Frequently Asked Questions About COVID-19

What is COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can infect humans or animals. Sometimes an animal coronavirus can change so that it can infect people and become a human coronavirus. There are seven known types of human coronaviruses. Four types (229E, NL63, OC43, and KHU1) are common and cause mild to moderate respiratory infections, like the common cold. Two types, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV), can cause severe respiratory infections. The seventh type (2019-nCoV) is a new coronavirus recently discovered in China. Public health officials are trying to learn more about this new virus and the infection it causes. The Virginia Department of Health has provided a fact sheet about COVID-19 for the community.

Is my child at risk? What can I do to keep my child safe?

The risk of COVID-19 infection for students and for the U.S. population in general is considered by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to be low. Specific questions may be directed to the Hampton Health Department at 757-727-1172.

During the winter season, many other viruses that cause respiratory illness, such as flu, are common. Precautions that are recommended for avoiding colds, flu and other respiratory illnesses include good respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene: covering coughs and sneezes, washing hands frequently with soap and water, and staying home when sick.

What is HCS doing to address the COVID-19?

In coordination with the Hampton Health Department, HCS is closely monitoring the health crisis in China and globally, as well as any impact it may have locally. According to the CDC, the risk to the U.S. public is considered low at this time. HCS will continue to work with the Hampton Health Department for guidance or actions, as necessary. In addition, HCS is proactively taking measures to keep our learning environments healthy - http://www.hampton.k12.va.us/news/2020March/ProactiveMeasure.pdf, as well as finalizing a division-wide instructional plan (i.e., who will deliver lessons, when will lessons be delivered, how lessons will be available, how students will be assessed) if the need to close a school or schools were to occur.
**Should students or school staff with recent travel to countries that have a Level 3 Travel Health Notice (widespread, ongoing transmission) stay home from school?**

Public health officials and HCS request the following:

- Stay home for 14 days from the time you left an area with widespread, ongoing community spread (Level 3 Travel Health Notice countries) and practice social distancing.

- Contact the principal of your child’s school immediately and maintain regular communication with the school throughout the duration of the absence.


**Should students or school staff with recent travel to countries that have a Level 2 Travel Health Notice (sustained community spread) stay home from school?**

Public health officials and HCS request the following:

- Stay home for 14 days from the time you left an area with sustained community spread (Level 2 Travel Health Notice countries) and practice social distancing.

- Contact the principal of your child’s school immediately and maintain regular communication with the school throughout the duration of the absence.


**Should students or school staff with recent travel to countries that have a Level 1 Travel Health Notice (risk of limited community transmission) stay home from school?**

- Students and staff do not need to stay home from school unless they are presenting symptoms of illness.


**What should I do if my family recently traveled internationally and my child is required and/or recommended to self-quarantine for 14 days?**

In these cases, the parent or guardian should contact the principal of the school immediately and maintain regular communication with the school throughout the duration of the absence.
What if a household member of a student or staff member recently traveled to a country under a Level 3 or Level 2 Travel Health Notice? Can the student or staff member attend school?

If the student or staff member has not traveled to a country with a Level 3 or Level 2 Travel Health Notice, and their household contact who returned from a country with a Level 3 or Level 2 Travel Health Notice within the past 14 days has no symptoms of COVID-19 infection (fever, cough, or difficulty breathing), there are no limitations for them to attend school. However, students and staff are asked to self-monitor and report to their school if their medical condition changes.

Will HCS be monitoring students or staff who have traveled to other countries and are allowed to attend school?

HCS does not screen or monitor students or staff who have traveled internationally.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

If you have questions about your child’s attendance at school, please contact the school directly.

If parents or guardians have questions about the illness or symptoms, or how to prevent respiratory infection, we encourage them to contact the Hampton Health Department at 757-727-1172.

Additional Resources

For updates and more information about novel coronavirus:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Virginia Department of Health
World Health Organization