

## **For Principals: School-level Response to COVID-19**

**Updated March 3, 2020** - The district will be updating this document as we gather additional guidance from local, state, and federal health officials.

Based on current information from the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), person-to-person spread will continue to occur and more cases may be identified in Chicago and the United States. We encourage you to read the CDC guidance to learn more, "[What you need to know](#)" [[Spanish](#)] [[Simplified Chinese](#)].

### **Immediate Action Required**

**CPS staff or students who have traveled to any location (including airport layovers) with [widespread community transmission](#) of COVID-19 should stay home for 14 calendar days after their return date.**

- Student absences should be marked as excused.
- Currently, there is no documentation required to return to school or work. This precaution is to prevent undue burden on our healthcare system.
- Travel to all locations with [widespread or sustained community transmission](#) should be canceled.
  - Please report the school travel cancellation to your network chief. The district will reimburse your school community for costs incurred due to the cancellation.
- Resources:
  - COVID-19: [www.chicago.gov/coronavirus](http://www.chicago.gov/coronavirus) or [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)
  - CDC One-Pager: "[What to do if you are sick](#)" [[Spanish](#)] [[Simplified Chinese](#)]

### **CPS staff or students who are sick must stay home.**

- Students and staff who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness must stay home and not come to school until they are free of fever (oral temperature below 100.4°F) for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- Absences should be marked excused, and attendance-driven incentives such as perfect attendance should be put on hold.

### **Sick students or employees must be sent home immediately.**

- We encourage those who are sick to go straight home and avoid crowds and public spaces, if possible.
- If you have a student who needs to be sent home:
  - Contact their parent or legal guardian. If they cannot be reached, contact the individual listed on the student's emergency contact form.
  - Keep the student under supervision in a suitable location away from other students until they are picked up. If possible have the student wait in a low traffic area of the school (ideally not the main office).

- When sending the student home, schools must supply the parent or guardian with the student's upcoming schoolwork.
- Please remind students or staff who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness that they may not come back to school until they are free of fever (oral temperature below 100.4°F) for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- Each day of student absence enforced under these policies must be recorded as "excused" in Aspen.
- If you have a staff member who needs to be sent home:
  - Discuss coverage and instructional plans prior to the staff member's departure, consistent with your school's handbook and process for addressing unplanned staff absences.
  - Email the Absence and Disability team at [cpsloa@cps.edu](mailto:cpsloa@cps.edu) for support with staff who need to take a leave of absence.

### **Encourage good hand hygiene.**

- Place posters that encourage [staying home when sick](#), [coughing and sneezing etiquette](#), and [handwashing](#) at the entrance to your school and in other areas where they are likely to be seen. The district will also be providing posters to schools in the coming weeks.
- Encourage everyone to clean their hands often.
  - Washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is best, especially if they are visibly dirty.
  - An alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60-95% alcohol is a suitable alternative.
    - Note: Small children should only use hand sanitizers under adult supervision. The use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers has raised concerns about eye contamination, skin reactions, alcohol poisoning, and flammability.
  - The district will provide alcohol hand sanitizers and cleaning wipes in addition to normal cleaning supplies. Please ensure your building manager has soap dispenser fully stocked in bathrooms and common areas, in addition to other cleaning supplies.
- Help ensure a clean learning environment.
  - Please work with your building manager and quality assurance manager to ensure schools meet the district's guidelines for cleanliness.
  - No additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is recommended at this time.
    - Scientific evidence does not currently indicate that there is a significant advantage to the use of additional cleaning regimens or products beyond the routine processes.

### **COVID-19 does not distinguish between race, nationality, or geographic borders.**

- Stigma and discrimination against the afflicted discourages early reporting of symptoms and further perpetuates community spread.
- If there is a concern related to student discrimination, please reach out to the Office of Student Protections (OSP) by calling 773-535-4400 or by emailing [osp@cps.edu](mailto:osp@cps.edu).

- If this is a concern related to staff discrimination, please reach out to the Equal Opportunity Compliance Office (EOCO) by calling 773-553-1013 or by emailing [eoco@cps.edu](mailto:eoco@cps.edu).

## Contingency Planning

Consider thinking about contingency planning

- Ensure that your school has a plan to monitor your school's attendance and plan for an increase in absences.
  - Convene your school leadership team to review this memo and begin a conversation about how to plan for COVID-19.
  - Discuss your school's unique needs and challenges around this issue.
- Identify space with low traffic that can be used to separate sick people, if possible, until they are able to go home or be picked up.
  - Do not have sick students or staff wait in the main office
  - If possible, designate a nearby separate bathroom for sick people only.
    - Develop a plan to thoroughly sanitize the room if used.
- Look for ways to increase the space between people or limit face-to-face contact between people at school.
  - Several ways to do this include moving desks farther apart, leaving empty seats between students, dividing classes into smaller groups, holding outdoor classes when weather permits, and canceling school-related group meetings and activities.
  - Please note that students unable to express their needs may not be able to communicate when something is wrong.
- Review your process for planning school events.
  - Identify actions to take if you need to postpone or cancel events, such as sports activities and special events. Consider limiting access to school campuses by non-essential visitors.