should be maintained between individuals, including within small groups.

Monitor and ensure appropriate accommodations, modifications, and assistance for students with special healthcare needs or disabilities.

Ensure education remains accessible for students who have unique educational support needs.

Ensure safety for children and youth who need assistance with activities of daily living, as well as their [service providers](#), as applicable.

Continue to maximize physical distance during mealtimes (e.g., individually package or plate meals, eat in classrooms or outdoors instead of gathering in cafeteria, stagger mealtimes by small group assignments).

Ensure each student's belongings are separated from others' and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or designated areas.

Continue to limit sharing of electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids. Clean and disinfect between users.

Ensure continuity of critical/essential services that are delivered at school (e.g., nutrition, health services).

Regularly update referral mechanisms and support resources for social, health, and protection needs (e.g., mental health).

Facilities and Supplies

Point Person(s):

Monitor and restock supplies including:

- soap
- hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol)
- paper towels
- tissues
- [cleaning and disinfection supplies](#)
- [masks](#)
- trash cans/rubbish bins (preferably no-touch/foot pedal)
- soap/hand sanitizer dispensers (preferably no-touch)
- disposable food service items
- gloves
- no touch thermometers (as feasible)
- [handwashing stations](#)
- buckets, jerrycans, or other containers for transporting and storing water (if water is not always available on-site)
- other:

Monitor adherence to the schedule for frequent routine cleaning and disinfection of:

- [buses or other transport vehicles](#)
- frequently touched surfaces (e.g., desks, door handles, railings)
- communal spaces (e.g., toilets)
- shared objects (e.g., school supplies, sport equipment, games)
- other:

Monitor safe and correct use and storage of [cleaners and disinfectants](#), including storing products securely away from students.

Ensure that there is adequate ventilation (e.g., open windows and doors) when cleaners and disinfectants are used to prevent students or staff from inhaling toxic fumes.

Ensure ventilation systems operate properly or that alternative arrangements (e.g., fans) are available.

Ensure that the application of disinfectants is done safely away from students, giving special considerations to higher-risk individuals, such as those with [asthma](#).

Ensure seating is spaced at least 2 meters apart and that desks remain facing the same direction.

For communal spaces, ensure staggered use, and [cleaning and disinfecting](#) of frequently touched surfaces and shared objects between users.

Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible throughout the school day (e.g., opening windows and doors when it is safe to do so).

Ensure adequate essential supplies (e.g., writing utensils) to minimize sharing of frequently touched surfaces and shared objects, and monitor cleaning and disinfecting between use. For non-essential items that are in short supply (i.e., art supplies, toys), remove these to prevent sharing among groups.

Education and Training

Point Person(s):

Educate staff, students, and caregivers about when they [should stay](#) home (e.g., if they have COVID-19 [symptoms](#), have been diagnosed with COVID-19, are waiting for test results, or have been [exposed](#) to someone with confirmed or suspected COVID-19) and when they can return to school.

Inform staff of flexible work and leave policies that encourage sick staff members to stay at home without fear of job loss or other consequences.

Reinforce and monitor [handwashing](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or [other appropriate method](#).

Reinforce the importance of [physical distancing](#) and staying with small groups.

Encourage [covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or into an elbow](#), and then washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Reinforce the use of [masks](#). Masks should not be placed on:

- children younger than 2 years old
- anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without help.

Consider [feasibility and adaptations](#) for when mask use is not possible for an individual or a particular situation.

Provide information on [proper use, removal, and washing of masks](#).

Train staff on any updated safety protocols. Conduct training virtually or maintain physical distancing during training. Staff serve as models of healthy behavior.

Use the following tool to monitor and maintain healthy behaviors, environments, and operations that reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Communication and Messaging

Continue to [post signs](#) or update signs in highly visible locations to [promote everyday protective measures](#) and describe how to stop the spread of germs.

Signage locations include:

- entrances
- dining areas
- restrooms
- classrooms
- administrative offices
- cafeteria/canteen
- auditorium/gathering areas
- janitorial staff areas
- other:

Continue to provide or update messages (e.g., [videos, posters](#)) about behaviors that prevent spread of COVID-19 when communicating with staff and caregivers. All messages should be culturally relevant, in plain language, and available in appropriate languages and accessible formats.

Messages can be shared on:

- websites
- email
- [social media accounts](#)
- messaging apps
- radio
- communal areas
- other:

Broadcast regular announcements with practical tips on reducing the spread of COVID-19 on public address systems, or during other regular announcements. Consider regular announcements that are also accessible to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Continue to communicate accurate information and dispel myths, rumors, and false information. Communication should [fight stigma](#) and express empathy to help students and families affected by COVID-19 re-enter school system. WHO has a [Guide to Social Stigma associated with COVID-19](#).

Ensure all staff and caregivers know which staff person is responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns and how to contact this person.

Encourage staff and students to take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories about COVID-19, including social media, if they are feeling overwhelmed or distressed.

Promote healthy eating, exercising, getting sleep, and finding time to unwind.

Encourage staff members and students to check-in on each other and [talk with people they trust](#) about their concerns and how they are feeling.

Continue to share mental health and well-being information to staff, students, and caregivers. Examples include [stress and coping resources](#), [positive parenting tips and tools](#), [How Right Now](#), and other support resources (e.g., community services, national support hotlines).

Ensure communication is developmentally appropriate, available in local languages, and accessible for all students, including those with disabilities. Where literacy is a challenge, make use of visuals instead of text.

Gatherings, Visitors, and Events

Point Person(s):

Continue to encourage physical distancing of at least 2 meters between people who don't live together at group events, gatherings, or meetings, including outdoor activities.

Continue to restrict nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations—especially those who are not from the local geographic area (e.g., community, town, city, country).

Continue to pursue virtual activities and events for large groups in lieu of any in-person gatherings. Where virtual format is not possible, consider holding activities

and events outdoors with adequate space for physical distancing (at least 2 meters between people who don't live together for all attendees).

Continue to follow [considerations](#) for students and staff participating in sporting activities.

If food or drink are offered at any event, have pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee instead of a self-serve food and drink.

Action Planning—Notes and Next Steps

Point Person(s):

Use this space to note any required resources and next steps, or potential barriers and opportunities:

Preparing for if Someone Gets Sick

Use the following tool when making initial preparations for if a student, teacher, or other school staff member gets sick with COVID-19. The [What to do if a Student Becomes Sick at School or Reports a New COVID-19 Diagnosis Flowchart](#) for schools in the U.S. may be useful for other settings.

Before Someone Gets Sick

Point Person(s):

The designated staff person or small committee works with local health authority to develop a response plan. Consider ways the school can be ready to assist the public health response (e.g., contact tracing).

Make sure students, staff, and caregivers know when they should not come to school, and who to notify if they have COVID-19 [symptoms](#), are diagnosed with COVID-19, are waiting for test results, or have been [exposed](#) to someone with symptoms of COVID-19 or a confirmed or suspected case.

Develop systems to:

have individuals self-report to the designated staff person if they have [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, have been diagnosed with COVID-19, are waiting for test results, or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days.

notify individuals of school closures and restrictions put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19.

provide academic work and remediation for students in isolation or quarantine.

In collaboration with the local health authority, develop policies for returning to school after COVID-19 exposure or illness. CDC's [criteria to discontinue home isolation and quarantine](#) as well as the [WHO criteria for releasing patients with COVID-19](#) can inform these policies.

Identify an isolation room or area to separate anyone who has COVID-19 [symptoms](#), or who has tested positive but does not have symptoms.

Establish procedures for [safely transporting](#), or arranging transport for anyone who is sick to their home or to a healthcare facility, if necessary.

Develop a plan to support staff, students, and families experiencing trauma or challenges related to COVID-19.

When Someone Gets Sick

Point Person(s):

Immediately separate individuals with [COVID-19 symptoms or who test positive for COVID-19 and accommodate them in a designated isolation area](#).

If necessary, transport sick individual(s) home or to a healthcare facility.

If calling an ambulance or bringing someone to a healthcare facility, alert the facility before arriving that the person may have COVID-19.

Immediately close off the usage of areas used by a sick person. If possible, open windows or doors to increase ventilation.

Advise sick individuals that they should not return to school until they have met local/national criteria to discontinue home isolation.

After Someone Gets Sick

Point Person(s):

In accordance with local laws and regulations, notify local health officials, staff, and caregivers of people with COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with local policies and laws.

Work with local health officials to notify individuals of any school closures and restrictions that will be put in place.

Advise those who have had [close contact](#) with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home, [self-monitor for symptoms](#), and follow local/national [guidance](#) if symptoms develop.

Wait at least 24 hours before [cleaning and disinfecting](#) to minimize potential for exposure of cleaning staff to respiratory droplets. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Ensure [safe and correct](#) use of cleaning and disinfection products.

Notes and Next Steps:

Special Considerations and Resources

Use the following resources to address any additional considerations specific to your school community.

Special Considerations

Point Person(s):

Use this space to note any modifications necessary for specific groups within the school community, as well as any other considerations specific to the context of the school community.

Use the following resources to address any additional considerations specific to your school community.

Resources

Point Person(s):

Resources with an asterisk (*) were developed for use in the United States, however, they include relevant and valuable information that can also inform mitigation measures in non-U.S. settings

Latest CDC COVID-19 Information

[CDC communication resources](#) (e.g., signs, posters, videos, social media, toolkits)

[Operational Considerations for Schools](#)

[Schools and Child Care Programs*](#)

[Masks*](#)

[Guidance for K-12 School Administrators on the Use of Masks in Schools*](#)

[Cleaning, Disinfection, and Hand Hygiene in Schools—a Toolkit for School Administrators*](#)

[Handwashing](#)

[Handwashing instructions poster](#)

[What School Nutrition Professionals and Volunteers at Schools Need to Know about COVID-19*](#)

[Making a 0.05% Chlorine Handwashing Solution](#)

[How to Make 0.1% Chlorine Solution to Disinfect Surfaces](#)

[Screening K-12 Students for Symptoms of COVID-19: Limitations and Considerations*](#)

[What to do if a Student Becomes Sick at School or Reports a New COVID-19 Diagnosis Flowchart*](#)

[If You Are Sick or Caring for Someone*](#)

[Guidance for Businesses and Employers*](#)

[COVID-19 Prevention*](#)

[Physical Distancing*](#)

[Cohorting*](#)

[COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions*](#)

[Students with Disabilities or Special Healthcare Needs*](#)

[Back to School Planning: Checklists to Guide Parents,](#)

[Guardians, and Caregivers*](#)

[Strategies for Protecting K-12 School Staff from COVID-19*](#)

[People at Higher Risk*](#)

[People with Disabilities*](#)

[Coping with Stress*](#)

[Global COVID-19](#)

[Global Community Mitigation](#)

[Taking Care of People Sick with COVID-19 at Home](#)

[Confidentiality and Consent for COVID-19 Contact Tracing](#)

Other Resources

[Considerations for school-related public health measures in the context of COVID-19](#)

[Social Stigma associated with COVID-19](#)

[Handwashing compendium for Low Resource Settings](#)

[COVID-19: 24/7 Parenting tips and activities](#)

[Safe to Learn during COVID-19: Recommendations to prevent and respond to violence against children in all learning environments](#)

[How Right Now*](#)

Other: