

For Immediate Release
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Marin County Schools Prepare for Coronavirus/COVID-19

Marin County, CA – School leaders and health experts in Marin County are coordinating efforts to help prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus/COVID-19 and determine how schools will respond in the event that a case is identified at a school site. Working closely Dr. Matt Willis, Public Health Officer, and his team at the County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), school leaders are receiving the most current information related to the virus along with guidance about keeping students and staff safe.

A community forum is scheduled for March 9 from 6-7:30p.m. at the Marin County Office of Education located at 1111 Las Gallinas Avenue in San Rafael. The forum will include health experts from the DHHS and Kaiser Permanente. Facebook live streaming will be available through the Marin COE Facebook page <https://tinyurl.com/tb2odfx>.

“We are taking this situation very seriously for the sake of our students, staff and community at large,” said Marin County Superintendent of Schools Mary Jane Burke. “While this situation is evolving, we are following the recommendations of local health experts.”

The DHHS recommends common sense guidelines for protecting against the spread of infectious diseases including:

- Encourage students and staff to stay home when they are sick.
- Those who have a fever at school should go home and stay home until fever-free for at least 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medication.
- Separate sick students and staff from others until they can be picked up to go home.
- The Center for Disease Control (CDC) does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
- Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others.
- Promote hand hygiene among students and staff through education, scheduled time for handwashing, and availability of soap and water and/or hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your face, particularly your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Teach and encourage proper cough etiquette—cough or sneeze into a tissue, sleeve, or arm (do not use hands).
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

The Marin County Office of Education has a dedicated web page related to the coronavirus at www.marinschools.org. The page includes written communications from the DHHS and resources related to hygiene, talking to kids about the virus and distance learning.

The Marin County Office of Education (MCOE) is also working with the DHHS to update its infectious disease emergency response plan, which was developed in 2009 in response to the H1N1 virus. The document serves as a plan for schools to manage an infectious disease emergency.

In the event that a case of coronavirus occurs at a school site, the school's crisis response team will work with public health officials to determine next steps, which may include closing a school for up to 14 days.

County Superintendent Burke praised the collaboration efforts of school leaders to prepare a database of online and paper-based learning resources for schools to use in the event of a closure and to support the continuity of teaching and learning.

"All of these efforts are reflective of our community's ability to come together in a time of need. While we are hoping that we will not need to implement our plans for a worst case scenario, we will be ready."

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