

# Protecting Students & Staff in K-12 from COVID-19

COVID-19 has greatly affected students and staff in K-12 schools across the country. As schools reopen, health and school officials constantly take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within our communities. Schools play a critical role in these efforts with their reopening, cleaning, and disinfecting plans. By building upon routine practices, they can address possible outbreaks and protect staff and students from respiratory illnesses.

The following recommendations are based on CDC and OSHA guidelines.

## Establish Cleaning and Disinfection Guidelines and Encourage Proper Hygiene:

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as shared desks, countertops, kitchen areas, electronics, and doorknobs.
- Make hand-cleaning supplies readily available.
- Train staff on healthy hygiene practices so they can teach these to students.
- Ensure hand washing includes washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 70% alcohol.
- Train staff on the potential use of additional personal protective equipment (PPE), especially custodial staff.
- Plan on additional sanitation of school buses. Consider installing a hand sanitizer station on the bus.

## Control Exposure in the School:

- Encourage any students, staff or faculty to stay home if they are sick.
- If someone gets sick at school, isolate them from healthy students and staff until they can leave, particularly if they show symptoms of respiratory illness.
- Plan to have dedicated isolation room(s) or area(s) where these individuals can be quarantined. Consider rooms with an exterior entrance if possible to limit exposure to other students and staff.
- Inform anyone who might have been exposed.
- Report any cases to your local health department.
- Stagger staffing or schedules to reduce in-person interaction.

## Follow Additional Cleaning Guidelines After Exposure:

- Close off areas used by the individuals with COVID-19 and wait as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets.
- Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas used by the ill persons (such as offices, bathrooms, and common areas), focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.
- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- For disinfection, follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time).

For the latest information regarding COVID-19 and how to keep schools safe, please visit the CDC [here](#).

