

FAQ for Administrators

Q: What should I do if a sick student or staff member is confirmed to have COVID-19?

Immediately notify health officials. They will help you determine course of action for child care programs or schools. You will likely dismiss students and most staff for 2-5 days. The short-term dismissal allows time for the local health officials to gain better understanding of the COVID-19 situation and for custodial staff to clean and disinfect.

Q: What should my school do if a student or staff member shows symptoms of COVID-19?

You should establish procedures to ensure students and staff who become sick at school or who arrive at school sick are sent home as soon as possible. Keep anyone sick separate from well students and staff until the sick person can be sent home.

Q: What should I do if my school experiences increased rates of absenteeism?

If your school notices a substantial increase in the number of students or staff missing school due to illness, report this to your local health officials.

Q: When should I dismiss our school/child care program?

Any decision about school dismissal or cancellation of school events should be made in coordination with your local health officials. Schools are not expected to make decisions about dismissals on their own.

You may need to temporarily dismiss school for 2-5 days, if a student or staff member attended school before being confirmed as having COVID-19. This initial short-term dismissal allows time for the local health officials to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation impacting the school and for custodial staff to clean and disinfect the affected facilities. Work with the local health officials to determine appropriate next steps, including whether an extended dismissal duration is needed to stop or slow further spread of COVID-19.

Q: If I make the decision for a school dismissal, what else should I consider?

In the event of a school dismissal, extracurricular group activities and large events, such as performances, field trips, and sporting events should also be cancelled. This may require close coordination with other partners and organizations (e.g., high school athletics associations, music associations). In addition, discourage students and staff from gathering or socializing anywhere, like at a friend's house, a favorite restaurant, or the local shopping mall.

Ensure continuity of meal programs for your students. Consider ways to distribute food to students who receive free or reduced cost meals. Check with the US Department of Agriculture – Food and Nutrition Service for additional information: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/USDAfoodsPandemic-Schools>.external icon If there is community spread of COVID-19, design strategies to avoid distribution in settings where people might gather in a group or crowd. Consider options such as “grab-and-go” bagged lunches or meal delivery.

Consider alternatives for providing essential medical and social services for students. Continue providing necessary services for children with special healthcare needs, or work with the state Title V Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) Program.