

**NH Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health Services
Bureau of Infectious Disease Control
Guidance for Schools to Parents and Guardians with General Prevention Information**

This letter is to provide you an update about Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). **You can get the most up to date information on cases of COVID-19 identified in New Hampshire** at the [NH Division of Public Health Services website](https://www.nh.gov/divisions/public-health-services/). It is important for all of us to make sure we are taking precautions to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory illness, such as the flu, which we frequently see this time of year.

COVID-19 and many other common respiratory viruses spread through contact with an infected person's respiratory droplets, such as when a person coughs or sneezes. To prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, the CDC recommends that individuals engage in everyday preventive measures to help stop the spread of germs and avoid illness, such as:

- Teach your children to wash their hands. Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizers.
- Teach your children to cover a cough or sneeze with a tissue, then immediately discard the tissue in the trash. It is also recommended to cough or sneeze into their elbow if a tissue is not available.
- Teach your children to avoid touching eyes, mouth and nose with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with individuals who are sick.
- Keep sick children at home. Children should stay at home for at least 24 hours after the last signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medicine. Those who have a constant cough should stay home until medicine relieves it. Any child that is sick at school should go home.
- Report your child's absence to the nurse. If your child is out sick with illness, please let the nurse know.
- Teach your child not to share personal items like their food or water bottles.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces within your home.

In addition to these personal prevention measures, our school families should avoid all travel to any locations for which CDC has issued a Level 3 travel notice: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>. Travel to other countries outside of the U.S. should be discussed with the family's healthcare provider.

According to the health department, people who have returned from CDC level 3 travel advisory countries are being monitored by public health authorities and must stay home for 14 days after their travel. People returning from CDC level 2 travel advisory countries are being advised to monitor their health and limit interactions with others for 14 days after returning to the United States.

Household members such as family members, including children, of quarantined individuals are not required to quarantine. As long as they remain asymptomatic, they can leave the home and can go to public places like school and work. If the person being quarantined develops illness, household members must then also stay home on quarantine.

People who have returned from other locations with travel advisories for COVID-19 may continue to attend work and school. Travelers that develop symptoms (e.g. fever, cough, or shortness of breath), should:

- Take their temperature with a thermometer.
- Stay home and avoid close contact with other people.
- Seek health advice by phone from either a healthcare provider or the NH Division of Public Health Services at 603-271-4496 (after-hours: 603-271-5300).
- Before going to a doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead and tell the provider or office about recent travel and symptoms.
- Practice strict respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene including covering the nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- If available, wear a surgical mask when traveling outside of the home (e.g. to a doctor's office)

Outbreaks involving COVID-19 evolve quickly and recommendations from public health officials may change as new information becomes available. Please check the following websites often for updated information:

- U.S. CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html>
- NH DPHS website: <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/2019-ncov.htm>