



Gayle Garbolino-Mojica
County Superintendent of Schools

COVID-19 Sample FAQs for School Communities

As of March 3, 2020

Provided by the Placer County Office of Education in collaboration with Placer County Public Health

[Insert School District] in partnership with the Placer County Office of Education and Placer County Public Health and other state and regional agencies, continues to closely monitor COVID-19. As of this letter, there is one confirmed case of COVID-19 in Placer County, but the immediate risk to the general public and to schools in Placer County is relatively low.

We will continue to keep our students, staff, and families informed as we receive guidance from public health officials. In the meantime, please see answers to some of the most common questions we've received from our school community in recent days.

For the most up-to-date information from health officials, visit www.placer.ca.gov/coronavirus.

Q: How are student absences being handled?

A: All absences due to illnesses are excused with parent confirmation, per policies outlined in our district materials [[link to appropriate policy or handbook](#)].

Q: Are there any plans to alter or cancel travel, field trips, school dances, etc... due to concerns?

A: There are no recommendations from public health officials at this time for cancellation of public events or field trips. Based on direction from Placer County Public Health, "students and school staff should go about their daily lives and practice the same precautions that they normally do during cold and flu season."

For information on travel plans you or families might be planning for Spring Break, please consult the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website for [travel guidelines](#).

Q: Are additional sanitization procedures taking place at sites and in classrooms?

A: We remain diligent in our efforts to disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects such as desks, keyboard and doorknobs using state-recommended cleaning materials. Additionally,

we are encouraging hand hygiene in locations readily accessible to students and staff by providing tissues, soap and hand sanitizer. All soap dispensers will be filled daily. Food Services has replaced the open-air salad bar, with individually packaged salad makings that students can grab and go. Transportation is taking extra cleaning precautions, increasing daily cleaning and sanitizing of buses. **[Insert other precautions your district is taking, if any.]**

Q: Are alcohol-based hand sanitizers allowed in schools?

A: Yes. Please visit the [California Department of Education](https://www.cde.ca.gov) website for more details.

Q: My school bathroom is out of soap. What should I do?

A: Contact **[insert who to contact]** as soon as possible so they can be refilled or fixtures replaced.

Q: What happens if a child is symptomatic with flu/cold symptoms?

If a child is symptomatic (for example: fever greater than 100.4, shortness of breath, cough, congestion), they should stay home and contact their personal physician for further guidance. A child may return to school once fever free for 24 hours without medication. If they are at school, and begin to feel sick, they should check in with the health office.

Q: What if a student catches the virus?

A: Any time a student is confirmed to have a communicable disease, the District communicates with Placer County Public Health for directives and guidance on preventing the spread of the specific communicable disease. This not only applies to COVID-19, but other health conditions as well (H1N1, tuberculosis, meningitis, etc.)

As a reminder, if your child is sick, please keep them home from school. All children and staff members with fever (>100.4 F / >38C) should remain home from school and other activities until they had no fever for 24 hours, without fever medication.

Q: What if someone in a staff member's immediate family is diagnosed? Are all quarantined in that household?

A: If students or staff come in contact with someone confirmed with COVID-19, they should stay home, contact their medical provider, and call Placer County Public Health at (800) 829-7198. If someone must quarantine or isolate, they will be notified by Placer County Public Health.

Q. How do school sites handle requests for Independent Study (IS) related to coronavirus fears?

A: Granting an IS request at the site level is a site based decision. If you are receiving requests for medical independent study or home hospital instruction, those would require a medical recommendation from a physician, and the District would follow the steps as outlined in the HHI/MIS application process. **[Insert any additional steps based on your individual district policies.]**

At this time, the risk for our student population to contract COVID-19 remains very low. Vulnerable populations are those with chronic underlying health conditions, recent international travel and known exposure to a person with COVID-19 virus.

Q: Who will make a decision to close schools?

A: If an outbreak occurs, and school closures are recommended or ordered, decisions will be made following discussions between the school district, the Placer County Office of Education and Placer County Public Health. We will also consider guidance from the California Department of Education.

Our District is unable to know if or when individuals are exposed to any illness, which is why we follow guidelines from expert agencies like the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) and [Placer County Public Health](#). Rather than recommending the cancellation of schools and public events, at this time, these agencies are asking people who may have been exposed to the virus, and their immediate families, to remain home from school and other activities.

Q: If, in a worst-case scenario, a school gets shut down, what “distance learning” protocols are being considered?

A: The District is currently looking at options to assess devices and access needs. We remain diligent in our communication with the Placer County Office of Education and Placer County Public Health professionals to establish protocols for schools and prepare for possible future school disruptions. More details will be communicated as they are available.

Q: Does the District have an emergency response plan specifically for pandemics?

A: We are working with the Placer County Office of Education and Placer County Public Health professionals to establish protocols for schools and prepare for possible future school disruptions. Specific pandemic response activities will be highly dependent on emerging data and direction provided by health authorities.

To control an epidemic, public health professionals work closely with a range of specialists, such as epidemiologists (scientists who study the spread of diseases among animal and human populations), medical specialists, virologists and immunologists. Control of epidemics almost always consists of four types of preventive measures—quarantine, immunization, mass education about prevention, and early and aggressive treatment of ill people.