

SCHOOL ACTION STEPS FOR PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS

The following is a list of important step-by-step actions schools should take before a pandemic disease outbreak. Outbreaks can have several cycles or waves so this list may need to be repeated.

PRIOR TO OUTBREAK/PREPAREDNESS & PLANNING PHASE

- Schools are encouraged to review and update their comprehensive school safety plan. Pursuant to California Education Code (EC) sections 32282 and 32286, every school in California should have a comprehensive school safety plan that is reviewed and updated annually. The comprehensive school safety plan should provide guidance for school administration, staff, and students for any emergency that impacts the school, including a public health crisis such as a pandemic.
- Work with local health officials and emergency preparedness officials. They may need to use schools to disseminate information to families.
- Decide the roles and responsibilities of school staff (including all ancillary staff) to prevent the spread of disease.
- Train nurses and staff in symptom recognition. Remember that a person who is infected may not show symptoms right away, and that children who are getting ill may show different behavior than usual, such as eating less or being irritable.
- Educate and improve the hygiene of students and staff. Use simple non-medical ways to reduce the spread of illness, i.e. by “cough and sneeze etiquette,” clean hands, and clean work areas. Posters are available at cchealth.org/coronavirus in the “resources” section.
- For COVID-19, clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Decide to what extent you will encourage or require children and staff to stay home when they are mildly ill. Share the symptom checklist available in the resources section of cchealth.org/coronavirus with parents and staff.
- Identify students who are most vulnerable to serious illness (immune compromised, chronic illness, etc.) and may have a greater risk of infections. Encourage those families to talk to their health care provider. Some parents may need to be more cautious in keeping their children out of school.