



## **Disinfecting & Hand Hygiene - Considerations and Best Practices During the School Day**

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### **Overview:**

The use of disinfectants and hand hygiene products are an important part of preventing infections, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. This document discusses important considerations in using these products correctly.

### **Considerations for disinfecting during the school day**

For surface disinfectants used in educational facilities, it is important to focus disinfection on **High Hand Contact/Touch Surfaces** as these are the surfaces likely to be of highest risk. Also, selecting a one-step cleaner disinfectant that can be used without needing personal protective equipment helps prevent injuries if the product is used incorrectly. Lastly, selecting a disinfectant with a short contact time (i.e. 1 - 3 minutes) helps ensure the disinfectant will keep the surface wet for the contact time with a single application, which helps achieve compliance and the optimal efficacy. If prewetted wipes are used, please ensure signage is posted instructing users not to flush, to ensure that there no resulting issues.

**In K-12 schools** commercial disinfectants should be stored in their original container and kept out of the reach of children at all times. Commercial disinfectants are only to be used by adults who have been properly trained and will carry label language advising to keep the product away from children. Decisions of who will be cleaning & disinfecting throughout the day, what surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected, and when disinfecting will be completed are all questions that need to be addressed and outlined in protocols for the school.

**For Higher Education (adult students) facilities,** if disinfectant wipes are to be made accessible for use by students throughout the day, best practice is to include signage outlining correct use instructions in the immediate area where the disinfectant wipes are accessible. The disinfectant needs to be safe to use without personal protective equipment and needs to be safe for use on the intended surfaces.

The **frequency of disinfectant use** is dependent on a number of variables and ultimately needs to be decided on an individual facility basis. The frequency of surface contact, traffic in the building, and tolerance for risk are all big factors. For the most commonly touched surfaces, a disinfection frequency of every 1-2 hours may be appropriate and for less frequently touched surfaces, at least disinfecting them daily may be appropriate.

### **Hand hygiene best practices during the school day**

Important considerations in using hand hygiene products include the following:

- Students and staff should wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, or when hands are visibly contaminated.
- If soap and water are not readily available or hands are not visibly soiled, use of an alcohol based hand rub (i.e a hand sanitizer) that contains at least 60% alcohol is also acceptable. The alcohol based hand rub should be applied in sufficient volume to cover all surfaces of the hands and hands should be rubbed together until they are dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Hand sanitizer stations may be placed in areas such as cafeteria lunch lines, near classroom doors, hallways, entryways and other high traffic areas where soap & water are not readily available.
- Place signage outlining best practices for washing hands and using hand sanitizer near hand wash sinks and hand sanitizer stations. It is also a good idea to place other signage encouraging more frequent hand hygiene in common areas throughout the building.

**Summary:**

The use of surface disinfectants and hand hygiene products are an important part of infection prevention, especially during outbreaks. This document reviewed a number of important considerations in the selection and use of disinfectants and the use of hand hygiene products.