



COVID-19 UPDATE

MARCH 5, 2020

Updated Recommendations for Schools

In light of significantly increasing rates of COVID-19 in Santa Clara County, the Public Health Department is taking further steps to protect the health of our community. Public Health is making these recommendations in consultation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and they are based on the best information we have at this time. These recommendations are effective immediately and may be updated upon further evaluation and public health need.

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS

The County Public Health Department currently is not recommending closing schools at this time. If a staff member or student in a specific school is confirmed to have COVID-19, the Public Health Department will consider, based on the specific facts of each situation, whether closure of that school is warranted. Among other reasons, the County is not recommending school closures at this time because children have not been shown to be a high-risk group for serious illness from this virus. Closing schools also causes significant community disruption.

As much as possible, children should be allowed to carry on with their education and normal activities.

We encourage all school officials to carefully review and follow the CDC's guidance for K-12 schools and childcare centers, as well as our recommendations for canceling certain gatherings and events, which also apply to schools. Schools in our community will need to make decisions about postponement or cancellation of specific activities.

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.

Schools 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 screen themselves (i.e., check themselves for subjective fever and/or respiratory symptoms such as cough) for symptoms each morning before interacting with students.
- 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 students who are together; and, if possible, group recess by classrooms to reduce opportunities for mixing.
- Consider alternatives to group programming within the school including any large or communal activities such as assemblies and large-scale 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 school by not allowing those with symptoms of fever and/or respiratory infection.

STAY HOME IF SICK

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

REGULAR CLEANING

Employers are responsible for ensuring that 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 environments where desks are shared. Exposure is thought to mostly occur through respiratory droplets but surfaces can still transfer the virus from person to person.



ENHANCED HYGIENE

Everyone needs to follow increased hygiene measures that include:

- Frequently wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used in a pinch if soap and water are not available
- Provide hand sanitizer stations for each classroom setting and at entrances when possible
- Avoid close contact with other people
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue

STAY INFORMED

Information is changing frequently.

Check and subscribe to Public Health's website and social media pages:

Public Health Website: <http://sccphd.org/coronavirus>

Public Health Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/sccpublichealth/>

Public Health Instagram: @scc_publichealth

Public Health Twitter: @HealthySCC