

## **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: 2/2/20)*

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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), human Coronaviruses most commonly spread from an infected person to others through:

- Coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands

The Novel Coronavirus is new, and public health officials are learning more each day about transmission patterns and incubation periods. As information becomes available, we will keep you informed.

People who have recently traveled to China could have been exposed to the virus. Seek medical care if you traveled to China and develop a fever or respiratory symptoms within 14 days of your return. People who have

been in close contact with a person who has a confirmed case of novel coronavirus should seek medical care if they develop fever or respiratory symptoms.

**Q: What are the Coronavirus symptoms?**

**A:** The Orange County Healthcare Agency reports that symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Severe illness

Complications and outcomes of this virus are still being investigated.

**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: What can people do to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus?**

**A:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention currently recommends avoiding all nonessential travel to China. Outside of China, novel coronavirus infection is rare. Activities that can prevent the spread of more common respiratory infections, like the flu, can be effective in preventing the spread of novel coronavirus, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water
- Avoid touching face with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home when you are sick
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw it in the trash
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

**Q: How do new federal guidelines affect schools?**

**A:** The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared a national public health emergency on Friday, January 31, 2020. As part of the emergency declaration, which went into effect Sunday, February 2, 2020 at 11 a.m. PST., Americans returning to the United States, who have been in China's Hubei province within 14 days, will face a mandatory quarantine and be monitored by public health officials. Americans

returning to the United States from other parts of China will face enhanced screening and a self-quarantine of up to 14 days to ensure they do not pose a health risk.

**Q: What are guidelines for Orange County schools?**

**A:** In response to the new federal guidelines, the Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA) will exclude students under mandatory quarantine from school for 14 days from their last exposure and will communicate with Orange County school districts, colleges and universities to ensure high-risk students remain out of school for the identified period. Students under voluntary self-quarantine should be excused from school during this period.

To support public health, IUSD follows the guidance of expert agencies and we expect our community to do so as well. This community effort will help ensure the health and safety of those who attend, work and visit our campuses.

It should be noted that according to OCHCA, at this time, there is only one confirmed case of the Coronavirus in Orange County (a man in his 50s who is isolated and in good condition). The risk to the public in Orange County and throughout the United States remains low.

**Q: What are guidelines for IUSD schools?**

**A:** Please know that the District is committed to maintaining the privacy of our students. Our schools will work with students and families under mandatory or self-quarantine with sensitivity and confidentiality.

Mandatory Quarantine

- The Orange County Health Care Agency will notify IUSD of any students under mandatory quarantine, who have been excluded from attending school due to recent travel from China's Hubei province within 14 days.
- Once IUSD has received notification these individuals are cleared to return to campus, schools will communicate with affected families to make arrangements.
- Schools will work with students to support continued learning at home.
- Related absences will be excused.

Self-Quarantine

- Students who have recently returned from other parts of China are asked to self-quarantine and provide schools with documentation and/or a doctor's note.
- Schools will work with students to support continued learning at home.
- Related absences will be excused.

IUSD understands that missing school, for any reason, can cause concern and stress for our families and students. We will work collaboratively with families throughout this process. However, to maintain a healthy and safe environment for all students and families, these guidelines have been put into place.

In addition, IUSD asks parents, caregivers or others, who may be under mandatory or self-quarantine to remain off campus as well.

**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: 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 more is being done to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus?**

**A:** Visit the [Orange County Health Care Agency's Coronavirus webpage](#) for ongoing updates and also visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), including their travel alerts webpage <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>.

**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 and should not be sent to school sick, even if they wear a mask.

**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.