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## Resources for families and schools

### Should my child stay home?

The main symptoms of COVID-19 are cough, fever and shortness of breath. If your child merely has a runny nose, your child may attend school.

Many school district policies state that a child should be fever free for 24 hours before they return to school. If your child has cough, fever and shortness of breath and you are concerned about possible COVID-19, call your [local health department](#) or health care provider. They will help you decide if you need an appointment. If so, they can help you plan a way to enter a clinic in a way that avoids potentially infecting others.

Teach your child to regularly practice good hygiene measures, such as:

- [Handwashing](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and
- [Coughing and sneezing etiquette](#).

Clean and disinfect often touched objects and surfaces. You can use a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

### Is my child safe at school? Will they be exposed?

Viruses can be spread in schools. This is why it's important that people with symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath) stay home. It is one of the most effective ways to minimize exposure. Public health is everyone's responsibility.

If your child merely has a runny nose, your child may attend school, after you teach them about use of tissues and handwashing. If your child has cough, fever or shortness of breath your child should stay home. Also, contact your [local health department](#) or health care provider. If you contact your health care provider, call ahead. They will help you decide if you need an appointment. If so, they can help you plan a way to enter a clinic in a way that avoids potentially infecting others.

Teach your child to regularly practice good hygiene measures, such as:

- [Handwashing](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and
- [Coughing and sneezing etiquette](#).

The most vulnerable populations are:

- Older adults, and
- Persons with compromised immune systems.

### **How will I be told if someone at my child's school is exposed or has COVID-19?**

If this happens, your local health department and school district will work together to let you know. They will do this within rules set by the school district and [local health department](#). If you have concerns, check with your child's school to learn about their communicable disease prevention plan.

### **What do I do if my child is sick?**

If your child has fever, cough, shortness of breath you should:

- Have your child stay home, and
- Contact your [local health department](#) or health care provider. They will help you decide if you need an appointment. If so, they can help you plan a way to enter a clinic in a way that avoids potentially infecting others.

It's important that people with symptoms stay home. It's one of the most effective ways to minimize exposure. Many school district policies state that a child should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school. If your child is diagnosed with COVID-19, your child may be required to stay home longer.

Teach your child to regularly practice good hygiene measures, such as:

- [Handwashing](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and
- [Coughing and sneezing etiquette](#).

Clean and disinfect often touched objects and surfaces. You can use a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

### **Why aren't schools closed?**

There are few COVID-19 cases in Oregon to date. If COVID-19 presents at your child's school, the school and the local health department will determine whether closure is needed.

School nurses, principals, and other school staff follow [OHA and ODE's Communicable Disease Guidelines](#).

### **What is the risk of spreading this if a student attends the identified school then buses to another school for aftercare?**

It depends on how long the student is in the bus and their ability to cover coughs and sneezes. Health experts believe the virus spreads mainly from person-to-person:

- Between people in close contact within about 3 to 6 feet, or
- Through droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- From contact with infected surfaces or objects. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object with the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. However, health experts do not think this is the main way the virus spreads.

Watch your child for symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath).

Teach your child to regularly practice good hygiene measures, such as:

- [Handwashing](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and
- [Coughing and sneezing etiquette](#).

Clean and disinfect often touched objects and surfaces. You can use a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

## **What schools are affected and where are they located?**

For the most up to date information go to <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/healthsafety/Pages/COVID19.aspx>.

## **What do I tell my child about this?**

Teach your child to regularly practice good hygiene measures, such as:

- [Handwashing](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and
- [Coughing and sneezing etiquette](#).

Check with your local health department or school district for other resources to talk with your child about diseases they can catch, such as cold and flu.

Reinforce the principles of respect and anti-bias. Let your child know they should not make assumptions of risk based on race, ethnicity or country of origin.

## **A school is closed. My child doesn't go there but was there recently. What do I do?**

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- From contact with infected surfaces or objects. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object with the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. However, health experts do not think this is the main way the virus spreads.

Watch your child for symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath).

Teach your child to regularly practice good hygiene measures, such as:

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- [Coughing and sneezing etiquette](#).

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### **What if I decide to keep my child home from school even if it's not closed? How do I get help with their schoolwork?**

Work with your child's teachers and principal at your local school district. They can talk to you about their attendance policies and can explain any procedures they have to support education from home.

### **Can my child wear a mask at school?**

CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a face mask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. There is no state ban against your child wearing a medical mask at school. However, you will want to check with your local school on their policies. Face masks **should** be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for:

- [Health workers](#), and
- [People who are taking care of someone in close settings](#) (at home or in a health care facility).

If your child is sick, they should stay home rather than attend school with a mask.

### **If school is cancelled, how does my child get lunch and breakfast?**

Check with your school. These programs are run at the local level.

### **I can't get off work, how do I get childcare?**

Start talking now with others about available resources. Examples are:

- Family members
- Local church, or
- Community organizations.

## **Should I be worried about the public charge rule? I'm worried about my immigration status.**

Your health and the health of your family and our community is important. The public charge rule does not apply to all medical care or to every immigrant. Many public health benefits don't count toward public charge rule, including:

- Oregon Health Plan coverage for youth younger than 21 (i.e., Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP)
- Oregon Health Plan coverage for people who are pregnant including 60 days after giving birth (i.e., Medicaid and Citizen-Alien Waived Emergent Medical Plus, or CAWEM Plus)
- Oregon MothersCare (OMC) program
- Emergency Oregon Health Plan coverage for people of all ages (i.e., CAWEM)
- Oregon's Cover All Kids program
- Special education services funded by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that Medicaid covers
- School-based health services for school-aged children
- Commercial health insurance premium subsidies through Oregon's Health Insurance Marketplace
- Medicare Part D Low-Income Subsidy (LIS)
- Many other health, education, and social services programs not listed here.

Please go to the OHA public charge [web page](#), [Fact Sheet \(Spanish\)](#), and [FAQ \(Spanish\)](#) for more information.

## How do I get updates on this information?

### [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)

This website has the most current information about COVID-19 in the United States.

### [Oregon Health Authority \(OHA\)](#)

This website has information specific to COVID-19 in Oregon.

### [211](#)

Call 211 in Oregon, if it is not easy for you to get the information online. They can give you general COVID-19 information.

Check your school's website which may contain updated information. Also, you can check local news and trusted social media sites.

## **We have students who recently returned from a trip overseas where coronavirus was present. Should schools contact local health authorities, advise the families, etc.?**

There is no need for schools to "report" returning travelers to public health. Students and families that are concerned about their health should contact their primary care provider by phone to discuss their symptoms and agree on a plan for an office visit that minimizes exposure to others.

## **If there is a family member under quarantine or isolation at our home, should my child also stay at home until the quarantine is over rather than risk infection at the school?**

There are no restrictions on family members of someone who is doing self-quarantine. Children in the household of a person doing self-quarantine are free to go to school. If the person doing quarantine develops fever, cough, or shortness of breath, the local public health department and the local health officer will work directly with the affected household to determine if the child has had close, prolonged contact with the ill person while that person was symptomatic. If that is the case, the child should avoid further contact with the ill person and stay home from school for 14 days after the last exposure. Schools should ensure continuity of learning for any students affected by COVID-19.

## **What changes should districts make regarding student exclusion, considering the current outbreak?**

Any exclusion guidance that is different than the pre-existing ODE/OHA guidelines will come from local public health or the Oregon Health Authority. Currently, decisions about exclusion should be made in consultation with public health experts and school district administrators. Please refer to [ODE's webpage on COVID-19](#), including resources on how to appropriately assess risk, and contact the local public health department to determine if changes to current practices are warranted. We also encourage school districts to consult with a licensed school nurse regarding assessment of individual students.

## **What is expected from a nurse practicing in a school setting?**

We understand that school nurses carry a large workload, especially during disease outbreaks. In these situations, it is important that school nurses work with school district administrators and health officials to ensure that any interventions follow informed federal, state, and local guidance, including avoiding discriminatory identification. School nurses can play an essential role in informing a school's response, including encouraging staff and students to follow communicable disease protocol (following ODE/OHA Communicable disease guidelines) and to employ prevention techniques. Registered nurses (RN) can continue to practice nursing, even during an outbreak. Acknowledging that authority to determine exclusion rests with the school administrator, the ability to practice nursing, assess students and develop nursing care plans, still lies with the registered nurse.

For further guidance, [please see the message from National Association of School Nurses.](#)