

# Emergency Preparedness for COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 19)

March 12, 2020



**Information for the Caesar Rodney School Community**

## **Background**

Many parts across the world are experiencing an expanding outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a novel coronavirus. This virus can spread from person-to-person and the number of cases detected in the United States and many other countries is growing.

Currently, the immediate risk to the general public in Delaware and in Kent County is considered to be low. There is no evidence that COVID-19 is spreading to this state at this time.

As new information emerges, Caesar Rodney School District staff will communicate to the school community. We believe that sharing accurate information during a time of heightened concern is one of the best things we can do to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading.

## **How is Delaware preparing for a coronavirus outbreak?**

Delaware:

- Has activated the Division of Public Health's State Health Operations Center to allow for enhanced response coordination;
- Maintains communication and outreach with federal, state and local partners;
- Coordinates testing for symptomatic persons with an associated travel history to high-risk areas;
- Is monitoring asymptomatic (not sick) individuals returning from high-risk areas to ensure they do not develop symptoms;
- Provides symptom monitoring guidance for residents returning to Delaware from high-risk areas;
- Participates in frequent calls with health care systems, EMS and first responder agencies and other state agency partners;
- Provides information to health care professionals, businesses and educational settings; and
- Has reviewed and adapted current pandemic flu plans for COVID-19.

## **What is a coronavirus?**

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that usually cause mild respiratory illnesses such as the common cold. Some coronaviruses have caused more severe illness, such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new coronavirus that was not identified in humans before December 2019.

## **What is the incubation period for coronavirus?**

CDC believes at this time that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure. This is based on what has been seen previously as the incubation period of MERS-CoV viruses.

### **What are common symptoms of COVID-19?**

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath. It takes 2 to 14 days after a person gets the virus in their body to become ill. COVID-19 is a new disease, and we are learning more each day about its symptoms and how it is spread.

### **When should students or staff stay home?**

If you develop a fever of 99 degrees Fahrenheit or above and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath you should call ahead to a healthcare professional. **You should not come to school. Students who are sick with these symptoms will be isolated and sent home.**

If you have had close contact with someone showing these symptoms who has recently traveled from high-risk areas, you should call ahead to a healthcare professional and mention your close contact. Your healthcare professional will work with your state's public health department and CDC to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19.

### **How does the virus spread?**

Most often, it is spread from person-to-person via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how flu and other respiratory pathogens spread. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

It's currently unclear if a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or their eyes. Often, with most respiratory viruses, people are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).

### **Can someone who has had COVID-19 spread the illness to others?**

The virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading from person-to-person. Someone who is actively sick with COVID-19 can spread the illness to others. That is why the CDC recommends that these patients be isolated either in the hospital or at home (depending on how sick they are) until they are better and no longer pose a risk of infecting others.

How long someone is actively sick can vary so the decision on when to release someone from isolation is made on a case-by-case basis in consultation with doctors, infection prevention and control experts, and public health officials and involves considering specifics of each situation including disease severity, illness signs and symptoms, and results of laboratory testing for that patient.

### **What protective equipment is needed?**

CDC does not recommend that well people wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. You should only wear a mask if a healthcare professional recommends it. A facemask should be used by people who have COVID-19 and are showing symptoms. This is to protect others from the risk of getting infected. Students wearing a mask for no medical reason will be asked to remove it.

### **What is the treatment for COVID 19?**

Currently, no antiviral medication is recommended to treat an infection with the new coronavirus. Treatment is directed at relieving symptoms and may include:

- Pain relievers
- Cough syrup or medication
- Rest
- Fluid intake

If your doctor thinks you can be treated at home, he or she may give you special instructions, such as to isolate yourself as much as possible from family while you're sick and to stay home for a period of time. If you're very ill, you may need to be treated in the hospital.

### **Who should seek medical evaluation for COVID-19?**

Students, staff, and volunteers who are:

- Ill with a fever, cough, or difficulty breathing AND have traveled from high-risk areas in the last 14 days.
- Ill with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing AND have been identified by public health officials as a recent close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case or had recent close contact with someone who is being evaluated for COVID-19 infection.

### **What should I do if I suspect a student, staff member, or volunteer is at risk for COVID-19?**

If a student, staff member, or volunteer meets the above criteria, it is important to place them in a private room away from others and provide them with a face mask. Immediately notify the school nurse. They will provide you with guidance.

## **How will we prevent COVID-19 infections in the District?**

The District is advising students and staff that they can reduce their risk for getting and spreading viral respiratory infections, including the flu and the common cold, by encouraging them to take simple steps which will also prevent COVID-19. These include:

- Staying home when they are sick.
- Frequent handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after they blow their nose. Help young children do the same. If hands are visibly dirty, use soap and water to clean hands.
- If soap and water are not readily available, using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Advising persons to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Following the school's routine cleaning and disinfection program. Emphasizing to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Covering coughs or sneezes with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in the trash and cleaning hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer (if soap and water are not readily available).
- Urging students and staff to get a flu shot during the flu season.
- Providing adequate supplies for good hygiene, including clean and functional handwashing stations, soap, paper towels, and alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid handshakes.
- Avoid sharing beverages.

## **What are the procedures for cleaning and disinfecting the school?**

Caesar Rodney custodians sanitize surfaces and objects that are touched often, such as bathrooms, water coolers, desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones and toys on a daily basis.

Our custodians are trained to use disinfectants in a safe and effective manner and to clean up potentially infectious materials and body fluid spills – blood, vomit, feces, and urine. Teachers and other staff routinely contact custodians or one of the school nurses if students are ill or the classroom needs cleaning and disinfection.

Custodians receive annual training on cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and will follow the following procedures:

- Cleaning the surface first to remove all organic matter. Custodial staff follows the disinfectant manufacturer's instructions for use. These instructions include:
  - Using the proper concentration of disinfectant
  - Allowing the required wet contact time
  - Paying close attention to hazard warnings and instructions for using personal protective items such as gloves and eye protection

- Using disinfectants in a sufficiently ventilated space
- Schools and districts must have a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for each chemical used in the school.

The District has been informed by the CDC and the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services that special processes beyond routine cleaning are not necessary nor recommended to slow the spread of respiratory illness. They have advised that schools should follow standard procedures for cleaning with third-party certified “green” cleaners and disinfecting with an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered disinfectant with a claim for human coronaviruses.

### **Will travel restrictions be placed on students or student activities?**

If our students are scheduled to travel to a high-risk area, the district will make a determination whether to cancel the trip and work with vendors to receive reimbursement for expenses.

### **What does the District recommend regarding family travel?**

We advise Caesar Rodney students, parents and staff not to travel to high-risk areas. If you do, notify the District staff of your plans in advance and check-in upon your return for a screening. Our goal is to determine the risk to the general population of the school.

### **What happens if we have a student or staff member confirmed with coronavirus?**

If the District receives confirmation that a student, staff member, or the parent of a student has received a confirmed diagnosis of coronavirus, we would immediately contact the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services to determine the next steps. These steps could include:

- Providing the names of students and staff who had direct contact with the patient;
- Deep cleaning of identified areas of the school; and
- Assisting public health authorities with traceback or patient contact investigations.

### **Would Caesar Rodney School District close if a student or staff member has a confirmed diagnosis of coronavirus?**

Caesar Rodney School District would work with the Delaware Department of Education and the Department of Health and Social Services to assist in making a school closure decision. If the district were required to close for an extended period of time, we would work with the appropriate agencies to develop answers to questions such as the following:

- Would the school year be extended?
- What would the impact be on summer school?
- Will there be alternate graduation ceremony dates?
- How would Work-Based Learning students be affected?
- How will other student activities be handled?
- What would be the impact on our financial obligations and outlays?
- Would employees be required to use sick or vacation leave?

### **If school is closed, how will students continue to learn?**

Teachers will use the Schoology platform to provide supplemental materials and lessons to students. Students should ensure that they know how to log into and use their Schoology accounts in advance.

### **Where can I turn for more information?**

- [Novel Coronavirus Outbreak 2020, DOH](#)
- [2019 Novel Coronavirus, Wuhan, China, CDC](#)
- [Guidance for Travelers, CDC](#)
- [Classroom Cleaning - Tips for Teachers](#)
- [Handwashing to Prevent Illness at School](#)
- [Infectious Disease Control Guide for School Staff, OSPI, 2014 \(PDF\)](#)
- <https://dhss.delaware.gov/dph>. Materials can be found in English, Simplified Chinese/Mandarin, Spanish, and Haitian-Creole. The website also contains numbers of asymptomatic (non-sick) returning travelers that Delaware is monitoring, which is updated twice each week (Tuesdays and Fridays).