
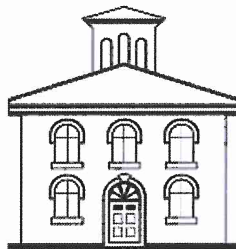


**From:** Ed Condon, Superintendent condone@district90.org   
**Subject:** D90 Update Regarding Spread of Infectious Disease  
**Date:** February 14, 2020 at 6:00 PM  
**To:** CondonE@district90.org



## River Forest Public Schools

Dear District 90 Families, Faculty, and Staff,

Recent news reports from around the world have increased awareness of the “novel coronavirus” (named by the World Health Organization as “2019-nCoV,” and recently referenced as COVID-19). Since late in 2019, the coronavirus has caused illness and related fatalities primarily in the Hubei Province of China with limited infections in about 26 countries across the globe, including the United States. As of February 11, there have been two confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV in the Chicago area, according to the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH). The CDPH also reports that the virus is not spreading widely in the United States, and the majority of U.S. residents are experiencing a low risk of exposure. Please be assured that District 90 will monitor the coronavirus situation and has an established procedure to respond to the possible presence of widespread infectious disease in our school community.

District 90 has adopted the recommendations specifically outlined for educational institutions and K-12 schools by the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Chicago Department of Public Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. As a result, the District Registrar has been instructed to ask the families of all new and returning students if they have been living in or traveling to China before enrolling in District 90. To date, District 90 has not registered any new or returning student who has visited or lived in China since the established date (February 3). All of the local public health agencies recommend that any student or staff member who has returned from mainland China since February 3 refrain from attending class or work for 14 days. If this were to occur, these absences will be excused and alternative arrangements for school and work will be instituted. However, to be very clear, public health officials are NOT recommending the cancellation of classes, school events, or community activities.

District nurses continue to monitor the situation regarding this coronavirus. They are also prepared to report suspected or confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV (COVID-19) to the Illinois Department of Public Health, as mandated by law. To combat the spread of all infectious diseases, including 2019-nCoV, influenza, and pertussis, District custodial staff members will continue to implement the disinfection protocols that have been in place since early December.

Many public health officials and physicians believe that the risk to U.S. residents of contracting the coronavirus is lower than catching the flu. Nevertheless, there are steps everyone can take to minimize the risk of spreading any virus, including 2019-nCoV. The CDC recommends:

- Wash hands frequently
- Use alcohol-based sanitizer when soap and water are not available
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home when sick
- Cover any cough or sneeze with a tissue or an elbow (not hands)
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

Please be assured that the District will continue to provide our families and staff members with additional information should the current situation change. At the same time, we remain committed to protecting the medical confidentiality of anyone affected by this or any medical condition. District 90 relies on our families to inform school nurses about any cases of confirmed or suspected infectious disease, including 2019-nCoV. Please share that information with the school nurse so we can help other families watch for potential symptoms in their students.

For additional information about coronavirus, please contact your child's doctor or click on the links below:

- [Chicago Department of Public Health: 2019-nCoV-Guidance for K-12 Schools](#)
- [Illinois Department of Public Health: FAQs 2019-nCoV](#)

Thank you for your ongoing support of our students, families, faculty, and staff. Stay well!

Sincerely,

Ed Condon, Ph.D.  
Superintendent



### What is 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)?

2019 Novel Coronavirus, or 2019-nCoV, is a new respiratory virus identified in December 2019 as the cause of an outbreak in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. People who get sick with 2019-nCoV develop mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms including fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Illness can begin 2 to 14 days after an exposure. Although this virus likely emerged from an animal source, it can also spread from person-to-person. Spread from one person to another is thought to occur mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Typically, with most respiratory viruses, people are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic.

The latest situation summary updates, including the number of cases identified in the United States, are available on CDC's web page [2019 Novel Coronavirus, Wuhan, China](#).

### What is the health risk from 2019-nCoV in Illinois?

Currently, the health risk to the general public from 2019-nCoV remains low, both in the U.S. and in Illinois. The goal of the ongoing U.S. public health response is to detect new cases quickly and prevent community spread of 2019-nCoV. The coming days and weeks are likely to bring more confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV in the U.S. and globally, but strong public health measures now may blunt the impact of the virus.

### What special precautions do schools in Illinois need to take?

Due to recent acceleration of 2019-nCoV transmission across China and in accordance with current federal guidance, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) recommends the following:

- **Any student, faculty member, or other university staff returning from mainland China on February 3, 2020 and onward should not attend school or work for 14 days after the return date.**
- Absences for this purpose should be excused and alternate arrangements should be made for teleworking and online school assignments.

This interim guidance is effective as of February 3, 2020, and does not apply retrospectively to students who have been in China during the previous 14 days and are already in the U.S., or those being managed as part of a contact investigation.

**Students, faculty members, or other university staff who returned from mainland China prior to February 3, 2020 can remain in school and work.** Individuals who returned from mainland China before February 3, 2020 and develop respiratory symptoms including fever, cough, and difficulty breathing, should be encouraged to stay home. University health services should immediately notify their Local Health Department.

The situation is rapidly changing, and we are monitoring it closely. Guidance will be updated as needed.

*This document was adapted from the Chicago Department of Public Health  
Revised 4/5/20. Please visit [DPH.ILLINOIS.GOV](http://DPH.ILLINOIS.GOV) to find the latest version.*



### **What are the latest public health measures?**

As airport screening procedures have changed, starting February 3, 2020, IDPH began receiving information on incoming travelers from all of China who may be at risk, and when appropriate instructing them to stay home from school and work, and monitoring them remotely. IDPH will be in communication with school administration about individual situations as needed.

### **How should schools prepare for the potential of coronavirus in their community?**

- Instruct all students, faculty, and staff who have traveled to China in the past 14 days (January 21, 2020 – February 2, 2020) and are experiencing symptoms to immediately contact university health services or another contact as designated by the university.
- Report any ill students with a travel history to IDPH immediately.
- Ensure students who may need to be quarantined or isolated and cannot return to their home have housing and basic needs.
- Develop a plan for outbreak response and share with stakeholders.
- Create an emergency communication plan and maintain up-to-date contact information for everyone in your communication chain.
- Establish leadership team, identify essential staff functions, assign tasks, and responsibilities.
- Plan workshops and trainings to educate staff on prevention services.

### **Do school events need to be cancelled?**

At this time, there is no need to cancel school or social events. However, as with any respiratory virus, students, faculty members, and other university staff should stay home and avoid events when they are ill.

### **If we have a student/staff member who has been ill at school and is now a person under investigation (PUI), what do we tell parents?**

IDPH will follow up with schools who need more specific guidance.

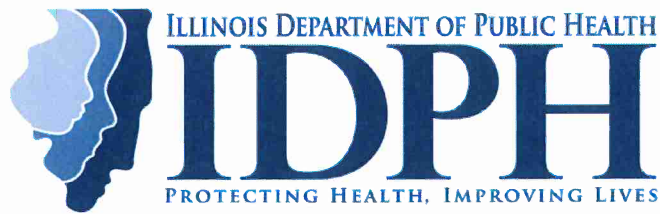
### **Should we be concerned about pets or other animals and 2019-nCoV?**

CDC recommends that people traveling to China avoid animals both live and dead, but there is no reason to think that any animals or pets in the United States might be a source of infection with this new coronavirus.

### **One of our students/staff members is from China. Can they return home?**

CDPH recommends **avoiding travel to China**. The latest travel updates are available on CDC's web page [Traveler's Health](#).

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### How can schools prevent infections with 2019-nCoV and other respiratory diseases?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent 2019-nCoV infection. As with any respiratory virus, students and school personnel can protect themselves and others by taking everyday common sense actions:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

IDPH **does NOT** recommend:

- the use of masks or gloves
- cancelling mass gatherings
- cancelling classes

### Are any special cleaning procedures needed?

At this time, no special sanitizing processes beyond routine cleaning are necessary or recommended to slow the spread of respiratory illness. Schools should follow standard processes for routine cleaning and disinfecting with an EPA-registered product. General infection control guidance is available at [www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol](http://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol).

### What should school-based health centers do to prevent the spread of 2019-nCoV?

If a student calls ahead with travel to China within the last 14 days and concerning symptoms, collect detailed history over the phone prior to deciding the location for triage. School-based health centers (SBHCs) should notify their Local Health Department immediately.

For more information, please visit [DPH.ILLINOIS.GOV](http://DPH.ILLINOIS.GOV) or [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).