

## CEA – Coronavirus Interim Guidance

This interim guidance document is based on what is currently known about the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) and is based on the most recent guidance from The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). CDC has not issued guidelines specific for schools. CEA will update this interim guidance sheet as needed and as additional information becomes available.

### **Recommended strategies for schools—even when there are no reported cases in Connecticut:**

1. Ensure all students, parents, and employees understand the importance of remaining at home when sick as well as the importance of practicing respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene.
  - Place posters in bathrooms, classrooms, and hallways that encourage staying home when sick, proper cough and sneeze etiquette, and hand hygiene.
  - Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles throughout school buildings
  - Instruct students and employees to clean their hands often with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Soap and warm water should be used preferentially.
  - Provide soap and water and alcohol-based hand sanitizers in bathrooms and ensure they are adequately maintained. Place sanitizers in multiple locations throughout the school to promote hand hygiene.
2. Advise students, parents, and employees to take certain steps before traveling
  - Check the CDC's Traveler's Health Notices for the latest guidance and recommendations for each country. Specific travel information for travelers can be found on the CDC website
  - Advise students and employees to check themselves for symptoms of acute respiratory illness and to stay home if they are sick.
  - Ensure students and employees who become sick while traveling alert the school immediately and promptly call a healthcare provider for advice. Ensure travelers know to bring health insurance cards and emergency contact information, including numbers of healthcare providers in the country where they are traveling.
  - If there is evidence of a COVID-19 outbreak in the U.S., consider canceling non-essential travel per travel guidance issued by the CDC.
  - Travel restrictions may be enacted by other countries which may limit the ability of students and employees to return home if they become sick while outside the United States.
3. Actively encourage sick students and employees to stay home and not return until they are free of symptoms (without using symptom altering medications) for at least 24 hours.
  - Do not require employees or students who are sick with respiratory illness to provide a doctor's note, as getting such notes could be delayed by very busy medical offices.
  - Maintain flexible policies that permit students and employees to stay home to care for sick family members without penalty.

**Recommended strategies for schools—when Coronavirus cases are reported in Connecticut, or when Coronavirus may be suspected:**

4. Separate individuals who are sick
  - Employees or students who appear to have respiratory illness symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) upon arrival to school or begin to exhibit these symptoms during the school day should be immediately separated from others and be sent home.
  - Remind individuals who have symptoms to cover their noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing or into their elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available. Remind them to wash their hands often.
5. Other measures
  - Students and employees who are well but have a sick family member at home should alert the school and refer to CDC guidance for how to conduct a risk assessment of their potential exposure.
  - If someone at the school is confirmed to have a COVID-19 infection, their confidentiality must be maintained, but students, parents, and employees should be notified of their potential exposure and encouraged to conduct a risk assessment of their potential exposure on the CDC website.
  - Coordinate with state and local health officials to ensure timely and accurate information can guide appropriate responses.
  - In some communities, early childhood programs and k-12 school may be closed if COVID-19 worsens. Explore whether you can establish flexible learning environments utilizing existing technology to increase the physical distance between employees and students.
  - Learn about community-level emergency response protocols already in place within your region.
  - Consider cancelling large in-person meetings and assemblies.
  - Engage state and local health departments to confirm channels of communication and methods of dissemination of local outbreak information.

**Important human rights guidance from the Center for Disease Control:**

To prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace, do not make determinations of risk based on race or country of origin, and be sure to maintain confidentiality of people with confirmed coronavirus infection. There is much more to learn about the transmissibility, severity, and other features of COVID-19 and investigations are ongoing. Updates are available on CDC's web page at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV)."

**The Connecticut Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control have posted resources and issued helpful guidelines regarding the coronavirus.**

- Guidelines for schools: [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Digest/2019-20/2019-Novel-Coronavirus-Update-Schools-K-12-2\\_6\\_2020-final.pdf?la=en](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Digest/2019-20/2019-Novel-Coronavirus-Update-Schools-K-12-2_6_2020-final.pdf?la=en)

- CT Department of Public Health News Release: <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Press-Room/Press-Releases---2020/DPH-Provides-Updates-on-Coronavirus-Guidance-to-Local-Health-Districts-and-Schools>
- About the coronavirus: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf>
- What to do if you are sick: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/sick-with-2019-nCoV-fact-sheet.pdf>
- Guidance for employers: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html>
- CDC in Action: Preparing Communities for Potential Spread of COVID-19. Accessible from: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/preparing-communities.html>
- Corona Virus Information on Travel: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>
- Handwashing and cough etiquette posters by the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/posters.html>
- Connecticut Department of Public Health: <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Public-Health-Preparedness/Main-Page/2019-Novel-Coronavirus>
- Guidance on COVID-19 from OSHA: <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>