



Pandemic Event Plan

Preparedness

In an effort to limit the impact of a pandemic event, Columbus County Schools has developed this plan to minimize the disruption of our schools and its activities, as well as, reduce the number of illnesses and deaths, as a result. At the pandemic level, infectious diseases will be present in the school setting with the potential for rapid spread. Collaboration with Columbus County Health Department from preparation through recovery will be initiated for management of the pandemic event.

Prevention

- Washing hands frequently with soap and water, and for at least 20 seconds each time. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based (at least 60% alcohol) hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are ill...keep 6 ft distance.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Use the bend of your elbow to cover your mouth and nose, if you do not have a tissue.
- Do not reuse tissue after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.
- Routine daily, cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces that are frequently touched (e.g. doors, doorknobs, handles, desks, tables, keyboards, light switches, countertops).
- Stay home if sick with contagious illness.
- Staff, faculty, and students with fevers of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater will be excluded from school until fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications (Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Motrin, Aspirin, etc.)

Communication

- Assess the needs of the schools, staff, faculty and students.
- Provide education and preparations to be taken to prevent and for the potential spread of the pandemic event.
- Provide translated educational materials in appropriate languages.
- Utilize various media outlets to inform and educate staff, faculty, students and parents of updates and protocols.
- Partner with Columbus County Health Department and attend their community meetings for updates.
- Provide regular updates to staff, faculty, students and parents, as well as, potential impacts of the pandemic event.

Surveillance and Monitoring

- Report weekly absenteeism for staff, faculty, and students to School Administration. Any noticeable increase to daily attendance reports in a suspected outbreak with more than 10% of staff, faculty or students absent and alert Columbus County Health Department of findings.
- Review attendance and sick leave policies for staff, faculty, and students.
- Determine at what point continuity of education is disrupted by absenteeism of staff, faculty and students.

Social Distancing

- Review procedures for sending individuals home that are showing signs and symptoms consistent with the pandemic event.
- Discuss suspending after school activities and events, as indicated by Columbus County Schools Administration.
- School closures, as indicated by Columbus County Schools Administration.

Recovery

- Operations will depend on the severity and duration of the pandemic event.
- In the event of closures, additional deep cleaning of schools will take place before re-opening.
- Columbus County School Administration, in collaboration with Columbus County Health Department, will determine when it is safe to begin school recovery and when management of school activities can resume as normal, prior to the pandemic event's occurrence.
- Assessment of the needs for staff, faculty, students and parents will be determined in order to provide pre-event status educational services.
- Provide counseling as needed to staff, faculty and students.
- Columbus County Schools Administration will develop revised calendar to recover lost educational time.

Supporting Documents

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved March 3, 2020, from <https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/pdf/pan-flu-checklist-k-12-schooladministrators-item2.pdf>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved March 3, 2020, from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-for-schools.html>

Columbus County Health Department. Novel Coronavirus Press Release document. Retrieved March 3, 2020 via email to Columbus County Schools (Dr. Meadows).

National School Boards Association. Retrieved March 4, 2020, from <https://www.nsba.org/Resources/coronavirus/legal-guide>

Columbus County Schools' Short-Term Communicable Disease Policy. Retrieved March 4, 2020, from <http://www2.columbus.k12.nc.us/schoolnurse/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Short-Term-Communicable-Disease-Policy.pdf>

Employment During Pandemic Event

Employee Absenteeism

During a period declared as a Pandemic Event, *Columbus County Schools Policy 7510: Leave of Absence* will be modified to not require a statement from a medical doctor when an employee is absent for three or more consecutive days and wishes to use sick leave for those absences. This provision applies whether the employee is absent due to personal sickness or taking care of a family member with symptoms related to the pandemic illness.

Employees who are experiencing the following symptoms during the time of a pandemic event are required to stay home and not report to the workplace:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Upon the recommendation of the CDC, supervisors will separate and send home immediately any employees who appear to have respiratory illness symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) when they arrive at work or develop such symptoms during the workday. If an employee is sent home or stays home due to suspicion of illness and schools are still operating under normal schedules, district leave policies will continue to be followed.

Employees who have the symptoms of a respiratory illness are required to stay home and not report to work until they are free of fever (temperature below 100.4°F), and free of signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g., cough suppressants).

In the event it is confirmed that an employee has the pandemic illness, other employees will be notified of their possible exposure to the illness in the workplace. At no time will the identity of the employee with the illness be revealed in order to maintain the confidentiality of the employee's medical information as required by Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and by N.C.G.S. § 130A-143, which keeps confidential the identity and medical information of people with communicable diseases. No administrator, department head, human resources department personnel, or anyone in any supervisory capacity shall confirm or deny who has become ill and with what illness.

Guidance taken from https://canons.sog.unc.edu/preparing-local-government-workplaces-for-the-new-coronavirus/#utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=preparing-local-government-workplaces-for-the-new-coronavirus