

Schools and child care

In order to allow school administrators and teachers to work on long-term plans for continuity of education and essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Tim Walz authorized the temporary closure of Minnesota K-12 public schools to students. Schools will be closed to students by Wednesday, March 18 through Friday, March 27. This closure is to accommodate planning. MDH still requests that schools contact us if they are considering additional closures. The strategies outlined in our community mitigation guidance below should continue to be followed when schools re-open.

More information is available:

- [Minnesota Department of Education: COVID-19 Updates](#)
- [Minnesota Department of Human Services: Communication to Child Care Providers Following Executive Order 20-02](#)

What child care facilities, K-12 schools, and colleges and universities can do to prepare for COVID-19, if the school or facility has cases of COVID-19, or if the community is experiencing spread of COVID-19.

Start now:

- Implement social distancing measures:
 - Reduce the frequency of large gatherings (e.g., assemblies), and limit the number of attendees per gathering.
 - Alter schedules to reduce mixing (e.g., stagger recess, entry/dismissal times).
 - Limit inter-school interactions.
 - Consider distance or e-learning in some settings.
- Consider regular health checks (e.g., temperature and respiratory symptom screening) of students, staff, and visitors (if feasible).
- Order short-term dismissals for school and extracurricular activities as needed (e.g., if cases in staff/students) for cleaning and contact tracing.
- For students with [underlying medical conditions](#) consider implementing individual plans for distance learning or e-learning.
- Direct sick students and staff to stay home until they are symptom-free for at least one day.

- Incorporate hand-washing into the daily routine. Reinforce respiratory hygiene (e.g., coughing into an elbow).

Continue these activities:

- Know where to find local information on COVID-19 and local trends of COVID-19 cases.
- Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if students or staff become symptomatic at their school/child care site.
- Review and update emergency operations plan (including implementation of social distancing measures, distance learning if feasible) or develop plan if one is not available.
- Evaluate whether there are students or staff who are at increased risk of severe illness and develop plans for them to continue to work or receive educational services if there are moderate levels of COVID-19 transmission or impact.
 - Parents of children at increased risk for severe illness should discuss with their health care provider whether those students should stay home in case of school or community spread.
 - Staff at increased risk for severe illness should have a plan to stay home if there are school-based cases or community spread.
- Encourage staff and students to stay home when sick and notify school administrators of illness (schools should provide non-punitive sick leave options to allow staff to stay home when ill).
- Encourage personal protective measures among staff/students (e.g., stay home when sick, hand-washing, respiratory etiquette).
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.
- Ensure hand hygiene supplies are readily available in buildings.

Adapted from the Minnesota Department of Health [Strategies to Slow the Spread of COVID-19 in Minnesota](#)