



COVID-19 Prevention and Planning Resources for Schools

Elementary and secondary schools play an important role in slowing the spread of COVID-19 by minimizing the exposure and spread of viruses such as COVID-19. This starts by reinforcing proper hygiene practices and through increased cleaning and sanitation measures.

Schools that do not yet have COVID-19 identified in their community should begin as soon as possible with preparations to prevent the introduction and spread of the virus. Based on recommendations from The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (United States), World Health Organization and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (United Nations), and European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (European Union) Adventist Risk Management, Inc. is making the following recommendations:

- Work with the Conference office and local health departments to review, update, and implement emergency operations plans (EOPs). These plans should build existing Union policies. For schools which do not currently have an EOP, the United States Federal Emergency Management Agency has [resources available](#) on developing high-quality school emergency operations plans.
- Utilize resources from the [World Health Organization](#) and [Adventist Risk Management](#) to reinforce basic hygiene practices such as proper handwashing techniques, cough and sneeze etiquette, social distancing, and avoiding touching your face.
- Develop or strengthen partnerships with local health officials to facilitate day-to-day information sharing and maintain open dialogue with your Conference education department and Conference risk manager.
- Monitor absenteeism patterns among both students and staff to identify abnormal patterns. Review your attendance and sick leave policies and encourage both students and staff to stay home when sick.
- Create plans for alternative staffing if teachers are out sick, including cross-training staff members and identifying additional possibilities for substitute teachers.
- Work with your Conference education department to identify resources and methods for continuity of education in the event of a quarantine due to an outbreak in your area.
- Develop procedures for dealing with students and staff who become sick at school or who arrive sick. These individuals should be sent home as soon as possible and should be separated from the rest of the school until they can leave.
- Increase routine environmental cleaning of frequently touched surfaces in common areas and provide disposable wipes to teachers so classroom surfaces and items can be cleaned before each use.
- Partner with the Conference to create a communication plan to share relevant information with parents and community partners. Write drafts of essential communication pieces to have ready for use at the appropriate time. You may also use *the Communication Plan for Schools* resource available at Adventistrisk.org/COVID19.

For schools in communities where COVID-19 has been identified, administrators should work with local health officials, in conjunction with the Conference, to determine if there has been possible exposure at the school. Consider canceling extracurricular group activities and large events and determine the appropriate time to enact your continuity of education plan.

Putting a plan in place prior to an outbreak in your community is the best way to respond quickly and effectively when an outbreak does occur. Communicating effectively with parents and constituents will help reassure them the school is actively engaged in prevention measures and prepared to deal with an outbreak if it should occur.