Emerging Disease Information

Updated March 5, 2020

The health of students is of primary concern to the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) and Mississippi schools. This guide is designed to provide basic information and procedures regarding viruses in schools. The MDE will continue to communicate with the MS State Department of Health (MSDH) to maintain a safe and healthy environment for our children. As new information is made available, the MDE will update this guide. Please refer to the links to the MSDH and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and for more detailed information.

**General Procedures for Personal Protection**

Basic infection control in school settings should always be promoted and maintained.

* **Hand hygiene -** Students and staff should be encouraged to wash hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing and sneezing. If soap and water is unavailable, sanitizers may be used.

Kids Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJG72sycQB8>

Printable: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/campaign.html>

* **Respiratory etiquette-** MSDH and CDC recommend covering the nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or a shirt sleeve or elbow if no tissue is available) and throwing the tissue in the trash after use, followed by hand washing.

Kids Video: <https://youtu.be/mQINuSTP1jI>

Printable: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/protect/cdc_cough.pdf>

* **Routine Cleaning-** School staff should routinely clean areas that students and staff touch often with the cleaners they typically use. Cleaning should take place immediately if there is contamination of surfaces with blood, stool or vomit. CDC recommends personal protective equipment as part of universal precautions when cleaning body fluid spills.

CDC Instructions: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/cleaning.htm>

* **Separate ill students and staff -** Students and staff who seem to have flu symptoms should be separated from others until they can be sent home. CDC recommends personal protective equipment as part of universal precautions when caring for infected individuals.
* **Stay home when sick -** Those with flu like symptoms, including respiratory symptoms, should stay home from work or school and seek medical attention if the symptoms get worse. This includes uncontrolled temperature, difficulty breathing, worsening headache, unusual muscle weakness or seizure activity. Remain home until fever has been gone for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.

**Coronavirus COVID-19**

**New 3/5/2020: Coronavirus Hotline**

The Mississippi State Department of Health is now operating a hotline for convenient answers to questions about COVID-19 by phone.

Mississippi Coronavirus Hotline (8 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday): **877-978-6453**

**NEW 3/2/2020:** Interim Guidance for Administrators of US Childcare Programs and K-12 Schools to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-for-schools.html>

**New 3/3/2020:** Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html>

* No cases have been reported in Mississippi at this time (CDC, March 5, 2020)
* COVID-19 symptoms are similar to those of influenza
* Current symptoms reported for patients with COVID-19 have included mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough, and difficulty breathing:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html>

CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, see next section “**Responding to Viruses in Schools”**

Additional Coronavirus Resources:

MSDH Coronavirus page

<https://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/14,0,420.html>

CDC Coronavirus Situation Summary

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html>

CDC Coronavirus Cases in the U.S.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>

CDC Coronavirus FAQs

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>

CDC What to Do If You Are Sick with Coronavirus Disease

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html>

**Contact Information**

Mississippi State Department of Health

* Toll-free: 1-866-HLTHY4U (866-458-4948)
* Public Health Emergencies: 601-576-7400
* <http://msdh.ms.gov/>
* Mississippi Coronavirus Hotline (8 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday):

**877-978-6453**

Mississippi Department of Education

* Safe and Orderly Schools 601-359-1028

<https://www.mdek12.org/OSOS/Home>

* Healthy Schools 601-359-1737

<https://www.mdek12.org/OHS>

**Responding to Viruses in Schools**

As with many illnesses the onset of fever may be the first indication of illness, along with coughing, sneezing, runny nose, muscle aches. The more serious cases can experience complicated respiratory symptoms especially in children with asthma.

CDC K-12 and Childcare Seasonal Flu Video

<https://youtu.be/8msgeGjI3xU>

CDC Guidance for Flu Prevention for Schools & Childcare

<https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/school/index.html>

CDC Guidance for Flu Prevention for Parents

<https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/school/parents-childcare-k-12-students.html>

CDC How to Clean and Disinfect Schools to Help Slow the Spread of Flu:

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/cleaning.htm>

**School response:**

* 1. Have current individual Student Asthma Plans readily accessible
  2. Provide hand washing instructions for teachers and students
  3. Have soap, water, and paper towels available for hand washing
  4. Make hand sanitizer readily available
  5. Implement standard cleaning precautions according to CDC guidelines
  6. Provide disinfectant wipes for surfaces such as keyboards
  7. Separate ill students/staff and make appropriate medical referral
  8. Follow CDC guidelines on cleaning and disposal of items soiled with bodily fluids from a person suspected of illness.
  9. Engage school crisis management plan if necessary

**Additional Resources**

**Health in Action** Lesson Plans Dealing with Communicable Diseases:

<http://lessonplans.movetolearnms.org/Search.aspx>

*Note: Even though these lessons are identified by grade level, a teacher can use the ideas and the information presented at any grade level that they feel is appropriate.*

**Grades K-2:**

* My Hands are Clean (this lesson utilizes United Streaming)

<https://lessonplans.movetolearnms.org/Detail.aspx?id=35184735-16bc-4225-ba42-1bde7d66a7d0>

* Keeping the Flu Away

<https://lessonplans.movetolearnms.org/Detail.aspx?id=c2d63b99-4d5b-4180-8f86-e23b84d5d110>

* Safety and Medicines

<https://lessonplans.movetolearnms.org/Detail.aspx?id=5e142264-cfc5-41bb-b6e7-b476ad3ad9a3>

* Immunizations

<https://lessonplans.movetolearnms.org/Detail.aspx?id=c3936a31-1fbc-44f9-8b42-204dfeec5632>

* Mr. Germ Head

<https://lessonplans.movetolearnms.org/Detail.aspx?id=555c3328-0ea5-497e-8089-ad224e3f82d9>

**Grades 3-5:**

* Do I Have to Wash My Hands?

<https://lessonplans.movetolearnms.org/Detail.aspx?id=00c0d186-cfe0-4a29-b440-9b87389e3287>

**Grades 6-8:**

* Don’t be Sick

<https://lessonplans.movetolearnms.org/Detail.aspx?id=33599ce8-c5c1-4046-9b21-fb567d9ccb87>

* Doctor, Doctor

<https://lessonplans.movetolearnms.org/Detail.aspx?id=5c8f57c0-7702-4f38-a135-1f8a975ca0ae>

**Additional Resources, Continued**

**Grades 9-12:**

* And you are…….

<https://lessonplans.movetolearnms.org/Detail.aspx?id=bedef997-5f45-4a6f-a6f0-37459bc39cd9>

* Clean Hands Are Happy Hands

<https://lessonplans.movetolearnms.org/Detail.aspx?id=7c18d428-7356-4805-8b1c-2bd48b9843a0>