



Duneland School Corporation

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Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The situation with the COVID-19 is rapidly evolving around the world. As of March 3, 2020, the United States has reported more than 100 confirmed cases of the virus. There are estimates that COVID-19 may be widespread in the United States by mid to late March/April. Currently, there are no reported cases in Northwest Indiana.

Tremendous worldwide efforts are being made to understand the characteristics of this virus. Although significant knowledge has already been achieved, it is predicted that there will be no drugs or vaccines available in the near future. Currently, only symptomatic support is available.

It is important for everyone to take common-sense precautions to prevent the spread of all infectious diseases. As always, Duneland School Corporation (DSC) nurses are using normal school-based procedures to assess symptoms. It is important to note that patients with a confirmed COVID-19 infection have reported mild to severe respiratory symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

DSC schools encourage all students, parents and staff to practice good health hygiene to prevent the spread of any illness, including viruses. Steps include:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- If possible, cough or sneeze into a disposable tissue and discard. Use your sleeve/clothing only as a last resort.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Remain at home until fever is less than 100° for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines.
- Seek immediate medical care if symptoms become more severe, e.g., high fever or difficulty breathing.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

As we prepare for the potential spread of COVID-19, the DSC will be working with the following organizations:

- Porter County Health Department
- Indiana State Department of Health
- The Center for Disease Control

- Indiana Department of Education (Student Health Services & School Building Security)

The DSC understands that schools could be a prime area of potential contamination due to the density of the population in a structurally confined area and the increased exposure that each student/staff member may encounter outside of the school building. It is important to note that Indiana schools are responsible to report excessive absenteeism (512 IAC 1-2-2) to the local health department. This process allows Indiana and local officials to monitor the percentage of student absences that can possibly be related to an infectious disease outbreak.

What if there are cases of COVID-19 within Northwest Indiana or the Duneland community?

If local health officials report there are cases of COVID-19 in the region/community, DSC schools will take additional steps to prevent the spread of the virus within our schools.

In consultation with local health officials, a determination would be made as to if/when school(s) would be closed. Closing schools is a strategy to stop or slow the further spread of an infectious disease in a community. If a school closing was warranted, the DSC would work with local health officials to determine how long schools would remain closed.

If an ill student or staff member attended a DSC school prior to being confirmed as a COVID-19 case:

- **Local health officials may recommend temporary school closures if a student or staff member attended school prior to being confirmed as a COVID-19 case.**

Local health officials' recommendations for the scope (e.g., a single school, the entire school corporation) and duration of school closures will be made on a case-by-case basis based on the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 and the specific cases in the impacted community.

- **DSC personnel will work with the local health officials and other relevant leadership to communicate the possible COVID-19 exposure.**

In such a circumstance, it will be critical for DSC personnel to maintain confidentiality of the student or staff member as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.

- **If a student or staff member has been identified with COVID-19, DSC schools will seek guidance from local health officials to determine when**

students and staff should return to schools and what additional steps are needed for the school community.

In addition, DSC students and staff who are well but are taking care of or share a home with someone with a case of COVID-19 should follow instructions from local health officials to determine when to return to school.

Should the need ever arise to close down our schools, the DSC would utilize our eLearning procedures. The implementation of eLearning allows DSC teachers to deliver lessons and materials remotely, thus maintaining continuity of teaching and learning.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers: Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Children *(Center for Disease Control and Prevention - CDC)*

Q: Are children more susceptible to the virus that causes COVID-19 compared with the general population and how can infection be prevented?

A: No, there is no evidence that children are more susceptible. In fact, most confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported from China have occurred in adults. Infections in children have been reported, including in very young children. From limited information published from past Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV) and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) outbreaks, infection among children was relatively uncommon.

For information on risk, please see current risk [assessment](#). Children should engage in usual preventive actions to avoid infection, including cleaning hands often using soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer, avoiding people who are sick, and staying up to date on vaccinations, including influenza vaccine. Additional information on prevention measures can be found here ([Prevention for 2019 Novel Coronavirus](#)).

Q: Does the clinical presentation of COVID-19 differ in children compared with adults?

A: Limited reports of children with COVID-19 in China have described cold-like symptoms, such as fever, runny nose, and cough. Gastrointestinal symptoms (vomiting and diarrhea) have been reported in at least one child with COVID-19. These limited reports suggest that children with confirmed COVID-19 have generally presented with mild symptoms, and though severe complications (acute respiratory distress syndrome, septic shock) have been reported, they appear to be uncommon. See more information on CDC [Clinical Guidance for COVID-19](#).

Q: Are children at increased risk for severe illness, morbidity, or mortality from COVID-19 infection compared with adults?

A: There have been very few reports of the clinical outcomes for children with COVID-19 to date. Limited reports from China suggest that children with confirmed COVID-19

may present with mild symptoms and though severe complications (acute respiratory distress syndrome, septic shock) have been reported, they appear to be uncommon. However, as with other respiratory illnesses, certain populations of children may be at increased risk of severe infection, such as children with underlying health conditions.

Q: Are there any treatments available for children with COVID-19?

A: There are currently no antiviral drugs recommended or licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for COVID-19. Clinical management includes prompt implementation of [recommended infection prevention and control measures](#) in healthcare settings and supportive management of complications. See more information on CDC [Clinical Guidance for COVID-19](#).

Children and their family members should engage in usual preventive actions to prevent the spread of respiratory infections, including covering coughs, cleaning hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer, and staying up to date on vaccinations, including influenza. Additional information on prevention measures can be found here ([Prevention for 2019 Novel Coronavirus](#)).

Q: Does the CDC recommend the use of a facemask to prevent COVID-19?

A: CDC does not recommend that people who are well 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. The use of a facemask also is crucial for health workers and other people who are taking care of someone infected with COVID-19 in close settings.

Additional resources and information can be found here:

- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- The Indiana State Department of Health: <https://www.in.gov/isdh/28470.htm>

As additional information becomes available about the COVID-19, this guidance may be updated.