

COVID-19 Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidance

FOR SCHOOLS AND CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for cleaning and disinfecting in schools and child care programs. This guidance is based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for schools, workplaces, and community locations.

Resource

[CDC: Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility \(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html)

How COVID-19 spreads

The virus that causes COVID-19 is mainly spread by respiratory droplets. When someone infected with COVID-19 coughs or sneezes, respiratory droplets that contain the virus are expelled and can be breathed in by someone nearby. Although the virus cannot enter the body through the skin, the respiratory droplets carrying the virus can get into your airways or mucous membranes of your eyes, nose, or mouth to infect you. The virus can also be spread if you touch a surface contaminated with virus and then touch your eyes, nose or mouth, although this is not the primary way the virus spreads.

Guidance for cleaning and disinfecting

Routine cleaning and disinfecting is key to maintaining a safe environment for faculty, students, and staff.

- **Cleaning removes** dirt and most germs and is usually done with soap and water.
- **Disinfecting kills** most germs, depending on the type of chemical, and only when the chemical product is used as directed on the label.

Routine cleaning and disinfecting

Clean and disinfect at least daily (or more, depending on use patterns) frequently touched surfaces and objects such as:

- Door knobs and handles
- Stair rails
- Classroom desks and chairs
- Lunchroom tables and chairs
- Countertops
- Handrails
- Light switches
- Handles on equipment (e.g., athletic equipment)
- Push-buttons on vending machines and elevators

- Shared toys
- Shared remote controls
- Shared telephones
- Shared desktops
- Shared computer keyboards and mice
- Bus seats and handrails

Note: Computer keyboards are difficult to clean. Shared computers should have signs posted instructing proper hand hygiene before and after using them to minimize disease transmission. To facilitate cleaning, consider using covers that protect the keys but enable use of the keys.

It is not necessary to routinely apply disinfectants to surfaces that are not high-touch or high-risk (e.g., floors, bookcases, tops of filing cabinets). Soft surfaces such as carpets, rugs, and drapes can be cleaned using soap and water or a cleaner appropriate for the material.

When a student or staff member becomes ill

When a student or staff member develops any symptoms of illness consistent with COVID-19 (e.g., new onset or worsening cough OR shortness of breath OR **at least two** of the following symptoms: fever of 100.4°F, chills, muscle ache, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell) in a school or child care setting:

- Isolate the person in a separate room while they wait to be picked up or until they are able to leave the facility on their own. Ensure that they have hygiene supplies available, including a cloth mask, facial tissues, and alcohol-based hand rub.
- Remind staff who are monitoring the student or staff member with symptoms to practice social distancing when possible.
- Close off the space used for isolation after the ill person leaves. Open it after proper cleaning and disinfecting.
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces, focusing on areas where the person is known to have been and items they have touched (e.g., individual desk, cot, recently used toys, shared equipment).
- Wear gloves when cleaning, and wash hands after removing gloves.

When a student or staff member is a suspect or positive case of COVID-19

As long as routine cleaning and disinfection has been done regularly, additional cleaning and disinfection may not be necessary. Depending on when a person with COVID-19 was last in the facility, it may be difficult to know what areas they were in and what objects or surfaces they may have touched after they become sick.

Email the MDH School Team (at health.schools.covid19@state.mn.us) if you have questions about cleaning after a child or staff member becomes ill.

General precautions for the cleaning staff after an ill student has been in your facility

The risk of getting COVID-19 from cleaning is low. The following are general precautions for cleaning staff, given that community transmission of COVID-19 is occurring:

- Staff should not touch their face while cleaning and only after they can wash hands after cleaning.
- Cleaning staff should wear uniforms (or designated work clothes) and disposable gloves when cleaning and handling trash. Cleaning staff should change clothes at the end of a shift. It may be helpful for them to keep a change of clothes at work.
- Clothing worn while cleaning should be placed in a plastic bag until it can be laundered. Laundering should be done as soon as possible and done safely at home.
- Cleaning staff should thoroughly wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after gloves are removed.
- Staff who are responsible for cleaning and disinfecting should be trained to use disinfectants safely and effectively and to safely clean up potentially infectious materials and body fluids – blood, vomit, feces, and urine.
- All cleaning staff should be trained on the hazards of the cleaning chemicals used in the workplace in accordance with [OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard 29 CFR 1910.1200](https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.1200) (<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.1200>).

Resource

For more detailed information for staff, see [Frequently Asked Questions About COVID-19 for Facilities Service and Cleaning Staff](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/cleanfaq.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/cleanfaq.html>).

Cleaning and disinfecting products

- Use soap and water or another detergent to clean dirty items. Then, use a disinfectant.
- Use an EPA-registered household disinfectant and follow the manufacturer's instructions to ensure safe and effective use of the product. Many products recommend:
 - Keeping the surface wet for a period of time (see the product label).
 - Wearing gloves and ensuring good ventilation during use of the product.
- Use diluted household bleach solutions, if appropriate for the surface. However:
 - Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date.
 - Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.
 - Use eye protection or have immediate access to an eye-wash station.

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- Leave solution on a surface for at least 1 minute.

To make a bleach solution, mix:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) of bleach per gallon of water OR
- 4 teaspoons of bleach per quart of water

Make only enough diluted bleach solution that can be used in 24 hours. After that, the solution may not be effective.

Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol can also be used for cleaning.

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For more information, visit [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-9\)](https://health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html) (health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html), or call the COVID-19 hotline at 651-201-3920 or 1-800-657-3903.

To obtain this information in a different format, call 651-201-5414.