

Irvine Unified School District Coronavirus FAQ

Please note: As the Irvine Unified School District receives new information from the Orange County Health Care Agency, the Centers for Disease Control and other agencies, this FAQ will be updated as soon as possible. (Last Updated: 1/27/20)

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Q: What is the Coronavirus and how is it spread?

A: According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the first known cases of 2019-nCoV — short for “2019 Novel Coronavirus” — were reported in December in the Chinese city of Wuhan. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause respiratory illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as [MERS](#). A novel coronavirus — often shown as “nCoV” — is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans.

According to the Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA), the Coronavirus is spread, similarly to other illnesses like the flu and common cold, through coughing or sneezing by those who already have it. Symptoms can include fever, coughing, and difficulty breathing. Symptoms may appear two-14 days after exposure. These symptoms generally resolve but sometimes the Coronavirus can cause lower-respiratory tract illnesses (windpipe and lungs) such as pneumonia or bronchitis, especially in older people or people with weakened immune systems.

OCHCA is reporting that the risk for schoolchildren in Orange County is minimal. Most patients with Coronavirus have mild symptoms. Internationally, the illness has primarily severely affected adults – elderly patients and those with pre-existing conditions.

Q: There has been a confirmed case of the Coronavirus in Orange County. Should IUSD close schools?

A: IUSD follows the guidance of expert agencies such as the Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). We will continue to monitor this situation and work closely with the appropriate agencies.

At this time, no special precautions are recommended other than those who have been to Wuhan, China and

have developed a fever with cough or shortness of breath within 14 days of travel, or have had contact with someone who is suspected to have Novel Coronavirus; those individuals should stay home and call their health care provider immediately. If individuals do not have a healthcare provider or if they need to be seen at a hospital, they should not go directly to the hospital. They should call the emergency room to get instructions before going in.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health has issued the following statement, "There is no immediate threat to the general public, no special precautions are required, and people should not be excluded from activities based on their race, country of origin, or recent travel if they do not have symptoms of respiratory illness."

Q: Given that there is a two-14 day period, where symptoms can develop, should schools close for a week?

A: IUSD is unable to know if or when individuals are exposed to any illness, which is why we follow guidelines from expert agencies like the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA). Rather than recommending the cancellation of schools and public events, at this time, these agencies are asking people who have traveled to the Wuhan region in China or who may have been exposed to the virus to stay home.

Specifically, the CDC and the OCHCA have advised that travelers who were in Wuhan, China and have developed a fever with cough or shortness of breath within 14 days of travel or have had contact with someone who is suspected to have Novel Coronavirus to stay home and call their healthcare provider immediately. If individuals do not have a healthcare provider or if they need to be seen at a hospital, they should not go directly to the hospital. They should call the emergency room to get instructions before going in.

Q: If the situation or health recommendations change, how will IUSD parents know?

A: Although at this time, the Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA) is reporting that the risk for school children in Orange County is minimal, IUSD continues to closely monitor this situation and work collaboratively with the appropriate agencies. Should there be any new recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control, OCHCA or other expert agencies, the District will immediately inform IUSD families and staff. Visit [Stay Connected to IUSD](#) for information on how to receive communications from IUSD.

Q: What can families do to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus?

A: IUSD urges our community to [follow the CDC healthy habits outlined in Superintendent Walker's email](#), which are key in preventing illnesses, including the Coronavirus. According to the CDC, if you have a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough, difficulty breathing, or shortness of breath:

- Stay home from school/work if you are having symptoms
- Wash your hands and stay well hydrated/drinking fluids
- Cover your cough, and avoid close contact with others
- Call your healthcare provider to make an appointment



- If you have traveled to Wuhan, China, or have been in close contact with someone who has recently traveled to Wuhan, China, within 14 days before the onset of your symptoms, stay home and notify your healthcare provider. If you do not have a healthcare provider or if you need to be seen at a hospital, do not go directly to the hospital. Please call the emergency room to get instructions before going in.

Q: What are IUSD guidelines for students/staff, who are sick?

A: Students and staff should follow these guidelines for when to stay home:

- A temperature of 100 degrees or above
- Students must be fever-free **without** fever-reducing medication (such as Tylenol or Motrin) for at least 24 hours before returning to school
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea. Students may return to school 24 hours after last episode
- Uncontrollable cough or wheezing or shortness of breath
- Suspected communicable disease (i.e. chicken pox)
- Suspected infections
- A rash of unknown origin – students may return to school when written authorization is received from the healthcare provider
- Students must stay home for the first 24 hours on antibiotic therapy

Q: What more is being done to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus?

A: In addition to public education efforts to support healthy habits and to provide guidelines for when people should stay home, airports in the US are now screening entering travelers from certain areas for symptoms of respiratory infection. Locally, as we learn more, IUSD is closely monitoring the situation and is working with the Orange County Department of Education Health Services team and the Orange County Health Care Agency. Should any new information become available or recommendations change from these expert agencies, IUSD will keep our families and staff informed. Visit [Stay Connected to IUSD](#) for information on how to receive communications from IUSD.

In China, Wuhan city and nearby areas have implemented travel restrictions.

Q: Should students and staff wear masks?

A: At this time, public health officials say there is no need to wear facemasks in the United States. However, as a precaution, students are allowed to wear facemasks on all IUSD campuses, if desired. Please note: IUSD students, who are sick must follow IUSD guidelines.

Q: Where can I find additional information?

A: For more information and updates, visit the [Orange County Health Care Agency's Coronavirus webpage](#).