

BACKGROUND

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common throughout the world. These viruses can live in animals, such as camels, cats and bats, and at times, evolve and infect people, before spreading 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. This has occurred previously with the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreaks.

WHAT SHOULD SCHOOLS DO?

Travelers from mainland China who have returned to the United States after being in China within the **last 14 days** are advised to (at minimum) self-monitor for fever, cough and shortness of breath and stay home avoiding group settings including work and school.

Travelers from Hubei Province, who have returned to the United States after being in China within the **last 14 days** are advised to stay home and avoid contact with others and contact 1-877-PA-HEALTH (**1-877-724-3258**).

Travelers who develop symptoms should **avoid contact with others** and contact 1-877-PA-HEALTH (**1-877-724-3258**) to discuss their symptoms and recent travel history.

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. Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- **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](#)