

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) – Tribal Childcare Programs and K-12 Schools

The Indian Health Service Office of Environmental Health & Engineering recognizes that staff, parents, and students may have questions and concerns about the novel (new) coronavirus disease, now called COVID-19. The situation surrounding the outbreak is rapidly evolving and the information or recommendations are changing as new information becomes available.

IHS would like to ensure that Tribal Childcare Programs and K-12 Schools have up-to-date information and resources to keep our students safe.

Key Points & Focus Areas:

- **Provide Education:** Distribute CDC health messages and materials to staff, volunteers, and students. Continue to promote everyday preventive actions (e.g., stay home when sick, cover coughs and sneezes, and wash hands often). <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>
- **Hand Hygiene & Handwashing:** Define when hand hygiene is required & ensure handwashing strategies include washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- **Coughing and Sneezing Etiquette:** Remind staff, volunteers, and students to cover their mouths and noses with a tissue when they cough or sneeze. Use inner elbows/upper sleeves to avoid covering the nose or mouth with bare hands.
- **Inclusion/Exclusion/Dismissal of Children & Staff:** Conduct daily health checks of staff, volunteers, and students and ensure those who become sick at school or arrive at school sick are sent home as soon as possible. Keep sick and well individuals separated by at least 6ft.
- **Perform Routine Cleaning, Sanitizing, & Disinfecting:** Follow routine cleaning, sanitizing, & disinfecting schedules; with a special focus on frequently touched surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, countertops). Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (e.g., keyboards, desks, remote controls) can be wiped down before each use. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/cleaning-disinfection.html>
- **Stay Informed:** The CDC will update their guidance as needed and as additional information becomes available. Please check the following CDC website periodically for updated interim guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

This information was based off of CDC's "Interim Guidance for Administrators of US Childcare Programs and K-12 Schools"

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-for-schools.html>

When reviewing, updating, or implementing policies & procedures at your facility, Caring for Our Children 4th Edition is a valuable reference <https://nrckids.org/files/CFOC4%20pdf-%20FINAL.pdf>. However, the CDC Interim Guidance should be the primary reference for the content of policies & procedures related to COVID-19.

For technical assistance with this or any other Environmental Health issue, please feel free to contact an Environmental Health Officer at your nearest IHS Office of Environmental Health and Engineering.

