



# POWAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

February 12, 2020

Dear Staff/Parent/Guardian,

Cold and Flu season is upon us. The California Department of Public Health reports that influenza (flu) activity levels have increased over the past several weeks. As a reminder, please do not send your child to school if they are feeling sick. Keeping your sick child home will be a great benefit for the health and wellness of our students and staff. The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness. Some people, such as older people, young children, and people with certain health conditions, are at high risk of serious flu complications. Symptoms of influenza can vary, but generally include a high fever, headache, chills, body aches, sore throat, and cough.

The 2019-20 flu season has been complicated by recent reports of a novel coronavirus. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Common symptoms in an infected person include a fever, cough, and shortness of breath or difficulty breathing. Presently, there has been one reported case of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in San Diego County, seven in the state of California, and 13 in the United States. The CDC has said the current risk of local transmission is low.

The Poway Unified School District is continuing to monitor the situation and obtain updates from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), California Department of Public Health, and local health officials about the diagnosis and management of cases of novel coronavirus, as applicable.

Below please find the updated Novel Coronavirus Policy for Poway Unified School District. This policy is subject to change, as new information is made available to us. It includes pathophysiology, signs/symptoms of disease, policy specifics, and basic prevention of viral spread.

## **About this Virus**

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause symptoms of colds. However, this is a “novel” virus, originating in China in late 2019 (hence the name, 2019 Novel Coronavirus). Until recently, this particular strain of coronavirus circulated among animals only. Now it appears to have spread to humans, and can be spread between humans. The abbreviated term for this virus is: *COVID-19*.

## **Current Understanding of Virus**

- Symptoms most commonly include: fever with cough or shortness of breath; Some people have fewer or no symptoms at all. Headache, sore throat, and runny nose also occur with this virus.
- Spread is most likely from droplets (cough and sneezing).
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers this a serious public health threat, but with health risk from this virus to be low at this time.
- It is not yet known whether people carrying the virus, but have no symptoms, can spread the virus to others.
- Symptoms of *COVID-19* may appear in as few as 2 days, or as long as 14 days, after exposure.
- Most people with this infection will recover on their own. There is no specific treatment for novel coronavirus infection yet.
- For patients who are more severely ill, hospitals can provide supportive care.

## What are Schools Doing?

School Districts follow CDC guidance, as well, the guidance from public health departments at the State and County levels to keep our student and staff populations safe and healthy.

### Current Poway Unified District Policy

1. All children and staff members with respiratory symptoms and fever (>100.4 F / >38C) should remain home (from school and other activities) until they have had no fever for 24 hours, without fever medication.
2. **A student or staff member who has been to any part of China within the past two weeks (since February 3, 2020) should be excluded from school for 14 days, beginning the date after they left China.** (Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan are not considered part of mainland China for this guidance, at this time).
3. Students should not be excluded from school or any school activities based on race or country of origin.
4. A student or staff member who has been in contact with a person *with a laboratory-confirmed case of 2019 novel coronavirus* during the past two weeks should be excluded from school until cleared by the local public health department.
5. If a student or staff member who has been to China within the past 14 days presents at school with fever or cough or shortness of breath a District Resource Nurse or health technician will:
  - a. Until the person leaves school, place a surgical mask on that student or staff member if it is tolerated. If possible, keep that person isolated (students must still be visible and supervised by a staff member); otherwise try to keep a 6 foot or more distance between student and others.
  - b. Notify Health Services.
  - c. The District Resource Nurse will notify the local public health department for directions on whether the student should be transported via the parent or otherwise to a medical facility for investigation and/or treatment.
6. If any student or staff member in this district is suspected to have the virus (i.e., becomes a County Health Department “patient under investigation”; or “PUI”) for the *Novel Coronavirus*, the school district will work with public health authorities who will collaborate with that student’s or staff member’s own physician to guide any further restrictions and public notifications.
7. As a reminder, all student and staff health information is confidential and cannot be shared with other students or with school site staff. Confidential health information can be shared with PUSD Health Services Personnel and with the County Public Health Department.
8. Any disease notification letters sent from school to the general school community and to schools’ parent community will always be cleared first with Health Services and done in consultation with the Public Health Department.

### Basic Prevention of Virus Spread

1. Recommend that all family members are up-to-date with their flu shots.
2. Promote basic hygiene:
  - a. Any coughing or sneezing should be directed into ones’ sleeve, rather than into hands or the air.
  - b. Wash hands after using/handling used tissues, blowing nose, before/after eating, and after toilet use.
  - c. Wash for 20 seconds with soap, rub between fingers and under nails; and then rinse and dry. Use alcohol (60%+) hand gel if sinks are not readily available.
  - d. Avoid rubbing your own eyes, nose and mouth.
  - e. Do not share utensils, cups, etc.
  - f. Stay home when sick
  - g. Avoid contact with those who are sick

3. Wearing of masks in public is not recommended for Americans by the CDC nor by our local public health department. It will be discouraged in schools. Handwashing is considered the best protection from infectious diseases.

## **Resources**

Reference the following resources for the most up to date, accurate information:

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/index.html>

### **Travel Procedures for Persons Returning from China:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/from-china.html>

### **California Department of Public Health:**

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx>

### **San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (Public Health)**

[https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/community\\_epidemiology/dc/2019-nCoV.html](https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/community_epidemiology/dc/2019-nCoV.html)

Thank you,

Greg Mizel

Associate Superintendent, Student Support Services

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