

March 5, 2020

Parents/Guardians,

We will continue to keep our staff and families informed on any COVID-19 developments as we receive guidance from public health officials. As we have previously mentioned, in San Diego County, there have been two positive cases of COVID-19: both were individuals on quarantined flights from Wuhan, China.

Please scroll down for answers to some of the most common questions we have received from stakeholders in recent days.

For the most up-to-date information from health officials, please visit the [San Diego County Public Health Department website](#).

Q: How are student absences due to illness being handled?

A: All absences due to personal illness are excused with parent confirmation, [per PUSD policy](#).

Q: What if a child or staff member is symptomatic with flu/cold symptoms?

A: If a person is symptomatic (for example: fever greater than 100 degrees [lowered from 100.4 degrees], shortness of breath, cough, congestion), they should stay home and contact their personal physician for further guidance.

Q: Are there any plans to alter or cancel travel, field trips, school dances, etc. due to concerns over the virus?

A: No. There are no recommendations from public health officials *at this time* for cancellation of public events or domestic (within the U.S.) field trips. Public health officials recommend students and staff should go about their daily lives and practice the same precautions as during the cold and flu season. Field trips outside of the U.S. will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

For information on travel plans you or your family might be planning for Spring Break, please consult the [U.S.State Department's travel advisories](#) or the [CDC's travel warnings](#).

Q: Are sanitization procedures taking place at sites and classrooms?

A: Yes. Lead custodians will work with staff on cleaning procedures, including specific guidelines to disinfect high-traffic locations using state-recommended cleaning materials. All soap dispensers will be filled daily.

Additionally, canisters of Lysol Daily Cleaning Wipes as well as additional hand sanitizer has been ordered for every classroom in the District.

Q: Are alcohol-based hand sanitizers allowed in PUSD schools?

A: Yes. For more details from the California Department of Education, please [click here](#).

Q: My school bathroom is out of soap. What should I do?

A: Staff should contact their lead custodian as soon as possible so they can be refilled.

Q: What if a student or staff member catches the COVID-19 virus?

A: Any time a student or staff member is confirmed to have a communicable disease, PUSD communicates with the San Diego County Public Health Department for directives and guidance on preventing the spread of that specific disease. This not only applies to COVID-19 but other health conditions as well (H1N1, tuberculosis, meningitis, whooping cough, etc.).

Q: What should I do if I think I or someone I know might have COVID-19?

A: Any suspected cases of COVID-19 or suspected exposure to COVID-19 should be reported by telephone to the San Diego County Epidemiology Unit immediately at (619) 692-8499 during business hours or at (858) 565-5255 after hours, on weekends, or holidays. That person should stay home, contact their medical provider, and if they must quarantine or isolate, they will be notified by the County Health Department.

Q: Does the District have an emergency response plan specifically for pandemics?

A: In an actual event, PUSD would utilize its existing **Infectious Disease and Pandemic Protocol**. Specific pandemic response activities will be highly dependent on emerging data and direction provided by health authorities. As with any emergency plan, this will be a living document subject to updates.

To control an epidemic, public health professionals work closely with a range of specialists, such as epidemiologists, medical specialists, virologists, and immunologists. Control of epidemics almost always consists of four types of preventive measures: quarantine, immunization, mass education about prevention, and early and aggressive treatment of ill people.

Q: Who makes the decision to close a school?

A: If an outbreak occurs, and school closures are necessary or recommended, the decision will be made following discussions between PUSD and the San Diego County Public Health Department. We will also consider guidance from the [California Department of Education](#).

PUSD is unable to know if or when individuals are exposed to any illness, which is why we follow guidelines from expert agencies like the [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC) and [San Diego County Health & Human Services](#). Rather than recommending the cancellation of schools and public events, at this time, these agencies are asking people who may have been exposed to the virus to stay home.

Q: How do school sites handle requests for OCIS (off campus independent study) contracts related to illness?

A: Granting an OCIS request at the site level is a site-based decision. If there is a planned absence of five or more consecutive days, please see the attendance clerk to set up an OCIS contract. An OCIS contract allows students to do the work that he or she would be doing if they were in class and absences accumulated while on an OCIS contract do not count toward a student's absence total (unless the student does not complete all assignments as agreed).

If schools receive requests for home and hospital instruction, those would require a medical recommendation from a physician, and the District would follow the steps outlined in the [Home and Hospital Instruction Program](#). The Home and Hospital Instruction program provides on-

going academic instruction to students who are unable to attend the regular school day for a period of two weeks or longer due to a temporary illness, surgery, or chronic medical disorders.

At this time, the risk for our student population contracting COVID-19 remains very low. Vulnerable populations include those with recent international travel to high risk areas, known exposure to a person with the COVID-19 virus, and those with chronic underlying health conditions.

Q: What if a school gets shut down? What distance learning options are being considered?

A: The District is currently looking at this option in three parts: students, teachers, and technological infrastructure. We currently use Canvas (MyConnect), our District's online learning management system. In addition, teachers, students, and families can access MyPlan, our District's online portal that provides a variety of digital resources. Furthermore, our network is currently able to support online learning for all students and teachers if needed, and we are assessing device and access needs. More details will be released as they become available.

Thank you for your continued professionalism and patience as we work to manage this challenging situation.

Greg Mizel

Associate Superintendent, Student Support Services