



February 27, 2020

Dear Contra Costa Schools:

In light of recent news regarding possible local transmission of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Northern California, Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) is recommending that local schools take steps to prepare for the possibility of cases in our community in the near future.

We know that our schools have questions about how to advise their families, and how and when to decide if it's appropriate to modify school activities in the event of local cases. Many schools already have robust, all-hazard emergency plans that address these topics, and CCHS encourages districts to review their emergency plans and consider them in the context of infectious disease – knowing the plan can help improve awareness and build confidence in your community's ability to respond when and if it becomes necessary.

CCHS will be working with schools in the coming days and weeks to provide additional guidance and assistance around preparedness. To date, there is no evidence that COVID-19 is circulating in Contra Costa County. As such, we are not recommending school closures at this time, or restricting student attendance outside of normal seasonal flu activity.

Our local hospitals are treating some international travelers who became infected overseas and were first quarantined at Travis Air Force Base in Solano County. The risk of these cases transmitting the virus to the community is extremely low, as they have been isolated from others during treatment.

You may hear the term “pandemic” used in relation to COVID-19. It is important to know that pandemic describes a disease that is affecting many places around the world at the same time. Pandemic does not necessarily mean a disease is extremely deadly or untreatable. The H1N1 flu in 2009 was a pandemic disease, for example, because it affected many parts of the world.

No one can predict whether our experience with COVID-19 will be similar to our experience with H1N1, but it remains vitally important to stay informed and communicate. We will keep schools and our other community partners updated as we learn more about this developing situation – [cchealth.org/coronavirus](http://cchealth.org/coronavirus) is a frequently updated source of local information.

At this time, we ask that you continue to reinforce the importance of hand washing, respiratory hygiene and supporting students and educators who have flu like symptoms to stay home until their illness has subsided.

Sincerely,

Dan Peddycord, RN, MPA/HA  
Public Health Director, Contra Costa Health Services

