

BACKGROUND

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common throughout the world. These viruses, at times, can evolve and infect people, then spread through human to human contact. Human coronaviruses spread just like the flu or a cold—through the air by coughing or sneezing; through close personal contact, like touching or shaking hands; by touching an object or surface with the viruses on it; and occasionally, through fecal contamination. Currently, the threat of someone in the United States becoming sick with the novel coronavirus, or 2019-nCoV, is very low. Those at risk are those who have traveled to China, and those caring for those who already have the virus.

WHAT SHOULD SCHOOLS DO?

K-12 schools may have exchange or other students who attend their school and have traveled to various locations in Asia, including China. Currently, any foreign nationals will be restricted from entry to the United States effective 5:00 p.m., February 2, 2020.

If a student arrived BEFORE February 2, 2020, and had traveled in the last 14 days to Hubei Province or other locations of mainland China (excluding Hong Kong and Macau), and develops a fever, cough, difficulty breathing or other symptoms, they should be evaluated. The local health department can assist with determining where that evaluation should occur. Calling **1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258)** will determine who the local health department is. At this time of year, there are many causes for these types of symptoms, including the flu.

We encourage schools to support students who may be quarantined by allowing for leniency in absenteeism from classes and extra-curricular activities.

WHAT IF WE HAVE A STUDENT WHOSE HEALTH IS BEING MONITORED?

If a student becomes a patient under investigation, schools should continue to follow usual procedures for notification of parents/guardians whose children are ill at school. Schools should also work with their local health department regarding notification.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

The department encourages schools to increase education on ways to protect yourself from illnesses such as the cold, flu and also the coronavirus:

- **Cover** any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, do not use your hands!
- **Clean** surfaces frequently, such as countertops, light switches, cell phones and other frequently touched areas.
- **Contain**- if you are sick, stay home until you are feeling better.

RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, visit <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

For information on what to do if you are sick, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/sick-with-2019-nCoV-fact-sheet.pdf>

The latest information on the coronavirus in the U.S. and worldwide can be found on the [CDC website](#)