



# RIDGEWOOD

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## PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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February 3, 2020

Dear Ridgewood Community,

Yesterday, the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) released documents with new information and guidance for schools with students returning from China, as well as recommendations for the management of those students. This worldwide health alert is dynamic and ever-changing, and we will provide updates upon receiving new guidelines and protocols.

As per the recommendations of the NJDOH, I ask all parents whose child has traveled to China and has returned in the last 14 days to contact your child's school. The school will work with you to assess the exposure risk and determine the best course of action. The guidance provided by the NJDOH outlines three risk categories for those who have returned from China: high risk (*returning student who has been in close contact with a person confirmed with 2019-nCoV*); moderate risk (*person who has worked as laboratory staff either in a healthcare facility that was treating patients with confirmed 2019-nCoV or has worked with the virus in a research laboratory setting*); and low risk (*person with travel history to Wuhan City, the Hubei Province, or Mainland China who have not had close contact with any person confirmed to have 2019-nCoV*). Some Ridgewood families who have recently returned from China have already voluntarily self-quarantined their children based on information they received from authorities when landing in the United States.

In our schools, additional measures beyond our routine cleaning practices are being implemented, including sanitizing "high touch" areas with hospital grade EPA approved products. These surfaces include but are not limited to, desks, countertops, doorknobs, hands-on learning tools, and faucet handles. We are also checking our hand sanitizer stations to ensure that they are full and replenished regularly.

Parents can help by reminding children to take preventive measures to reduce the spread of viruses, such as covering their coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve and washing their hands often. Most importantly, please keep children home if they are sick. We are in the middle of the flu season, and with the addition of the Coronavirus, we are increasing our illness prevention protocols. The attached documents provide more information on this evolving situation. Please be assured that we are monitoring this situation closely and are following the recommendations of the NJDOH and the Centers for Disease Control.

Sincerely,

Daniel Fishbein

C: Board of Education  
Ms. Colleen Manke, Ridgewood Public School Head Nurse  
Dr. Wayne Yankus, District Physician



**New Jersey Department of Health**  
**Guidance for Managing Employees or Students Returning from China**  
February 2, 2020

The New Jersey Department of Health is providing the following guidance for the management of employees or students who have returned to New Jersey from recent travel internationally. This guidance is, in part, based on new scientific information available on novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) transmission and the need to limit transmission in our communities.

**This guidance is being provided for individuals who have traveled to China in the last 14 days. New screening and management protocols are set to take effect on *February 2, 2020 at 5pm.* This guidance *only* applies to individuals who have arrived prior to this date and time. Additional guidance will be made available for those who arrive after this date and time.**

Recognizing that 2019-nCoV is now present in numerous countries worldwide, the guidance below references any contact with people who have confirmed diagnoses of 2019-nCoV, regardless of country. As of February 1, 2020, the following countries outside of the U.S. had confirmed cases: Japan, Republic of Korea, Viet Nam, Singapore, Australia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Philippines, Thailand, Nepal, Sri Lanka, India, Canada, France, Finland, Germany, Italy, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates.

This guidance applies to non-US based exposures and will not apply to exposures occurring in New Jersey if a case of 2019-nCoV is confirmed. Contact tracing guidance will be provided by NJDOH should these types of exposures occur.

The guidance outlined below serves as a recommendation for employers, administrators, and decision-makers, in general; application of this guidance should be made only after all aspects of each individual case are assessed. These are general guidelines and entities (e.g., businesses, schools, universities) are responsible for the implementation and oversight of these guidelines which should be based on their own internal policies and procedures. NJDOH will also be producing advisory documents which will assist entities in the implementation of this guidance.

NJDOH recommends the following risk-based stratification of travelers and corresponding actions associated with those risk levels. The procedure on how employers/administrators identify and screen individuals with a travel history is at the discretion of that institution. It is anticipated that employers/administrators would use existing or develop new policies to support the actions that NJDOH is recommending. Since this is an ongoing and evolving public health emergency, institutions would be asked to implement and conduct monitoring of those meeting these risk criteria and would be supported by the local health department.

## **1. HIGH RISK: ACTIVE MONITORING REQUIRED**

Institutions should identify employees or students meeting the following criteria, notify their local health department about these individuals, request individual to self-quarantine, and conduct **active** monitoring for 14 days after their last exposure:

A. Employees or students who have been in close contact<sup>1</sup> with a person confirmed with 2019-nCoV, while the person was symptomatic OR any contact with infectious secretions, OR living/caring/visiting someone with a person confirmed with 2019-nCoV, regardless of use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

*Notes:*

- While appropriate use of PPE is considered protective, PPE use outside of the US may not adhere to the same standards in the US.
- Note: Contact with an ill individual while traveling who has not been confirmed to have 2019-nCoV would fall into the low risk category unless the criteria from other risk groups are met.

## **2. MODERATE RISK: PASSIVE MONITORING REQUIRED**

Institutions should identify employees or students meeting the following criteria, notify their local health department about these individuals, request the individual to self-quarantine, and conduct **passive** monitoring for 14 days after their last exposure:

A. Employees or students who worked as laboratory staff either in a healthcare facility that was treating patients with confirmed 2019- nCoV or were working with the virus in a research laboratory setting, while not wearing the recommended PPE, OR without standard biosafety precautions in place. This would include but is not limited to processing blood, serum, or respiratory samples.

## **3. LOW RISK: VOLUNTARY SELF-QUARANTINE**

Institutions should identify employees or students meeting the following criteria. Precautionary actions are not recommended and no reporting to the local health department is needed. Voluntary self-quarantine for up to 14-days, to monitor their health status for any signs or symptoms of a lower respiratory illness, may be appropriate and can be implemented at the discretion of the employer/institution.

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<sup>1</sup> Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet distance of a 2019-nCoV case for more than 10 minutes.

A. Employees and students with a recent travel history to Wuhan City, the Hubei Province, or Mainland China, who have not had any close contact with any person confirmed to have 2019-nCoV;

B. Employees or students who had transient interactions with suspected cases in public settings, without any close contact.

#### **4. NO RISK: NO CHANGE/RESTRICTION IN ACTIVITIES**

Persons who have returned to the U.S. and more than 14 days have elapsed from their last exposure are able to continue routine activities without restriction.

#### **Identification of Symptoms**

Travelers should monitor for the following symptoms for 14 days after their return:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

If symptoms develop they should:

- Seek medical care right away. Before they go to a doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about their recent travel and symptoms.
- Wear a surgical mask while in transit to limit transmission.
- Avoid mass transit when seeking care if possible.
- Cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or their sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

#### **Definitions**

**Self-quarantine** means avoiding contact with other people except direct household contacts or travel except when travel is associated with critical needs such as for medical care. All group activities/gathering should be avoided. Avoid contact with others.

**Active monitoring** means contacting the individual daily to assess for symptoms and fever. Check-ins can be through daily phone calls, interactive voice response, internet reporting, or via Skype or other video conferencing, with possible follow-up home visits as needed.

**Passive monitoring** means the person being monitored assesses themselves for fever and symptoms daily and notifies designated authority if symptoms occur. Minimally passive monitoring should contact the individual at the beginning and end of the 14-day period.

### **Important Notes**

- Since this is an ongoing and evolving public health emergency, institutions would be asked to implement and conduct monitoring of those meeting these risk criteria and would be supported by the local health department.
- As local health departments are working to identify, report and monitor ill individuals suspected of having 2019-nCoV, resources in supporting these activities may be limited. Institutions should consult their local health departments if monitoring assistance is needed.
- Institutions recommending self-quarantine of these individuals should have internal policies developed to address questions about work restrictions and furloughs.
- Boarding schools and institutions of higher learning requesting individual to self-quarantine may need to provide housing and basic needs to students during this time.

### **Resources**

- NJDOH – General Information Page
  - <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml>
- CDC – General Information Page
  - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- CDC – Home Isolation Guide
  - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-home-care.html>
- NJDOH – Local Health Department Directory
  - [www.localhealth.nj.gov](http://www.localhealth.nj.gov)



**New Jersey Department of Health  
Managing Students (travelers) Returning from China  
Frequently Asked Questions  
February 2, 2020**

Many K-12 school administrators, teachers and staff in New Jersey are concerned about the current outbreak of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) and potential impacts to their school communities and wish to take appropriate steps to mitigate any risks. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is working hard to learn as much as possible about this 2019-nCoV so that we can better understand how it spreads and characterize its associated illness. The New Jersey Department of Health is also working hard to develop guidance and education materials, in the face of evolving information.

Though the CDC considers 2019-nCoV to be a serious public health concern based on current information, the immediate health risk to the general U.S. public is considered low at this time. The CDC and the World Health Organization are closely monitoring the national and global situation and providing ongoing guidance. At this time, the CDC recommends avoiding nonessential travel to China. Updated travel information specific to 2019-nCoV can be found at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/watch/novel-coronavirus-china>.

The New Jersey Department of Health is providing the resource specific to management of students who have returned to New Jersey from recently traveling in areas with known transmission of 2019-nCoV. This guidance is, in part, based on new scientific information available on novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) transmission and the need to limit transmission in our communities.

**General Information**

**What is the difference between seasonal and novel coronavirus?**

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses and there are different types of coronavirus within that family, much like there are different types of influenza viruses. Coronaviruses in general are not new, they are quite common and are a frequent cause of respiratory illnesses such as the common cold. Coronaviruses tend to circulate in the fall and winter months, similar to influenza. Most people get infected with these viruses at some point in their lives.

The type of coronavirus that has recently emerged in Wuhan, China is a **new type** of coronavirus and is infecting people for the first time (which means that people do not have any immunity to it).

**What are common symptoms of 2019-nCoV?**

Information to date suggests this virus is causing symptoms consistent with a respiratory illness such as cough, fever, and shortness of breath.

**How is 2019-nCoV spread?**





At this time, it's unclear how easily or sustainably this virus is spreading between people. Typically, with most respiratory viruses, people are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest). Chinese officials report that sustained person-to-person spread in the community is occurring in China. Person-to-person spread in the United States has been detected in a close, household contact to an individual confirmed to have 2019-nCoV, but the risk to the general public remains low. Cases in healthcare settings, like hospitals, may also occur.

### **What measures can be taken to prevent 2019-nCoV?**

There is currently no vaccine to prevent 2019-nCoV infection. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses.

### **How is 2019-nCoV treated?**

Currently, there is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for the coronavirus. There is no vaccine to prevent this virus, and the CDC advises that the best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

If a person traveled to China in the last 14 days and is sick with fever, cough or difficulty breathing they should:

- Seek medical care right away. Before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Not travel while sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

### **Do school events need to be canceled?**

At this time, there is no need to cancel school or social events. There are no cases of 2019-nCoV in New Jersey, and there are no restrictions on public gatherings. Students should be reminded that part of good respiratory hygiene is staying home from events when they are ill.

### **What preventive measures should be taken to help reduce the spread of respiratory viruses?**

NJDOH recommends that schools increase education on respiratory hygiene. Students, faculty and staff should all be asked to follow these steps that prevent the transmission of respiratory infections:

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or into your sleeve, not your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.



- Wash hands often for at least 20 seconds, especially after coughing or sneezing. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Stay home from class and work if you're sick.
- Avoid people who are sick.
- Get a flu shot – it's not too late to be protected.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects.

Additional preventive measures include:

- Adhere to exclusion recommendations from public health. For acute respiratory illness; fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.
- Separate sick students and staff from others until they can go home.
- Provide adequate supplies, including clean and functional handwashing stations, soap, paper towels, and alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Encourage routine surface cleaning through education, policy, and the provision of supplies.
- Get a flu shot – it's not too late to be protected!

### **School Cleaning Procedures**

Special sanitizing processes beyond routine cleaning, including closing schools to clean every surface in the building are not necessary or recommended to slow the spread of respiratory illness. Schools should follow standard procedures for routine cleaning and disinfecting with an EPA-registered product. Typically, this means daily sanitizing surfaces and objects that are touched often, such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones and toys.

### **How should schools prepare for the potential of coronavirus in their community?**

- **Instruct all students and staff who have traveled to China in the past 14 days to contact the school**
- Students who visit health services should be instructed to wear a mask when they present with respiratory symptoms.
- Health personnel should inquire about travel history.
- Clinicians should wear personal protective equipment to guard against potential exposure.
- Report any ill students with a travel history to the local health department **immediately**.
- Continue to monitor up to date information from health officials.
- School nurses should continue to monitor students and staff who may exhibit respiratory symptoms.
- Always promote daily practice of everyday preventive actions.
- Have supplies on hand for staff and students (masks, soap, tissues, hand sanitizers, trash baskets).
- Develop a plan for outbreak response and share with stakeholders before an outbreak occurs.
- Prepare to offer home instruction to students.
- Establish relationship with local public health officials and identify points of contact.





- Create emergency communication plan and maintain up to date contact information for everyone in your communication chain.
- Establish leadership team, identify essential staff functions, assign tasks and responsibilities.
- Plan workshops and trainings to educate staff on prevention measures.

### **Information about management of returning travelers**

#### ***Who is this guidance intended for?***

**This guidance is being provided for individuals who have traveled to China in the last 14 days. New screening and management protocols are set to take effect on February 2, 2020 at 5pm. This guidance only applies to individuals who have arrived prior to this date and time. Additional guidance will be made available for those who arrive after this date and time.**

#### ***Which students/staff should conduct active or passive monitoring and self-quarantine?***

NJDOH recommends the following risk categories and associated actions. This guidance is in accordance with “**Guidance for Managing Employees or Students Returning from China**” put forward by NJDOH. This guidance recommends the following.

- Individuals who fall into the **High Risk or Moderate Risk** categories should **self-quarantine for 14 days**, including restriction from work/school.
- Those with **High Risk** exposures should conduct **active monitoring**.
- Those with **Moderate Risk** exposures should conduct **passive monitoring**.
- Individuals in the **Low Risk** category **do not require symptom monitoring and are not required to self-quarantine**, however the decision to self-quarantine and restrict from school/work may be appropriate if the decision is made in conjunction with the individual’s employer and/or occupational/school health provider and is in accordance with the facility’s policies and procedures. The decision to restrict these returning travelers from work may be at the facility, employer, or institution’s discretion.

#### ***How are the risk categories for student/staff defined?***

Administrators should work with their school district medical personnel/employee health programs to assess the exposure risk of returning travelers based on the following criteria.

##### ***High Risk***

Returning students/workers who have been in close contact<sup>1</sup> with a person confirmed with 2019-nCoV, while the person was symptomatic OR any contact with infectious secretions OR living/caring/visiting someone with a person confirmed with 2019-nCoV, regardless of use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

##### ***Moderate Risk***

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<sup>1</sup> Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet distance of a 2019-nCoV case for more than 10 minutes.



Returning students/workers who worked as laboratory staff either in a healthcare facility that was treating patients with confirmed 2019-nCoV or were working with the virus in a research laboratory setting, while not wearing the recommended PPE, OR without standard biosafety precautions in place. This would include but is not limited to processing blood, serum, or respiratory samples.

### ***Low Risk***

Workers/students with a recent travel history to Wuhan City, the Hubei Province, or Mainland China, who have not had any close contact with any person confirmed to have 2019-nCoV; OR Workers/students who had transient interactions with suspected cases in public settings, without any close contact.

### ***What type of symptom monitoring is recommended?***

Active or passive monitoring should be instituted if returning students/staff meet one of the risk criteria. Monitoring may be done by the organization's occupation health department (with consultation from the state/local HD when needed), school health personnel or by the local health department if these other options are not available. **Active monitoring** means that the school or a public health agency will check in daily to assess for symptoms and fever. Check-ins are through daily phone calls, interactive voice response, internet reporting, or via Skype or other video conferencing, with possible follow-up home visits as needed. **Passive monitoring** means the person being monitored assesses themselves for fever and symptoms daily with a check-in at the beginning and end of the monitoring period with your school or public health agency. Any individuals who develop symptoms while on passive or active monitoring should notify public health immediately if symptoms occur.

### ***For residential or boarding schools, does this monitoring need to take place on campus?***

- This is a decision that should be made by each school based on their student population.
- Residential schools may decide to send students home (if reachable by car) Note: LHD where student will be residing should be notified.
- Students who live abroad or would need to travel by plane to go should be housed by the school in an area away from other students.
- Schools should be prepared to offer alternate instruction while a student is self-quarantined.
- Residential schools should be prepared to provide suitable housing and basic needs for students who cannot return home.

### ***Which students/staff will not need to monitor symptoms or restrict their activities?***

Persons who have returned to the U.S. and more than 14 days have elapsed from their last exposure are able to continue routine activities without restriction.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Identification of Symptoms**



Travelers should monitor for the following symptoms for 14 days after their return:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

If symptoms develop, they should:

- Seek medical care right away. Before seeking care at a doctor's office or emergency room, they should call ahead and tell them about recent travel and symptoms.
- Wear a surgical mask while in transit to limit transmission.
- Avoid mass transit when seeking care if possible.
- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

### **Important Notes**

- Since this is an ongoing and evolving public health emergency, schools would be asked to implement and conduct monitoring of those meeting these risk criteria and would be supported by the local health department.

As local health departments work to identify, report and monitor ill individuals suspected of having 2019-nCoV, resources in supporting these activities may be limited. Schools should only consult their local health departments if monitoring assistance is needed.

### **Resources**

- NJDOH – General Information Page
  - <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml>
- CDC – General Information Page
  - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- CDC – Home Isolation Guide
  - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-home-care.html>
- NJDOH – Local Health Department Directory
  - [www.localhealth.nj.gov](http://www.localhealth.nj.gov)