COCONINO
COUNTY ARIZONA
Health & Human Services

Return to School - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Updated July 9, 2020

PLANNING AND RESPONDING

Q. What are the symptoms of Covid-19?

A. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus.** People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms. CDC continues to update this list as it learns more about COVID-19.

Q. What should a school do if it experiences increased rates of absenteeism?

A. Schools noticing a substantial increase in the number of students or staff missing school due to illness, report this to Coconino County Health and Human Services (CCHHS) Call Center at 928-679-7300.

Q. What steps should schools take if a student or staff member shows symptoms of COVID-19?

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

Q. What should schools do if the suspected sick student or staff member is confirmed to have COVID-19?

A. Immediately notify CCHHS health officials at the Call Center (928-679-7300). CCHHS will help school administrators determine a course of action for their childcare programs or schools.

It is likely that the school will dismiss students and most staff for 2-5 days. 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 there is a diagnosis of COVID-19 in a school building, what will happen?
A. The school district and school with work closely with the Coconino County Health and Human Services Department to determine the appropriate next steps if there is a COVID-19 diagnosis in a school. The response to an individual case will depend largely on the circumstances surrounding the case and contact(s) the individual had within the school setting and the level of community transmission at the time.

Q. Do schools have to report Covid-19 cases to CCHHS?
A. Currently, the State of Arizona does not require or allow for schools to report Covid-19 cases. The link below illustrates the diseases schools must report to CCHHS.
https://www.azdhs.gov/documents/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/communicable-disease-reporting/school-childcare-reporting-requirements.pdf

Q. How should a school report a communicable disease?
A. The is link reviews the disease reporting process.
https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/index.php#reporting-schools

Q. Is it necessary to have physical distancing at recess or outdoor playtimes?
A. Physical distancing should be maintained at recess and outdoor playtimes. This can be accomplished by way of staggered recess sessions of smaller groups, and by having students take turns using playground equipment such as swings and slides. As with other common areas and structures, each piece of equipment should be wiped down between students as best as possible.

Q. Is there recommendation for physical distancing or safety protocols on busses?
A. In addition to taking the bus driver's temperature at the start of morning and afternoon transportation cycles, bus drivers should always wear facial coverings when on the bus. Because the bus driver should be focused on driving safely, schools should have a bus monitor address physical distancing and facial covering processes for students. Students should be spread out on the bus to put six feet between them. This will mean staggering the rows and where the students are seated in the rows. Ideally, there should be no more than one student per row.

Q. What are some ways schools can ensure physical distancing in hallways and near lockers?
A. Physical distancing can be accomplished in hallways by directing the flow of foot traffic, for example in a clockwise manner. Schools should consider the use of temporary colored flooring or signage to denote the directional flow of traffic as well as safe distances. Some schools are painting the school's logo on the floors and sidewalks to denote six feet apart.

Lockers can be addressed in several ways. If the school has a surplus of unoccupied lockers, it may consider reassigning lockers six feet apart. If this is not possible, the school should schedule staggered, designated times for students to access lockers. The school should also ensure that there is regular cleaning and wiping of the outside locker areas during times when students are present and deep cleaning on appropriate schedules when students are not present. Students and employees should always wear facial coverings when they cannot be more than six feet apart in communal areas.

Q. How can physical distancing be promoted with the use of restrooms?

A. Schools should consider limiting the maximum number of persons in the restroom at the same time, considering physical distancing guidelines. Although physical barriers such as stalls are enough where physical distancing is not possible, there is still potential for close contact during in ingress and egress, using sinks and urinals in male restrooms. Schools should consider allowing students to use all available bathrooms on campus such as those in locker rooms that might otherwise be closed during the school day. The school must provide appropriate monitoring of all expanded spaces.

Q. What additional safety protocols should be considered?

A. Supervisors/Division Heads/Department Chairs should regularly check in with employees and students to determine how they are feeling and immediately segregate and send home any employee or student who is feeling ill or has a fever. In such a case, the school should immediately engage in a dialogue to determine who the employee or student had close contact with (less than six feet without facial covering) and/or had any type of potential body fluid contact with (coughing or sneezing). The employee or student should be required to be tested for COVID-19 and, if the test is positive, those individuals (or their parents) should be alerted to the situation and possible exposure (without disclosing the name of the employee or student unless the employee or student has consented in writing).

All rooms that are close quarters and not necessary for use (small teacher lounges) should be closed off or used for alternate purposes. For instance, a small teacher's lounge could temporarily be repurposed as a faculty office.

Remove or disable non-essential shared objects from shared spaces, such as water fountains, communal books/bibles, communal athletic equipment.

All students and employees should be reminded regularly about good hygiene (hand washing, coughing into a tissue that is immediately discarded and hands are immediately washed), wiping down surfaces regularly, regular use of hand sanitizer, etc. Schools should increase the number of hand sanitizer stations around the school and increase the number of supervised handwashing opportunities for young children.

Remove public/shared computers, tablets, or other electronic devices from shared spaces.

For employees who clock in, utilize electronic timekeeping or paper that only the employee handles.

Hold staff meetings in large rooms allowing appropriate physical distancing or via video conference.

Set up classrooms with as much distance as feasible between student desks and have all desks face the same direction.

Sanitize classrooms between classes, if possible.

Establish one-way directional travel in hallways and corridors to the extent possible. If not possible, all persons in the hallway area should wear face coverings when passing within six feet.

Hold parent/teacher conferences via video conference.

Q. How should lunch and snack service for students and employees be addressed? Are there some high-risk items we should eliminate?

A. Because of the higher risk of actual or presumed transmission of COVID-19 through buffet lines and open food areas, many schools are eliminating such processes. All food should be served in pre-prepared containers or displayed for selection in such a way that students and employees cannot breathe on or touch food without proper protection. Thus, if you choose to have food in food service lines that students/employees select from, ensure that there are glass partitions such that students/employees can see and select the food but not breathe on or touch or self-serve. Those serving the food should be properly checked daily for COVID-19 symptoms and wear facial covering and gloves when serving and preparing food. Consider individually packed and disposable eating utensils and trays.

In some cases, schools are considering having food service through outside vendors such as food trucks or other services and/or are requiring students to bring food from home. The problem with both processes is that in peanut-sensitive schools, introducing outside processes increases the risk of peanut oil or peanut particle transmission (as well as other allergens).

Consider whether starting the year with multiple pre-packaged box lunches might be a good idea and then expand as the year goes on, if things seem to be going well. This allows students and employees to carry a lunch with them easily as they attempt to spread out on campus to eat.

Q. Should lunch be served in the classroom rather than the café or cafeteria?

A. There is nothing wrong with serving lunch in the cafeteria, except that you must take positive steps to ensure cleanliness and appropriate physical distancing, especially since students and employees will not be able to wear facial covering while eating. You may need to utilize the lunchroom area along with other supplemental areas for lunch service and stagger and/or shorten schedules more than the school has done in the past.

If the school has fewer students coming in day-to-day (such as on staggered daily or hourly schedules), then there may be more space and less time needed to stagger the use of the lunchroom areas. The school can always choose to require students to eat lunch in their classrooms at their desks, again if appropriate physical distancing is observed.

Another option is to allow students to spread out into other supervised areas that are not typically used for lunch, such as a courtyard, student lounge area, or field house. In this case, schools need to be mindful of student supervision.

Q. Should we continue to allow parents as volunteers?

A. The school may allow parents and volunteers to assist at school, recognizing that they must be treated the same as any other person entering campus. If you require temperature and COVID-19 testing, these processes must be applied to all persons entering the campus.

In addition, all persons should be required to maintain physical distancing, wear facial covering, and wear other protective equipment if they are working with food or assisting in other ways (such as taking temperatures). The school may also choose not to introduce others back onto the campus to avoid the risk of other potential exposures to COVID-19 by the community and to avoid the necessity of training, supervising, and managing third parties.

Q. Should a school close its campus to all visitors? If so, how should vendors be handled?

A. In the early stages of back-to-campus life, a limitation of the areas on campus visitors can access may be warranted. For example, if a school typically requires visitors to check-in at a central location but then permits the visitor to access most parts of the campus with proper ID and badging, it might want to limit access to the check-in location and a handful of administrative offices or conference rooms nearby.

Vendors may require additional access, in which case a school should attempt to schedule vendor visits at times when the fewest numbers of students are present (e.g., before and after school). "Convenience visits," such as allowing parents to have lunch in the café with their child or faculty family members to join employees for lunch, should be limited, at least in the initial stages of reopening. All visitors to the campus should be required to wear cloth face coverings.

Q. What should we consider with respect to athletics?

A. To a great extent, athletics are going to be determined by the state or local district and/or athletic conferences. Pay attention to indoor sports and those that require student-to-student contact such as wrestling and football.

Schools also need to think through physical distancing for spectators. It may be that for some sports, the number of spectators will be limited, or the school may live stream the activity for all to watch from a distance.

Q. What should be considered with respect to performing arts?

A. Performing arts such as dance concerts, musicals, and plays will require preplanning for students and spectators alike. Not only will fine arts teachers need to plan for an increase in absences (more understudies) but also for how to maintain physical distancing of students for rehearsals. This might require more rehearsals with fewer students.

Many other aspects of school planning also apply such as limiting cast dinners or asking students to bring their own meal. For performances, schools may have the performance run multiple times to allow seating to be every third seat rather than every seat being occupied in the theater or music hall.

Q. How should class trips (overnight and day trips) be addressed?

A. Unfortunately, it is too early to say whether field trips will be feasible for the upcoming school year. The school will need to continue to monitor the situation locally with Coconino County Health and Human Services as well as the location of the intended trip.

DISMISSALS/CANCELLATIONS

Q. When should school/ childcare programs be dismissed/canceled?

A. 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.

If there is substantial transmission in the local community, local health officials may suggest extended school dismissalspdf iconpdf icon (e.g., dismissals for longer than two weeks). This longer-term, and likely broader-reaching, dismissal strategy is intended to slow transmission rates of COVID-19 in the community.

TEACHERS

Q. What can teachers do to protect themselves and their students?

A. Teachers and students are in close contact for much of the day, and schools can become a place where respiratory diseases like COVID-19 can quickly spread. Protect yourself and your students by practicing and promoting healthy habits during the school year. You should also plan to say home if you have symptoms of COVID-19 like fever, cough, or shortness of breath. Encourage parents to keep students at home if they're sick. Consider physical distancing strategies, such as modifying classes where students are likely to be in very close contact; increasing space between desks; and allowing students to eat meals in the classroom.

Q. How should I talk to my students about COVID-19?

A. As public conversations around COVID-19 increase, children may worry about themselves, their family, and friends getting ill with COVID-19. Teachers can play an important role in helping children make sense of what they hear in a way that is honest, accurate, and minimizes anxiety or fear. CDC has created guidance to help adults have conversations with children about COVID-19 and ways they can avoid getting and spreading the disease.

PARENTS

Q. Are children more at-risk?

A. Information about COVID-19 in children is somewhat limited, but the information that is available suggests that children with confirmed COVID-19 generally had mild symptoms. Person-to-person spread from or to children, as among adults, is thought to occur mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. Recent studies indicate that people who are infected but do not have symptoms likely also play a role in the spread of COVID-19.

However, a small percentage of children have been reported to have more severe illness. Despite lower risk of serious illness, children with COVID-19-like symptoms should avoid contact with older adults and people of any age who may be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Q. How should parents talk to children about COVID-19?

A. As public conversations around COVID-19 increase, children may worry about themselves, their family, and friends getting ill with COVID-19. Parents play an important role in helping children make sense of what they hear in a way that is honest, accurate, and minimizes anxiety or fear. CDC has created guidance to help adults have conversations with children about COVID-19 and ways they can avoid getting and spreading the disease.

RESOURCES

CDC Covid-19

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fspecific-groups%2Fguidance-for-schools.html

Arizona Department of Health Services

https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/infectious-disease-epidemiology/index.php#novel-coronavirus-home

https://www.azdhs.gov/documents/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/infectious-disease-epidemiology/novel-coronavirus/schools/school-childcare-handout.pdf

Coconino County Health and Human Services Covd-19 home page
https://www.coconino.az.gov/AlertCenter.aspx

Checklists for Teachers and Parents
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/checklist.html