



March 9, 2020

Contra Costa Schools and Parents:

Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) has received many calls asking for situation-specific information or guidance about real or rumored cases of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in our school communities.

We expect these requests, and more of them, as the virus becomes more common in our area. It's natural to worry about our kids, and schools touch everyone in the community.

We want you to know that if our public health team at CCHS believes at any point there is an elevated risk of exposure to students or others at a school campus in Contra Costa County, we will immediately communicate with the school to ensure swift steps are taken to reduce risk.

If CCHS believes there is no specific, elevated risk to a school campus as a result of a case we are investigating, we will **not** communicate with schools or the community about the case – even if the person involved is associated with a school.

One reason for this policy is medical privacy. State and federal law requires us to protect personal and medical information of patients whenever possible, as much as possible.

We must balance that obligation with our obligation to be transparent, and sometimes the resulting communication is unsatisfying or unpopular. We understand the community concern and want everyone to know we are communicating as much as we can, as soon as we can.

We ask for your patience and your trust. CCHS will be in touch with your school if and when we are needed.

Stay home if you are sick. Thank you for caring so much about our school communities. For more information about COVID-19 and specific steps schools can take, refer to the [California Department of Public Health guidance for schools](#) released over the weekend.

Sincerely,

Ori Tzvieli, M.D.
Acting Health Officer, Contra Costa County

