

## 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: 1/30/20)*

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### Q: What is the Coronavirus?

**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.

### Q: How is the Coronavirus spread?

**A:** According to the Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA), initially some patients were linked to a live seafood and meat market in Wuhan, but cases continued to emerge after the market was closed on January 1, 2020. Based on what is known today, the Coronavirus can be transmitted from person to person, though it’s unclear how easily this virus is spreading between people.

### Q: What are the Coronavirus symptoms?

**A:** 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.

**Q: How concerned should Orange County residents be regarding the Coronavirus?**

**A:** At this time, the risk to the general public is low – one case has been identified in Orange County, in a traveler from Wuhan, China. In consultation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the California Department of Public Health, the Orange County Health Care Agency is following up directly with all individuals who have had close contact with the identified person and may be at risk of infection.

As a point of comparison, in a typical flu season there are hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and tens of thousands of deaths in the U.S. alone.

**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). IUSD will continue to monitor this situation and work closely with the appropriate agencies.

At this time, no special precautions are recommended beyond simple daily health habits. These habits include staying home and avoiding close contact when you are sick, covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, washing hands regularly, and practicing good habits like eating well, drinking fluids and getting plenty of sleep.

Those who were in China and have developed a fever with cough or shortness of breath within 14 days of travel or those who have had contact with someone who is suspected to have Novel Coronavirus 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.

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

**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 school and public events, at this time, these agencies are asking people who have traveled to China or who may have been exposed to the virus and are exhibiting symptoms, such as fever, coughing, and difficulty breathing, to stay home.

Specifically, the CDC and the OCHCA have advised that travelers who were recently in China and have developed a fever with cough or shortness of breath, within 14 days of travel, to stay home and call their healthcare provider immediately. Additionally, anyone who has had contact with someone who is suspected to have the Novel Coronavirus and has developed a fever with cough or shortness of breath should also 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 low, 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
- 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 China, or have been in close contact with someone who has recently traveled to 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 their 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:** The Orange County Health Care Agency reports that all travelers from Wuhan are being routed through designated US airports for screening by the CDC. International travelers should also be aware of the outbreak in China and be sure to review guidance for international travelers from the CDC at:

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>.

Additionally, public education efforts include healthy habits and guidelines for when people should stay home. 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 OCHCA. 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 also 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 health guidelines.

**Q: Where can I find additional information?**

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

**Q: Why did the World Health Organization (WHO) declare a “public health emergency”?**

**A:** According to news reports, the declaration from WHO is procedural to increase funding and resources and to impose disease reporting requirements on countries for increased coordination and information sharing.

At this time, no special precautions are recommended beyond simple daily health habits. These habits include staying home and avoiding close contact when you are sick, covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, washing hands regularly, and practicing good habits like eating well, drinking fluids and getting plenty of sleep.

Those who were in China and have developed a fever with cough or shortness of breath within 14 days of travel should stay home and call their healthcare provider immediately. Additionally, anyone who has had contact with someone who is suspected to have the Novel Coronavirus and has developed a fever with cough or shortness of breath should also 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.

Should there be any new recommendations from the OCHCA or other expert agencies, the District will immediately inform IUSD families and staff.