



## **Early Childhood Program Leader Guidance for 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

*Updated as of 3-4-2020*

### Background

- Health officials are still learning about the newly discovered respiratory virus COVID-19, how it is transmitted, and the spectrum of illness among infected persons.
- SARS-CoV-2 is the cause of the illness known as COVID-19.
- Based on current information, the health risk to New Yorkers is considered low due to the lack of confirmed cases of person-to-person transmission in New York City.
- If person-to-person transmission is confirmed, additional information will be provided as soon as it becomes available.

### About Coronaviruses

- Coronaviruses are common in humans and often cause mild upper respiratory tract infections.
- Rarely, coronaviruses, like SARS-CoV-2, capable of causing severe illness, can emerge that infect and spread from person to person.

Human coronaviruses most commonly spread from an infected person to others through:

- The air by coughing or sneezing
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it and, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands

**For answers to common questions about the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) specific to the school setting and to get accurate information and help guard against stigma and fear, visit:**

- <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/imm/novel-coronavirus-guidance-schools.pdf>

To learn the most up-to-date information, visit:

- [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) or call the CDC Health Line at 1-800-232-4636
- [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://www.nyc.gov/health/coronavirus) or call 311 (interpretation and translation services are available)

Staff or students planning to travel abroad should review CDC's Coronavirus Disease 2019 Information for Travel:

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

### DOE International Travel Trip Policy for Schools

- Based on the CDC travel guidelines for international travel, and in consultation with the Health Department, the DOE is issuing the updated guidance on international travel. Currently, the CDC recommends that travelers avoid or consider postponing all nonessential travel to the following destinations that have a level 2 or higher advisory alert: China, South Korea, Italy, Iran, and Japan. Accordingly, all DOE-sponsored international trips to these countries must be cancelled for the rest of this school year. If any additional countries are added to this list we will continue to provide updated information.
- Schools should work with travel vendors regarding securing reimbursement of trip fees. In instances where vendors will neither reimburse nor credit the school for future trips, superintendents should escalate to their BCO Directors for vendor engagement. Please note that the DOE is limited in its ability to secure funds particularly in instances where trips were not booked with the DOE contracted vendors.



### General Preparedness

#### *Follow Standard Infection Control Precautions*

Routinely employ infection prevention strategies that can prevent transmission of common respiratory viruses (e.g., influenza or “flu,” “common cold viruses”). These include encouraging staff and students to:

- Stay home if you are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (in the absence of a tissue, cough or sneeze into your shirt sleeve or bent arm).
- Keep your hands clean (wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Get the flu shot (at this time, there are no current vaccinations for coronaviruses).
- Post “Cover Your Cough” posters at appropriate locations throughout the school in appropriate languages to encourage general infection control (available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/cd/cyc-poster-clinics.pdf>).

The routine use of these infection prevention strategies cannot be overemphasized.

### Additional Items

#### *All of the following should be in place:*

1. All bathrooms are stocked with soap and paper towels.
2. Announcements have been made that emphasize the importance of covering coughs and sneezes, and washing hands frequently.
3. Facilities staff disinfect bathrooms, cafeteria and common area door knobs on a regular basis.
4. Program staff ensure building is properly ventilated, for example, by opening all the windows.

### Monitoring

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is currently screening people arriving from mainland China for symptoms and advising them on how to monitor themselves for 14 days after arrival and how to seek care if they become ill. These travelers should not come to work or school for 14 days after leaving mainland China
- There are no restrictions on travelers returning from any other countries at this time. Healthy students and staff returning from other countries may return to school/work.
- DOE-funded early childhood programs should enforce the CDC monitoring protocols referenced above, but may not require healthy children or families to undergo additional monitoring or screening in the absence of guidance from the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and NYC Department of Education

**Please remember it is important that as we address this outbreak, we separate facts from fear, and guard against stigma and discrimination. There are a lot of things on social media and in the news that are at best not rooted in science and at worst, offensive, demeaning and racist. We need to encourage everyone to keep their attention on the facts and support our neighbors. As you interact with families and students during these evaluations please keep this in mind.**