

# Coronavirus Prevention Update: FAQs for Parents

March 13, 2020

We know the recent spread of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, is raising a lot of questions from our parents. We have compiled a list of questions we've received at our schools and what's being shared by leading health officials. If you're the parent of an IDEA scholar or expecting, here's what to know.

## Precautions

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### What steps is IDEA Public Schools taking to protect against the spread of illness?

We are taking the recommended steps to protect against the spread of this illness in a similar way we would other respiratory illnesses such as:

- Increasing the frequency for disinfecting schools including high-traffic areas such as cafeterias, buses, and restrooms
- Wiping down frequently touched surfaces in classrooms as often as between every class period
- Encouraging frequent handwashing for staff and students
- Teaching students how to cover their cough and sneeze

During Spring Break and weekends, our facilities staff are deep cleaning all classrooms, restrooms, cafeterias and offices to ensure all school buildings are disinfected for the week ahead.

### Should my family be wearing masks?

No. The CDC does not recommend wearing facemasks to protect yourself from COVID-19. Only infected patients and their health care providers are recommended to wear masks. Instead, follow everyday prevention practices such as frequent handwashing, covering your cough and sneeze, staying home when sick, and cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces.

### What can I do to prevent myself and my family from getting sick?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. [The CDC recommends](#) everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

### Should I see a doctor if I feel sick?

Call your healthcare professional if you feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19, or if you live in or have recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19. Your health care provider is best suited to determine what level of care is needed.

### I don't have a primary care physician. Where can I take my family?

We have posted Community Resources on our IDEA Health Services page, which includes the names and locations of local clinics. Find more at <https://ideapublicschools.org/parents/health-services/> or contact your campus Health Aide.

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## Travel

### Are schools canceling field lessons and field trips?

Yes. Effective March 13, 2020, IDEA Public Schools is suspending all College Field Lessons and any student field trips until further notice. You can expect follow-up communication from your school if your child was scheduled to participate in an upcoming field lesson.

### Should my family change our travel plans?

- We ask families not travel to level 3 areas such as China, Iran, Italy, Japan, South Korea or the European Union.
- We ask that you cancel or postpone any cruise ship travel.

### If we don't cancel our travel to a level 3 area, will my child be allowed to return to school?

We ask that you implement a period of self-quarantine and social distancing for 14 days before returning to school. We encourage you to report your domestic or international travel plans so we can help advise you. Look for a reporting link in your school's REMIND message from March 11.

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## School Closures and Events

### Are there plans to cancel classes?

Yes. For Texas regions (Austin, El Paso, Rio Grande Valley, San Antonio, and Tarrant County), we are extending Spring Break in all Texas regions and will resume classes on March 30. If we need to extend further, we will keep you updated as we learn more from health and education officials.

For Southern Louisiana regions (Baton Rouge and New Orleans), we are following the lead the of East Baton Rouge Parish and Orleans Parish School Boards. Currently, these schools will be closes until April 16.

### What is the Learning Plan for Students in the Event of a School Closing?

IDEA remains fully committed to its core purpose – providing every child with a quality education. Instruction WILL continue in the event of a school closing through a Distance Learning Program. The Distance Learning Program will enable multiple methods and modalities for teaching remotely to reach all families, including those with special needs or with limited access to technology. Heavy use of printed materials, virtual classrooms, and individualized learning programs are involved.

### Will Schools Continue Offering Meals During School Closure?

Yes. From Monday, March 23rd to Friday, March 27th, every IDEA campus will be serving grab and go meals for breakfast and lunch. Parents can drive though the school parking lot and pick up meals for their students from 7:30 to 9:00am (breakfast) and 11:30am to 1:00pm (lunch).

### Does IDEA plan to cancel College Signing Day and other events?

Every event is being evaluated based on the circumstances in each region. We will make weekly decisions on the cancellation of Spring events as appropriate. At this time, we are rescheduling the following events:

Region	Event		Action
Austin	College Signing Day	Rescheduling	Postponing to May
Austin	College Case Studies	Canceling	TBD
San Antonio	College Signing Day	Rescheduling	Postponing to May
San Antonio	College Case Studies	Canceling	TBD
RGV	College Case Studies	Canceling	TBD
Network	State Science Fair	Rescheduling	TBD
Network	Texas Special Olympics	Rescheduling	TBD

## COVID-19 Facts

### What is coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV).

Common signs of infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath, and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure, and even death.

## Is there a difference between coronavirus and COVID-19?

Yes. There are multiple strains of coronavirus. COVID-19 is a new disease, caused by a novel (or new) coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans. This is the strain of coronavirus that is currently being monitored by the CDC.

## How is it different from the flu?

Coronaviruses are a type of respiratory illness, so it shows in symptoms similar to the flu or common cold. This new coronavirus, COVID-19, is most often showing the following symptoms: fever, dry cough and shortness of breath. In milder cases, doctors are reporting symptoms like runny nose, cough, sore throat, fatigue and fever. Since symptoms are so similar, the best way to tell if you or a family has COVID-19 is by going to your doctor, who can determine if testing is necessary.

## Who is at risk for contracting COVID-19?

Coronavirus is most dangerous to people ages 65 and older or have chronic illnesses or a weak immune system. Very few children have been reported with confirmed cases. Those children who were infected showed mild or no symptoms.

### Current risk assessment:

- People in communities where ongoing community spread with the virus that causes COVID-19 has been increasing within communities in the United States.
- Healthcare workers caring for patients with COVID-19 are at elevated risk of exposure.
- Close contacts of persons with COVID-19 are at elevated risk of exposure.
- Travelers returning from affected international locations where community spread is occurring are also at elevated risk of exposure.

## How is COVID-19 spread?

### Person-to-person spread

- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

### Spread from contact with infected surfaces or objects

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

## Who should be quarantined for COVID-19?

The CDC makes the necessary assessment of who should be quarantined. Quarantine means separating a person or group of people who have been exposed to a contagious disease but have not developed illness (symptoms) from others who have not been exposed, in order to prevent the possible spread of that disease. Quarantine is usually established for the incubation period of the communicable disease, which is the span of time during which people have developed illness after exposure.

### **Are children more susceptible to COVID-19?**

To date, children with confirmed cases of COVID-19 have shown no to mild symptoms. Older adults, and people who have serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease, are at higher risk.

### **How many confirmed cases of coronavirus are there in Texas and Louisiana?**

As of March 11<sup>th</sup> there are 21 confirmed cases in Texas and 6 cases in Louisiana. All cases trace back to travel abroad. There is currently no community contagion in these states.