

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Update



The mission of the Portsmouth Public School Division is to engage all students in learning that will foster academic excellence and responsible citizenship.

Updated March 2020

Background

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is responding to an outbreak of respiratory disease caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that was first detected in China and which has now been detected in almost 90 locations internationally, including in the United States. The virus has been named “SARS-CoV-2” and the disease it causes has been named “coronavirus disease 2019” (abbreviated “COVID-19”).

On January 30, 2020, the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization declared the outbreak a “public health emergency of international concern” (PHEIC). On January 31, 2020, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex M. Azar II declared a public health emergency (PHE) for the United States to aid the nation’s healthcare community in responding to COVID-19.

Source and Spread of the Virus

Early on, many of the patients at the epicenter of the outbreak in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China had some link to a large seafood and live animal market, suggesting animal-to-person spread. Later, a growing number of patients reportedly did not have exposure to animal markets, indicating person-to-person spread. Person-to-person spread was subsequently reported outside Hubei and in countries outside China, including in the United States. Some international destinations now have apparent community spread with the virus that causes COVID-19, as do some parts of the United States. Community spread means some people have been infected and it is not known how or where they became exposed.

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person. This can be between people who are in close contact with one another (within about six feet). Or, it can be through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or, possibly, be inhaled into the lungs.

People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic. However, some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Additionally, it may be possible that 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 possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Illness Severity

The complete clinical picture with regard to COVID-19 is not fully known. Reported illnesses have ranged from very mild (including some with no reported symptoms) to severe, including illness

resulting in death. While information so far suggests that most COVID-19 illness is mild, a report out of China suggests serious illness occurs in 16% of cases. Older people and people of all ages with severe underlying health conditions — like heart disease, lung disease and diabetes, for example — seem to be at higher risk of developing serious COVID-19 illness.

Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases.

The following symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure**:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Please note there are ongoing investigations to learn more as this is a rapidly evolving situation.

Risk Assessment

Outbreaks of novel virus infections among people are always of public health concern. The risk to the general public from these outbreaks depends on characteristics of the virus, including how well it spreads between people; the severity of resulting illness; and the medical or other measures available to control the impact of the virus (for example, vaccines or medications that can treat the illness). That this disease has caused severe illness, including illness resulting in death is concerning, especially since it has also shown sustained person-to-person spread in several places. These factors meet two of the criteria of a pandemic. As community spread is detected in more and more countries, the world moves closer toward meeting the third criteria, worldwide spread of the new virus.

It is important to note that current circumstances suggest it is likely that this virus will cause a pandemic. This is a rapidly evolving situation and CDC's risk assessment will be updated as needed, but the current risk assessment is as follows:

- For most people, the immediate risk of being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to be low. This virus is not currently widespread in the United States.
- People in places where ongoing community spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 has been reported are at elevated risk of exposure, with increase in risk dependent on the location.
- Healthcare workers caring for patients with COVID-19 are at elevated risk of exposure.
- Close contacts of persons with COVID-19 also are at elevated risk of exposure.
- Travelers returning from affected international locations where community spread is occurring also are at elevated risk of exposure, with increase in risk dependent on the location.

CDC has developed guidance to help in the risk assessment and management of people with potential exposures to COVID-19. To learn more about the CDC's response, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov).

What May Happen

More cases of COVID-19 are likely to be identified in the coming days, including more cases in the United States. It's also likely that sustained person-to-person spread will continue to occur, including throughout communities in the United States. It's likely that at some point, widespread transmission of COVID-19 in the United States will occur.

Widespread transmission of COVID-19 could translate into large numbers of people needing medical care at the same time. Schools, childcare centers, and workplaces, may experience more absenteeism. Mass gatherings may be sparsely attended or postponed. Public health and healthcare systems may become overloaded, with elevated rates of hospitalizations and deaths. Other critical infrastructure, such as law enforcement, emergency medical services, and sectors of the transportation industry may also be affected. Healthcare providers and hospitals may be overwhelmed. At this time, there is no vaccine to protect against COVID-19 and no medications approved to treat it. Nonpharmaceutical interventions would be the most important response strategy.

CDC Recommendations

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- **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 using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Avoid sharing personal household items, such as dishes, drinking glasses, towels or bedding with other people or pets in your home.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

- Since it is currently flu and respiratory disease season, the CDC recommends getting a flu vaccine and taking flu antivirals, if prescribed.
- Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.
 - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
 - Facemasks 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).
- Older people and people with severe chronic conditions should take special precautions because they are at higher risk of developing serious COVID-19 illness.
- If you are a close contact of someone with COVID-19 and develop symptoms of COVID-19, call your healthcare provider and tell them about your symptoms and your exposure.
- If you are a resident in a community where there is ongoing spread of COVID-19 and you develop COVID-19 symptoms, call your healthcare provider and tell them about your symptoms.
- For people who are ill with COVID-19, but are not sick enough to be hospitalized, please follow CDC guidance on how to reduce the risk of spreading your illness to others.
 - People who are mildly ill with COVID-19 are able to isolate at home during their illness.
- If you have been in China or another affected area or have been exposed to someone sick with COVID-19 in the last 14 days, you will face some limitations on your movement and activity.

Please follow these recommendations during this time. Your cooperation is integral to the ongoing public health response to try to slow spread of this virus.



Portsmouth Public Schools

Preventive Action Steps

Whenever there is a large-scale, public health threat within the school community, Portsmouth Public Schools' staff, including health services, custodial and transportation teams, will implement the following proactive steps as necessary to help limit student, staff or visitor exposure to the threat.

-Upgrade surface disinfectants to hospital grade disinfectant (Quaternary-Based Disinfectant) to treat all "Touch Points"

- Door Handles
- Counters, Tables, Desk Tops
- Light Switches
- Keyboards
- Chairs
- Cafeteria Tables
- Bathrooms
- Use disposable clothes to prevent cross contamination

-Utilize electrostatic disinfecting machines to treat each school with a quaternary-based disinfectant

- These machines are designed to disinfect all surfaces regardless of its material makeup
- Disinfecting checklist will be utilized to ensure proper sanitizing of all school spaces
- All custodial personnel have received additional training on the proper use of electrostatic disinfecting machines and surface disinfecting cleaners

-Upgrade soap at all hand washing stations to antimicrobial grade

- Implement school-wide hand washing education agenda and hand washing signage is placed throughout each school building
- Clean all school buses and transport vehicles with disinfectant wipes and sanitized weekly with a quaternary-based disinfectant

-Implement deep cleaning protocols

- Power washing of bathrooms and locker rooms with quaternary-based disinfectant
- Removing all items from flat surfaces for thorough disinfecting
- Disinfecting all air vents and ventilation returns
- Cleaning of all windows and blinds
- Deep cleaning of carpets with appropriate sanitizing solution
- Disinfecting all surfaces thoroughly throughout school buildings



Pandemic Response

During all public health emergencies, including the possibility of a pandemic outbreak, Portsmouth Public Schools works closely with the Virginia Department of Health, Portsmouth Department of Health as well as state and local educational authorities to achieve the predetermined response goals below:

Response Goals

- Obtain accurate and timely information
- Provide accurate and timely information to parents, students, teachers and staff
- Limit the number of illnesses and deaths
- Preserve continuity of essential school functions
- Minimize educational and social disruption
- Minimize academic and economic losses

Working in collaboration with the bodies listed above, there are four phases of operations regarding instruction that will be put in place when deemed appropriate.

Phase 1 - Stable Phase

- No current large-scale infectious disease of concern in the region
- PE teacher delivers instructional unit to students in grades PK-6 on hygiene practices for limiting the spread of germs while secondary students are reminded of these practices via periodic morning announcements
- Instruction proceeds according to PPS curriculum and pacing guides

Phase 2 - Alert Phase

- Disease of concern could be present in the region but not on a large-scale
- Portsmouth Health Department not recommending closure at this time
- Instruction proceeds according to PPS curriculum and pacing guides
- C&I begins updating/developing alternative learning plans
 - Schools with grades PK-4 assess paper stock
 - Schools with grades 5-12 assess teachers' level of understanding of Google Classroom for classroom instruction purposes

Phase 3 - Growth Phase

- Disease of concern begins to spread in the community
- Portsmouth Health Department recommends closing one or several schools
- Instruction proceeds according to PPS curriculum and pacing guides for schools that are open
- Closed schools begin to implement alternative learning plans outlined in *Phase 4*

Phase 4 - Large-Scale Disease/Pandemic Event Phase

- Disease of concern has spread in the community and PHD recommends school closure
- Implement alternative learning plans in grades PK-6
 - Deploy packets to students that are focused on standards in the four core subject areas
 - Hard copies/electronically
 - Printing and distribution timing
 - Supporting resources (e.g., videos, electronic submission of checks for understanding)
- Implement alternative learning plans in grades 7-12
 - Expectation of reliance on Chrome books (high school students) and use of Google Classroom in four core subject areas
 - Emergency packets and accompanying resources will be made available for families without Internet access upon request

Please note, during a pandemic outbreak, all communications will be distributed at a division-level, not an individual school-level. PPS will work closely with the Portsmouth Health Department to provide up-to-date and accurate information to families and staff via the division's website, social media platforms and PPS Connect messages through the division's rapid notification system.

Recovery

If schools are forced to close, the goal of recovery is to resume regular school activities and events as soon as possible. Counseling teams will be available at each school to provide social-emotional support. The division will also provide information and materials for students and staff to assist in recovery process (for example, the Employee Assistance Program will be utilized to assist staff coping with grief or stress).

After reopening, students and staff will continue to be monitored – especially those directly affected by the virus to ensure a seamless transition back to school.